

[Marked questionable translation with ((?)), made some comments with ((comment))]
[Quite often translation would contain “authority” instead of “power”(and sometimes “skill”), haven’t changed that since it seemed fitting, even tho it probably means the same thing]
[Also there is alot of places where terms like “magic power” or “energy” have been used. I think some of them(maybe even most of them) ment “magicules”, but I only replaced those that seemed to explicitly state that that was “magicules”]
[And sorry for inconsistent names, can't be bothered to change them all]

Volume 22: Godly Destruction and Chaos

Prologue: Pure Malice

The Cryptids are a group of individuals with a myriad of different characteristics. Most of them have no sense of cooperation and simply rampage as they please. However, there are also groups that share the same characteristics. They are highly intelligent and protect their allies, and can even form groups to fight against beings of a higher rank by joining forces. This is proof that the Cryptids, who fight day and night without fear of even death and driven by their fighting instinct, also have a certain intelligence. Therefore, it was inevitable that the Insectar race would derive from the Cryptids.

And now—

"Ahahahahahahaha—♪"((kufufufufu))

Ivalaje, the "Destruction Dragon," let out a cry of evolution.

It was a new birth. As the rainbow-colored cocoon enveloped Ivalaje, its body was reconstructed inside. Spiritual lifeforms can freely change their appearance and size, but Ivalaje, being without will, was formless. As energy accumulated, it grew larger, becoming sinister and evil, a figure that inspires fear and terror. But as Ivalaje evolved, it underwent a major change. Its size shrunk, becoming the size of a human child. The enormous amount of energy condensed into it made its presence so striking that it was almost hopeless((?)). The rainbow-colored remains of the cocoon enveloped its [precious/beautiful] body((jade body?)). The skin peeking through the gaps was pure white and fresh. Its pure white hair, which seemed to swallow up the light, was fluffy like a dandelion. Its cherry-colored lips were cute, yet twisted with wickedness.. Its golden eyes were filled with the light of intelligence.

By gaining the emotion of "hatred", Ivalaje's sensibilities blossomed. As an incarnation of malice with a clear will, Ivalaje wanted to show off its existence to the world at large.

But before that.

Ivalaje remembered.

The emotional gain has also rapidly developed her intellect. Thanks to this, she understood that she had been cast out.

Lonely.

Frustrating.

Unforgivable.

There was once a time when she was a perfect, flawless "all one". She was fulfilled. Lacking intellect, sensitivity, or even emotion, Ivalaje felt no anxiety, dissatisfaction, or even boredom.

And yet—

Half of her body was missing. The dreamlike sense of omnipotence vanished, and she was exposed to an uncertain reality. Still, since Ivalaje had no intellect, she never felt dissatisfied... but the sense of loss that suddenly came and went - loneliness - was something she could not counter no matter what she did. But now it was different. Ivaraje also gained an ego. She gained intelligence and came to know her situation((?)), and gained emotions, vowing revenge.

If she had lost something, she could just take it back.

If she swallowed the entire world, what is lost should be returned((?)).

She'll destroy what Veldanava had created. That was the means to achieve Ivalaje's goal. Because of the hatred that was the first emotion she acquired, Ivaraje became jealous of all living things. As such, she has no doubts, and no hesitation in her intention to destroy the world.

And then, in front of the awakened evil god, there was a door. A gate leading to another realm - "Heavenly Star Palace". Beyond this must lie an unknown world. There are many worlds created by Verdanava. If we crush and swallow them one by one Ivaraje thought, "I am sure I will be satisfied one day. Ivaraje thinks so and takes pleasure in dreaming of that time((imagining it)).

"Kyaha♪"

When Ivaraje laughed, there were those who responded. They were the kings who ruled the flock.

Beasts that galloped through nothingness.

Birds that flew through dimensions.

Fish that swam between the stars.

Three servants who loved the Dreaming Chaos Dragon Ivalaje as their mother. The rulers of the Cryptids, whose talents alone could rival even the former King of the Insect Demons, Zeranus, had been blessed by the evolution of the Destruction Dragon Ivalaje. Their rampant violence, which had been powerful even in the past, had become uncontrollable by gaining a sense of self. This has had an unimaginable impact on all derived races.

"Kyaha♪ My adorable servants. This is what cuteness feels like♪" ((Watashi no kawaii shimobe-tachi. This is what kawaii is all about.))

Ivarage was overjoyed with this emotion she was experiencing for the first time, and became even more cheerful((propelling emotion even further)). So, carried away by that momentum, she decided to give her beloved servants a gift of this delightful feeling.

"Well, well, well, that's it! I'll give you all names. Mommy'll give you wonderful, wonderful names."

The name was the first gift Ivalaje ever received.

She had never thought of it that way, but now that she has gained a sense of self, she understands how happy it made her.. Experiencing the emotion of joy for the first time Ivalaje innocently embodies joy((?)). However, Ivalaje is too ignorant of being the very embodiment of malice. So even naming something has a different meaning than usual.

"Let's see, you're Kakeashi."

Ivarage said, turning her eyes to the beast sprinting through the void. The beast named Kakeashi possessed not only animalistic instincts but also strong emotions. It inherited the "malevolent intent" that Ivarage harbored, along with its name.

Ivarage named the other two beasts in the same way.

The bird that flies through the dimensions was given the name Habataki, along with the "resentment" she carried.

The fish that swims between the stars was given the name Swim, inheriting the "hatred" she carried.

They were cute names, but the malice was undoubtedly transmitted.

The three [Servants] [Shimobe] would have done anything for their mother, but this naming only strengthened that tendency. In order to fulfill their mother's wish, they will not hesitate to even destroy themselves.

The evolution of the three servants is complete. Their appearance is sinister and vicious.

Kakeashi has the body of a giant lion with the head of a dragon, covered entirely in dragon scales. Its tail, like a viper's, is divided into eight sections and wriggles freely. It also has eyeballs all over its body, so there are no blind spots. A viscous degradative seep from small protrusions and turn into mist, and even demons of the Demon Lord class would not be able to escape death if it were to come into contact with Kakeashi's aura.

Habataki is two-headed and hermaphroditic. It is an elegant demonic bird with an eagle-like figure and a peacock's tail. Its entire body is covered in feathers of the ultimate metal, Hihiirokane, and shining in a golden color. Its appearance is somewhat inorganic and mechanical rather than biological. If you look closely, even its feathers are made of metal.

Swim is the most bizarre of the bunch. And yet((?)), it is a fish monster with a mysterious beauty. It has a squid-like shape with a pointed tip. It has no head, and numerous tentacles grow from a round torso located in the center of its body. Upon closer inspection, it can be seen that its tentacles are made up of tiny, interconnected joints, allowing them to move with complete freedom. A collection of small, monstrous entities covered in bio-steel (Arionium) are parasitizing Swim.

They are all unique and have no similar parts, but what they have in common is their otherworldliness. It is impossible for them to exist as living creatures, and the lack of any regularity is what makes them unique.

The same can be said for their subordinates. The higher the [Cryptids] that belong to each [Servant], the more they inherit the characteristics of their parents. They inherited more ferocious and terrifying powers than those that are naturally generated from magical energy. The same can be said for the influence of evolution and naming this time. Countless fantasy creatures stained with malice had undergone immeasurable and evil evolution. In the case of the veteran higher-ups, they possess a ferocious and unparalleled power that surpasses even the Disaster class at the very least. Their number easily exceeds one hundred, and when it comes to the lower ranks that branch out from them, the scale reaches tens of thousands.

The horde of Cryptids centered around the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivarage was the very army of the evil god that heralded the end of the world.

"Fun, it's so much fun. Now, let's go play!" Ivarage ordered.

She had a smile on his face, but her eyes were not smiling.

She fixed her gaze firmly on the "Heavenly Stare Palace" and began to move without a sound.

Harboring hatred in her eyes for those who left her behind, Ivarage descended to the Heavenly Star Palace, vowing to take back everything she had lost. Normally, the gate connecting to the

Base World was completely closed, and no one could pass through without a key. But now, for some reason, the gate was open. Dagrue, the gatekeeper, was also absent, and anyone could pass through.

On top of that—

A tremendous impact strong enough to reach the Heavenly Star Palace had passed through the gate and been delivered from the ground, passing through the Heavenly Tower beyond. This was the effect of Milim's Dragon Nova. The interior of the Heavenly Tower was now in a state of catastrophic destruction. Each floor had an open ceiling, allowing the Cryptids' army to pass through without any hindrance.

"Kya ha! How exciting!!"

No one could impede Ivalage's steps. Accompanied by the army of hell, the innocent evil god strode forward. And as soon as she crossed over into the world...

"--Found them!"

Ivalage discovered the "fragments" scattered throughout the Prime World.

It is the presence of those who were once related to the "Star King Dragon" Veldanava.

Ivalage sneered. Filled with hatred for those Veldanava loved, she swore to destroy the world. The evil god's army responded to Ivalage in order to overrun the earth. To swallow everything and return to being "the whole one" once again—

Chapter 1: Lord of Vice

Let's rewind time to before the battle in the labyrinth began—(())

As soon as the policy was decided at a meeting of the executives of [Demon Country] [Tempest], Testarossa quickly took action.

Leaving the "control room," she immediately sends a "Thought Transmission" to Cien, who she had left behind in the Kingdom of Ingrassia. After briefly conveying the contents of the meeting, she ordered him to consult with Hinata and decide the rest.

Next, as she was about to contact Moss, she was greeted by Souka, who had a stern expression.

"Oh?"

"I will guide you."

"Is it alright for you not to assist Lord Souei?"

"Yes. My subordinates have already been dispatched to various locations."

Souka said, nodding slightly.

That was the truth.

Hokusou was in the Holy Empire of Ruberios.

Saika was in the Holy Void of Damargania.

In the Sorcerer Dynasty of Sarion, there were Nanso.

They had scattered to their respective battlefields to become Lord Souei's "cloned body's" limbs and quickly gather information.

And in the place they are heading to now, Touka is in charge of the mission, but contact has been lost.

Judging from the situation, she had been trapped in the icy world created by Velzard.

If her subordinate Touka had been turned into an ice statue, it is only natural for Soka to participate in this rescue operation.

"...I see."

Even without a full explanation, Testarossa understood the situation.

Led by Soka, the two head to a secluded room dedicated to teleportation.

To prevent enemy infiltration, "teleportation" directly from within the labyrinth to the outside was forbidden. For those who can freely use "spatial teleportation," it is a troublesome matter, but everyone follows this rule to comply with the safety-first policy.

While walking, Testarossa thinks.

Frankly speaking, even with Soka's skill, she will only be a hindrance when facing Velzard. Understanding this, Testarossa accepted Souka's offer.

Not only fighting power is necessary in battle, but analytical and information transmission abilities are also important. If Souka could relay information to the "control room", Testarossa will not be bothered with miscellaneous tasks. It is not something she cannot do without, but she judged that it would be helpful to have.

Moreover, she can understand Soka's feelings of wanting to help her subordinates who are caught up in this.

Since Testarossa's purpose is also to rescue Carrera and the others, cooperating with Soka here rather than refusing her help will increase the probability of success of the operation.

However, if she takes her along as she is, Soka will only die in vain. This is because Guy and Velzard had returned once again.((?))

If she is exposed to Velzard's aura, who has become serious, she will probably die instantly before becoming an ice statue.

(I don't know what Lady Velzard is thinking, but I wonder if she is seriously fighting with Gii? If so, I don't think I can withstand her—)

Currently, the battlefield of old Eurazania is sealed in a world of ice, but that in itself is a mystery.

If Velzard had wanted to, she could have easily turned all living things into ice dust instead of turning them into ice statues. If that had happened, with the exception of Demons and other exceptions capable of resurrection, there should have been zero survivors.

In other words, it was precisely because they had become ice statues that possibility of survival remains—

(That's right. Lady Velzard is a merciless person, but she doesn't do meaningless things. She didn't intend to kill—it's reasonable to think so. If that's the case...)

What, exactly, is Velzard's purpose?

Testarossa was convinced that it was unlikely that she was being controlled by Feldway.

It would be difficult even to manipulate the Primordials like themselves, let alone control a "Dragon Kind" who reigns at the pinnacle of spiritual life in perfect condition—from Testarossa's point of view, it was an impossible idea.

There were examples, so the possibility was not zero, but it was more convincing to conclude that it was all Velzard's will.

The most likely reason was that she was holding Guy back at Feldway's request.

Since she has sensed that there seemed to be a connection between them((?)), it was natural to think that their interests coincided.

However, Testarossa suspected that there was more to it than that.

(Could Lord Rimuru have foreseen a perfect answer?((?)) No, it's no good to rely on him like this every time. I will do what I can in my own way.)

If there was an answer, there is no point in worrying, but if not, it's just a waste of time to think about it.

It would be best if she could read Velzard's intentions, but even Testarossa could not perfectly see through the heart of a "Dragon Kind."

In any case, it is certain that it is better not to have unnecessary casualties. If so, they should take on the mission using all the safety measures they can take.

"Moss, come here."

"Understood."

After calling out to her confidant Moss, Testarossa stopped and called out to Souka. Then, she looked directly at her and tried to gauge Soka's resolve.

"You intend to come with me, don't you?"

"Yes. My mission is to investigate the local situation. If possible, rescue anyone who needs to be rescued—"

"Wait. Because that's impossible."

"Eh?"

"It seems you don't understand, so I'll explain. Velzard-sama's ice and snow freezes everything, halting all activity. Yes, even life((vital)) activity."

"—! Then, is it already too late—"

"No, it's not."

Testarossa told Souka to calm down, restraining her.

Then she explained the current situation in a way that Souka could understand.

"It's just stopped, so it can be resumed."

"Eh?"

"In other words, that wasn't an attack. Rather—"

Yes, that ice and snow was more like a protective curtain protecting that land.

In ancient times, Testarossa had witnessed Velzard fighting Guy.

I was peeking at the scene on the ground from the Demon World, and the battle was nothing short of spectacular.

Velzard's "Atmospheric Prison Wall," which solidified the atmosphere, easily blocked Guy's attack.

However, in the next moment, it was just as easily shattered by a barrage of magic.

Such a scene repeated itself.

The exchange of superb techniques showed that both were in a class of their own.

Back then, she hadn't even been able to find either of their weaknesses... but now Testarossa could at least understand what properties their techniques contained.

Velzard's ice and snow stopped everything in place.

Probably, with the same principle as the defensive technique "Atmospheric Prison Wall," she is prolonging the effect time by freezing it.

Even if you capture the opponent with a normal "Atmospheric Prison Wall," it will be released in a short period of time, so it is not suitable for sealing. However, in the current state combined with freezing, it should be possible to seal the movement semi-permanently.

It was like an ice prison that took away their consciousness, and considering that even Carrera was unable to escape, its strength and precision had reached a terrifying level.

Moreover, it was originally a defensive technique—

"—I think it's to protect them so that they won't be involved in their battle."

"Um, eh?"

"It's safe to say that the ice statues are difficult to destroy."

Testarossa asserted.

A little later, a look of understanding finally appeared on Souka's face.

"So you're saying that Velzard-sama has no hostile intent?"

That was a difficult question.

After thinking about it for a bit, Testarossa answered.

"Rather than being hostile, Velzard-sama must have some sort of plan. She probably used such a method because she doesn't want it to be disturbed."((?))

She is not controlled by Feldway, they just have a common interest. And Velzard must have created a situation that was convenient for her to achieve that goal.

Testarossa explained this speculation to her.

"Then, is the rescue operation itself unnecessary?"

"Yes, that's right. Or rather, it's probably impossible to move them."

"—?"

Seeing Soka's bewildered look, Testarossa added to her explanation.

"It's not just living things that were frozen by the snow and ice. The ground itself, a part of the planet's surface, is protected from being destroyed by Velzard-sama's attacks."

"I see..."

Souka finally understood.

--No, that's not right.

She understood, but the scale was so different that it didn't really feel real.

Even so, she grasped the situation, so she understood what Testarossa was trying to say.

(It's hard to believe that everyone was turned into ice statues as a measure to protect the planet...but if that's true, then there seems to be no need to transport the ice statues to a safe place.)

Ah, that's why—Souka understood.

It's not that it's not necessary, but that it can't be moved.

If everything is fixed in place, then the ice statues must also be integrated, making it impossible to move them from their places. Testarossa's words pointed to that.

"It seems you understand. Then, I'll ask you one more time. Do you still intend to come along?"

If rescue missions are meaningless, all Souka can do is a reconnaissance mission. And if she has to jump into a hellish place where the "White Ice Dragon" Velzard and the Demon King Guy are fighting with all their might, it is inevitable that Souka's own safety could not be guaranteed.

Is it really worth taking such a risk?

Yes—Souka nodded.

"If it's allowed, I'll go too."

Soka is also a covert operative.

As Souei's confidante, she had a duty to convey what was happening on the ground to the center.

She would not let others realize it, but Souei was pushing himself too hard. Souka, who had always followed Souei's footsteps, was aware of this fact.

"You might die, you know?"

"I'm prepared for it!"

Souka answered Testarossa's question without hesitation.

That determination was beautiful.

Testarossa smiled with satisfaction.

"Frankly speaking, there is little you can do on the ground. If it's just about conveying the situation to the "control room," we can do it ourselves."

"....."

"But there's a role that only you can play."

"What is that...?"

"A landmark."

"A landmark, you say?"

"Yes, that's right. Because of the battle between Velzard-sama and Guy, that area has been transformed into an unobservable danger zone. It's impossible to 'teleport' directly to such a place, and naturally, we have no choice but to jump to a place a little away that isn't affected."

Souka nodded in agreement.

However, when she heard Testarossa's next words, she understood her intention.

"But, if there was someone she knew there, she could have jumped to that person."

Testarossa said.

If it were Gii and Velzard, Testarossa knew both of them well. It would be possible to use those two as landmarks to perform a "space transfer," but in that case, there was a possibility of being caught up in a super-attack if they were unlucky.

It was unclear what was happening on-site, so the situation immediately after the transfer would be left to chance. Even from Testarossa's point of view, that is nothing short of a suicidal act. In other words, it was a dangerous act for anyone.

In that respect, if there was someone observing the situation on-site...

"I see, just by me being alive, that place is guaranteed to be a safe zone..."

"That's right."

Testarossa smiled with satisfaction at the perceptive Soka.

That was a gentle smile, but it was very ruthless and cold.

Because those words were practically asking Souka to become a "canary in a coal mine."

Moreover, it was a job that anyone could do.

Anyone would be fine as long as they were alive.

Besides, the only thing they could gain by taking that much risk was the short time it would take for reinforcements to arrive...

Normally, there was no need to take such a risk.

But Souka had already made up her mind.

"No problem. If I can be of service, I'll just complete the mission."((??))

Souka declared with a completely clear gaze.

(As Souei-sama's confidant, I can't be thought of as useless. Including the situation report, I will show you that I can handle it!)

That resolve was enough to move Testarossa's heart.

"Very well. That's wonderful, Souka-san."

Testarossa looked at Souka in a new light. All of Rimuru's subordinates have strong wills, and Souka is no exception.

Testarossa's smile deepened.

Then, she commanded, facing the empty space.

"Moss, make sure you protect Souka."

When Soka turned her eyes, Moss, who had been summoned, was kneeling there.

He respectfully bowed and responded, "As you wish."

"Um...?"

If Moss was there, then surely her role would be unnecessary—Souka panicked.

But, neither Testarossa nor Moss budged.

"I, of course, and even Moss can erase his presence. It will be difficult for even the executives to find his location, I suppose."

Diablo would be able to do it. However, it would be difficult for others, Testarossa asserted.

Then, she thought that it would be good to make it possible to sense the presence—but, when she thought about it carefully, she realized that there were few executives who were on good terms with Moss.

Souei also used Moss, but it was only one-way communication from Moss. Benimaru was the same, and only received information from Moss.

To begin with, for a [Demon], a spiritual lifeform that specializes in secret operations, leaking one's location information is a foolish act. Continuing to show one's presence is like an unbearable torture.

He had no choice but to do so if necessary, but in truth, he did not want to do anything that would draw attention in front of Velzard.

"If I unnaturally((?)) make my presence known, I might be thought of as annoying by Lady Velzard and could be targeted first..."

Moss whispered in a low voice that only Souka could hear.

I see— Souka agreed and decided to accept Moss's protection.

Thus, the group headed to the frigid hell of Velzard, where snow and ice rage wildly.

*

The place where they were "teleported" by Moss's magic was the very edge of the boundary where Velzard's authority reached. Even Moss, a great demon, could not jump into the ice and snow where even visibility was impossible.

However, that was according to plan.

"From here on out, you have to be prepared to die. Are you really going? If you want to stop, now's the time," Moss quietly asked Soka.

Demon Lord Rimuru, who was Moss's ultimate master, had given his subordinates an absolute order.

Don't die—It was an impossible task in the current situation.

(That's what our mission is, though—)

Testarossa thought without getting worked up.

To do that, the important thing was to understand the situation perfectly.

Both Guy and Velzard were more powerful than Testarossa. If she got caught up in the battle between those two, there was a good chance she would die without even understanding anything.

From here on, she couldn't do anything carelessly. Testarossa and Moss can revive if they die after a while, but Souka couldn't.

For that reason, Testarossa sent her consciousness to the white battlefield.

A world dyed white.

Velzard's snow and ice swallowed everything, painting it all in one color.

However, this was to Testarossa's advantage.

Because she is the [Primordial White] [Blanc]—the beautiful white queen who is merciless, cold, and ruthless to all enemies.

Testarossa's consciousness melted into the white. And she instantly grasped all kinds of information.

Information gathering was Moss's [specialty], but there was no way that her master, Testarossa, could be inferior. She usually just worked Moss over, but when she wanted to, her abilities alone were enough.

(Velgrind-sama's power has mitigated the impact on the earth, and the battlefield is being maintained. Velzard-sama's authority has frozen the surface of the earth, but this is still...)

If Guy and Velzard were to clash, the aftereffects of that power alone would have an immeasurable impact on the earth. Even so, the axis of the earth has not shifted yet because Velgrind is protecting it.

Even for someone like Velgrynd, it would be difficult to intervene in the battle between the two. Those who can end this battle are no one but themselves.

What is of concern here is Velzard's purpose.

Not only Carrera and the others, but all of Milim's subordinates have been turned into ice statues. If she intended to kill them, she would not have gone to such troublesome lengths.

If it was to protect the planet, it was different from Feldway's intentions. That is why it is difficult to imagine that Velzard is being controlled by Feldway.

(Vague speculation and assumptions can lead to fatal mistakes. Let's take a closer look at this situation.)

Testarossa was cautious.

Even though she was approaching the core of the matter, she stopped thinking there.

Unlike ordinary people, she never acts without certainty. That's Testarossa.

In order to make the situation more certain, Testarossa grasps the entire battlefield from a bird's-eye view. The center of her concern is, needless to say, the battle between Gii and Velzard.

Battlefield which ordinary people cannot even approach, and where even heroic-class people cannot see the battle scene, Testarossa observed with the ease of sightseeing.

Velzard's whole body emitted a pale blue glow, countering Guy's attacks. The protective curtain of [beautiful fine ice][diamond dust] that protected her body drew patterns reminiscent of dragon scales every time it received an impact.

It was Velzard's proud ironclad defense—『Snow Crystal Shield』.

(I wonder if even Guy can break that defense? No, it seems that he hasn't shown his true power yet—)

A lot of time has passed since this battle began. Even so, they are still observing the situation((cautious?)), which suggests that both Guy and Velzard are well acquainted with how to fight as transcendents.

However, that is the same for Testarossa, so it was not worth being surprised about.

If they cannot find a decisive chance to win, the one who gets impatient will lose. The only way to win is to repeat steady work according to the [standard move] [theory] that the one who completely drains the opponent's energy will win.

Considering this information, Guy was at a disadvantage.

Velzard was efficiently defending while looking for gaps in Guy's defence. In contrast, Guy seemed to be trying to break the [Snow Crystal Shield] by repeatedly using unnecessary attacks.

(It looks like that, but knowing Guy, he probably has some kind of plan. For example—)

If it's just buying time, it would be the best move.

Guy had been thinking about the upcoming battle with Ivalaje, so he probably didn't want to tire himself out by fighting Velzard here. If Velzard is focusing on defense, it was understandable that he would take the strategy of suppressing consumption by repeating attacks moderately.

(But that alone is meaningless. I wonder what he thinks the end game will be...?)

Thinking like that, Testarossa continued to observe.

As she got used to seeing the battle, the next thing that caught her eye was Velzard's beauty.

While being dyed with anger like a raging sea, her golden eyes are fixed on Guy.

Those eyes, which usually looked gentle, now had no trace of that. Only Guy was reflected in her "freezing cold eyes".

(—After all, this person is unreadable. If so, it is more certain to directly ask her true feelings.)

Testarossa had completed her assessment of the situation.

The location of Carrera and the others who have been turned into ice statues has already been investigated. While starting to move there to protect Soka, Testarossa prepares for battle.

Moss asked Testarossa. ("To such Testarossa, Moss asks.", some of the Testa magnanimity and Moss's reverence was lost in translation))

"Do you intend to join forces with Lord Gii?"

Testarossa coldly glanced at Moss, who spoke anxiously.

"—!? S..sorry!!"

Moss panicked, thinking that he had made a mistake, but Testarossa, unlike usual, didn't blame him.

"The real battle has not yet begun. It's not my turn to step in."

"Y..you're right!"

"Besides, if Gii gets serious, even if I participate, I'll only be a hindrance."

Testarossa was also one of the Transcendents, but Guy and Velzard possessed god-like powers on a different level. There was no way Testarossa would ever think of intervening in the battle between those two.

Testarossa clarified the reason why she was here.

The most important thing was to rescue Carrera and the others.

Second, she had to stop Velzard from going on a rampage.

It was also important to be ready to accept reinforcements as soon as the intruders into the labyrinth were eliminated and the situation in the home country calmed down.

Some of these objectives were already beyond reach.

The most important one was the rescue operation.

They had to protect everyone who had turned to ice in this land, including Milim's subordinates, and they had concluded that there would be no problem with this.

It had been suspicious from the start, but confirmation on the ground had revealed that "Velzard had no intention of killing."

And since it had also been revealed that "it was difficult to interfere with Velzard's powers," they had concluded that "the rescue of Carrera and the others could only be postponed."

Although their first objective was no longer a reality, Testarossa's second objective was her main focus.

If they could just stop Velzard, the problems in this land would be solved.

That was why she tried to read Velzard's objectives, but even Testarossa could not be sure.

So Testarossa had no choice but to resort to force. However, it was not the direct use of force that Moss was worried about.

"Beautiful pure white. This land is dyed in my color. Don't you think it's convenient?"

"Ah..."

At this point, Moss understood exactly what Testarossa was thinking. And, his face turned pale, realizing that this was going to be a big deal.

.....
.....
...

Testarossa's unknown power is the "Nihilistic World".

The power to manifest the abyss of hell in this world - or so we might say.

It was an authority to construct a world unique to Testarossa, capable of annihilating all life.

Naturally, it was not omnipotent, but rather an inconvenient power that required various conditions.

If the area where the "[White Pure World] [Nihilistic World]" was constructed is filled with positive energy, life force, it will interfere with the manifested negative energy "Void", cancelling out and causing annihilation. Therefore, if the power is expanded to a wide area, a massacre of all living things will occur.

Fortunately, the total amount of "Void" energy that can be summoned is proportional to Testarossa's ability. This means that the range of the "[White Pure World] [Nihilistic World]" is naturally limited.

However, this was only possible if the prerequisite was met - that is, unless Testarossa let go of control over "Void" and allowed it to overflow endlessly and go out of control.

Testarossa was feared precisely because she had the potential to destroy the world.

However, it is difficult to effectively use "[White Pure World] [Nihilistic World]" in battles against strong opponents. As mentioned above, "Void" is automatically counterbalanced by the living, so if you don't thin out some of the living beforehand, the effective range will be narrowed.

If you deploy it on a strong target, you must be careful not to involve unnecessary beings.

Since it is an authority that makes it impossible to distinguish between friend and foe, the reality is that there are almost no situations in which it can be used.

Although it is incomparably powerful, there are few places to use it. Even Testarossa, who is highly intelligent, was not able to use this authority to its full potential.

However, now Testarossa had obtained the [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[King of the Dead] [Belial]". With this, she was able to perfectly control this extremely dangerous authority.

This synergistic effect was so unimaginable that it gave Testarossa an absolute advantage that made those who opposed her feel pitiful.

Only Moss, who was the Viceroy of the White Forces, was well aware of the horror of that power.

In hell, life cannot survive. Even "souls" are annihilated and transformed into energy, a true nothingness.

Only higher spiritual life forms can endure this hell...

And the abyss of hell was a region where even such high-ranking beings could not survive.

Testarossa's "White Pure World [Nihilistic World]" can summon that abyss into the present world.

Incidentally, Ultima's speciality, dark magic: [Nihilistic Vanish], is a magic that imitates the mechanism of the abyss of Hell. Since it is deployed to cover not only a wide area but the entire region, it can be understood how dangerous this is.

In the unlikely event that Testarossa fails to control it, the "void" will overflow endlessly, and the world will be swallowed by the ever-expanding abyss and collapse.

Moss knew that.

With just Testarossa's will, death will come that is not even allowed to resist. The speed at which the white space expands exceeds even the speed of light.

He must escape immediately.

Before Testarossa releases her power...

If he gets caught up in it, Moss will die instantly.

It's not just a matter of protecting Souka, he will have to give up his own life.

Moreover, it seems that even revival may be impossible.

He has never tried it, and has no desire to, so the truth remains a mystery... but for Moss, it doesn't really matter. He doesn't mind not knowing until the very end of his seemingly eternal life.

Thinking this, he was about to act quickly, but then, Moss suddenly reconsidered that it might not be the case.

Testarossa's "[White Pure World] [Nihilistic World]" is terrifying, but it is not invincible. Not only is it difficult to prepare the conditions, and even if it is activated, it is not enough to defeat an overwhelmingly superior opponent.

If it were against people of the same rank as Testarossa, such as Carrera or Ultima, the outcome would be decided without any problems. However, if the opponent is a "Dragon Kind", it should be difficult to eliminate that enormous amount of energy.

Moreover, Guy is also in this land.

As the strongest of the Seven Pillars of the Beginning, Guy is undoubtedly "stronger" than Testarossa.

(If it was only Lord Gii, she might be able to defeat him... but...)

With Guy and Velzard there, it was unknown how far the effect of the "Nihilistic World" would extend.

Testarossa is not the type to take risks. She is an intelligent and cautious person who can determine the trend of the battle and appropriately find the optimal solution.

The reason why Testarossa unleashed her power here and now was——

(The only ones here are Guy-sama and Velzard-sama, right? No, is that really the case...?)

At this point, Moss finally realized that his premise was wrong.

Just like Testarossa, Moss was also gathering information.

He released his own 『clone』 and investigated this place. He shared that information with Testarossa, and found nothing unnatural.

That was supposed to be the case, but there was a possibility that he had overlooked something.

Due to its nature, the "Nihilistic World" does not miss those who lurk hidden within the scope of the authority. No matter what concealment effect it is, the void does not miss it.

What if Testarossa was aiming for that?

(Does that mean there is someone else here!?)

"No way——" Moss was shocked.

But if the supreme Testarossa whom Moss feared and respected had found that possibility——

That was the truth.

The outcome was always in Testarossa's hands.

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"I'll be on high alert!"

"Do so."

"I don't like incompetent subordinates", Testarossa told Moss.

It was her own kindness, and proof that she acknowledges Moss.

After all, if he was truly incompetent, he would not even be able to stand before Testarossa.

His existence would be erased before she even spoke to him.

As the viceroy, Moss was well aware of that.

And he had continued to choose the correct answer with over 90% accuracy, protecting his current position.

He had made it through this time too.

Hearing the satisfied tone in Testarossa's voice, Moss felt a great sense of relief.

Then the world was painted even whiter.

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"You do something quite reckless, Testarossa."

While saying "As expected," a beautiful woman with blue hair stood beside Testarossa.

It was Velgrynd.

She appeared before Testarossa with the "separate body" she had left behind here.

"It's not that bad. I was suspicious of whether this series of disturbances was truly Lady Velzard's will, so I just decided to check just in case."

"For the sake of just that purpose, you use a power that could destroy the world. I think it's impressive."

Two beautiful women stand side by side, conversing with smiles on their faces. It is a spectacle that would be a feast for the eyes if seen by someone who knows nothing about it.

However, for Moss, who had been exposed to the "White Pure World" [Nihilistic World], it was nothing but a terrifying experience.

(Please, have mercy! I'm still the Grand Duke of Hell, you know? Even though I'm a powerful person second only to the Primordials, why am I always treated like this!?)

How refreshing it would be to be able to complain like that.

The moment he did something like that, Moss's fate would be sealed... but even so, he should be allowed to grumble in his heart.

Thinking this, Moss endured his bitter sadness.

"Um, thank you for protecting me."

Souka, who had entered Moss's "barrier" with him, said this apologetically.

It seemed that she hadn't been able to keep up with the rapidly changing situation since coming to this place.

Moss thought that it was inevitable.

This place, filled with Velzard's magical power, was whiteout due to a fierce snowstorm containing dense magical power.

A normal person would die instantly. Even an A-rank adventurer would be in danger of dying if they stayed there for a few hours.

In addition, in this blizzard, visibility was zero, and even sound was obscured.

Not only that,

Souka's "Magic Sense" was useless, and it was impossible for her to grasp the situation.

I wonder if Souka even noticed Testarossa, who was near Moss, and Velgrynd, who had appeared.

"Don't worry about it. Your goal is to survive here."

"I'm frustrated because I realized how useless I am."

"It'll be fine. I mean, I'm the same."

Moss and Souka have different levels of strength.

Their "ranks" are as far apart as those of an adult and a baby.

And yet, just like Souka, Moss was in a situation where he couldn't do anything. This was not a matter of feeling humiliated or anything like that, but merely reaffirming the vast difference in power between Moss and his master.

"You understand? Right now, our reason for existence is in Testarossa's hands. In this white world, our lives will be over with just her will. Swallowed by the void where even reincarnation is not possible."

"Um...?"

"That is the true nature of the 'Nihilistic World', but we are only in the first stage now. Until Testarossa releases the void, we can still live."

The first stage is waiting to attack, and the second stage is starting the attack - but it is difficult to keep the raging power in check, so Moss doesn't even know how long this state will last. For him, the reins of his life are in Testarossa's hands. Souka understood that there was nothing he could do, and there would be no point in explaining in detail, so his explanation was half-hearted.

Souka's existence was meaningful just by being here. Any unnecessary burdens would be left for Moss to carry.

"....."

Souka was confused.

What she wanted to ask was why she was using such a dangerous technique, but all Moss had given her was an explanation of the technique.

Even if she understood better, her sense of fear would only increase, so that explanation was unnecessary, Souka thought.

There was one thing that she was glad to know.

That is, Moss seems to be unable to do anything, just like herself.

And, she also understood a lot.((?))

The reason she was here was truly important.

It was because they were people who were good at gathering information, such as Testarossa and Moss, that she did not waver. In this white world where visibility is uncertain, it will take a considerable amount of time for reinforcements to arrive after they are dispatched.

If things went wrong, they might even get lost and not be able to reach their destination.

There is no guarantee that even executive-level personnel will be able to make it this far.

However, if Souka is here, the story will be different. Using Souka as a landmark, direct "teleportation" will be possible.

As Moss said, Souka can achieve her goal just by being alive. Souka realized that there was no need to belittle herself.

All that was left to do was to wait obediently here.

In a corner of the white world, Moss and Souka huddled together like clams. Without paying any attention to the two of them, the conversation between Testarossa and Velgrind continued.

"So, was there any third party intervention?"

"Is that what you wanted to ask, that you even took the trouble to show yourself by dividing your power?"

"That's right. Honestly speaking, there is little I can do in this land. Milim, who went to the "Holy Void" Damargania, released a [Dragon Nova] inside the "Heavenly Passage Tower." I reinforced it with the "[Star Guardian Barrier]," so no major damage was done, but this does not mean that the crisis has passed. I want to save some strength."

Velgrind gave a brief explanation of the battle situation in Damargania. The great gate of the "Heavenly Tower," which connects the heavens and the earth, had opened, and Ivalaje's great advance would soon begin.

But that's not all.

Threats are occurring all over the world.

"Milim went to Sarion. Her target is probably the Divine Tree, but there is no way to stop it. We have no choice but to leave it to the local forces."

"Did Feldway also go to Sarion?"

"Yes, that's right."

"I see, the situation seems dire."

"Exactly."

"We're in trouble—" Velgrind said with a beautiful smile.

Currently, at Luminas's call, heroes from all over the world are gathering at the Lubelius border. The hero Masayuki is there as a representative, and Velgrynd and Velgrind wants to prioritize that.

In fact, even if troops are dispatched from afar, they will not make it in time, so Velgrind's help is essential.

"That's why I have to help with that, so I want to leave the activities here to you."

"Even if we ignore the impact on the earth, there is no doubt that someone is behind Lady Velzard. It's not their intended purpose, so I don't know the details,((?)) but I definitely sensed their presence."

If Guy and the others' battle intensifies, the impact on this planet will become more serious. Even if it's fine for now, we must not forget to respond to this. Moreover, with the existence of a new player who could sway the war situation, it was a situation that made Testarossa's head ache.

But at that moment, a "thought transmission" arrived from an unexpected person.

『Call for my idiots. If we are going to fight Ivalaje in Damargania, there's no point in having them guard Leon's place.』

Surprisingly, Guy, who was fighting Velzard, interrupted their conversation.

Testarossa was impressed that he was able to send out his thoughts in this dense magical blizzard.

"Oh? Guy was listening too"

『You have time for eavesdropping?』, Testarossa retorted.

Guy elegantly ignored this and continued.

『There's someone behind Velzard, isn't there? I also felt something was strange. That's why I was just watching the situation, but I need to settle things before Ivalaje gets here.』

『What are you trying to say?』

『You should get to work too, Testarossa!』

Testarossa gave a wry smile, being told that she had acquired a lazy habit similar to her master

It is a compliment to say that she resembles her beloved Rimuru, but she is not happy with the ((acknowledgement of the)) lazy habit. Besides, Rimuru is not slacking off or anything, but is just busy with various things.

Testarossa's reluctance to immediately comply with Guy's requests is not out of spite.

Well, there was no doubt that he was annoyed by requests from Guy, but Testarossa fully supported Rimuru. So she ignored what Guy said without giving it much thought.

"Well, I'll let Rain and Mizari take over maintaining the 'Protective Barrier', and Moss, you will assist them."

"Understood."

Since there are only two possible answers, "Yes" or "Understood", Moss had no choice but to answer immediately.

Velgrind, Moss's last hope, did not seem to think that Moss was insufficient either.

"Well, I'll leave this to you."

And with those words, she simply dissipated her 'other body'.

A few seconds later, the remnants of Velgrind's power connected with another space, a "transfer gate" appeared, and Rain and Misery arrived.

Thus, the war situation in the white world entered a new phase.

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Rain began to complain as soon as she arrived.

"I-It's cold. Even I, a Primordial, am freezing."

That comment, not reading the atmosphere, was as dignified as expected.

However, Testarossa is there.

"Be quiet. Everyone is working diligently, so you shouldn't complain."

It might not have been a problem if it was just Mizari that scolded her, who always spoils her, but this time she got angry.

"I can't help it. I guess I'll have to get serious for the first time in a while."

Rain said this with a dissatisfied look on her face, and began to construct magic to reinforce Moss's "barrier."

"Moss, aren't you perhaps stronger than me?"

"Hahaha, you're joking..."

Since it would be troublesome to get involved, Moss brushed off Rain's words.

However, Rain was not the type to be convinced by that.

"This 'barrier' can withstand most attacks, right?"

Moss's 'barrier' was constructed to protect only Souka and Moss himself. Its strength was at a considerable level, and it perfectly neutralized the aftershocks of the attacks generated by Guy and Velzard.

"Well, survival is the priority."

"My subordinates can't handle this level."

"Same here. He is incomparable to Kahn and the others."

Mizari agreed with Rain's statement.

Moss didn't mind being praised, but he did not get carried away here. He knows that praising someone to death and then pushing chores on them is what Rain is best at.

Therefore, in order to preempt it, he decided to assign work.

"I have connected my 'barrier' to the 'protective barrier' that Velgrind-sama had constructed here. I will hand over the leadership to Rain-sama, so Mizari-sama, please make the adjustments."

Making a request of the two Primordials, who are far superior to me, is a foolish act akin to suicide. However, this is an emergency, and it is in line with the plan set by Testarossa.

Moss had judged that this much should be forgiven.

And his guess was correct.

"--As expected of Testarossa's adjutant, you're truly excellent. It seems that now is not the time for discussion, so that's fine with me."

Mizari readily agreed.

The next moment, Moss's burden was instantly lightened. As Mizari had said that, she had begun to intervene.

The sensation of holding the raging reins with all his might disappeared, and Moss breathed a sigh of relief. However, it was not yet a situation where he could be careless.

"I don't understand why I'm assisting and you're leading, but oh well."

Rain, who had finished grasping Moss's "barrier," forcibly seized the leadership.

Even for Moss, who was skilled in precise manipulation of magical power, it was a miracle.

"Amazing--"

Moss was astonished. As Rain herself said, Moss might be stronger than Rain in a fight. Although he could not say for sure because he had never tried it, Moss thought that he would win if he devised a plan and prepared thoroughly.

After all, Moss's ultimate technique, Infinite Eater, can surely destroy an enemy with an amount of magic or energy equal to or less than his own. It is pointless if the enemy escapes, so it must be used at the most critical moment, but it is the secret weapon that makes Moss undefeated.

Rain and Misery have similar amounts of magic or energy to Moss, so it is not surprising that they would think that they could win if they fought well.

However, that was a misunderstanding.

(Even if I used the "Infinite Eater" against Rain-sama, it probably wouldn't work. To think that there was such a difference in ability...)

As expected of a "Primordial," Moss strengthened his awe for the Seven Pillars. He reflected that he had become arrogant, and from this day onward, he began to be careful not to be pushy.

That aside, what about Rain?

(What is this? Why does Moss have more magical powers than me!?)

She was inwardly in a great hurry.

In fact, Moss's numerical value was slightly higher.

Although she jokingly asked, "Aren't you perhaps stronger than me?" it was half-serious.

In the past, she had been given a hard time by Testarossa.

Although she had conveniently erased the memory of that humiliation, the feeling of [embarrassment] [frustration] continued to smolder deep in her heart.

And now, the fact that she was on the verge of losing to Testarossa's subordinates was enough to trample Rain's pride.

Rain was not just thinking, "Should I get serious?", but he got super serious and took the leadership of the "Protective Barrier" from Moss.

It's not just a matter of being immature. For Rain, this was war.

Moss probably thought he had taken the initiative, but the same was true for Rain. She showed off her strength to the fullest against Moss, who was not even aware of fighting.

Thus, Rain's face was saved, and the situation turned around for the better.

While looking sideways at such Rain, Misery was impressed.

It was not just Moss's skill, but also the amazing Rain's magic manipulation, which she saw after a long time, captivated her without words.

(As expected of Rain. If this child always put in her full effort, even Lord Guy would value her more.)

She is thinking such things, but she is not aware of her own shortcomings.((?))

Moreover, from Rain's point of view, it would be meddling.

Because being given more credit means having more work to do.

Rain is a demon who lives for her hobbies, so she hates work that is forced on her by others.

Work is something that you find yourself. She is wasting her diverse talents, thinking that it is enough if she can earn enough to eat.

However, Rain can live without eating, and if she has any trouble, she relies on Misery and her subordinates, so there was no particular problem. To put it bluntly, an environment where she doesn't have to work was in place.

In other words, Mizeri, who is cooperating with her, is also at fault, so it could be said that it is Mizeri's fault that Rain put in her full effort.

Not realizing this is Mizeri's fatal flaw... but since she is so happy to take care of Rain, it seems this problem will not be solved in the future.

Anyway, it is true that Mizeri was influenced by Rain. This worked well this time as well, and Mizari's magical adjustments were also motivated.((?))

She eliminated the vulnerability of the "Protective Barrier" while meticulously examining it so that Rain could move easily. As a result, the impact on this land became so slight that it more than compensated for the hole that Velgrind had left.

Testarossa smiled at the situation.

Souka's protection was also perfect, and with this, all worries were gone.

The only thing left was—

"Now, who is hiding?"

Muttering this, Testarossa looked up at the battlefield in the sky, where a fierce battle was taking place.

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Guy had been fighting Velzard in the air for a long time.

But he wasn't tired.

That's because neither of them were serious.

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A white world.

All living things that inhabit this land, including the flowers and trees, have all turned into ice statues.

This meant that they could be revived if Velzard's power was released.

Even from that point of view, Velzard's aim seemed to be different from Feldway's.

However, Guy's words did not get through to Velzard.

He tried to persuade her to stop doing foolish things, but she did not listen.

Velzard wore a bewitching smile and repeated her attacks on Guy. All of them are like childish pranks, but because the magic power contained is enormous, it is dangerous if you are careless.

So, although Guy didn't need to get serious, he couldn't ignore Velzard's every move either.

Both of them were trying to gauge each other's true potential, and gradually increasing the power of their techniques.

There were also occasional attacks that might be considered fatal, but they were both familiar with each other. They were instantly seen through and nullified. These were such a natural flow that even a third party with outstanding abilities would not be able to distinguish them from other attacks. That was how far apart Guy and Velzard's abilities were from everyone else. Neither of them wasted any energy.

Velzard was currently the strongest "Dragon Kind," second only to Veldanava. Since she can generate magic power inexhaustibly within her body, the concept of a war of attrition did not apply to her.

Strictly speaking, she needs specific conditions to be in that invincible state.

That is, to complete the "Eternally Frozen World," which is the "white closed world" frozen by the magical element snowstorm. In this space where the ice and snow are raging, Velzard's magic power circulates. Because the recovery speed exceeds the consumption speed, the inexhaustible magic power is generated as a result.

If Velgrynd were to use high-powered arts repeatedly, she would eventually become exhausted. However, against Velzard, the strategy of attrition would be meaningless.

Guy knew that.

Even among the "Dragon Kind", who are already the epitome of injustice, Velzard was in a class of her own. To oppose her, he needed to keep his own consumption to an absolute minimum. However, this was easy for Guy to do.

Instead of using his own magical power, Guy used the magical energy floating in space, just like a human with little magical power. It took time to gather magical energy from space, and the efficiency of magic activation was also poor. However, if you consider it in terms of consumption rate, it allowed him to conserve his own power. Altho, when Guy used it, the magic's accuracy and power were impeccable. The only problem was that almost all magic didn't work on Velzard.

(Well, that's the problem, though.)

If it didn't work, there was no point. Even if he understood that, it was better than using his own magic power to attack. He had to attack repeatedly to find an opening in Velzard, otherwise he wouldn't be able to defeat her. He had to save his magic power for the final blow. For this reason Guy was engaged in a mind-blowing battle of nerves, but he showed no signs of fatigue, which was impressive.

Guy narrowed his eyes in amazement as he looked at Velzard. He wondered why she wasn't getting serious. If Velzard unleashed a great technique, he planned to counterattack and make a move. However, as if she was sticking to her ways, Velzard was consistently watching the situation.

(Tch, I didn't think it would be the same as when we fought at first, but I'm surprised that she has become so patient...)

Velzard is selfish and capricious. She has lived a life unrelated to patience. The first time she fought Guy, she got angry when Guy didn't do what she wanted and made a mistake in her haste to win. Knowing Velzard's personality well, Guy intended to set similar traps this time as well. However, Velzard had no openings. The ice and snow imbued with magical power destroyed all of the traps Guy had set.

(Even though I have become much stronger than I was at that time...)

Since he had assumed that he could win more easily, he had no choice but to acknowledge Velzard's growth. And—

The situation was becoming more and more unfavorable for Guy with every passing moment. Velzard's magical power was enormous, and the magical power that gushed out from her raged like a blizzard. A magical frozen earth that did not allow the existence of life was nearing completion in this land. Heaven and earth were filled with Velzard's magic power, and they bared their fangs at Guy as she willed. That alone could be dealt with, but while continuing to observe, Guy felt a sense of discomfort.

Velzard's behavior pattern was clearly unnatural.

Velzard was good at brute force, relying on her own power. Because she is an absolute powerhouse, there was no need to play tricks. However, now she was using her tactics with great care. Rather than being surprised that she was able to fight in such a way, it was more natural to suspect that someone's intentions were involved...

He didn't think she was being controlled by someone. However, Guy decided to face Velzard on the premise that there was a third party.

And it seemed that his choice was correct.

Thanks to his careful attention on the battlefield, he learned that Testarossa and the others had arrived here. He learned their purpose and even understood the current world situation.

(What happened to Rimuru? No, more importantly, Ivalaje is coming. I have no choice but to deal with him.)

It seemed that this was going to happen, and Guy felt bitter. Velzard alone was a problem, but the worst case scenario had arrived.

However, there was good news. Thanks to Testarossa, the existence of a third party was certain. Moreover, he could leave that person to her. There were few people with the ability that Guy recognized, but Testarossa is definitely one of them. Thinking this, Guy thought so and prepared to resolve the situation quickly.

『Call those useless subordinates. If we're going to fight Ivalaje in Damargania, there's no point in having them guard Leon's place.』

He gave those instructions while interrupting Testarossa and Velgrind's conversation. There was a lot to do, and there was no way he could let his capable subordinates sit idle. Thus, things started to move.

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Guy was relieved that the magical power in this land had stabilized.

(As expected of Testarossa)

Rain and Mizari are doing well too—he was satisfied for the first time in a long time.

Velzard was in a state of joy. It couldn't be read from her expression, but she was enjoying the fight with Guy from the bottom of her heart.

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Long ago, she fought Guy.

The reason was that she could no longer bear the existence of someone her brother, the "Star Dragon King", Veldanava, acknowledged.

"Even if my brother acknowledges him, I don't!"

With that vigor, she challenged Guy and ended up in a draw. However, to Velzard, this was tantamount to defeat. At the time, Velzard boasted that she had the second-highest amount of [magic essence] and [energy] amount after Veldanava, while Guy's amount of [magic essence] and [energy] was less than one-tenth of hers.

Not only that.

There was the presence or absence of authority((skills?)), which should have been a decisive difference in war power. Velzard possessed the invincible authority given to her by Veldanava - [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] [[King of Patience] [Gabriel],] yet she was unable to defeat Guy, who only had a unique skill. This fact was a wound to Velzard's pride. It couldn't be helped that they ended up in a draw despite her being in an overwhelmingly advantageous position.

After that incident, Velzard decided to observe Guy. How far could Guy, who had obtained the ultimate authority through his own will, reach? She wanted to see for herself. To Velzard, Guy had become "special," but to Guy, Velzard was not. Guy was calm and cold-hearted, a tyrant who reigned over everything. However, he was equal and fair, treating everyone the same. He would test people and make friends with those who could overcome the challenge.

That was Guy's policy. He didn't shy away from turbulent change, and spent his days peacefully. Living with such a person was a bit dissatisfying for Velzard. Even though she'd been trying her best to use her charm to get Guy to notice her, Guy's attitude remained unchanged.

(What a cruel guy...)

Though she thought that, she couldn't bring herself to hate Guy. In fact, he was becoming more and more attached to him...

She would sometimes jokingly tell him how she really felt. However, it did not reach Guy—

Arrogant Guy.

Foolish Guy.

Gentle Guy.

Ruthless Guy.

Terrifying Guy.

And Guy was acknowledged by her brother as a friend. She loved spending time with him, with all his many faces. At the same time, she was angry at Guy for not noticing the real her.

(What a cruel person. You're so intelligent you can see through everything, so why don't you notice my true feelings?)

Though she thought that, she was scared of what would happen if she was rejected—

Yes. While living with Guy, Velzard had come to understand the emotion of fear. Then, one day, an entity that would destroy Velzard's peace—those who called themselves "Heroes" arrived.

As always, Guy accepted the challenge from the "Hero." That person - Rudra, was strong. Surprisingly, the fight was evenly matched. A smile formed on Guy's lips -

Seeing Guy looking happy, Velzard bit her lip. A fierce flame swirled inside her.

Anger?

No, that's not it. It was "jealousy." Guy would never show such a face to Velzard.

(To think he'd fight with such enjoyment...)

When he fought Velzard, Guy had been careful not to hurt her, just like an adult would with a child. If he hadn't, it wouldn't have ended in a draw. Velzard was hiding her true feelings, but the same was probably true of Guy. If Guy had seriously intended to kill Velzard, then there was no doubt that the Velzard of "the present" would not have existed. And yet, he had used all his power against Rudra.

The moment she noticed that she became aware of the "jealousy" that had sprouted in her heart. Ever since her brother Veldanava had acknowledged Guy, Velzard had been troubled. She could not understand what the emotion that had grown in her heart was. But at that moment, she finally understood.

Guy Crimson—

A demon lord acknowledged by Veldanava. Strong, kind, arrogant, and never doing as Velzard wanted. Velzard admired such a Guy. And, seeing Rudora making such Guy serious, she regretted((?)), "That should have been my role."

Ever since that day when her jealousy has sprouted, Velzard has lived with pent-up feelings. And, she had been constantly worried. While she maintained a calm appearance on the surface, flames of jealousy continued to burn deep in her heart. As a result, the great goddess of disaster was born—

(Guy is kind to me. But he won't allow me to stand beside him)

—Is that because I'm weak?

(No, I'm strong. I'm the strongest "Dragon Kind"!)

— No, I'm weak. Because Guy doesn't acknowledge me.

(No! I have the right to stand beside him!!)

— Is that so?

(Of course)

— Then why is Guy always playing around with Rudra?

(That's because...)

— That's because I'm weak.

(Am I... weak?)

– If I am stronger, Guy will look at me.

(Will you look at me?)

– Yes, that's right.

(That's right, if I get stronger--)

– If only I had the power.

(I'd be able to stand beside Guy--)

– That is my wish.

(That alone is my desire)

– After watching Guy and Rudra's fight, Velzard wished for power.

That was the moment the Goddess of Calamity was born. Velzard's patience reversed. The [Ultimate Skill] "King of Patience" [Gabriel] was reborn as the "King of Jealousy" [Leviathan] due to her jealousy. However, it didn't disappear.((referring to US Gabriel))

Velzard's mental strength was strong, and she was able to conceal her new power without being noticed by Guy. Possessing two opposing Ultimate Skills - "King of Patience Gabriel" and "King of Envy Leviathan", Velzard continued to stay by Guy's side.

And she kept waiting for an opportunity.

Feldway's call was also laughable to Velzard. There was no way that it would work on Velzard, who was deceiving others by cancelling out conflicting powers such as Michael's authority - "Ultimate Dominion", which gave absolute control over angel-type Ultimate Skill holders. And yet, she followed Feldway because his proposal was attractive. If she sided with Feldway, she could fight a serious Guy. He would be serious, not playing around, and would surely be Velzard's opponent.

There were other reasons too—

"Hahahaha((For some reason I'm imagining Sakamoto's stupid laugh)), that's interesting. I'm sure it will be so."

And, her collaborator gave her a stamp of approval. A collaborator. One who works to fulfill Velzard's wishes. This is also a story from ancient times, but it began when she helped that person, who was about to disappear, on a whim. He was an existence that had only an [astral body] left, with his [material body] and even his [spiritual body] destroyed, but he was unexpectedly useful as Velzard's advisor.

He brazenly said that he wanted to study the "dragon species." Velzard allowed it, and in return, she treated him as her henchman((or. as her own hand and foot)). And so, a long-lasting relationship of coexistence was established. But finally, it seemed that the existence of the collaborator had been discovered.

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Velzard smiled.

"Ufufufu. You're doing well, Testarossa. You found him so easily."

"Oh dear, this isn't any fun for me. I wanted to hide in the shadows a bit more and do whatever I wanted."

"The [Pseudo Dragon body] is complete, isn't it? You said that the performance test was perfect."

"Well, that's true, but you see, I'm weak."

『What do you mean, "I"? You used to be a lot more arrogant.』((something lost in translation))

『Hahahaha, if I almost got destroyed because of that, it wouldn't be a laughing matter, would it? This time, I reflected and decided to live more cautiously and humbly.』

With a laugh, 『Well, I'm off now,』 the collaborator left Velzard.

Then, he appeared before Testarossa to face her. And so, the battle reached a major turning point.

Guy and Velzard.

Testarossa and Velzard's collaborator.

Each of them faced each other head-on. Testarossa immediately saw through the identity of the person when she saw him. A slender young man. Looking closely, he looked like a woman. He was wearing a bluish turtleneck and a bright red suit. His shoes were white, trimmed with gold. Although it was flashy, it had a sense of style and was a very fitting appearance. And what was distinctive was his [heterochromia] with red and blue eerie glows. His features were somewhat similar to Luminas. It was an unforgettable appearance at first glance, like the opposite of gender and eye color, but Testarossa had never actually met that person. So, appearance was not a basis for judgment. However, she could tell. The essence of that person, the innocent madness. From the appearance reminiscent of Luminus, Testarossa's guess would not be wrong.

(Was it "Don't poke the hornet's nest"? There seems to be such a saying in Lord Rimuru's previous life, but it's exactly like that.)

Testarossa was annoyed. It was fine until he saw through the presence of someone and lured him out, but that person turned out to be more troublesome than he had imagined.

"Oh my, how nostalgic. This is the first time we've met, but I've heard rumors about you."

"Hahahaha! I'm very honored that the White Queen remembered me."

"I remember. People as unconventional as you are are rare. And—we also acknowledged your achievements in creating humanity? Right, King of Dusk?"

When Testarossa called him the King of Dusk, he grinned.

"Call me Twilight. That's the name Veldanava gave me."

"Yes, I may. If you call me Testarossa."

They exchanged words with a smile, and both of them released murderous intent. Testarossa remembered. The King of Dusk - Twilight Valentine is the divine ancestor of the vampire race

and the ancestor of humanity. A confidant of Veldanava, he has given birth to many races in order to fulfill his wishes. The [Vampire Clan], including Luminus, was one such example, as was the [High Human] [True Humanity] race, which is now said to be extinct. In addition, the birth of many races said to have originated from spirits is also due to Twilight's involvement. It is also Twilight who, when traced back to its origin, created the existence that is indispensable for Demons, back to Twilight.

Therefore, Testarossa recognized Twilight as she said. However, in contrast to his achievements, Twilight's evil deeds were also famous. The numerous experiments that ignored morality make those who know his actions frown. It was so terrifying that those with weak-minded would go insane or, at best, nightmares were unavoidable. He was more vicious than a demon, had no human heart, and left behind achievements that were abhorred by everyone.

In fact, when Rain heard about Twilight's resurrection, she said, "Ugh, that guy, he's still alive... he's more tenacious than a cockroach..." and was scolded by Misery for "bad language."

In fact, Testarossa, unusually, felt like agreeing with Rain.

"Testarossa, what a nice name. I never thought that there would be someone other than Rudra who would be foolish enough to name a "Primordials" like you guys."

That comment made Testarossa quietly lose her temper. Even an insult directed at her was unforgivable, but Twilight had crossed the line. The moment her beloved Rimuru was ridiculed, Testarossa's heart was made up.

"I really hate you."

Testarossa coldly told him with a thick murderous intent. Twilight's courage is so extraordinary that he dismissed it with a laugh.

"Hehe, don't say it like that. I like you guys. After all, you guys are the best research subjects!"

Velzard was cooperative, but Guy was an opponent who could not be underestimated. Twilight tried to find an opportunity to explore, but any careless move would have made Guy aware of his presence in an instant, so he was unable to do anything for a long time.

However, he has gained a body that he can freely control after a long time, and Twilight thought, "It might be good to play around a bit here."

Testarossa was the perfect opponent for the first public demonstration of her "[Pseudo-Dragon Body]". The fact that he provoked Testarossa to make her serious was also the reason. However, that amount was a bit too much, but Twilight did not notice.

"If you were killed by your beloved daughter [Luminas], you should have just stayed dead. I will bury you completely this time so that you cannot resurrect."

Testarossa declared, but in reality she was trying to assess Twilight. Even though she was furious, she didn't let her guard down. She separated her heart from her emotions and continued to calmly analyze the situation.

(The Ancestors were highly immortal life forms. But, he shouldn't have been able to handle "separate bodies" like Lady Velgrynd...)

From what Testarossa had heard, Twilight was hit directly by a carefully prepared "[Spirit Disintegration]" that Luminas had set up, and vanished without even a trace. Of course. If it hit directly, even Testarossa, a "Primordial," would not be able to escape annihilation. There is no theory that he escaped just before. Apparently Rain also witnessed it, so this has been confirmed. It was a direct hit and it was definitely annihilated. If so, it would have been a resurrection from nothing, but it was doubtful whether such an act was possible.

Another possibility Testarossa considered was Velgrind's specialty, the "separate body." This would explain how Twilight managed to escape, but Testarossa thought that this was not the case. It would not explain why Twilight had been hiding up until now. If Twilight could use the "separate body," he would have been more open in his actions. There was no way he would have left Luminas alone after she had betrayed him, and the world would have become much more chaotic.

To begin with, there are only a handful of people who can use the "separate body." It is an extremely difficult power, so difficult that even Veldora and Rimuru cannot use it perfectly. A similar authority was Rain's "[Omnipresence] [Mist]", but it required that all "clone bodies" be within visible range. It was impossible to operate it on the other side of the planet, so it was not as convenient as an "alternate body". As far as Testarossa knew, only Velgrind and Souei could use an "alternate body". Even in the case of Souei handling it, there were actually hidden conditions that were essential.. By entrusting his "[Heart Core] [Kokoro]" to his former master, Benimaru, he was merely manipulating the two bodies from a "god's" point of view. Souei alone could handle it within visible range, but to control the "alternate body" at a distance, he needed to borrow Benimaru's power as well.

That being said, it would be abnormal for someone to be able to do something like that, so Souei's case could be considered an exception. The important thing is how difficult it is to divide consciousness. If they used the method of using others like Souei did, Rimuru and Veldora would be able to use a "separate body". However, there is no point in going that far. Rimuru and Veldora are each other's safety devices, so even if one of them dies, as long as the other survives, they can be revived.

By the way, if Vega had been able to use his own powers, he would have been able to imitate "another body". It was fortunate that this did not happen, but Testarossa did not know about that.

And so, Velgrind was the only one who could truly use a "separate body".

(Even if this guy can handle "parallel existence," it doesn't matter. In order to make it clear whether he can use it or not, I will thoroughly kill him.)(??)

It's best to see and experience everything with your own eyes. Testarossa had made that decision and swore to kill Twilight for sure.

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Rain's face twitched when she saw Twilight.

"Ugh, that guy, he's still alive... he's more tenacious than a cockroach..."

She involuntarily said her true feelings and was scolded by Misery for "bad language." But it can't be helped, since he hates him that much.

"G is no good?"((G, my man! Probably gokiburi))

"Yes, that's right. I really hate bugs."

What! Moss, who was listening to the conversation, wanted to retort, but he did not have the guts to interrupt the conversation of the Primordials. Or rather, the idea that a Primordial would be scared of bugs seemed like a joke that no one would believe, no matter who you told. Souka, who had been quietly like a statue, spoke to him.

"Um, maybe Testarossa-san and others are also not comfortable with bugs?"

"Huh?"

"No, I was just a little curious, but if that's the case, I thought it might be a weakness..."

Moss's eyes widened when he was asked that.

(Weakness—are you thinking such rude things about the Primordials? Seriously, what's wrong with this child?)

Moss was horrified by Soka, who had a very frightening idea despite her appearance. He doesn't know if they are afraid of bugs or not, and he doesn't want to know. Trying to find the weakness of the Primordials, especially Testarossa, is a taboo in itself. At least, it was for Moss. Rain and Misery, who could hear Moss's and Soka's conversation, were whispering to each other.

"I wonder if that [Dragonoid] child is not afraid of Testarossa?"

"Could it be that she's planning to throw a cockroach at her? What a terrifying idea."

"Stop it, Rain. Just listening to it gave me goosebumps."

"Me too. I said it myself, and it made me shudder."

They said in a fairly loud voice, with no intention of hiding it. It was the moment when the unexpected weakness of the two "Primordials" was revealed, but Moss wasn't happy at all. He instinctively knew that this conversation was going in a dangerous direction.

"Um, can you stop making such dangerous remarks? I don't want you to get me involved."

Just by being there, even though he hadn't said anything, he could be considered guilty of the same thing as "Moss thinks the same way." If he didn't stop this, there was no doubt that he would be held responsible((guilty by association)).

"Um, which dangerous remarks?"

"I mean, bugs! Whether Testarossa-sama hates bugs or not is none of your business, right?"

"That's not the case. My original mission is to be a spy, so I have a duty to report any information I learn to Souei-sama. In that case, it would be troublesome if the information was unreliable, so I would say it's essential to confirm---"

"That's why!"

[Don't get me involved—], Moss wanted to say loudly.

However, it doesn't get through to Soka.

"This is actually a surprisingly important topic. It's well-known that Rimuru-sama hates cockroaches, and he has been thoroughly focusing on pest control, including the section where Rimuru-sama's residence is located, and the guesthouse. However, a while ago, one appeared at the courthouse, and it caused a big fuss."

And so she began to carefully and thoroughly explain a story that Moss didn't know and didn't want to know. According to Souka, Carrera, who happened to be there, went berserk. There was a terrible incident where she tried to fire a nuclear strike magic inside the building, and the staff desperately tried to stop her.

Rimuru was also very angry about this—or rather, he didn't get angry and said, "Yeah, yeah, I understand how you feel!" and protected Carrera, so it was a big deal. A subjugation team was

organized by those who were tolerant of insects, and it was said that they were thoroughly making sure that it would not even be seen by Carrera.

"—By the way, Ultima-san even said that spiders are okay and even said, "They're cute♪," and I'm totally fine with cockroaches and caterpillars." Souka continued, adding some irrelevant information.

Moss heard this and couldn't help but react.

"Look, now's not the time to be talking about such nonsense, is it? Carrera-sama isn't just targeting cockroaches, she's targeting everything!"

Not touching on Ultima is because of Moss's own sense of danger. Even if she is okay with spiders, she may not be okay with cockroaches. For Moss and the others, they think it is better not to know that the "Primordials," who are equal to gods to them, have something they are not good at.

However, that was premature.

"Moss-kun, don't people say to you, 'You can't read the atmosphere'?"

"Yeah, what you just said is dangerous. Carrera will be thought of as a dangerous girl who picks fights with anyone and everyone, so there's a way to say it."((?))

"No, not that—or rather, that's true in that sense, but what I want to say is, that [Dragonoid] person there—"

"I'm Souka."

"Souka over there was just talking about something very important. Moss-kun, you need to understand that properly."

"—!?"

Moss was surprised in various ways. There were so many things to point out that he didn't know where to start.

First of all, Rain. Why are you calling me -kun!? —Moss wants to ask loudly.

Next was Souka. How could you interrupt Rain? Moreover, it was insane to casually introduce oneself so casually. To Moss, it was an unbelievable act of violence, but he was surprised that Rain accepted it so calmly.

What's going on? That's the feeling.

Even Misery, who he believed to be the most sensible, was on Rain's side. However, even if her argument was completely wrong, her point was correct. Certainly, if Carrera heard it, Moss's life would be over. He had to reflect that he had been inadvertently carried away and had said too much. Still, he had to say what he should have said. Thinking this, Moss timidly retorted.

"Um, Rain-sama. Um, it's not necessary to call me -kun, so could you please call me by my name...?"

Moss pointed out the most important point first. Why would the Blue Lord be so friendly towards the White Queen's lieutenant? If they were enemies, it would be fine to provoke each other, but Moss was embarrassed and said, "We're not that close, are we?"

Rain didn't pay any attention to Moss and just laughed.

"What are you saying? Moss-kun has the potential to beat me, right? Then, I think it's natural to show respect."

It was a really suspicious statement. The fact that Misery was sighing loudly was proof of that.

"Rain, stop teasing Moss. More importantly, Soka-san's story is more important, right?"((?))

"That's true. Moss looks serious, but he has funny reactions, so I just couldn't help it..."

"I agree with that."

"That's right, I thought you'd be more difficult to get along with, so it was a bit surprising."

Moss is left out of the women's conversation. Moss is left out of the women's conversation.

"Anyway, you said my story is important?"

With Soka starting the conversation, it seems that they are finally getting to the main topic. Mizeri answered.

"You're investigating what Carrera and Ultima are not good at, right? Maybe you've got information on Testarossa as well?"

"Um...?"

Rain, who was considering how to deceive them, even launched a follow-up attack.

"That's something I'm curious about too. By the way, I hate cockroaches too. They don't appear in the frozen soil, so I'm grateful to Velzard-sama for that!"

"Yes, they do appear in Ingrasia. I've had Ivy thoroughly exterminate them, but they keep coming back out of nowhere..."

"Maybe they're more immortal than the undead?" Mizari also didn't let the topic go.

Moss had no choice but to listen carefully, as if giving up on everything, saying, "This is not the time to be talking about such things..."

"This is top secret, so..."

"Just say it."

"There is no option of not talking here, is there?"

Moss thought that it probably wasn't. Even if he was in Souka's position, he would have been forced to spill the beans. Of course, if it was really top secret, he wouldn't have made such suggestive remarks. Souka was a professional spy, so she should have understood that. In other words, it seemed like it was okay to share that information.

"We are constantly looking for the weaknesses of all the executives under Souei-sama's instructions. From food preferences such as Benimaru-sama's dislike of carrots to interpersonal relationships such as Diablo-sama's dislike of Testarossa-san, we cover a wide range. It's really trivial information, but I hope it will be a trump card in case something goes wrong."

"I see."

"And?"

"In Testarossa-san's case, I couldn't find any weaknesses at all..."

"I was having trouble," Souka said.

Just as Moss had expected, she wasn't saying anything important. It's a story that you would be thought of as a matter of course.

However, Rain was not convinced.

"Then, let's have Moss throw a roach at her!"

She made a ridiculous suggestion.

As soon as he heard this, Moss jumped up and shouted, "Stop it!"

He was so shocked he couldn't speak, but inside he felt like screaming, "Is this a child's prank!!"

This was no joke. If he did something like that, he would definitely incur Testarossa's wrath. Regardless of whether she was afraid of bugs or not, that malicious act alone would be punishable by death.

(W-What a terrifying thing to say—!?)

"Please have mercy, Rain-sama!!" Moss looked at Rain with a terrified twitch.

"I'll never do that, you know?"

Moss refused with a straight face.

"Eh, too bad!"

"It can't be helped, Moss just doesn't have the courage."

"The Primordials are all like this—" Moss lamented, but he understood that putting it into words would stir up a hornet's nest.

However—

"It's really a pity. Maybe I could have found out Testarossa's weakness..."

Souka's words made him think, "This girl is really scary—"

It was Moss's patience that allowed him to swallow those words without questioning. The current Moss is what he is because he has endured many years of patience.

--By the way.

This conversation was also overheard by Testarossa. She later said that she was quite irritated by the relaxed conversation while she was trying to fight seriously.

"At that time, I thought about pretending to make a mistake and turning everyone into dust in the 'Nihilistic World'. But I didn't want to show my weakness in front of Twilight, so I refrained. How lucky."

Moss and the others were shaken to the core when they heard that, but that is another story.

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Rain was having fun teasing Moss, but at the same time, she didn't take her eyes off Twilight, who was facing Testarossa. Performing "parallel thinking" without any effort is a common feat for Primordials. What Rain considers to be historical problem children—at the top of that list were

Diablo and Twilight, these two. Until Rimuru appeared, these two were immovable troublemakers. Which one is superior is debatable, but it is an unshakable fact in Rain's mind that Diablo is a likable problem child, while Twilight is a detestable problem child.

It's the difference between a lovable idiot and a loathsome idiot.

Diablo is egocentric and a nuisance who operates by his own theory and rules. He sticks to his own beliefs, but doesn't force them on others. Even Rain acknowledges that he has a surprisingly common sense side.

On the other hand, Twilight doesn't care about the convenience of others at all. He and Diablo are both troublemakers who operate by their own theory and rules, but she can't like him because he forces them on others.

Rain also has a self-centered side. She would never admit it, but she is a character who thinks about things in a way that is convenient for herself, to a dangerous level. It is only natural that Rain doesn't get along well with Diablo and Twilight because of this.

Keep your distance from people you dislike - if you do this thoroughly, you can avoid conflict. But the problem is that there are people who try to impose their own sense of justice on others. Twilight was a prime example of this. He spread all kinds of trouble all over the world. He caused so many major problems that it was impossible to ignore even if you tried to turn a blind eye.

The Life Disaster, the Undead City, the Two Moons, the Eroded Forest, the Sea of Fresh Blood, and countless other evil experiments have caused countless disasters.

Records have been lost in modern human nations, but the Demon Lords informally recognized him as a dangerous person who was deemed an honorary [Catastrophe] level, not a counted yakuman.((?)) Even Rain couldn't remember how many times he was called in to clean up after him.

No.

Rain has the temperament to never forget grudges, so he took detailed notes. That's why she celebrated when Twilight was destroyed by Luminas, and felt gratitude and respect for her. With Twilight resurrected, it was inevitable that she would keep a close eye on him.

(Good grief, that bastard is even more troublesome than a cockroach. But that terrifying Testarossa could handle Twilight... right?)

In Rain's judgment, it was a difficult situation. Testarossa basically was good at defense. So, there was no way he would lose. But what about on the offensive side...

Against Twilight, who has approached true immortality due to numerous experiments, there was a concern that she might not be able to completely defeat him. What's more, Twilight now was even more ominous than before, and the full extent of his power was unclear. Rain, sensing that she herself could not win in the first place secretly broke out into a cold sweat.

(I was able to evolve thanks to Rimuru-sama, but I still can't do it. Maybe I can at least hold her back and buy some time? Maybe if I try hard, I can do something? But, but, I absolutely refuse to fawn on that damn bastard? I don't even want to act it out.)

How would she fight if it were her?

Act while letting Twilight let down his guard, and buy some time. That was the only thing Rain had concluded. But at the same time, she gave up before even trying, saying, "I absolutely don't want to do it, so it's impossible!"

However, if it were Testarossa, it would be a different story. Even compared to when Rain fought her, she was in a completely different league.

What's more, Testarossa was cunning and the most calculating of the "Primordials." There is no way she would stand in front of an enemy without a chance of winning, so there was a little hope.

(Testarossa probably knows her own weaknesses. I also heard that she fought well against that Velgrind-sama, and if I cheer her on with all my might, she should be able to manage somehow!!)

Rain's support was worth nothing to Testarossa. But since Rain had a very high opinion of herself, she assumed that Testarossa would be happy too. And so, she prepared to watch the outcome of the battle with great interest.

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Now, as for Testarossa.

Even though she was annoyed by the chatter of the people around her, she didn't forget what she had to do. The formula for victory had already been completed within Testarossa's mind.

"What's the matter, aren't you coming?"

Twilight provoked with a condescending tone. Without responding, Testarossa quietly deepened her smile.

"...What's so funny? You shouldn't be in a position to be so relaxed."

Twilight asked, suspicious of Testarossa's attitude.

Testarossa responded with a sneer.

"That's ridiculous. Maybe you still think you have the advantage?"

Hearing this response, Twilight looked suspicious. It was an abnormally bullish attitude, different from what Twilight had expected.

(Good grief. This is why I hate people who don't know their place. I did turn to dust with a blow from my beloved daughter Luminas. But that wasn't a defeat. It was just an unavoidable experiment.)

He had intended to provoke Testarossa to become serious in order to test the performance of the "Dragon-like body," but he did not expect her to make such a misguided statement. Twilight was disappointed.

"Well, it can't be helped. You guys believe that you're the strongest, so you have a habit of looking down on your opponents. But, if you don't cultivate an eye to see through the truly strong, you'll have a painful experience"

Twilight warned from the bottom of his heart. Of course, this was a statement full of intentions to hurt Testarossa. However, Testarossa was unfazed. She continued to smile fearlessly, as if she didn't even notice Twilight. This isn't funny, Twilight thought, becoming displeased.

"I don't like that attitude. I was thinking of having a little fun, but I'm going to stop now." Saying this, he released the fighting spirit he has been holding back. It was undoubtedly the spirit of a dragon.

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The "[Pseudo-Dragon Body]" was the culmination of Twilight's research. When researching ubiquitous immortality, the destination was the "Dragon Kind". They are immortal beings that, even if they die and their "personality" is reset, their "soul" is perfectly reproduced over time.

But Twilight wasn't satisfied with just that. If the inheritance of the [Heart Core] wasn't also perfect, then it could truly be called the ultimate life form - or so she thought. Even if memories are inherited, if the personality that utilizes them is different, they cannot be recognized as the same being. Conversely, even if they dwell in a different body, if the [Heart Core] is the same... would it be dismissed as a completely different person?

The core of the "soul," the most important "memory" and "[Heart Core]"—what should be done to reproduce this, Twilight's research was devoted to that. Using herself as a test subject, she was able to successfully replicate her memories relatively easily. By synchronizing with the many clones that had been prepared in advance, Twilight's memories would not be lost even after death. Needless to say, Velgrynd's "other body" was the model for this.

Next, regarding the reproduction of the most important personality—the "[Heart Core]"—this was difficult. Something without form. Something that changes over time. The [Heart Core] was a "fleeting thing." Unless one was able to freeze even their own heart like Velzard, it was impossible to maintain the same state forever. However, Twilight's madness was quite impressive, as he had found a way out here.((?))

"Velzard-sama, I have a request. Could you freeze this [Heart Core] of mine with your power?"

He made such a request and took the means of having his own [Heart Core] protected by Velzard. On top of that, he let the duplicated memories dwell in his own body and continued to do as he pleased.

The synchronization of memories was perfect, and it was undoubtedly the real thing —Twilight himself. It was inevitable that even Luminus could not tell the difference due to the circumstances.

And now.

Twilight had created a powerful body from Velzard's magical energy as the ultimate body. He housed the regenerated "soul" in this, and the memory synchronization was also perfect.

And that's not all.

Because it was created from Velzard's body, it possessed combat capabilities that were truly comparable to the "Dragon Kind." He could declare that even a "Primordial" demon was not an enemy. Moreover, even if an unforeseen situation occurred, Twilight's [Heart Core] was protected by Velzard. If he created a new "Dragon-like body," he could resurrect without any loss.

(Well, there is no such thing as an unlikely event. This power is equal to Velzard, and even if the opponent is the [White Queen] [Testarossa], there is no way I can lose.)

Twilight was full of confidence.

Although her amount of [magic essence] [energy] couldn't compare to Velzard's, his [magic power] was equal. In addition to this, he had her own authority, so there was no way he could lose—or that was Twilight's honest feeling. Twilight's authority—that was the unique skill 'Greed'—but it is different now.

Twilight, by researching the unique skill he acquired, completely grasped its nature. On top of that, he released what he duplicated and fused with his own ego as the seed of greed.

The freed unique skill "[Greed]" is drawn to the most greedy person. Then, after going through many hosts, it went to Maria Bell. Eventually, it was inherited by Yuuki.

Twilight observed the process.

Information was always synchronized from the pseudo-personality dwelling in the unique skill "[Greed]." By analyzing that, Twilight's research made a big leap.

When it resided in Yuuki, she even had the opportunity to experience the strength of the Demon Lord Guy.

Guy was such a dangerous opponent that he even cut off synchronization and had it respond in automatic mode. It would have been the end if Yuuki had died, but he survived with mysterious good luck.

Thanks to that, he was able to resume the synchronization of memories. And, he obtained valuable information. This was the process by which Yuuki sacrificed "[Greed]" to obtain the [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] [King of Greed] [Mammon]. It was a stroke of good luck that the details were revealed. The pseudo-personality of Twilight that was housed in Yuuki was manipulated by Michael. The synchronization was cancelled at that point, so it is unknown what is happening now. He heard that Yuuki had died, so he probably disappeared long ago, but such trivial matters were of no concern. Because, Twilight himself had reached the ultimate. [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] [King of Greed] [Amon] - that was the authority that Twilight had obtained.

Neither good nor evil, just someone who purely desires everything. An existence that fulfills intellectual curiosity as it is determined to be. And unable to suppress his desire to know, he tries to see what the outcome will be. No matter how much chaos the world may fall into, to Twilight, the result is what matters. What's important is to obtain results. And then to develop them and use them in the future. For that sole purpose, Twilight has spent everything.

Since there is no malice in it, it has become a purer embodiment of vice. This is the divine ancestor - Twilight Valentine. The ultimate egoist. Twilight will do anything for himself, regardless of whether it is a good or bad deed. And so, inevitably, he could no longer turn away from a certain question.

What lies beyond the ultimate?

If even [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[King of Greed] [Amon]" was offered as a sacrifice, what would one gain? Twilight's true worth lies in his determination to resolve this question.

And he obtained it. A terrible result that should never have happened - [Ultimate Ability]
[Ultimate Skill] "[King of Evil] [Angra Mainyu]

This is the ultimate. It was a terrifying power that surpassed even the powers of the deadly sins, forming the counterpart to the powers created by Veldanava. Its main powers are diverse, including [Thought Acceleration, Omnipotent Perception, Analysis and Appraisal, Creation of All Things, Ability Duplication, Ability Synchronization, Space-Time Manipulation, Multidimensional Barrier, and [Eternal Return]. Although he specializes in creation and research, he is also unparalleled in combat. The culmination of Twilight's research, the 'Pseudo-Dragon Form', was also completed by this 'Evil King Angra Mainyu'. As long as Velzard existed, Twilight was immortal and invincible.

.....
.....
...

Twilight released his dragon aura and intimidated Testarossa. The existence value of the 'Pseudo-Dragon Form' was overwhelming, nearly ten times that of Testarossa. Twilight can't quantify it, but there is no doubt that the difference between them is vast.

It was because he understood this that Twilight was at ease.

(Although she is older than me, she is ultimately a resident of the spiritual world who does not even have a physical body. Even though she has been incarnated, I have the advantage in the material world. Moreover, my physical performance is overwhelmingly superior—)

Twilight laughs, saying that there is no way he can lose to Testarossa, who seems to have misunderstood her position.

*

Thus, the battle between Testarossa and Twilight began.

And several hours passed.

Both are still alive and well. They face each other in the air.

What is Feldway's plan? Has Milim, who arrived in Sarion, still going on a rampage?((?))

How much fighting power has been gathered by Luminas' "End Times Proclamation"? Will humanity be able to confront the large army of [Cryptids] led by the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivarage? And what would become of the fools who entered the labyrinth—? Forgetting all such concerns, Testarossa focused on her opponent, Twilight.

The equation for victory has already been completed, but deciphering it is not easy. It is only Testarossa who can push the situation forward without any danger. She proceeded carefully so that Twilight would not notice.

Meanwhile, Twilight also felt something was off.

"Hahahaha! What's wrong? There's no way that magic would work on me!"

He easily erased the successive nuclear attacks that Testarossa had unleashed with a time lag. With overwhelming computational ability, he overwrote Testarossa's magic. Normally, this would be an astonishing level of skill. Even so, it was Twilight who was inwardly irritated.

(Something is wrong? It is natural that Testarossa's attack does not work on me, but why is she still healthy? To endure against me for several hours, no matter how you look at it, it doesn't make sense...)

That's right. All of Testarossa's attacks were easily neutralized. And of course he is launching a counterattack, but Testarossa is still healthy. Though stained with blood, she is floating in the sky with a dignified appearance. Moreover, she hadn't lost her fighting spirit from the very start.

"— "White Flash Annihilation Flame Tyrant" —"

Twilight was engulfed in the white flames.

(Tch, this is what happens the moment I let my guard down!? She was aiming for this from the beginning—)

For the past few hours, whenever Twilight's attention wandered to think about Testarossa, powerful magic was used as if she had aimed for it. There is no significant damage, but it cannot be ignored. Twilight had no choice but to regain consciousness and concentrate on Testarossa.

This was quietly becoming a source of irritation. It would be no problem to ignore it as it would recover almost instantly, but the opponent was Testarossa. Twilight understood that it was important not to let his guard down, but the monotonous repetition had made Twilight become complacent. Irritation and complacency, and the resulting carelessness. In that instant, he was hit with a powerful blow—

The magic stimulated Twilight's sense of pain. It was so powerful that it reminded him of death. And that was only natural.

"[White Flash Annihilation Flame Tyrant]" was the ultimate anti-personnel magic that Testarossa had created with her own [Ultimate Skill], "[King of the Dead] Belial."

Twilight's "[Pseudo-Dragon Body]" was burned to ashes in an instant——but that didn't matter. It regenerated perfectly as if nothing had happened.

"My goodness, you never learn your lesson. I told you that no matter what you do, it won't work on me."

Twilight looked down on Testarossa in exasperation and sneered. It was an act of hiding the irritation he felt inside. No matter what attack she used, he wouldn't die, but he couldn't shake the anxiety that he must have overlooked something big. A sense of discomfort and unease. It was a warning bell that Twilight's instincts were telling him.

However, Twilight ignored it.

He had heard that the "White Flash Annihilation Flame Tyrant" that he had just received was Testarossa's strongest technique. The blow, strengthened by the authority of the [Ultimate Skill], was heavy. And when it came to her strongest technique, it was on a different level to the magic she had used so far. Even Twilight's pride and joy, her "[Pseudo-Dragon Body]", was broken through the many layers of "protective barriers" he had placed around it, and was burned to ashes in an instant. That was proof of just how dangerous Testarossa was.

But that was all.

Since even her strongest attack was meaningless, Testarossa had no chance of winning. Knowing this, Twilight sneered with confidence. Testarossa, whose strongest technique was ineffective, was surprised. No, it should be added that it was surprising for Twilight. Testarossa had expected this outcome from the beginning. Everything up to this point, including the fact that Twilight would get carried away and ridicule her, was according to Testarossa's plan. Testarossa is very cunning and calm. Even her trump card, "[White Flare]", was merely one card in her hand. And by using a variety of techniques to fix Twilight's attention on herself, she was able to prevent him from noticing a bigger trap.

Twilight was certainly strong. If one were to simply compare their combat abilities, there was no doubt that he surpassed Testarossa. However, the match was even — rather, the state of the game was in Testarossa's hands. That was the difference in combat experience between them. It was rare for Testarossa to act on her own, but she used her wit to give orders to her subordinates with her intellect. It is Testarossa's strength that she has the combat sense to make use of such experience.

"You're really foolish," Testarossa said, deepening her smile.

Her eyes are not those of someone who is desperate because her trump card has been broken. She clearly looked down on Twilight. At this point, even the conceited Twilight finally noticed the true nature of the discomfort.

"--? I see... I thought something was strange, but you didn't take much damage from my attacks, right? Were you pretending to be hit on purpose?"

Unlike Twilight, who recovered instantly, Testarossa's wounds continued to grow. There were no major ones that would be fatal, but there were many discolored scars on her bare skin, where her military uniform was torn. They were burns, cuts, and impact marks. It was undoubtedly something that Twilight's attack directly hit and was created. But that's why--if she had been hit by such a powerful attack, it was unnatural for her to still be active. No matter how much damage she had mitigated, the power of Twilight's techniques was no joke. The techniques unleashed from his body, which imitated the strongest "dragon species", were enough to slaughter even a demon lord species in one blow.

And yet, the reason why Testarossa is healthy is that she was only pretending to be hit directly.

(Or, it's possible that she didn't really take much damage—no. If that were the case, there would be no point in leaving traces, would there? Interesting! What is she aiming for?)

Because he is invincible, Twilight is not afraid. Because he is arrogant and believes he can handle anything, he finds it fun to try to figure out what Testarossa is thinking. That was Twilight's bad habit and weakness.

Testarossa was well aware of Twilight's personality.

"You haven't grown at all."

"What are you talking about? I've become much stronger than before!"

"Hmph, you're hopeless. Your way of fighting is childish. You enjoy tormenting opponents who are less powerful than you, don't you? Just like a child who enjoys crushing an ant's nest."

"So what? What's wrong with that?"

"I'm not saying it's wrong. I just think it's foolish."

That was Testarossa's true feelings.

It's fine to look down on someone you can beat, but tormenting them is out of the question. This is especially true if it's a battle you can't afford to lose. If there's a difference in strength, you should finish them off quickly. And above all, you shouldn't give your opponent time to devise a strategy.

"You think I'm foolish? What a strange thing to say."

"It's a fact. But, I'll thank you. Because, thanks to that, I can win."

It is an unbelievable foolish act from Testarossa's point of view, but this time she was saved by it. By being able to use Twilight's bad habits, the conditions for Testarossa to win were met.

"That's stupid. No matter what you do, you can't make up for this difference in strength."

Twilight laughed at Testarossa's words, but then quickly withdrew his smile. He sensed an abnormality in Testarossa.. Not only the traces of the wounds, but even the tears in her uniform had been repaired. How on earth did she manage to do that, Twilight wondered. Her seductive smile was full of confidence, and she didn't seem cornered.

(Does she really think she can beat me?)

That's impossible. No matter how many attacks he receives, Twilight can revive. Even when it comes to energy loss, Testarossa is at a disadvantage. Twilight's "[Pseudo-Dragon Body]" is constructed from Velzard's magical powers floating in the air. Even if he is reduced to dust, he can regenerate instantly, so there is no way to defeat him. And mentally, having his [Heart Core] protected in Velzard, even if his "soul" is shattered, he can resurrect.

Truly invincible.

No matter who her opponent is, Twilight is confident that he can defeat even Veldanava. Therefore, there is no way he could lose to the likes of Testarossa.

"Very well. I'll destroy your confidence. I'll show you the true power of my authority - [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[King of Evil] [Angra Mainyu]."

Twilight declared, his [Golden and Silver Demonic Eyes] [Heterochromia] shining eerily.

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[Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[King of Evil] [Angra Mainyu]" is the most terrible authority in the world. It is the will to kill a god itself, and can also be said to be an authority used exclusively against Veldanava.

"Surpassing one's parents" - in other words, "God Killer".

Twilight also bore that karma. The reason he had Luminas kill him was to observe the process of achieving that karma. .He intended to kill VeldaNava with perfect preparation after considering all kinds of cases. Since Veldanava was not resurrected, that ambition remained unfulfilled...

However, in return, [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[King of Evil] [Angra Mainyu]" was further refined and increased its ferocity.

It is an authority at the top of the great sin series, but it does not have the right to dominate lower authorities such as "Ultimate Dominion". Since the Demon-type abilities are inherently free, they are immune to being dominated. That is why there was no coercive domination ability such as "Regalia Dominion." In the first place, it can be said that there is no need for such a thing. Because [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[King of Evil] [Angra Mainyu]" has the power to kill and reduce everything to nothing. The end result for all living beings is "death". Leading anyone, no matter what, to a place they cannot escape, is the "Eternal Recurrence" of "Anra Mainyu," which specializes in trampling on the free will of others —

"You will continue to perish in my world — "Eternal Twilight""

Testarossa was assailed by malice. The embodiment of vice, which even feeds on the resentful voices of the dead in hell — that is the essence of "Anra Mainyu". It was a despicable power, more vicious and disgusting than that of the Demons, who feed on human emotions.

The effect was tremendous. The King of Evil, Angra Mainyu, boasts the ability "Eternal Recurrence," which exerts a terrifying effect by trapping all beings within its range in a pseudo-hell, causing them to experience nightmares for eternity until the world disappears. Those who are captured are not allowed to be liberated, and they must face the end of the world. And their cries of anguish and resentment only make the King of Evil, Angra Mainyu, grow stronger.

If one is targeted by this, there is no way to escape, and even if one is a "primordial demon" accustomed to hell, they will end up repeating the nightmare of being destroyed and reborn again and again. And so their "souls" become exhausted, and eventually they will return to nothing... .

Which will come first, the end of the world or this? Twilight, looking forward to finding out, cried out with joy.

"Hahahaha! My malice will destroy even a god!! Even if you are an older existence than me, someone like you would never be able to —"

The darkness of the end, the embodiment of despair, tried to engulf the white world—

But nothing happened.

Testarossa was floating back where she was, looking happy.

"—!?"

Twilight was utterly shocked. The familiar feeling was the same as when she had received unexpected experimental results. But unlike then, he wasn't excited. He just couldn't accept reality.

"You seem puzzled? How foolish of you to not even realize it."

"H-How? Why are you unharmed!?"

Twilight didn't even care that he was mocked for being stupid, he wanted to know the reason. Testarossa had to be dead. There was no way such a ridiculous story could exist, like she was completely unharmed. But that was just Twilight's convenience((?)), and Testarossa had no obligation to go along with it. She simply carried out the role given to her.

Testarossa's cherry-colored lips curved in an evil arc. And, she announced despair.

"You want to know what destruction is like, don't you? Good for you, I'll tell you. Right now — the preparation is over."

As soon as she finished saying that, Testarossa deepened her cold smile.

And then —

she carried out the plan ((that she was preparing)) from the beginning.

"—[Nihilistic End]—"

The world was dyed white.

Originally, it was a whiteout due to Velzard's ice and snow, but the world was covered with a "white darkness" that overwhelmed it.

"You're kidding me, right? I can't see what's going on outside at all!?"

"Well, I've been there for a long time now..."

"That's surprising. It's not that Moss's 'barrier' is amazing, it's that there's an invisible membrane on its surface."

"...As expected of Testarossa, she's worthy of drawing with me."

The voices of those watching from the sidelines could be heard. Each of them had different feelings, but they all shared the fact that they were shocked.

Except for Souka.

Velzard's ice and snow also disrupted her magic, so even 'Magic Perception' was useless. Since she had been in a completely whiteout state for a long time, her senses had long ago become numb.

The reason she didn't go mad was because she could see inside Moss's "barrier" only. This time, it seemed like she was painted over with even more 'white', but Souka couldn't tell the difference. Something ridiculous must have happened— she thought, and looked upon it as if it had nothing to do with her.

On the other hand.

Twilight had no time to relax. He was trying to grasp the situation with his mind working at maximum speed, accelerating his thoughts by millions, even tens of millions of times.

(What happened!? My "[Eternal Twilight]" was perfect, so why is Testarossa safe? But more importantly—what is this "white darkness"!?)

The "white" was eating away at Twilight's body. It was happening at a speed that exceeded the speed at which his body could regenerate.

(No, calm down. Even if my body turns to dust, I can just create another 'Dragon Body'. Right now, it's more important to find out what Testarossa did—)

Regardless of what happens to his own body, he put it aside and tried to resume the situation analysis.

At that moment, Testarossa's 'thoughts' reached her infinitely delayed thinking domain.((?))

"I wonder, how do you feel about experiencing true destruction?"

"Interesting. I understand a little of what you did. You left the "void" that you used to find my existence as it is."

"Yes, that's right."

"That's amazing. To maintain this so naturally while fighting me."

Twilight praised her wholeheartedly.

The void is an energy of ultimate destruction. It is a common sense to think that it is a wasteful act to naturally melt it into the ice and snow and maintain it in a harmless state as it is. Because the consumption cost is too large, it is more effective to use it for attack as soon as possible. Moreover, it was an incomprehensible act from Twilight's point of view to keep it hidden until the moment of attack. That is why he overlooked it, but he has no sense of crisis.

Certainly, because he received a direct hit from the void, his current body will be annihilated, including the "soul." However, since Twilight will be completely regenerated, it was completely meaningless.

This is perfect immortality. The [reason] for invincibility.

But then a miscalculation occurred.

Testarossa muttered in exasperation.

"As I thought, you don't seem to understand."

"—?"

"My void was not summoned from hell."

"Huh? "

With a look of saying, "What on earth are you talking about —," Twilight looked at Testarossa. What was there was an absolute monarch who was laughing with an ecstatic expression.

"This power is proof that he is still alive. I opened the "door" in the depths of my chest, and felt a definite "breath.""

"What are you talking about?"

"I wanted to feel it more, but it seems it's about time to say goodbye."

Testarossa was cautious. Unlike Zegion, she would not try to exceed her capacity. She knew that she would not succeed even if she tried. However, even the prescribed amount was sufficiently threatening.

Testarossa's [Ultimate Ability][Ultimate Skill][King of the Dead][Belial]" was the authority closest to "death". Among them, "Afterlife" was the authority that could handle the hellish flames - "Void". Therefore, the "Void Collapse" borrowed from Rimuru could be safely exercised with the prescribed amount((power given?)), and by combining it with her own "Nihilistic World," she was able to control the extremely dangerous world as her own.

The void also devours "information particles."

To put it strictly, it erases the information written in the "information particles."

Any and all orders are meaningless if they cannot be transmitted.

Even if the information is synchronized instantly across time and space, if the "information particles" in which the information is written are interfered with...

"That's stupid... my, my [heart] isn't responding...?"

"Of course, isn't it? I've been playing with you for a long time, but I'm getting tired of it. So, I have to put an end to it."

Leaving those words behind, Testarossa's "thought" left. Twilight's thought domain becomes lonely again.

(What? You're saying all this "white darkness" is "void"? Ridiculous!? There's no way that could happen!!)

To control the already difficult "void" to the point that it fills the space, even if it is isolated, is something that no one can do as far as Twilight knows.

To give an example, it is like taking on a thousand shogi players called masters of all ages at the same time and dominantly controlling the board. You cannot lose your concentration even for a moment, and one mistake is not allowed. Even so, it's a dream beyond dreams, a feat that's impossible even in stories.

From the past to the present—yes, even Veldanava shouldn't have been able to pull off such a feat.

(What on earth is going on——)

Twilight's consciousness is swallowed up by the "white darkness" and disappears.

Although his intellectual curiosity should have been satisfied after receiving an answer from Testarossa, a new question arose, and his heart was left unsatisfied—

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Those inside Moss's "barrier" had difficulty finding out what was going on outside. Even so, without knowing the details of the battle, they somehow thought that Testarossa would win. It was because they couldn't imagine Testarossa losing, and they felt a fundamental fear from the "white darkness" that filled the outside.

This was especially evident in Moss.

"Oh no!? Lady Testarossa seems to be quite angry..."

He was able to "sense" her briefly before the white closed around him, and Testarossa's whole body was covered in wounds. She seemed to have recovered properly, but that didn't mean she was okay. The problem was that the proud White Queen's body was damaged. That meant that Twilight's attack had come into contact with Testarossa's orb((soul core?)).

If Testarossa only used magic, this would not have happened. She would have attacked from a distance, never letting him get close. However, that did not seem to be the case. Perhaps Twilight's skill in fighting had made Testarossa abandon her pride? Even so, it was an unbelievable event for Moss.

If the opponent was a "Dragon Kind" like Velgrind, she could have endured it. However, her opponent was a divine ancestor. Although he was feared as one of the ancient gods, Testarossa, who was one of the Seven Lords, he is not an opponent to pay respect to.

"Well, I admit that he is strong, but Testarossa-sama is not good at close combat..."

"I'm not good at it either, you know?"

"Well, she's not good at it."

Rain and Mizari responded to Moss's muttered words.

Souka remained silent, but there were mixed feelings.

(I'm good at hand-to-hand combat, but... I'm weaker than those who say they're not good at it...)

It's a blunt statement, but sadly it's the truth. Leaving Souka's sadness behind, the conversation continued.

"But it's strange..."

"What is?"

Moss thought for a moment to explain the discomfort before speaking.

"Testarossa-sama is good at defense. Of course, she is not kind enough to fight in the opponent's forte, so the current situation itself seems unnatural to me."

In fact, Testarossa was engaging in close combat. She used magic, but stayed in place while dealing with Twilight's attacks.

It certainly seemed like an unusual move for Testarossa, who excels at long-distance attacks to avoid taking any damage.

Rain and Mizari nodded after hearing the explanation.

"I see. Well, that's true, isn't it? I'll do anything to win, too. I'll bring it to my forte without question."

"That's right. Even so, Testarossa didn't do that. Which means —"

There was a reason for that.

"Umm, I have a question—"

At this point, Souka timidly opened her mouth.

"What is it?"

Moss urged, hiding his true feelings that it was too much trouble.

There was nothing Souka could do in this situation, so Moss wanted him to stay quiet. There is nothing that Soka can do in this situation, so Moss wants her to stay quiet. So, he didn't care much about Soka's opinion, but his eyes widened when he heard it.

"Testarossa-san's, what was it again? Um, "Nihilistic World," was it? What happened?"

'Huh?'

Come to think of it — Moss remembered. Testarossa deployed 'Nihilistic World' and found Twilight, who was hiding here. That was the first stage, and it was in attack standby mode. If she were to attack from here, everything within the range of effect designated by Testarossa would be exposed to the fierce power of the "Void". Regardless of friend or foe, a set amount of energy would be offset and they would be annihilated. Moss and Souka had no way of escaping, so the fact that they were still alive meant that Testarossa had not released 'Void'.

Or rather, to begin with,

"Even Lady Testarossa would be unable to maintain 'Void' for a long time. That's why she must have deactivated it a long time ago."

--That was Moss's impression... no, it was his wish.

Perhaps the reason Testarossa didn't use her speciality in magical combat was because she was dedicating her energy to something else. No, no, that can't be the case--Moss denied his own thoughts. Fighting for a long time with the extremely dangerous 'Void' deployed would be insane no matter how you look at it. Just in case, if Testarossa were to lose consciousness even for a moment during the battle, the uncontrolled 'Void' would be unleashed. She seemed to be receiving blows from Twilight, and there was a high possibility that she would lose consciousness momentarily. Even just controlling the "void" normally consumes energy, so from Moss's point of view, constant deployment is impossible.

(Surely she wouldn't take such a risk — it's okay, right, Testarossa-sama?)

As if swallowing his uneasy feelings, Moss prayed.

However, the person he was praying to was Testarossa, so there was no way his wish would be granted.

"But you know, Moss-kun, it looks like 'void' no matter how you look at it?"

"That's right. No matter how you look at it, it's exerting its aggression and corroding Twilight."

It was Rain and Misery who told so in a heartless voice. Even without them pointing it out Moss had already noticed it.

"No way..."

(So, in the unlikely event, no, even in the one in a billion chance, there was a risk that the world would be destroyed!?)

As soon as he realized this, Moss nearly collapsed.

"Wow, Testarossa-san is really amazing! I thought that if you were going to attack in that second stage, we would all die too."

Souka, who didn't understand anything, gave a slightly off-topic comment.

"Um, yeah."

Rain gave a wry smile to cover it up.

"Die, or rather, yeah, it might be better not to know. Do you still want to hear?"

Speaking as if about to explain and then clouding the words, Misery looked at Souka enviously.((?))

With just that, Soka realized.

"No, there's no need. I wanted to know the information as a secret agent, but I'll let that go for now!"

It was Souka's strength that she could choose peace of mind over a sense of responsibility here. But that was the right decision. Even if they had explained that the world was on the verge of collapse, Souka would not have been able to accept it.

Rain and Mizari, who had made that judgment, also had a surprisingly gentle side. While everyone was lost in thoughts, Twilight's existence disappeared.

Rain was overjoyed to see this.

"Alright! That damn Twilight bastard, it's what he deserves!!!"

She was shouting from the bottom of her heart, wanting to finally release all the pent up resentment. Misery agreed.

"Well, yeah, he was a big troublemaker, so I feel more relieved than anything."

Even Soka, who was listening to that, is convinced that he must have been a dangerous person. From the sense of relief that the crisis had passed, everyone's tension was lessened.

"Alright, alright. I drew with Testarossa, so in effect, it's no exaggeration to say that I defeated Twilight. I feel really refreshed, as if I have fulfilled one of my long-cherished wishes!"

Even though Rain hadn't done anything, she still interpreted it in a way that was convenient for her. However, the problem was not yet resolved. Velzard((, her original objective still unknown but in effect)), was still alive and well, and this land was still covered in a "white, enclosed world."

As if to remind them of this once again, Guy and Velzard's fierce battle began in earnest—

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In the air, white and red [Haki] [Aura] intersected.

The small mass was filled with a heat that would have been enough to engulf a star system. A mere collision would cause great destruction, but since the ground was protected, only ice and snow blew wildly. Guy's attacks did not work on Velzard. Because he wasn't serious.

Guy had grasped everything. Testarossa's victory, and the nonsense of those idiots. And even the changes in his enemy, Velzard.

He sensed the presence of a third party along the way and was constantly on guard. It was difficult to find out while fighting Velzard, but Testarossa had uncovered his true identity. Moreover, she had just defeated him with great care. Now, he could finally focus on Velzard.

(Even so, Twilight, huh? That doesn't mean he died from that. He's probably still inside Velzard—)

Guy speculated. And he thought that Testarossa had probably noticed that as well. Testarossa was a fearsome person that even Guy acknowledged. She had shown an unparalleled power of evil that lived up to the name of the White Queen. According to conventional common sense,『Void』could not be controlled. Once unleashed, all beings trapped within the range of effect of

"[Nihilistic World]" would be devoured. However, Testarossa perfectly controlled it, destroying only Twilight. This was a surprising phenomenon even to Guy. And only Guy had noticed. What Testarossa had done was a much more difficult and incredible technique. Testarossa had taken her time to create a cage out of "Void". She sealed Twilight inside it, cutting off its connection to the outside. At the moment he was burned up by "[White Flare]", she observed the movements of the "information particles" and confirmed and grasped the main body inside Velzard.((?))

Because Guy had done the same thing, he correctly understood the meaning of Testarossa's actions.

(What a horrible thing to do. I might have lost too if I had let my guard down.)

And he thought of something impossible. Guy would never let his guard down, so that was just a fantasy. Anyway, there was no doubt that he needed to reassess Testarossa's threat level. But he could think about that later.

Right now, stopping Velzard was the priority.

"Guy, you understand, don't you?"

"Of course, I do."

"Then that's good. I'm going to rest, so can I leave the rest to you?"

"Yeah. You'll leave the 'Void' covering Velzard as it is, right?"

"Hehehe, I guess there's no other way. I'll lend it to you."

Testarossa said that and descended to the ground.

She would never admit it because she was so proud, but she was already so exhausted that she didn't even have the magic power left to float in the air. Guy saw through it, but he wasn't so gauche as to point it out.

On the contrary, he even made an unreasonable request.

Testarossa was convinced that Twilight's main body was inside Velzard, so she had spread "Void" over her body to cover it. This erased the information from the "information particles" and prevented Twilight's regeneration. Guy asked her to leave it as it was. In other words, he meant that he wanted her to keep the "Void" maintained indefinitely.

Testarossa lightly agreed, saying it was a "loan," but this exchange was only possible because of the firm trust they had in each other. Thus, there was no longer any fear of Twilight getting in the way. Guy grinned and faced Velzard.

They had been fighting for dozens of hours, but neither of them was serious. However, this was where the real fight began. The preliminary skirmishes were sufficient, so Guy intended to launch an attack next that could be a fatal blow.

(Well, she won't die from this, right?)

Thinking this, he unleashed a hand chop. Naturally, Velzard parried it with a relaxed expression.

"Tch, you're going to nullify even my [Calamity Claw]?"

The blow that Guy unleashed--[Calamity Claw]--contaminates the enemy's inner self by infiltrating infectious destructive particles from the point of contact. It has a greater effect on the mind than the body, and even a graze can cause mental contamination, making it a special attack against spiritual lifeforms that is extremely deadly. It was a technique that was effective enough even without a direct hit, making it a first-time killer((?)).

But even so, it didn't work on Velzard. Any material that Velzard touches is instantly fixed in place. Because it exerted influence at the "information particle" level, it froze everything, regardless of whether it was physical or mental.

So, Velzard smiled playfully.

"Of course not. Let's keep crossing blades, shall we?"

Hearing that, Guy felt slightly annoyed.

(This guy((in the voice of Nandor the Relentless)), how long is she going to hold a grudge?)

She hasn't changed since they first met—, Guy thought.

And at the same time, he realized a possibility. Could it be that Velzard has even frozen her emotions? If that were the case, it would be troublesome. It's because the harder and more rigid something is, the more fragile it is to unexpected shocks.

Now that it was clear that Twilight resided in Velzard's mind, Guy realized that the situation was unpredictable.

*

Velzard had originally approached Guy with the purpose of testing him. Out of jealousy for Guy, who was recognized by his elder brother—Veldanava. And as the years passed, he began to feel, just a little, yes, just a little, that it was fun. In a way, that was only natural.

Because it was Velzard, not Feldway, who had managed to empty the "[Celestial Palace]".

Forever alone.

Without doubting the current situation, which was nothing more than a sense of duty. That's why life with Guy was refreshing—

If she continued like this, she would forget her purpose... no, in reality, there was no need to worry. In her regular visits to "[Celestial Palace]", Velzard took a fresh look at her own [Heart][kokoro]. In order to never forget her original intentions, she made full use of her newly awakened "[King of Jealousy][Leviathan]" and "[King of Patience][Gabriel]" to freeze her own [Heart].

In this way, Velzard sealed away his emotions as if to discard her wavering.

And now.

Velzard was in a trance.

In this long-desired situation, his heart was filled with a sense of great happiness. Yes, Velzard had always wished for this. To defeat Guy, who has become serious, this time for sure. And prove that she was the strongest. If she did that, Guy would acknowledge her, or so Velzard thought.

—Why do I have to win against Guy?

A question arose somewhere in her mind, but she ignored it.

In order to prevent such questions from arising, she closed her heart more and more. While maintaining a smile on the surface, a fierce blizzard was constantly blowing inside Velzard.

《Now, it's time to fulfill your long-cherished desire.》

Twilight, her ally, whispered to Velzard. He has completely informatized his own [core of the heart][kokoro] and turned it into the ability itself. Recently, new information and facts have come to light at a dizzying pace. Twilight, while letting out a happy shriek, seemed to be scrutinizing that information, and as a result, had undergone rapid evolution. Now, it seems that he has reached the level of being that transcends the spiritual lifeforms known as [Manas].

The "[Pseudo-Dragon Form]" is also one of them, and it was an unparalleled power, but it is originally demonstrated only when combined with Velzard.

《The best plan would have been to use my trump card, the [Pseudo-Dragon Body], after we'd reached a stalemate with Guy》

『It can't be helped. Guy never lets his guard down.』

He had been looking for an opening for several dozen hours, but there was not even a glimmer to be found. Guy never let his guard down from start to finish. On the contrary, he seemed certain that Velzard was hiding something. So Velzard thought that plan would fail. It was unexpected that Testarossa would interfere, but the situation remained unchanged.

《Well, yeah. Even so, the [White Queen][Testarossa] is something else. She's become able to manipulate the extremely dangerous "Void" as she pleases.》

『That's right. It's still covering my body, so I can't even use the "[Pseudo-Dragon Form]".』

In truth, Velzard was wrapped in the shining white darkness. It's not that she can't shake it off, but it's dangerous to do it in front of Guy. Since the Void has the property of absorbing energy, Velzard could erase it by releasing magic power. However, she didn't think that would be the end of it. If『Void』was summoned again, it would be a complete waste. It is a really troublesome and difficult hand.

《Release-type attacks are completely useless, aren't they? It's not just that the power is reduced, but the moment you fire is completely obvious, so evasion becomes easy.》

As expected of Twilight, his analytical ability is top-notch. The pseudo-personality he sent out was completely defeated by Testarossa, but it was extremely capable as an advisor.

Testarossa's goal was to contain Twilight. That meant she had lost one of her trump cards against Guy. At this point, she had no choice but to abandon her original plan and go for a head-on battle.

『As for me, it's a welcome situation.』

Twilight didn't say anything back. If Velzard was aiming for a sure victory, that would be one thing, but her goal was different.

《—Defeat Guy, and then you can do as you please.》

Yes, I will-- Velzard's smile deepened dramatically. The next moment, Velzard released her desire. She was already struggling to hold back, but she still held onto that last line. But now, in order to get Guy, she had abandoned her reason.

"Guy! For me, you are everything!! I've been watching you all the time. I've only been watching you. Even so, why won't you look at((see)) me? Look at me. Only see((look at)) me—!!"((Notice me senpai!!!))

That was Velzard's cry from the bottom of her heart. It was a selfish and self-centered, but above all else, it was a pure desire.

*

Guy had been hovering in the air and keeping his distance from Velzard, but sensing the danger - fear - he flew backwards.

It was a close call.

In the place where he was before, raging ice and snow were blowing wildly. With the speed of lightning, Velzard began her fierce attack. Velzard, who had abandoned his strategy, was a threat in the true sense of the word. Even among the strongest "Dragon Kinds," Velzard was in a class of her own.

Second only to the "Star King Dragon" Veldanava, she possessed unfathomable power. The enormous magical power that was released turned into a raging wave, trying to blow away Testarossa's "Void". This was not what Velzard had intended, it was merely a threatening act accompanied by her rising fighting spirit. Even so, it was extremely effective.

"Damn it, this is no joke.....it's going to cost you, Guy!" Testarossa said bitterly as she tried to join Moss inside the Barrier. Even so, he did not give up and manipulated the "Void," skillfully diverting Velzard's magic power. The skill of his technique was in the realm of art, and even Rain, who was always competing with her, admitted defeat early on, saying, "It's impossible."

Even Guy admitted it.

"Thanks, Testarossa!"

If even Twilight came out here, it would be troublesome, and Guy's victory would have become more distant. I'm glad Testarossa came—Guy thought from the bottom of his heart.

Even Testarossa didn't have the luxury of facing her again. It worked because it was the first move, but if it was a second time, countermeasures would have been taken. Before that, the best thing to do is to ignore enemies who revive no matter how many times they are defeated. That was one of the lessons she learned from her special training in Ramiris' labyrinth.

Anyone who tried to stop Velzard now would be defeated in an instant. Not even Testarossa could do it. It wasn't something that could be achieved by tactics, and dialogue would not work either.

It was hopeless.

There were fewer people who could face Velzard at this point than could be counted on one hand. No, even worse than that—

(Even Veldora-sama or Velgrynd-sama might not be able to do it...)

The only ones who could face her were those of the same rank as "Dragon Kind" or—Guy.

(Rimuru-sama could probably do something about it... but I'm pathetic for even thinking something like that.)

Testarossa restrained herself, but no one could blame her. Rimuru wasn't here, so either way they had to do something on their own.

"—There's no choice but to leave it to Guy."

All remaining hope was placed on Guy, who had the potential to stop Velzard.

Testarossa finally reached Moss's "barrier". The inside was comfortable in anticipation of Testarossa joining them. This was because Moss, taking this opportunity to score points, had adjusted the temperature. It was as warm as the spring sunshine, and Souka, who had been freezing, was able to take a breather. Not only that, Moss had even created a chair with "Material Creation". There was no way she could sit on the frozen ground. Moss and the others had been standing the whole time, but there was no way Testarossa could be allowed to do such a thing. Only acting after being ordered was second-rate. First-rate was preparing everything in advance so as not to upset the master. Moss faithfully adhered to that theory while serving Testarossa.

"Moss-kun, why didn't you make it this way from the beginning?"

Rain complained as she sat down in a chair. The emphasis on "kun" was quite sarcastic.

Rain was sensitive to the cold, so he had been enduring it up until now. She had the common sense to think that it was meaningless to wish for something they didn't have, so she had been quiet.

However...

Seeing that chairs were prepared for Mizari, Rain, and even Souka, it was clear that he had spare energy. Rain wanted to say, "Do it from the beginning if you can!". She wanted to ask why only Testarossa was treated preferentially.

"What are you talking about, Rain?"

Testarossa, who had elegantly settled into the prepared chair, asked in exasperation. It was Mizari who answered.

"I'm sorry, Testarossa. Rain is also working hard, so she seems to be a bit stressed."

"Mizari, aren't you spoiling her too much?"

"That's not true."

"Telling a child who is working hard to do their best will only push them into a corner, which is counterproductive, but encouraging a child who isn't working hard is just isn't right."((that boy ain't right I tell you))

"—? What are you trying to say?"

Testarossa was genuinely astonished at Mizari's apparent lack of understanding.

"Rain is working hard."

"Eh? Are you serious?"

"Of course I am."

"Haven't you been looked down on by Guy?"

"That's true, but that's because my skills aren't good enough, right?"

No, Testarossa thought, but she hesitated to say it aloud. She felt a little sorry for Mizeri. The conversation stopped, and inside the barrier went quiet. Outside, the battle between Guy and Velzard was intensifying, so if there wasn't any topic of conversation, only the tension would increase. Even so, it was best to avoid careless topics.

Still, it was safer to avoid careless topics.

By the way, Moss had erased his presence like air. He sat down, hiding behind Soka, and silently did his job with a face that said it was none of his business. It was extremely stressful for him to have his name mentioned in a conversation between two Primordials. It would be best to ignore it while hoping that topic of discussion would not touch him. However, Moss's wish was not heard.

"Look at Moss. Thanks to me, he's grown into a reasonably capable person, hasn't he?"

Please have mercy on me—Moss thought.

(If I were to fail, you would get so angry that you would erase me from existence!)

This is not a cutesy matter of provoking someone. The reality is that only those who can endure the pressure of not allowing failure are able to survive. Even if you tell me that it's your own achievement, well—it would be easier if I could say that, but Moss kept his mouth shut like a clam and showed his attitude that "It's as Testarossa-sama says."

"Well, that's true. Looking at Moss, I can admit that you're competent in terms of education... but Rain can do it if she tries, right? She was made to cry, but you drew with her, didn't you?"

"... When was that?"

Testarossa looked dubious.

It wasn't Mizeri who answered, but Rain, who had been the subject of the conversation.

"Old stories are no longer relevant, are they?((?)) Rather than that, it's more important now to think about how to ensure Guy-sama's victory, isn't it?"

Her true intention of wanting to dodge the inconvenient story could be seen through.

"Changing the topic so blatantly is a surprisingly underhanded tactic..."

Souka muttered quietly. She said that at Moss.

(Please keep quiet? At the very least, stop dragging me into this!!)

Moss looked off into the distance, feeling like crying. Rain was trembling.

(Why is that? I feel like my position has become very precarious...)

It's her own fault. However, Rain is the type of person who looks for the cause in others, so she doesn't think that she was in the wrong. This time as well, as soon as she understood that her cover-up wouldn't work, she decided to take the next step.

In other words, she changed the topic again.

Rain declared with a sense of satisfaction.

"There's no other choice. For the sake of victory I'll go and help Guy-sama!"

How about that—Rain said, as if to show off. Hearing this, Testarossa snorted. And then—

"I won't stop you if you want to die. You'll just be defeated in an instant and provide us with some laughter"

And so, as if putting into practice the words she had spoken earlier, she provoked Rain with her harsh words. Souka is refraining from speaking as if to say "I have no right to speak," but she agrees with Testarossa. The same goes for Moss. It's not just that his lord says so, it's obvious from considering the situation that Rain's words are laughable.

Rain was one of the strongest, but she was at a great disadvantage against the top. Anyone would understand that Testarossa's opinion was correct. Even Mizari, as expected, couldn't shield Rain.

"Well, that's true. Even if you go, you'll only get in Guy-sama's way, and we should do our best in what we can do, right?"

She said this to calm Rain down, and then skillfully changed the topic, saying, "Now that you mention it, I sent my subordinates to Lubelius as well."

Rain, who was left hanging, became teary-eyed, but she quickly changed her mood by saying, "Thinking about it, it's cold outside, isn't it?"

One of Rain's strengths is her ability to recover quickly.

"I asked Velgrynd-sama to take Rain's subordinates to Lubelius. It's tough here, but we need them to work hard there too."

"That's right. Even if we bring Velzard-sama back to his senses, it will be meaningless if the world is destroyed. In that regard, let's expect Luminus-sama, who is already there, to do something."

And so the topic shifted.

"So, were you able to find Carrera and the others?"

Testarossa asked Moss. It was in the form of a question, but the only answer she's looking for is affirmation. Moss understood that, so she nodded without hesitation.

"Oh, yes."

"That's good. They're under this snow, aren't they?"

"That's right."

Moss answered without hesitation. While searching for traces, he gradually moved and reached right above the ice statues of Carrera and the others. Velzard's ice and snow had piled up several meters, so the ice sculpture was not visible. But, without a doubt, there was a reaction from Carrera and the others directly below the point where the "barrier" was set up. Milim's subordinates were also reacting, huddled a short distance away. There were no signs of life, but he was not worried about this.

(Since they were frozen in an instant by Velzard-sama's Authority, it would be easy to revive them.)

Resurrection is impossible if the soul disappears, but there was no need to worry about that. So Moss himself wasn't concerned about that point. Testarossa was the same. Anyway, the fighting force that would be useful in this place was only Carrera and Obera. There were strong people such as Karion, Frey, and Midray who are [Awakened] [Million Class]. Although they are slightly inferior to them, Esprit and the Three Beast Warriors are also rare fighting forces... but they are no match for Guy and Velzard.

It would be safer to postpone the rescue.

Nevertheless, Testarossa wanted to revive Carrera in place of her own exhaustion. It would be even better if Obera could be revived at the same time. The outcome of the battle in the white world is still too uncertain. That is why it is important to secure as many fighting forces as possible.

"Dig them out as soon as possible."

"As you wish."

Moss wanted to argue, "That's unreasonable...", but he was only allowed to agree.

While lamenting that he couldn't even move them anyway—, but he followed Testarossa's orders and began the most appropriate action.

*

Guy, who had been pondering after hearing Velzard's cry((scream)), had a thought.

"Velzard—you...I see, I didn't realize. You've been harboring jealousy towards me all this time—"

Velzard reacted softly to Guy's muttering. She smiled. However, that didn't mean that her rampage would stop.

"Guy, you know—I've always—"

And so, the world was dyed white. Unlike Testarossa's "Nihilistic World," this white was a pure, transparent, isolated "absolute stop"—"[Frozen World][Eternal World]". By the will of the authority, all laws were forcibly stopped from functioning. While only time flowed slowly, Guy was in a state of slight bewilderment and deep understanding.

(So that's it, no wonder the sprouting of jealousy was slow)

He understood.

At this point, Guy realized the hidden power Velzard possessed. However, the extent of its effect remained unknown. It was a contradictory power. Controlling it would be difficult with a half-hearted mental strength. It was only possible because it was Velzard. And when she made Guy aware of it, it was safe to assume that Velzard had seen through Guy's hand.((?))

Now, what to do?

Guy pondered again.

Unlike the rather carefree "barrier," Guy, who is the person involved, was very serious. In the end it boils down to one point: how to stop Velzard's rampage. There was also the issue of how to prevent Ivalaje's attack, but he didn't have the time to worry about that.

"Those who chase two hares will catch neither" as the saying goes, but Guy correctly grasps his own abilities, so he only acts according to policies that can produce steady results.

It would be easy if Velzard was being controlled, but that is not the case. She is challenging Guy of her own will. So Guy had no choice but to put up with her until Velzard was satisfied.

(Tch, that's what's troublesome—I have no choice but to do it)

Defeat Velzard. I could only think about what to do after that after I won. That being said, it was an extremely difficult situation.

Once again, an absolute freezing wave of ridiculous power grazed Guy's cheek. If it had hit him directly, it would have penetrated numerous defensive measures and barriers and caused a fatal injury. As proof of that, he sensed the distant mountains collapsing. It was probably because the molecular bonds were broken by the direct hit on the bedrock in the middle of the mountain, and it could no longer withstand its own weight. It was an unreasonable level of violence.

(Those "Dragon Type" guys are so selfish and troublesome)

They exert their power as they please without thinking about reducing damage to the surroundings. Such races are basically troublesome because they are suited to combat. In fact, Guy used to have a similar personality, but now he made a promise to Veldanava. Though he lived as he pleased, he had begun to pay attention to his surroundings.

He comprehends that this had placed him at a disadvantage. Guy looked at Velzard. Her icy white hair and golden eyes were beautiful. She was a terrifyingly beautiful woman, but her danger level seemed to be proportional to her beauty. Facing Velzard, who boasted endless and overwhelming magical power, Guy decided that he could not afford to hold back his trump card.

(My goodness, you've driven me this far)

Guy being cornered was something that hadn't happened since he fought Velzard in El Dorado or when he fought Rudra in the past. However, that did not mean he had been defeated. It was just that it was very rare for him to get serious.

In fact, Guy's power, the [Ultimate Skill] "[King of Pride][Lucifer]," is the strongest ability precisely because Guy wields it. The abilities of this skill—"[King of Pride][Lucifer]"—are diverse, but its essence is "the complete reproduction of abilities once seen." This is one of the reasons why Guy waited for other Demon Lords to develop [Ultimate Abilities] [Ultimate Skills]. To become the strongest being, all one needs to do is observe various [Ultimate Abilities] [Ultimate Skills] and incorporate them into oneself. With this in mind, Guy has learned the powers of many strong people. As a result, he has become able to deal with all kinds of situations.

Naturally, this was also reflected in combat.

With "Lucifer," Guy was able to imitate the "[Pseudo-Dragon Form]" that Twilight had shown him, and even the "Nihilistic World" that Testarossa had likely wanted to keep secret. This is why Guy is the most terrifying. Since he can even make the enemy's abilities his own, Guy will never lose in terms of the number of moves.

This is no exception even if the opponent is Velzard—but this time there were problems. From Guy's point of view, he wants to analyze Velzard's abilities and make them his own. If he does that, it will be easy to neutralize them, so he will surely win and subdue Velzard. But in order to do that, he had to make the target use their power.

(Tch, until the crucial moment, she won't use it in front of me, will she?)

Velzard is aware that Guy can imitate other people's abilities. If that is the case, she should not expose her trump card abilities. That's why she was only using "[King of Patience] [Gabriel]" right now.

Guy already knew about Velzard's "[King of Patience] [Gabriel]". As such, he was able to deal with the previous battle with minimal effort, and he had predicted all dangerous attacks in advance and avoided them perfectly.

However, it is meaningless to just grasp the abilities. Velzard's power is dangerous regardless of her abilities, and if he showed even a slight opening due to the difference in the amount of [magic essence][energy], he could receive a fatal blow at any moment. When Velzard will show her abilities to Guy would be the decisive moment. Whether Guy's "analysis" can keep up in that instant will surely be the turning point of the battle.

Knowing this, Guy was depressed. A battle is something that must be won with certainty, and an unpredictable situation was out of the question. Especially a gamble like a strategy... Guy felt like his pride had been trampled on.

But even so—Guy believed in his own strength.

(Well, there's no way I'm going to lose.)

No matter how cornered he was, Guy's [core] [heart] would never break. Full of confidence as an absolute strong man, Guy chuckled softly.

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After a tense moment, Guy escaped Velzard's "Absolute Stop". If he hadn't understood that power, his defeat would have been decided the moment his movements were stopped. It's an overwhelmingly unreasonable ability that forcibly stops the kinetic energy of all kinds of matter through its interaction. It was so reckless that he was able to repel it with the force of his will. It was a rough technique that only Guy could do, but it wasn't a problem since he wasn't that exhausted.

Besides, that time was valuable. By constantly observing Velzard, Guy had gained one conviction. There was no doubt that Velzard was acting from her heart, but it was also likely that she was being tempted by someone. That someone was, needless to say, Twilight, who resided within Velzard. Velzard herself seemed to think that she was acting of her own will. However, it seemed that this was the result of being cleverly led.

(That bastard is probably watching a serious battle between me and Velzard and he's planning to use it for his own research, isn't he?)

Velzard is not stupid, but she is single-minded. For the clever Twilight, deceiving her must have been as easy as taking candy from a baby. What's troublesome is that this is unrelated to the influence of abilities or anything like that. Unless Velzard's heart is moved, Guy's words won't reach her. That's very troublesome, and it will be a gamble with few chances of success even for Guy. That's why he couldn't make a decision and continued to observe the situation.

Soon, he would have to make it tho..

He couldn't leave Velzard alone any longer. And more than anything, he had a bad feeling about this. Twilight is the worst kind of troublemaker in history. He uses all sorts of schemes, and whether they succeed or fail, he's a great villain who spreads malice throughout the world. In the past, he surprisingly had a likeable side, but... from a certain day onwards, he changed completely and began repeating inhumane experiments.

(Didn't that bastard Dagrue also complain? In the end, he never told me what happened. Well, it has nothing to do with me, anyway.)

Even if something happened to an old acquaintance, as long as he laid a hand on what's important to Guy, he was an enemy.

Guy's anger quietly grew. That became fuel and burned Guy's [core of the heart][kokoro] hot.

(That's ridiculous. Immortality? A power that can't be realized without relying on others is something that doesn't suit him)

Twilight should be free to pursue her own desires. However, it's extremely unpleasant when his own people—his partner is used for that. Whether Velzard had been deceived was just Guy's speculation. However, he was angrier than ever, so the truth didn't matter. Guy unleashed the elemental magic [Heat Dragon Flame Blast][Napalm Burst] on Velzard. The scorching dragon, twisting its long body, danced wildly around her. It's a magic that burns the target just by touching it, but it was expected that it wouldn't work on Velzard. From the beginning, Guy used this for the purpose of restraint.

However, this was also in vain. It was scattered by the [beautiful fine ice][diamond dust] that arose as Velzard breathed, and bloomed into a large ring of fire in the air before disappearing. It was [Freezing Breath], an absolute freezing wave released in dragon form, but Velzard was able to use it in human form as well.

"As expected," Guy thought to himself.

At the same time, he was also impressed.

(She's strong, isn't she!)

Guy smiled gleefully.

As Guy had acknowledged, Velzard was an incredibly strong person. Her strength had not weakened since they met. On the contrary, she kept on a comparable level to Guy, whose strength had continued to grow. Guy was very satisfied that she was worthy of being his partner. It was a worry to have to do something about such an opponent, but it only made him more motivated.

The saying goes that those without emotions or will are weak. The reason why Twilight lost to Testarossa was probably because he abandoned those emotions. If you kill your emotions, you'll be left behind by change. Therefore, those without wills do not grow.

In that respect, Velzard was different.

If Velzard had only been manipulated by others and gone berserk, she wouldn't have been able to reach this level of strength. It's precisely because she is saturated with a single, specialized "jealousy" that she has become so strong to the ultimate degree.

(Is she being used by Twilight while using it as a stepping stone to fuel herself? Well, either way, that bastard Twilight needs to be dealt with.)

Regardless of whether Velzard returns to her senses or not, Guy intends to deal with Twilight.

(Good grief. It seems that I, of all people, have been overthinking things. If you think about things simply, you'll see the answer!)

Guy threw away all his distracting thoughts and focused only on the problem at hand.

If Velzard is selfish, then Guy is the embodiment of arrogance. He doesn't consider the other person's circumstances, and just acts as he pleases, with the mentality of crushing them because he doesn't like them. Once he remembered that that was himself, the rest was easy. He just explodes his pent-up anger and rampages as his heart dictates.

At this point, Guy finally got serious. He stopped saving his energy for the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivarage, and faced Velzard with all his heart and soul.

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Ah, he's finally gotten serious—Velzard rejoiced.

Now, finally, she can enjoy fighting in a world with just Guy. A smile naturally blossomed on her face at the thought.

(Even so, Guy is really strong.)

The battle had begun, and the day((s?)) had already passed. Although neither of them was at full strength, it was a battle in a realm that ordinary Demon Lords could not even enter.

Guy showed no weaknesses. As if he could see through their plans, he acted like a role model.

In addition, Guy was using magicules from the atmosphere to cast magic, just like humans do. In other words, he was fighting using Velzard's magic power and energy, so he wasn't wasting any of it.

Normally, this is an inefficient way to activate magic, but when Guy does it, it's a different story. He can convert magic essence into magic instantly without even generating a slight time delay.

Guy is strong.

He is the strongest among the "Primordials," and even if Velzard were to try and defeat him seriously, it's unclear whether she would be able to win. Having always been by Guy's side, Velzard knows the reason why he is the strongest. With his genius observation skills, Guy is able to understand the true nature of an ability or skill just by seeing a glimpse of it.

Therefore, all of Velzard's tricks were practically exposed. If she had only possessed [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] [King of Patience] [Gabriel], her chances of victory would have been close to zero. That's why Velzard had been preparing her secret weapon for this day. The trump card called Twilight was sealed by Testarossa's intervention. All that remained was her trump card, "[Envious King] [Leviathan]," but it seemed Guy had found out about this as well.

"He's really not letting his guard down," Velzard thought, feeling angry but also pleased at the same time. And that's exactly why Guy - the only one she recognized - made her proud.

However, she couldn't just be happy.

Velzard, who has more than twice the amount of Guy's [magicules][energy], has only one trump card left. There is only one chance to win.

Right now, she was circulating her magic essence in "[Frozen World] [Eternal World]," so it wasn't being consumed at all. However, since Guy was getting serious, she should have considered that her advantage was lost. Nevertheless, impatience is forbidden. If she revealed her hand poorly, her chances of victory would be crushed.

As before, she had to drive Guy into a corner with "[King of Patience][Gabriel]," then aim for a sure kill and attack with "[King of Jealousy][Leviathan]."

(That's why I should have prepared more trump cards before facing Guy)

It was also unexpected that Twilight's 'Dragon Body' didn't even serve as a diversion. Luck doesn't seem to be on Velzard's side, but she accepted it as fate. Since Guy is serious, her goal is as good as accomplished. Velzard flies towards Guy with all his feelings—

And so, Guy and Velzard—those who are at the pinnacle of the world, have finally become serious.

Chapter 2: Time of Despair

In the Sorcerer Dynasty of Sarion.

After seeing Benimaru and the others off, Kagali and Tear left, saying they would pursue Jahil. It may have been the right decision to stay behind, but they felt uncomfortable about meeting Elmesia and the others. Laplace, who Kagali had revived as a Deathman, was Silvia's husband and a father to Elmesia. He was no longer with us, having been annihilated by Jahil while protecting Kagali. Kagali had mixed emotions about it.

Her hatred for Jahil was immeasurable. It seemed more like her to plan revenge than to stay behind and work with Elmesia, so Kagali took action. Understanding this, Elmesia and the others saw her off without saying a word.

As for the remaining people, they collapsed from exhaustion and took a rest. The battle for the Sacred Tree was an all-out war. Everyone, led by the Heavenly Emperor Elmesia, everyone had exhausted all the power they possessed. The only one who could be said to still have some leeway was the enemy commander, Zalario.

"First of all, let's eat."

With those words from Elmesia, those who had only been watching the battle started to move hurriedly. As if it was finally their turn, the soldiers began to distribute combat rations. Cooking was even being done in various parts of the battlefield, and warm soup was prepared. It was done with great efficiency, as if they had prepared it in advance.

"I hope it suits your taste,"

As she said this, Elmesia served Zalario and the others.

"... Thank you,"

Zalario accepted the food obediently.

Zalario and the others, who had been fighting in a different world for a long time, had long forgotten the concept of eating. The stomach and other organs had long since become vestigial and lost their function. They could replenish their energy by sleeping and hydration. By sleeping, they didn't mean actually sleeping, but simply resting without moving.

Thinking back, their lives had been dull.

"For the first time, I'm glad I was incarnated," said Nice, one of Zalarios' lieutenants.

Regarding the eating situation of the Zalario army, there were large individual differences in diets. Many of the higher-ranking soldiers were impressed, but the lower-ranking soldiers had only just acquired free will. From now on, little by little, changes will occur.

"So, what do you plan to do from now on?"

After drinking the hot soup, Zalarios asked Leon a question.

"Do you want me to be your opponent?"((not sure why he's trying to start shit, maybe there was some implied dick measuring contest that was lost in translation))

Leon calmly inquired. He was elegantly enjoying his after-meal tea. He exuded a relaxed atmosphere, making it clear that he had no intention of fighting Zarario.

"Let's not do that. I want to avoid further exhaustion in preparation for the next battle."

Zarario replied in a serious manner. He is evaluated by Guy as a boring guy, but from Leon's point of view, he has a high degree of likability.

Having successfully protected the Sacred Tree, their safety was assured for the time being. However, Milim was still rampaging, and Feldway was still alive and well. If they didn't rest while they could, they would be unable to react when the time came.

"That's right," Leon nodded, also trying to enjoy a moment of peace. But the bad news was quickly delivered. The "Doomsday Declaration" that Luminas had made was also projected near the Sacred Tree.

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On a branch of the Divine Tree, dignitaries gathered on a vast leaf. As guests, Leon, Zarario, and Zarario's adjutants, Daris and Nice, also attended as guests. Since there was no time to return to the palace, makeshift desks were set up and military chairs were prepared for everyone. No one from the higher-ups complained, and an emergency countermeasures meeting began.

"Well, what should we do?"

Elmesia tilted her head, and Silvia, with the same expression, agreed, "That's troublesome."

It was the duty of all mankind to resolutely prevent the nightmare that will destroy the world, the world-destroying dragon Ivalaje from interfering with this pivotal world. However, the sad news that Rimuru had disappeared and the report that the rampaging Milim had once again headed for the Sacred Tree were brought together.

It was a major problem.

Even if they tried to consult with Benimaru and the others, they couldn't contact them. All communication lines with Tempest, as if it had been disrupted, couldn't be connected.

There was no doubt that something was happening. However, Elmesia and the others didn't have the time to worry about Tempest. They had to deal with the approaching threat of Milim themselves.

If Milim destroys the Divine Tree, it could lead to a crisis of world destruction. This was a problem that could not be ignored. This was not the time to debate which was more important.

The problem was that they simply did not have enough fighting power. In light of this, Elmesia and the others were faced with the ultimate choice.

In other words, they could abandon the Sacred Tree and join the Lubelius forces, or defend it to the death with a small number of forces available. Concentrating their forces on one point would allow them to respond more quickly to anything. However, that would be tantamount to abandoning the Sacred Tree and, by extension, the Sorcerer Dynasty of Sarion.

If no measures were taken against Milim, there was no doubt that the Sacred Tree would be destroyed along with Sarion. That being said, an army would be meaningless against her. Everyone understood this as they had seen the threat with their own eyes. A military force that was useless even against Jahil would not be able to buy time against the Milim Nava., the "Tyrant of Destruction".

Even now, Elard was in charge of overall command, guiding the evacuation of the people. They were carefully evacuating from the Divine Tree as quickly as possible so as not to cause panic.

Still, it was impossible for everyone to escape. There was not enough time.

They were abandoning all their personal possessions and fleeing with nothing but the clothes on their backs, but even with all their magical devices operating at full power, there was a limit to how much they could carry.

Besides, many people were willing to share the Sacred Tree's fate. The longer-lived they are, the more they seemed to have resigned themselves to the fact that this was the end of their days. The moment Milim arrives, their lives will be over.

The [time] of tragedy was approaching.

If they try to avoid it, the countermeasures will naturally be limited. As if to break the heavy atmosphere, Leon spoke up.

"There is no choice but to do this. I will take on Milim. Elmesia, you will fulfill your duties as the Heavenly Emperor."

Elmesia protested his statement.

"Don't underestimate me. If you're talking about responsibilities, I'll protect the Divine Tree."

"But——"

"Leon-kun, this is the time to persevere. It's not just Demon Lord Milim who's coming, Feldway is also there. The more forces you have to fight, the better, isn't it?"

Leon had no choice but to remain silent.

This is not a problem that can be solved with spirit and willpower, and even if he wins here, if Leon is defeated, Elmesia will have no choice but to step in.

It was Zarario who intervened here.

"Hmph, I have a grudge against Feldway. I'll take care of him."

Sylvia also follows suit.

"I'll join you. Leave the rest to your super-strong mom, El - you'll have to lead the people..."

She was about to say that, but Elmesia cut her off.

"There's no way I can do such a thing. The people are what make me an emperor."

The aura of the Heavenly Emperor, Elmesia, is felt even by her mother, Silvia. It's not a matter of strength, but her dignity as a ruler that overwhelmed her.

The responsibility of a ruler is heavy, as she shoulders the burden of her people. Even if it meant putting her own interests on the back burner, Elmesia has always prioritized the lives of her people. She intends to protect that pride until the very end.

However, even while doing so, Elmesia has built up an enormous personal fortune. She has a reputation for being shrewd, and she does not have such a noble spirit of self-sacrifice. Elmesia's basic philosophy is to make her people happy while also making herself even happier. Besides—

Even if she escapes now, it won't matter if the world is destroyed. If so, they should choose a proud way of life until the last moment. Leon and Zarario have no intention of retreating. They look resolute, even if guaranteed defeat awaits them. It's the same for her.

Sylvia also gives in. She wanted her daughter to be happy, but she realized that it was just her own ego. So, there was no need for further discussion.

"I understand. It seems that Veldora is heading this way too, so let's try our best to survive."

Buying time would be worth it if reinforcements were to arrive. Rather than just waiting to die, acting with a purpose gives some glimmer of hope.

"I'll leave the rest to you guys," Elmesia concluded, turning to the leaders.

The members of the Thirteen Royal Families of Sarion looked grim. Still, they didn't utter any objections, and nodded solemnly to each other. Their pride had fallen to the ground, having been protected two or three times. However, they had no choice but to accept that even if they went out, they would die in vain. It was humiliating, but they were going to cast aside those feelings and do everything they could.

And so, it was decided that four warriors would attack Milim and her group.

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The forces under Zalario's command were to help evacuate the people of Sarion.

Because the chain of command is different, it would be difficult to cooperate from the get go. Therefore, their main duties were to be on guard and provide support. Dalis and Nice were leading the charge, and seemed to be doing a good job. Seeing this, Zalario felt relieved, and sharpened his mind in preparation for Feldway's arrival.

There was no strategy to speak of. If he had to say, survival would be imperative((important?)). One hit from Milim would be instant death. Therefore, it was decided that the three people specializing in speed would confront her and try not to give her a chance to attack. If [Dragon Star Explosion Pa] [Drago Nova] was fired at the Sacred Tree, it would be over, so this strategy was judged to be the most effective.

However, this meant that Zalario would be the only one to face Feldway. That's a big responsibility— Zalario shuddered. Perhaps out of concern for Zalario, Leon called out to him.

"Are you nervous?"

"Hmph, Feldway is strong when he gets serious. I'm feeling nervous."

Feldway has even brought out his main body, and is in his complete((perfect)) form. It's a do-or-die situation, but his ((opponent's)) strength is unknown.

Even Zalario has had few opportunities to see Feldway's main body. He had not seen him since he was sealed away long ago.

He was confident that he was stronger than Feldway in terms of strength, but his overwhelming presence cannot be ignored. He has energy that is comparable to or even greater than that of a "dragon type". If he took it lightly, he could be destroyed in an instant((destroyed at a touch of the armor sleeve)).

Zalario understood this, and warned himself that he would die if he let his guard down.

"More importantly, are you guys okay?"

Zalario changed the topic.

Leon and the others were silent. Even Leon and Zalario's special moves didn't work on Milim. They were easily blocked by the [Invisible Barrier], which was merely a by-product of [Dragon Nova]. Anyone would understand that the difference in their abilities was as great as heaven and earth.

"Winning isn't my goal. I don't need to defeat her, I just need to attract attention."

Leon replied as if it was nothing. It was a very pretentious attitude, but very Leon-like. Elmesia and Silvia nodded in agreement.

"That's right. If you ask me to defeat her, I'll say it's impossible, but if I just have to face her, I think I can do it."

"That's right, that's right. We are confident in our speed alone. Leon-kun is also my disciple, so he's the best at running away, right?"

Leon made a bitter face at this.

"I've been thinking about it for a while, but could you please stop calling me 'Leon-kun'? Also, I reject the way you say 'running away.' We should use a more positive expression, shouldn't we?"

His expression showed that he had been dissatisfied with this for a long time.

"Positive, huh....."

"Operation Mosquito or something — I feel sad even saying it." ((El-chan basically cringing herself out))

Leon, who was listening, let out a big sigh.

"That's enough. It was foolish of me to expect anything from you guys."

"Sure."

"You're at that age where you want to look cool, huh?"

"....."

Leon finally fell silent.

Zalario tapped him on the shoulder and looked at him sympathetically, saying, "You're having a hard time, aren't you?" It was a silly exchange like that, but it was by no means useless. It was a way to relax a little, in order to overcome the approaching despair. It definitely worked, as the four of them were in top condition. Then, the approach of the target was confirmed.

"They're here," Zalario succinctly announced .

"I've confirmed it on this side too"

"That's incredible...to arrive in just a few hours"

Elmesia's mutter was a shared impression among everyone present.

The distance from the "Sacred Void" Damargania to here - the Sacred Tree - was over 20,000 kilometers in a straight line. It is because Milim is able to produce an abnormal flying speed of dozens of times the speed of sound that she was able to return in such a short time.

"Probably not at full power. If she was serious, she should have been faster, but are you guys really okay?"

Zalario said worriedly.

"Even if we're not okay, we have no choice but to do it"

"Well, that's how it is."

"We won't lose in terms of maximum instantaneous speed!"

Elmesia, Leon, and Silvia spoke in that order.

They were full of energy.

After that, they just had to let things be what they were.

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The moment they spotted Milim, the battle had already begun.

As planned, Leon, Elmesia, and Silvia spread out to surround Milim.

The three were all fellow disciples with Silvia as their master, so their movements were the same.((in sync?))

Curiously, even their powers were similar.

Leon's [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "Shining King [Surya]", Elmesia's [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "Wind Sky King [Vayu]", and Silvia's [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "Thunder King [Indra]" all contained powers specialized in increasing speed. Unlike Zalarion, they did not have wings, but all three could fight in the air without any problems. By fixing the space with their abilities to make a foothold, they were able to run through the sky freely.

It was thought that they could confuse Milim by making full use of this. Furthermore, they worked together in perfect harmony, and in that sense, they were the best team, even though it was an impromptu one. And so, the three spread out and took turns to step forward, keeping Milim in check.

"I'll go first."

Leon was the first to take on the challenge. It was the most dangerous role, but he had taken it on naturally. Without waiting for a reply, Leon made his move.

"—[Flash Break Spirit Smash][Melt Breaker]"

It was one of Leon's secret techniques. The principle was the same as Hinata's Melt Slash. The only difference was that Leon controlled the "spiritons" with his power. Needless to say, Leon's ability is superior in safety and stability, and it is possible to maintain a high-power slash for a long time. If this is unleashed with all his might, it will become [Hundred Break Light Spirit Smash][Hundred Breaker], but it wouldn't work anyway, so he decided to wait and see.

Was that decision right or wrong?---

"Tch, you're not even going to defend yourself!?" Leon blurted out, frustrated.

It was the ultimate [God] weapon, a [Holy Flame Rapier] - a [Flame Pillar], clad in the light of [Disintegration]((Spiriton Collapse)), a sure-kill sword capable of slaying even a Demon Lord.

And yet Milim continued flying towards the Sacred Tree as if she didn't care at all. As they passed each other, it hit her directly.

Leon's arm felt a definite response, and he was startled for a moment, wondering if he had inflicted a serious injury, but it seemed that it was unnecessary worry. Leon was well aware that he might have underestimated Milim's [Stampede].

On her back were a pair of jet-black wings. The single crimson horn that grew from her forehead further increased its brilliance and shone in rainbow colors. Her bare skin, except for her face, was covered in hard, glowing dragon scales with mysterious patterns floating on them. Milim's combat form looked sinister, but it wasn't just her appearance that had changed. Even her abilities had become extraordinary.

Leon's sword only managed to wound Milim's [dragon scales][ryuurin]. Even the "spiritons" that cut through everything could not break Milim's "star particles". Moreover, [dragon scales][ryuurin] regrew. If regeneration can keep up, they will grow anew, so the actual damage was zero.

Leon had told himself that it was no problem because he had no intention of defeating her, but no matter how you look at it, anyone could see that he's just being sore about it. Sylvia followed up on Leon's attack, but the result was similar. It's a complete loss of face for the teacher, but no one can blame her here.

"As expected, it's impossible, impossible, isn't it?" Sylvia grumbled.

".....Hmph, you knew that from the beginning, didn't you?"

Leon replies with a straight face, but it was too hollow((?)). Even using their ultimate techniques, they can't even stall her. It's no wonder their morale is waning. At this point, Elmesia shouted to encourage the two who were feeling down.

"Okay, yes. I'll increase your speed with the blessing of the wind, so keep provoking her without giving up!"

Hearing that, Leon and Sylvia regained their spirits. Whether it's sour grapes or putting on a brave face, it's over if they lose their spirit here. As Elmesia says, if it doesn't work once, just try again.

"I'll go again"

"I'll follow you!"

Leon and Sylvia launch a series of attacks, and Elmesia supports them. Such a flow naturally developed, and wave attacks were repeated against Milim. And finally, Milim moved slightly.

The color of joy was about to appear on Leon and Sylvia's faces—but in the next moment, they were blown away by a sweeping gust of wind.

Immediately afterwards, a mass of magical power flew over where they were, causing a huge explosion in the distance. That explosion was Milim's doing. Perhaps she found their attacks annoying, as she casually fired a magical bullet.

Elmesia noticed it quickly and blew the two away a step earlier.

"If you're careless, you'll really die....."

Elmesia warned with a pale face, and Leon and Sylvia simply nodded silently.

Zalario was facing Feldway. The two stood frozen in mid-air, facing each other. Feldway was the first to speak.

"Why did you betray me?"

Hearing this, even the gentle Zarario felt indignant. The whole thing started when Feldway tried to manipulate Zalario. He ignored that and forced his own selfish convenience, Zarario couldn't stand it.((?)) As if to express his dissatisfaction, he retorts sharply.

"That's my line, isn't it? Why did you even dominate me?"

He tried to hear Feldway's side of things, but what came back was a logic that Zarario could not understand.

"Domination? I didn't intend to do that. I just made our bond stronger with my ability. That way, my orders can be transmitted smoothly, right?"

Feldway's way of thinking was hard to understand.

".....What are you talking about?"

Zarario asked back, genuinely perplexed. But this didn't work either. Feldway, unable to understand why Zalario was angry, spoke his own thoughts.

"You guys were my friends. In that case, what's the problem with unifying our will?"

Unifying their will means completely obeying Feldway. There is no need for individual wills there, and objections are not allowed. That was a statement that completely ignored Zarario and the others. Zalario was horrified.

(Does this guy not even have a concept of respecting others?)

If conversation cannot be established to this point, mutual understanding is impossible—Zarario had no choice but to conclude.

Feldway was carrying loneliness. He had carried too much, and it had broken him. Zalario realized this and regretted not noticing the change in his friend. But then he thought to himself that there might still be time. He should have tried to persuade Feldway, at the very least, while he was willing to continue the conversation.

Moreover, Feldway's power, which he brought out to his main body, lightly overwhelmed Zarario. Zarario, who saw it up close, felt Feldway's aura with his skin and reaffirmed it.

(It's more than I expected. With this, it's as if the real VeldaNava-sama has been resurrected.....)

Looks, demeanor, everything is exactly the same. Although there are minor differences such as the color of his hair, the current Feldway was exactly like the "Star King Dragon" VeldaNava in Zarario's memory. To be honest, he didn't feel like he could win. If it was just about buying time, it would be safer and more reliable to continue persuading him rather than fighting.

Wracking his brains over where to start, Zalario began gravely.

"Veldanava-sama wouldn't want the world to collapse, would he?"

"How can you be so sure?"

"Why?"

"Hmph, you probably don't know this, but that person tolerated everything. In a world rich in diversity, he allowed each lifeform to evolve freely. What do you think lies beyond that?"

"....."

"Strife. The world will come to an end as a result of the fierce struggle for survival."

"Isn't the existence of the Demon Lords there to prevent that? In other words, Veldanava-sama also wishes for peace in the world--"

Feldway looked at Zalario with pity as he argued.

"Wrong. You see, I've noticed something."

"What--?"

"All the life forms born into this world were not "allowed" to evolve. Rather, on the contrary, weren't they "destined" to aim for it..."

Feldway's remark troubled Zalario.

There is a big difference between being allowed and being destined. Because it would be an obligation, not freedom. However, only Veldanava himself knows the truth. No matter how Feldway, a third party, interprets it, it is only the truth for that person. Humans are creatures who believe what they want to believe. If they neglect the most important part, whether that belief is correct or not, they will never reach the path of truth.

(Even Feldway, an administrator who should understand this, is treading the same path as the foolish and insignificant ones.....)

The words of God must be conveyed correctly, without alteration. Each person should interpret them at their own risk.

However, if an influential person proceeds with things based on a wrong interpretation, it will cause unhappiness to the many people who follow them... and this is where the barrier of difficulty in understanding words comes in. With Feldway, the right-hand man of God - Veldanava, in this state, Zalario was overwhelmed by how difficult it must be for him to lead humanity.

However-

(First of all, Veldanava-sama is not omniscient and omnipotent. He said that he himself makes mistakes, and it is inevitable that we, his creations, will make mistakes...)

This was Zalario's understanding. It was useful information as a basis for judging how to persuade Feldway from here.

"If what lies ahead of aiming for evolution is strife, then that is the will of God. In order to reach even higher heights, Dagrue, Twilight, and even Zeran, who was born in the "different world," were given the "destiny" of "surpassing their parents"—"

"....."

"It was a feeling that was difficult for us, who were born perfect, to understand, but I feel that I have understood it a little."

Zalario braced himself for what he was about to say. In any case, in order to be able to refute whatever is said, he must not miss Feldway's words.

(Obera was better at this sort of thing...)

His reliable colleague had now turned into an ice statue. With no hope of reinforcements, it was time for Zalario to do his best. He listened to Feldway's words with determination.

"To "surpass one's parents" is, in other words, to "kill God." Those people were able to gain a solid connection by struggling to surpass Veldanava-sama. I don't even have that....."

Feldway speaks with a sad look in his eyes. Zalario spent a tense moment not understanding how the conversation was coming together. It would be fine if it could buy him some time, but putting up with a former friend who was talking about things he couldn't understand was more mentally painful than he had imagined.

However, Zalario's earnestness was one of his redeeming features. I'd have to endure this, Zalario thought, gritting his teeth.

"What I can do is—yes! To fulfill the wish that VeldaNava-sama desired!!"

"--!?"

"The destination of those who aim for evolution—the destruction of the world, I will accomplish it with my own hands. That is the only mission left for me."

Feldway declared with a refreshing look on his face. No, no, no--Zalario was troubled as to how to respond.

"Isn't that a misunderstanding on your part? What are you going to do if Velda Nava-sama did not wish for the destruction of the world?"

What he came up with was a righteous argument.

Since he wasn't directly ordered to do so, stop acting on your own judgment. In other words, that's what Zalario tried to say.

However, Feldway's response to this left Zalario speechless.

"Well, that's fine. If a foolish subordinate is trying to go down the wrong path, shouldn't the lord fulfill his responsibility and stop him?"

"Huh--"

"You see, I'm angry. At the foolish humans who killed God, and at all those who allowed it to happen—"

Feldway pauses here.

Then he pours out all his anger at once.

"And even more so, at Veldanava-sama, who has yet to be resurrected."
In other words, he's angry at Veldanava.

He has been left in the "other world" for a long time, and he probably feels that he has been abandoned.

However, to Zalario, this logic was laughable.

His face was so identical to Veldanava's that he felt like saying "Do be so selfish((spoiled))".

Among the "Seven Primordial Angels," Feldway was the one who was most favored by VeldaNava. He was the most trusted and valued. Which is why he must have been given the important mission of watching over the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivalaje.

Above all, Feldway's body itself is proof of that. While Veldanava had long jet black hair that bore the brilliance of the stars, like the world itself, Feldway's long silvery hair represented a shining light. Veldanava himself had created a body identical to his own and given it to Feldway. It was hard to believe that he would still complain after receiving such special treatment.

That was Zalario's opinion.

"Don't be so selfish."

"What?"

"Don't forget your mission and don't make up selfish excuses!!"

Zalario barked. As a warrior, he was disgusted by Feldway's weakness. There were some parts of what Feldway was saying that were understandable. That was certainly true, but it was a matter of him saying it. At the very least, he should have consulted with the Zalarios, who were in the same position as him. If he felt that Veldanava had abandoned him, then what about his treatment of Zarario and the others?

Feldway is too selfish.

He himself was using others as he pleased, so there was no way to sympathize with him.

"Draw your sword. I'll re-temper((train)) your spirit."

Zarario declared that and drew his strong sword and took a stance.

Zalario's sword, which can cut even Insectar monsters with a strong exoskeleton made of bio-diverse steel (Arionium), is, needless to say, a [Mythic Grade]. Although he may not be as strong as Feldway in overall strength, he is confident that he is superior in skill. He wanted to give him a painful blow and wake him up. Feldway looked coldly at Zalario, who was determined to fight.

"Are you sure? Even if you don't buy time?"

No matter how insane he was, Feldway's mind was still intact. He had seen through Zalario's intentions from the beginning and was just going along with the farce.

"...I don't care."

Zalario realized that persuasion was useless from the start. Feldway knew that they were just trying to buy time until Veldora arrived...

"Then prepare yourself."

Feldway also drew his sword. Seeing the "[Void][Ark]" held in his hand, Zalario felt a little sad. He swallowed the words "I guess we're no longer friends," and launched a sword attack at Feldway.

By the time the full-scale battle between Zalario and Feldway had begun, Milim's team were quickly driven to their limits. They could not let their guard down for even a moment, and continued to respond like they were walking a tightrope.

In any case, they repeatedly provoked Milim so that she would not be in a position to fire [Dragon Star Explosion Flame] [Drago Nova]. The basic pattern was for the two of them to attack, but there was also a pattern where Elmesia would intervene depending on the situation.

If they were hit, it was an instant end, so all three of them ignored defense. They just put all their effort into speed and confused Milim. All three are at the top of this world, and they are called one of the strongest. Even so, this passive strategy is also sad, but it can't be helped because Milim is that dangerous.

Hoping that they could buy even a little time, the three continued their desperate struggle. However, they suddenly reached their limit. Elmesia, who was focusing on providing support, was targeted by Milim. Despite being out of control, Milim's fighting instincts were outstanding. She realized that Elmesia was the key to the three-way cooperation, and ignored Leon and Silvia as she relentlessly pursued her.

At this point, there was practically no other option. They had been trying to keep Milim's attention distracted, but there was nothing they could do if she didn't react. The only remaining means is for the targeted person to continue to run away.

Bad things happen in succession.

The plan was based on the premise that Leon's maximum instantaneous speed was faster than Milim's, but in just a short time Milim's reaction speed was increasing. It was bottomless, and Leon and the others were gradually losing their advantage. Moreover, out of the three who specialized in speed, Elmesia was the slowest. Since she was the target, it was only a matter of time before she was captured.

"This is bad——"

"Damn, she's completely ignoring lightning attacks. She's unharmed even when hit directly, there's no way to stop her..."

Leon and Silvia's frustration only grew, and time passed without them being able to do anything. Elmesia, who was the target, made up her mind.

"This is impossible.....there's no way to shake her off."

Even if they tried to toy with Milim with an irregular trajectory, all of her movements were captured by her "Magic Perception".

"Good grief.....even though she's this incredible, she's only acting on instinct. Rimuru-chi was really able to deal with Milim in this state....."

Even now, Elmesia understands just how amazing Rimuru is. In no time, Rimuru subjugated the monsters of the forest and brought about civilization. He is a great man who would rarely be rivaled no matter which era you look at. Even though he's a monster. The speed of his development was frightening, and from Elmesia's point of view, it was dangerous. When she first saw him making the "Primordial Demon" his subordinate, she doubted his sanity. Moreover, when the number increased from one to four, she almost screamed, "That's crazy!!". When Elmesia asked what they would do if the "Primordial" - Diablo - went berserk, Rimuru calmly replied, "I'll stop him before he goes berserk.". At that time, she didn't take it seriously, but only admired his composure.....

That was his true intention, wasn't it—Elmesia is now belatedly convinced. Rimuru's ideals stirred Elmesia's withered heart.

(Ah, that was fun—)

She conspired with Rimuru, Gard, and Myormiles, who were humans, and even created a secret society. They established a new ruling system in the Western countries that were dominated by the Rozzo family. They tried to make it a reality, not just a dream, so that as many people as possible would not fall behind. A good-natured, unexpectedly careless, yet cunning...a friend full of humanity. That was the slime called Rimuru.

He is also a person whom Elmesia respects, who can overcome any difficulty. Although she will never say it to him. Rimuru's existence was like a wild card in a card game. As an absolute trump card, just having it gives you a sense of security.

(I wonder what Rimtchi is doing now...)

She was more worried about Rimuru's whereabouts than Luminas's "End Proclamation" or Milim's rampage. Now that the sense of security that if Rimuru is there, everything will work out, is lost, Elmesia's responsibility was grave.

She was putting her heart into it thinking so, but this is the situation. If things stay like this, she won't be able to face Rimuru in the afterlife, Elmesia thought.

(Well, he's probably living his life somewhere, nonchalantly, though...)

Elmesia couldn't imagine Rimuru being put in a difficult situation. That's because Rimuru always managed to do something, even in situations that seemed hopeless to the outsider.

She thought that Elmesia should follow his example...

(Is this a dying flashback?) —Elmesia thought.

Milim was closing in. She will probably catch up soon. This meant that the game of tag, as they ran around the sacred tree, would soon come to an end. And with it, Elmesia's life—

『El-chan—!?!』

『Damn, don't give up!』

She could hear the "thoughts" of Sylvia and Leon shouting. Elmesia understood too. If she gave up, she would die. But—it's impossible, that's just how it is. Leon was coming towards her with a desperate look, as if trying to exceed his limits. But he couldn't catch up with Milim.

In ultra-high-speed aerial combat, it took time for them to reset after passing each other. If they had been chasing each other on the same trajectory, it would have been one thing, but no matter how superior Leon's skill or level, it would have been impossible for him to overtake Milim, whose speed was constantly increasing, and protect Elmesia.

Of course, even if he had arrived in time, they would both have been killed. Demon Lord Milim was a true Transcendent.

Daughter of the Creator God, Dragon Princess.

The Lord of many legends.

The real thing was so amazing that all of those things faded away. When she was next to Rimuru, she just looked like an ordinary girl... Now she was nothing more than a natural disaster. The approaching ultra-high density energy body would pulverize Elmesia with a single collision. Even her majesty Elmesia, one of the strongest in the world, was now just waiting for her end.

(That's why, Leon-kun, you don't have to think it's all your fault, okay?)

Despite his cool appearance, the Demon Lord Leon is easily moved to tears and has a passionate soul. He's always been misunderstood, and now he is a master of playing the villain, but from Elmesia's point of view, he is a lovable younger disciple. Elmesia wanted to do something for him at the end, but there was no time left.

Elmesia closed her eyes.

But at that moment—

She thought she heard a cry of "Kyui—!!"

It must have been an illusion, since it cannot reach before Milim, who is approaching at dozens of times the speed of sound, it must be an illusion. But the impact that should have come didn't come. Realizing that something was wrong, Elmesia opened her eyes slightly and saw a shocking sight.

"—!?"

A [Mini-Dragon] with a total length of just under one meter was flying in front of Elmesia, turning its back as if to protect her. When Milim saw the [mini dragon] and heard its voice, she stopped moving for a moment. That gap saved Elmesia.

And then—

Floating with the [small dragon] [mini-dora] in her arms was a young girl. Her hair was a rare color. It was a mix of black and silver—in any case, she was a beautiful girl with mysterious hair color.

Leon started making a fuss in the distance, but from Elmesia's point of view, it didn't matter. She was captivated by the girl and was at a loss for words. The girl was one of the children Rimuru was looking after, and her true identity was—

"No, Gaia. It's dangerous here, so stay quiet."

And with that, the girl entrusted the [small dragon] [mini-dora] to Elmesia. Then she turned to Milim and prepared herself as if she was going to fight. At first glance, it seemed reckless. But Elmesia was relieved. Now her hope was confirmed. Because that girl is—the one who carries the fate of this world.

"I'll be your opponent."

When she said this, the girl was gone. Instead, there was a beautiful woman with long, black-silver hair sprinkled with silver light, fluttering smoothly. In her hand is the "Moon Goddess

Sword," and protecting her body is "Spirit Armament". Needless to say, her true identity was Chloe, the "Hero," in combat form.

*

Chloe created a [Barrier] to deflect Milim's charge. With this, Elmesia escaped the danger. And immediately after that, the summit((?)) battle between Milim and Chloe began.

Leon and Sylvia came to Elmesia's side, who was catching his breath.

"I'm glad you're safe."

"Yes, really..."

"It's all thanks to the incredibly beautiful Chloe. You should be grateful."

"Why are you acting so arrogant all of a sudden, Leon-kun?"

"Really, that's right. You're even saying 'incredible,' Leon-kun, you sometimes get weird."

"Shut up."

Leon, who returned to a serious expression, stopped the chatter mother and daughter. If he didn't retort he'd be teased forever, so it is the correct answer to cut it off neatly.

Apart from that, it's true that everyone was saved by Chloe's arrival.

"Kyui!!" cried Gaia, the little dragon held by Elmesia.

.....

.....

...

Why was Gaia here? Currently, the "Control Room" in the labyrinth of Tempest, the Land of Monsters, was the safest place in the world. Therefore, the waiting room next to the "Control Room" was used as a shelter for pregnant people like Momiji and Alvis, as well as children.

The awakened Chloe was also there. It was explained to everyone that she was feeling unwell, and she had evacuated with Kenya and Alice(, and the others)), and they had been playing board games together to ease their anxiety. She was working hard to recover her physical strength((nani?)) so that she could fight in case of emergency.

But then, it was reported that the "Evil Dragon Beast" unleashed by Vega was approaching, heading for the lowest level. Hakurou, who was their guardian and bodyguard, had been dispatched to intercept it. Immediately after that, something strange happened to Gaia.

Only Chloe was able to react.

Intuitively, she guessed that something must have happened to the one connected to Gaia - Demon Lord Milim. This meant that Rimuru, who was trying to do something about Milim, was also caught up in a serious situation. There was no way Chloe could stay quiet.

She sensed the signs of Gaia trying to perform a "space-time jump" while being pulled by the "soul" bond with Milim, and came along so that the others wouldn't notice.

.....
.....
...

Just in the nick of time, the "hero" Chloe arrived. Leon and the others accepted the situation obediently.

"As expected, the "masked hero" who is said to be the strongest of all time is different..."

Ermesia exclaimed in admiration. The masked figure is dignified and cool, but the bare face is beautiful and cute, and she is excited((probably meaning doki-doki)).

Leon nodded vigorously and said, "That's right," in agreement.

"She's a little stronger than me. It's only natural that she's the strongest of all time."

He even adds a convenient embellishment for himself while praising Chloe. It was Elmesia's mother, Sylvia, who put a stop to this remark.

"Wait a moment. The strongest is Rudra, the 'Hero of the Beginning.' His disciple, the "Dawn Hero" Granbell, is also hard to throw away, but after all, he is inferior in ability."

She began to talk about heroes, even adding some trivia. Silvia, who is married to Sarion, the 'Wandering Hero,' was a serious 'Hero' buff. From her perspective, she was not convinced by the theory that Chloe was the strongest.((fkn powerscalers everywhere, inbound clayman calculus))

"Why? She's obviously the strongest!"

Elmesia passionately stated as she looked at Chloe fighting in front of her with admiration. Chloe's actual age is far below Elmesia's. She has just turned twelve, and is so young that she

cannot be compared to Elmesia, who is over two thousand years old. However, Chloe's years of experience are reflected in her strength, a time that cannot be expressed in numbers.

From Elmesia's point of view, it is natural to call her "that person"((probably some honorific stuff lost in translation)) and admire her.

Her existence is in the shadow of history. As far as Elmesia knows, the "Masked Hero" Chronoa has saved the world from crisis many times.

However,

That being said, Silvia had a point. The heroic tale of Rudra, the "Original Hero," was reality for Silvia, who lived in the same era. As far as Silvia knew, Rudra was the only one who could fight on equal terms with that strongest demon lord, Guy Crimson. Emphasizing this point, Silvia enthusiastically "promoted" Rudra. In a sense, they were a similar mother and daughter.

But then, Leon's opinion tipped the scales.

"Hmph, I'll admit that this Rudra guy is a great person. If he was able to draw with that Guy, then his abilities must be solid. But Chloe is a perfect beautiful girl who also combines beauty and loveliness. In that respect, it can be said that the order of superiority is clear!!"

Leon stated this ridiculous reasoning with a straight face. Elmesia nodded with a smile, while Silvia, who was at a disadvantage, clicked her tongue resentfully.

"Hey! You're the really out of reach 'Blonde Hero', can you just keep quiet and stay there?"

Sylvia said, venting her frustration on Leon. Leon was a former 'hero' too, but he was treated poorly. From the point of view of Sylvia, who is a "Hero" maniac, Leon's evaluation was the lowest.

Unlike Elmesia and the others, who were relieved and excited, Chloe's expression was stiff. The reason is... Chloe had been defeated by the Demon Lord Milim many times in the past. She had even faced Milim as the strongest 'hero', Chronoa.

And yet she couldn't win.

After Rimuru's death, Milim went into a "Stampede" state, slaughtering the strong with tremendous power. Chloe was one of them, and since she remembered her appearance and the situation, it was impossible for her not to feel nervous. But there was hope. The current Chloe is much stronger than the Chronoa in her memory because she has all three elements of "Courage, Hope, and Justice". Moreover—Chloe, who woke up from her sleep, was more deeply in sync with the [Manas] "Chronoa". Chronoa's ego naturally disappeared as Chloe accepted it. No, that wasn't actually the case. As Chloe grew up, the role of the [Manas]

Chronoa came to an end. And at that point, Chronoa had returned to the past and assimilated with the young Chloe.

"Don't worry. I'll pretend to be driven mad and guide you so that you can definitely reach this future."

That is Chronoa's determination. It was sad to part ways with Rimuru, but Chronoa smiled. Because, yes. I'm sure we'll meet again——

Chloe, who doesn't know that, is no longer a young child. She is the strongest "Hero" that Chronoa believed would be okay.

In the future world that Chloe remembers, Chronoa was doing her best just to master the [Ultimate Skill] "[King of Space-Time][Yog-Sothoth]." But now she was strong enough to reign at the top of the world, Chloe now had awakened to her [Ultimate Skill] "[God of Space-Time][Yog-Sothoth]."

This was something else.

Even without the [Wisdom Core] [Manas] "Chronoa", she had naturally become able to control the power. Responding to Gaia's wish, she "space-time jumped" to Milim in an instant, Chloe understood what she had to do.

(That's what sensei, Rimuru-san, wants——)

Milim must not be allowed to commit any more crimes. This very moment was the reason why Chloe had obtained the power.

"I will protect your destiny."

"Gaa——!!"

As if responding to Chloe's declaration, Milim roared.

The air trembled.

Thus, with the hopes of humanity on her back, the "Hero" entered the battle.

Chloe chose a long-term battle. Against Milim, who has an inexhaustible amount of energy, it is normally a bad move. But Chloe didn't hesitate.

The reason is that, based on her experience of fighting Milim many times, she is convinced that it is the best way. Chloe blocked the dragon fist that Milim unleashed with her "[Moon Goddess Sword.]" The [Moonlight] which has evolved to [Mythic Grade] easily withstood Milim Nava's fist pressure, which is the strongest Demon Lord, and was not broken. But that was only possible

due to Chloe's outstanding skill. She was subtly diverting the power and acting so as not to receive a direct hit from Milim.

Chloe timed her counter well and deflected Milim's dragon fist. She was about to follow up when-

"Gofu!!"

-- Chloe spat out blood and lost all strength from her body.

Milim's tail had pierced Chloe's abdomen. With movements unconstrained by convention, Milim toyed with Chloe.

No —— she was supposed to confound her.((?))

Chloe had vomited blood and was fatally wounded, but her face had returned to its former beauty as if nothing had happened((healing lost in translation?)). And calmly, she aimed her sword at Milim.

There was no scar on her abdomen, and her clothes didn't look torn. Her "Spirit Armament" was still intact, and strangely enough, it was as if Milim's attack earlier had been a dream or an illusion——

At that moment, Milim launched a fierce attack. Unlike before, Chloe avoided the attack with a blank expression. A dragon fist and tail passed in front of her eyes. The opportunity to launch a counterattack was lost, but it was a repetition of the previous scene. However, this time, as if to say that it was the correct answer((probably means "as if to say she knew the future")), there was no mistake in Chloe's movements.

Yes, that was only natural. Because Chloe knows the correct choice((same)).

In fact, Chloe almost died in the previous offensive and defensive battle. However, when she realized her mistake, she activated her ability——[Ultimate Skill] "[God of Space-Time][Yog-Sothoth]" and made it as if nothing had happened. Experiencing something once, then returning to the past - this was the true essence of Chloe's power.

By making full use of "[God of Space-Time][Yog-Sothoth]," Chloe was able to freely jump only her "consciousness" to the past. By dwelling in and synchronizing with the "existing" self there, she can recall the memories experienced in the future.

In other words, Chloe was always able to choose the best move. This was an absolute advantage in battle. Chloe was able to compete alone against Milim, an opponent who would not allow even a slight mistake. The reason for that was thanks to "[God of Space-Time][Yog-Sothoth]," which allows her to know the future.((love when fuse repeats the

same shit 3 times in a row trying to pad the scene. Probably some artistic differences in original j, but this don't translate well in english))

The greatest advantage of this power is that it consumes no energy. In the future, energy would be consumed, but in the present, nothing is consumed. Chloe had chosen a long-term battle in order to take advantage of this power.

Chloe knew. It was impossible to defeat Milim. So the only option was to suppress and neutralize her. So Chloe knew very well that she was the best person for that role.

"Amazing..."

Elmesia muttered.

There were no mistakes in Chloe's fighting. It was as if she had read everything into her mind, and she brought the battle smoothly and perfectly into the way it should be. It was a beautiful, waste-free battle, like a dance. Moreover, the impact on the surroundings was minimal.

How much concentration is needed to perform such a feat...?

Even now, Chloe perfectly controlled Milim. It would have looked as if Milim had rushed into the place where Chloe had evaded, and a stray magic bullet fired by Feldway happened to land there.((??))

But the reality was different.

With conviction, Chloe chooses the optimal action as planned. All that remained was a perfect and ultimate result. To everyone watching besides Chloe, it was an unrealistic sight.

But, even with the overwhelming ability to recall future memories, Chloe had no room for mistakes. With Milim as her opponent, she could never let her guard down.

In fact, Chloe had already made several blunders that had resulted in fatal injuries. Milim acted on instinct, but her combat sense, which even transcends [skill], remained intact.

(Really, she's strong. She might be even better than Guy...)

That was Chloe's true feeling. Guy could probably match up with her using skill. A high-level psychological warfare, where they read each other's intentions, might work.

For Chloe, who knows the future, such an opponent is easy to deal with. But Milim is different. Moreover, it was impossible to kill her with a single blow. Unlike Rimuru, Chloe can be as cold-hearted as possible if she judges it to be the best option. Naturally, she tried to eliminate Milim with this in mind. But it led to the worst possible outcome.

None of Chloe's secret techniques worked on Milim. Even the strongest mental magic, [Invitation to the Abyss][Hypnos], has no effect. The normally strongest technique, "[Absolute End]," is also blocked by the [barrier] and does not work on Milim. If she tries to seal her with "[Infinity Prison]," she'll easily break through and come out... Even Chloe's "[Reverse Fate]," which leads to the desired result, could not bring Milim back to her senses. It was proven that unless the cause of her rampage was removed, the best outcome would not be achieved.

So she had no choice but to use "[Fatal Lost]"((?)), her strongest technique that crushes her with time "thickness", but—this was the worst. This technique accelerates the time flow of the target and takes them to the very end of time, making it an ultimate technique that no living being can withstand.

However—it was different for Milim.

All it did was allow her to accumulate more power, which ended up destroying the world.

Even Chloe was stunned by this.

[Dragon Star Flame Blast][Drago Nova] was fired repeatedly as if playing, and the base((prime)) world collapsed in an instant. After witnessing the whole thing to the end, Chloe returned to the past... but she made a firm commitment to herself that this was a nightmare that must never be repeated.

However, the situation was only getting worse.

Chloe tried various things and acted carefully, but there were times when she moved greatly at the risk of taking damage. It may seem like she misread the situation, but that is not the case.

There were times when Milim's attack motion would directly lead to [Dragon Star Explosion][Dragon Nova]. If this was left unchecked, the Sacred Tree would be shattered. Or, great damage would occur on the ground. In order to prevent that, Chloe had to push herself, even if it meant making some sacrifices.

(That's tough—)

Chloe thought calmly.

Despite continuing to choose the best move, Chloe had suffered greater damage. As opposed to that, Milim had not even been able to feel any pain or discomfort, and the situation was still unfathomable.

Chloe is undoubtedly one of the strongest. She could fight evenly with the Hero Rudra and the Demon Lord Guy. The many ultimate techniques are so powerful that they are unparalleled.

However..

The Demon Lord Milim was a tough opponent.

How much more time could she buy...? The pain seemed endless, as she continued to read the future. But even so, Chloe wouldn't give up.

Yes, it was almost time——

"I'll join——"

"Never mind that, take the front!"

"Eh?"

"No 'eh'! Hurry!!"

Veldora flew in at hypersonic speed—but before he could even say hello properly, he was placed under Chloe's command. There was no time to boast. But that was fine. Finally, Chloe had some leeway. Veldora is pitiful, but that was also his fate.

*

Veldora had suffered an unreasonable experience.

(Wait, wait, wait, this is strange!! When I appear as a helper, shouldn't the people who were in a pinch greet me with appreciation and gratitude? But, why.....?)

Standing in front of Milim and exposed to her onslaught, Veldora was very confused. He should have been praised, but he was overworked. Zalarion was also having a hard time against Feldway, but his misfortune is not comparable to Veldora's.

"Leon-onii-chan, you've rested enough, right? Go ahead and support that person over there!"

"What do you mean?"

"Move quickly!"

"Okay..."

Perhaps it is the fate of an older brother to be manipulated by his younger sister's whims. Even if they are not related by blood... Moreover, to Leon, Chloe is an extremely beautiful girl and a beloved younger sister. When ordered, the only answer he is allowed to say is "YES."

While thinking that it was a reward, Leon went to support Zarario. That way of thinking is quite unusual, but he maintains a cool image because he doesn't say it out loud. Leon made an effort to show Chloe how cool he is. Encouraged by this, Elmesia also plunged into the Feldway battle.

"I'll avoid direct combat so as not to get in the way!"

After saying this, she resumed her support role.

Elmesia's [Ultimate Skill] "[King of the Sky][Vayu]" specializes in manipulating the atmosphere. Since a foothold is important for a swordsman, she fixed the space in line with Leon's movements and adjusted it so that he could use the recoil((reaction force)) as well.

This was a great help for Leon. Zarario and Feldway have wings, so they are also skilled in aerial combat using swords. However, Leon's specialty is ground combat. It's fine if you're just holding back Milim, but if you want to counterattack when you see an opening, it's better to have a proper foothold. With Elmesia's participation, not only Leon but also Zarario's momentum increased. After all, it is more convenient for swordsmen to have a foothold.

And on top of that, Silvia wasn't slacking off either. She was deeply regretful that she had been unable to do anything when her daughter, Elmesia, was in danger earlier. She was on edge and ready to deal with the next time she found herself in the same situation.

Leon, Elmesia, and Silvia. All three of them have the ability that specializes in increasing speed, but in fact each of them has their own unique characteristics.

Elmesia has excellent endurance and is the fastest when it comes to traveling long distances.

In contrast to her, Silvia had the fastest short-distance power, the Ultimate Skill "Thunder King Indra."

Naturally, Silvia also has the shortest time to reach top speed, boasting a speed of 100 kilometers per second, unmatched by anyone, not even Milim.

However, this requires prior preparation. If she could move freely, Silvia would be known as the strongest. However, this was not the case. Just as lightning advances after partially ionizing the air that didn't conduct electricity to create a path, Silvia's movement required a similar process. The weakness of this power - "Lightning Speed" - was that it was not possible to change trajectory freely in an instant.

Still, there's no doubt that it's useful. If that speed is utilized properly, even if someone gets into a pinch, it should be possible to avoid it.((??))

Sylvia believed so and determined her own role.

With the situation now three plus one, Zarario's psychological and physical burden was also reduced, and a way out began to be seen in the battle against Feldway.

However, this was not the case for Veldora. He suddenly entered the real battle without any explanation of the situation. What's more, if he made even the slightest mistake, he would be harshly scolded by Chloe. Unlike Leon, Veldora had no interest in being scolded. Rather, because of the terrifying experiences his two older sisters had instilled in him, the psychological trauma of "beautiful women = scary things" had been engraved in his [heart] without him even realizing it.

This meant that Veldora was unable to resist Chloe and was manipulated at will.

"There! You can't use brute force against Milim!! Be sure to deflect it."

"Uh, okay!"

Veldra was strictly reprimanded just for trying to catch Milim's fist and bring it into a power struggle. It made him sad, but needless to say, Chloe's instructions were spot on. She was being strict because she didn't have the time, but everything she said had meaning.

Chloe had rewound time countless times to test out Milim's power, and she had come to one conclusion. In other words, Milim's power was limitless, and the more she resisted, the more her power would increase.

This was not wrong.

Milim's [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[Wrathful King] [Satanael]" was a very simple and straightforward ability. It had the effect of generating and amplifying magical energy in response to Milim's rage. There is no limit to its power, and if it goes out of control, it may "infinitely proliferate."

Chloe had almost accurately guessed that and was trying to stop Milim from using her power.

The more Milim activates ``[Wrathful King] [Satanael]," the more she will have to defend with even more power. Not strengthening Milim any further was the most important thing in this battle.

"I'm sorry. I don't have time to explain, so please just follow my instructions for now."

"Hmm, there's a reason? Alright. Then I will follow you!!"

Chloe was aware of the risks, and performed ``Thought Transmission" on Veldora. Chloe was the strongest solo, so she was not used to fighting in cooperation. Considering the possibility that her plan might be intercepted, she didn't want to reveal her true intentions.

Veldra accepted this.

Or rather, he had no intention of opposing it. Since he couldn't complain at this point, there was no way he could turn the tables. He followed Chloe's lead and was worked like a horse.

*

Feldway was by no means a good swordsman. His overall strength was superior to Zalario's, but if we looked only at combat ability, there was a chance that Zalario could win. However, that is a story on the premise that "Feldway has not brought out his main body." Now that Feldway had revealed his true form, he was a much more overwhelming presence than before. Looking only at his energy and ability values, he was several times stronger than Zalario in all aspects. He was not an opponent that could be defeated in a normal fight.

Since Zalario's only advantage was in swordsmanship, there was no chance of victory unless he found an opportunity. Zalario had been exerting all his strength against Feldway from the first move. He launched a fierce attack, saying that if there was no gap, he would create one. Then, he felt something was off.

(Was this guy really that strong?)

The reason he felt that way was because his sword was so easily deflected. Zalario is calm and collected. He is a warrior who does a good job steadily, without overestimating his own strength. His skill and power level are also high. His unadorned swordsmanship without using many techniques is simple and sturdy, and he is a master of the "Strong Sword" that can cut down any enemy with a single slash. Though not as good as Feldway's "[Void] [Arc]", Zalario's beloved sword was also a wonderful sword. Even though he was slashing at Feldway with such a reliable partner, it was deflected away with ease. If he had been able to block it with a bang, it would have been understandable, but this was unexpected.

Since his speed and power are superior to Zalario, it would have been easy to lightly receive and repel Zalario's sword. Zalario had expected this and was aiming to pursue after the blow had been knocked away, but... his momentum was halted here.

This was abnormal, and Zalario became wary. He observed Feldway, but could not read anything from his beautiful expression. His ((masterful)) intuition told him that this was dangerous.

(Parrying my sword? Feldway didn't have this much [skill]...)

To parry Zalario's strong sword was impossible with just surpassing power. It would have required a certain amount of skill and ability. As far as Zalario knows, Feldway has never trained in swordsmanship. He has no experience fighting on the front lines, and he was always

supposed to be in a commanding position. He is strong, he admits, but he was never a warrior. Perhaps his doubts were visible on his face, as Feldway looked at Zalario and laughed.

"Hmph, isn't that strange?"

"Yeah. You never had any interest in martial arts, did you?"

"That's right. The strong are those who are born strong. Unlike the weak, who have natural enemies, there was no need for strong to train themselves."

"Then why--"

"Why was he able to parry your sword? It's simple. Once you learn the basic movements, you can "see" your aim just by looking at the angle of the initial movement."

Feldway explained this to him gently. But Zalario wasn't convinced.

"Don't joke around. Even if you can see it, it's not something you can easily dealt with!"

Those who were weak-minded or unsure of their own skills would have easily been fooled by Feldway's words. But Zalario was different. He saw through the lie and scoffed.

Feldway, who was pointed out, grinned. Not even trying to hide it, he continued the conversation with Zalario.

"Hahaha, you seem to understand me well. But you couldn't see through my tricks, could you?"

"Your tricks?"

"Yes."

Feldway went on the offensive. His movements were not the same as before, but those of a skilled swordsman. And that form is something that Zalario is familiar with—

(It's similar...are these Leon's movements?)

It wasn't a misunderstanding on Zalario's part. There is no way that Zalario would mistake the movements of a worthy opponent who was his enemy until just a short while ago.

Feldway told the bewildered Zalario.

"You know, I have never neglected my research. I have always observed all phenomena and continued to think about what is optimal. That also applies to those whom I and Lord Michael have dominated."

"...?"

"The emotions, thoughts, experiences, and everything else of those I have dominated with [Ultimate Ability][Ultimate Skill] '[King of Justice][Michael]' are shared with me. If that is the case, the [skill] that those people acquired is also in my hands."

This explanation is hard to accept.

"Huh?"

He was speechless, even in the middle of a battle. It's no wonder. He was told that the knowledge he had gained through his own efforts, the experience he had fighting against strong enemies, and the many techniques he had honed, were all taken away without his knowledge.

"Don't mess with me... our techniques are not something that can be taken away so easily!!"

Throwing away his polite tone, Zalaro shouted. And just like that, he transformed his frustration into anger and delivered a powerful, unparalleled blow, putting all his heart and soul into it.

But the result was tragic.

With a stance that was incredibly similar, and with the same amount of force, Zalaro's sword was blocked head-on. As if to prove his words, Feldway imitated Zalaro. Moreover, as if showing off his power, he even adjusted it so as not to kill Zalaro.

"You can't be serious.."

Only Zalaro was injured. The two forces clashed with equal strength, but Feldway had plenty of reserves. Therefore, only Zalaro was blown away by the recoil.

"...You keep ridiculing martial artists!!"

Zalaro roared.

Geniuses have no interest in the suffering of ordinary people.

To someone who can memorize the contents of a textbook after reading it once, an ordinary person who desperately tries to memorize by reading it over and over again must just look like they're slacking off. He sees no value in effort, and only sees results. If he had at least realized the difference between himself and others and shown a willingness to compromise, they could have built a different relationship...

Feldway had no compassion for others. He always believed he was right, and wanted to guide the foolish. He never thought he could be wrong, and never placed any importance on the words of others. He is the owner of a very dangerous ideology, but sadly, it has worked so far.

That's why he doesn't understand.

He can't see any value in Zalario's anger. Therefore, he asked a mercilessly cruel question.

"I don't understand, why are you angry? Aren't techniques supposed to be something you learn by watching them?"

The various techniques passed down from master to apprentice are all learned by watching and experiencing. The conditions, such as whether or not permission is required, vary, but the process is the same. Even if it is a style that one created, if one traces the origins of that martial art, one will arrive at a limited destination.((??))

There are only a handful of people who can create something from nothing. With so much history now, it can be said that it is an almost impossible feat. If that is the case, the right path is to develop it by imitating. If one ignores the question of right and wrong, Feldway's reasoning was sound. Even Zalario has no choice but to admit that...

However, it is different. It is fundamentally wrong. The skills that should be passed down are passed down along with the master's feelings. Zalario was the founder himself. He taught his techniques to his subordinates, and honed them as they defeated the Insectars together. There was a definite pride in that.

The same goes for Leon. Though there was a difference in strength, his swordsmanship impressed Zalario. Which is why he recognized him as a worthy opponent and was able to connect with him. There was a clear "feeling" behind it. He had something to carry on his shoulders.

Ignoring all of these, Feldway only looks at efficiency.

Zalario and he are like water and oil, they would never be compatible. Reaffirming this, Zalario bit his lip.

While feeling anger he also calmly assessed the situation.

If all of their techniques had been observed, he realized that there was no chance of winning.

Feldway was currently showing off the difference in their abilities, or was he showing mercy to Zalario? If he was serious Zalario would have been taken out early on.

For Feldway, Zalario is not a threat, and he does not feel the need to dirty his hands. Once he understood that, it became ridiculous even to feel insulted. Just as Zalario realized this, Leon and his group joined the battle as reinforcements.

Zalario was unsure. He wondered whether or not he should tell the truth to Leon and the others.

Whatever he does, it will not work, and no matter what, he will not be able to win against Feldway. He could not even outwit him, and Feldway's indifference meant that he could only buy time. If the result was the same regardless, it might be better to just watch in silence.

(--No, that's not it. In fact, he doubts whether he should even believe his words...)

There was no doubt that Feldway was telling the truth. But at the same time, he didn't think he was telling the whole story. Zalario intuitively felt that he was hiding something crucial.

He was right. For Feldway, it would be troublesome if Milim were to awaken. One of Feldway's goals was to absorb the "Dragon Factor" from Veldora, but the situation did not allow it. If Feldway tried to take on Veldora, he would not have the capacity to completely control Milim.

The current Veldora has that much power hidden within him. Feldway saw through it and could not act carelessly.

(Even though the long-awaited prey has come, I have no choice but to leave it alone for now...)

And so, Feldway decided to leave Veldora alone for the time being. He could win if he fought with all his might, but he decided that there were priorities.

However, that did not improve the situation.

If even Veldora, let alone Chloe, joined the battle, there was a risk that the domination would be released at some point. Therefore, he had to constantly strengthen his control, and he did not have time to deal with Zarario and the others. That's why he was so relaxed about it, trying to drive Zalario to despair.

But Zalarios remained unfazed.

(Tch, how annoying. I liked his honest personality, but when he becomes an enemy, he's troublesome.)

His colleague, who had been fighting tenaciously against the Insectars, was a reliable ally. But now, his determination to win was getting in the way of Feldway's plans.

While thinking that Zalario was impressive, Feldway also reflected that he should not let his guard down. Although they were inferior, Leon and Elmesia were not opponents to be underestimated either. One or two direct hits would only cause minor damage, but it would be a problem if his concentration was disrupted.

At least, until Milim destroyed the Sacred Tree...

(If only I could destroy the Sacred Tree with my own strength, there would have been no need to go to such troublesome measures...)

The Sacred Tree is a key base for the pivotal world((?)). Its defenses are perfect, and it cannot be destroyed by half-hearted force. Even Feldway, who has immense power, could not completely destroy the Sacred Tree. Even if he could destroy the elf country, Sarion, the only one who could destroy the Sacred Tree was Milim's [Dragon Star Explosion] [Drago Nova].

And if he cannot destroy the Sacred Tree, he cannot destroy the [Heavenly Tower] in [Holy Hollow] Damargania. Feldway realized this when he saw the [Heavenly Tower] withstand Milim's [Dragon Star Explosion] [Drago Nova].

However, as long as the Sacred Tree is destroyed, it does not matter if you cannot break the [Heavenly Tower]. The world would naturally collapse, and the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivalaje would soon descend upon us, destroying everything that exists.

For that reason he couldn't afford to fail to control Milim here.

"Good grief, this is the most critical moment" — Feldway secretly pumped himself up.

Thus, the second battle over the Sacred Tree intensified.

The duo of Chloe and Veldora tried to stop Milim. An impromptu team led by Zalarion tried to eliminate Feldway. The outcome of the battle remained difficult to predict. In Old Eurazania, the battle between Guy and Velzard was intensifying. At the foot of the Sacred Tree, heroes were fighting to thwart Feldway's ambitions, with the fate of the world at stake.

At the same time.

On the border of the Holy Empire of Lubelius, bordering the Dead Desert, heroes were gathering. With Vergil's cooperation, they gathered one after another from all over the world.

About 500 heroes came from various countries.

From the armed nation of Dwargon, the hero King Gazelle leading the Pegasus Knights, numbering 500.

From the Eastern Empire, 100 members of the newly formed Imperial Guardian. With Calgurio as commander and Minutes as adjutant.

The Lubelius forces and the giant's forces, who had been clashing in this land until just yesterday. Now they have reconciled and become comrades fighting together.

From Lubelius, 300 Crusaders led by Hinata.

Sale and Gregory, former "Three Martial Saints" who temporarily returned, are also under Hinata's command with 30 members of the Imperial Guard.

The Bloody Knights, numbering just under 400, are led by Pope Louis.

As for the giant's forces, Dagura took command in place of Dagrue, who had fallen asleep. Basara, the head of the Five Great Fighting Generals, assists the acting king Dagura, leading more than 1,000 elite warriors of the "Binding Chain Giant Legion."

In addition, a small number of elite forces, such as the 100-strong Musketeer Corps of the "Three Drunkards", rushed to the scene as fast as they could.

Their total number was just under three thousand. This was the full extent of the anti-World Destruction Dragon Ivarage alliance at this time.

Not even a day had passed since Luminas's "Doomsday Declaration". It may seem long, but in reality it was a very short time. It was a great achievement that such a large force gathered at such a speed, surpassing the conventional wisdom of the past.

However, the real battle had not even begun yet. The fate of mankind will be decided in the upcoming battle—

Five hundred heroes from all over the world were gathered in one place as one group. All of them were capable people over A rank, but it is not something to be proud of in this place. Leaving aside more prominent individuals, it was judged that they could not be counted as a fighting force in an unorganized state. In that case, there was also the question of who would take command.

Everyone probably thought that the role should be entrusted to Masayuki, but in reality, it would be a bad move. Masayuki is good at increasing luck, but if a group of people who can't even work together do whatever they want, it will be less effective.

Because they are well-known people in the guilds of each country, they have little experience working under a single banner. Similarly, they were not suitable for leading someone. Someone was needed to bring these heroes together. Anxiety was seeping into everyone's faces, and they looked nervous..

Among them, there was a person who made light jokes in a very carefree tone. It is Youm, who was celebrated as a hero and finally ascended the throne as the king of a great power. This time, as King Farmanas, he summoned his former comrades and participated in the war.

"Look, it's amazing. Well, I may be called a hero, but compared to a real hero like King Gazelle, I'm a far cry. I'm worried if I can be of any help..."

While shrugging his shoulders, he speaks to the wolf Lycanthrope next to him—Grucius.

Grucius then laughed away Youmu's worries.

"Ha! Don't make me laugh. Whether it's a fake or the real thing, just standing here makes you a hero. If the world is going to be destroyed if we lose, there's no point in hiding in fear. Whether it's a meaningless death or a dog's death, we have no choice but to stand up."

Youm nodded in agreement. From the beginning, he didn't [smugly] think that they would be a fighting force. He just thought that he could help a little, even if only a little.

His still young daughter, Meme, is staying at home.

The retired King Edmaris had changed his name to Marius and was serving as an advisor. His son, Edgar, was also reliable, so they believed that the issue of succession would be resolved somehow. If they could survive, that would be the best. Even if that did not happen, as long as they could win this battle—then they could leave the rest to those they had left behind.

That was why Youm was standing here, accompanied by his wife, Queen Myu, and his best friend, the Knight Commander Grucius.

"Normally, I would boast that I would buy time to escape, but there is no place to escape, so there is no way to put on a good face. There is no choice but to go forward."

— Razen grumbled in an old tone despite his young appearance.

"Hahaha, you're right!" — Youm responded with a big laugh.

"Tch, after you, it was my turn to be happy with Miulan..."

"Don't worry. I made no promises like that."((??))

The two [idiots][guys] glared at each other over [Queen Miu]. This was business as usual, and it helped to ease the tension of those watching their exchange.

The heroes thought.

(This man could be trusted.)

They were convinced that they could entrust their lives to Youm, who was also a friend of the Demon Lord Rimuru.

"Hey, Youm-san. I don't belong to any nation, so even if you're the king, I'll skip the honorifics."

"I don't mind. I was originally a [screw] [thug] too."

"Hahaha, you get it!"

"Hehe, I suppose so."

"I'll be happy to do that too."

"Yeah!"

"And please take on the role of our commander!"

"Leave it to me -- ..huh?"

Those who were attracted to Youm's personality called out one after another—and then, without any objection, they forced the role of commander on Youm. He couldn't refuse here, which is why Youm was Youm.

"Oh, okay. Are you sure it should be me? Are you sure?"

"I'll leave it to you."

"Only you can do it!"

"I've only been active solo, so use me for guerrilla warfare or something."

And so on, there was no complaint about making Youmu the commander. Youm's companions also laughed heartily at this.

"He looks like a commander."

"It seems that another tale of valor will be added. I have to write it."

"Even if you fail, no one will resent you. Anyway, everyone will be together when the time comes."

With that declaration, Youm decided that he would lead this group as the commander-in-chief.

"Taking on such a difficult role without thinking it through is still as stupid as ever..."

Myulan also looked exasperated. But at the same time, seeing the man she loved living such a turbulent life, her pale cheeks softly blushed.

*

Meanwhile, Luminas, who initiated this, had no time to relax. She was huddled together with Vergil and Hinata, having a close meeting.

"Targeting them as they try to leave the "Heaven's Passage" will cause the least damage."

"That's right. We only have a little less than 3,000 people gathered, but this is the best fighting force we could hope for. It looks like we'll get a few more, but we should start thinking about where we'll be positioned?"

Velgrynd nodded at Luminas's words. Then, pointing at the map spread out on the table, she began to explain the structure of the "Heaven's Passage."

"Heaven's Passage is a circular tower with a spiral staircase at its center. There are residential areas on the outer wall, but you can ignore those. The problem is what's beyond the door--"

The map was a three-dimensional blueprint. When seen from above, it was a perfect circle, and when seen from the front, it stretched into the sky with almost the same width. It looked the same from the left and right, so it wasn't a fancy design. The entrance was on the part that touched the ground. It had a series of arched openings, allowing anyone to enter and exit freely. The tower had a diameter of about 500 meters. The size of each opening was also quite large, as you can see from the fact that giants could easily enter and exit.

"--It's impossible to concentrate forces at one point, I guess."

"Heaven's Passage" cannot be destroyed. In other words, it is very difficult to block the entrances. It would be possible to block them from the outside with earth magic, but it would be pointless if blockage could be destroyed.

To begin with, there are more than 300 openings. It was decided that it would be difficult in terms of time to block them all and lead the enemy as planned.

"If there is a door inside, how about sealing it off?"

Hinata asked, but Velgrynd denied this as well.

"I think I made you misunderstand because I said 'door,' but what you are imagining is wrong."

While saying that, she used "Thought Transmission" to give Hinata an image of the inside.

The spiral staircase inside "Heaven's Passage" was wide, and the door in the middle was also huge. The axis was over three hundred meters wide, so the width of the staircase was also large. The steps were also too large for a human to see.

"I see... so this is a huge gate, so to speak. Even if we wait inside, we'll be helpless if they all rush in at once..."

Basically, attacks from above are more effective. Waiting on the stairs with poor footing was disadvantageous for the defenders. Hinata agreed and withdrew her opinion.

"We will deploy troops on the four sides of the "Heaven's Passage" and have the strong people stand in front to intercept the enemy's main force. There is no other way."

Since it's a circular tower and entry and exit is possible from all sides, there is no choice but to deploy troops so as to surround it. It would be best to distribute the forces evenly so that they can respond equally from all sides.

"It's tough, but we have no other choice."

"Yes, that's right."

"We'll have the rear groups destroy the enemies that escaped the encirclement or were missed. Is this okay?"

Hinata, Luminas, and Velgrynd all agreed.

"Then let's gather the leaders and decide on the division of roles."

The policy was decided, but there were a lot of problems to solve. If an army of Cryptids were to emerge from the opening, they might be overwhelmed by numbers. To prevent this, they had to use their forces appropriately. However, the people gathered here each had their own intentions. No matter how much of a crisis the world was in, it was doubtful that they would obediently follow the instructions.

(Well, it seems that it would be my role to persuade them.)

Hinata decided. There was no time to be fighting among allies in this time of need. The fate of the world would be decided by the meeting that was about to begin—Hinata steeled herself.

*

A simple tent was set up and the leaders gathered.

It was thought that famous adventurers would also want to participate, but seeing the distinguished faces of kings and celebrities from various countries, they seemed to give up, thinking that it would be too much for them to handle. And so, the carefully selected people were seated around the round table. To introduce some of the more famous ones—

The person sitting at the head of the table was the organizer, Luminas. Taking responsibility for carrying out the "Doomsday Proclamation" on a global scale, she volunteered to be the coordinator. To Luminas' right sat Hinata, and to her left Louis. Behind her was Gunther, dressed as a butler. Also, standing behind Hinata was cardinal Nikolaus.

He had been indifferent during the final battle with Dagrue, but now that Hinata was taking part, it seemed like things were different. His expression was full of motivation, and he was fully prepared to be of use to Hinata. Standing alongside Nikolaus was Leonard Jester, vice-captain of the [Holy Knights], the [Crusaders]. Behind him were the four captains. After undergoing intensive training in the labyrinth, their abilities have improved greatly. They were expected to be a valuable asset this time as well.

Sitting opposite Hinata was Shion.

She was still tired from the recent battle, but her complexion was good. She was smiling fearlessly, full of motivation and with an expression that said she was not afraid of anything. Sitting next to Shion was Dagura, who had become Dagrue's representative. Behind him stood Basara, intimidating the people gathered here. Perhaps it was to ensure that Dagura was not underestimated, but he was quite out of place here.

From the royal and noble group were Gazel, Youm, and Masayuki. Gazel was accompanied by a man dressed in martial arts attire. It was Agera, the reincarnation of Hakurou's grandfather, Byakuya Araki. Agera was still confident and carefree, as flexible and natural as a willow, guarding Gazel's back.

Youm and Queen Mulan are participating together as a couple. Youm is a hero, but he's not good with difficult topics. The right thing to do here was for the advisor - or rather, for Queen Myu, the powerful woman, to take the lead. Behind Youm were Rahzen and Grucius.

Incidentally, Sale and Gregory were also seen at the edge of the conference tent. They adjusted their positioning angle to avoid meeting Hinata's eyes. As they are still on the run, they seem to be feeling very awkward. Hinata notices this, but doesn't have the kindness to call out to them, so she just leaves them be. Or rather, Hinata thinks that even if she calls out to them, she will only scare them, so she pretends not to notice. There was no doubt that this was the best thing for both((meaning both parties)) of them.

Just like Sale and the others, there was someone else who felt awkward. It was Masayuki. A former high school student who wanted to get away from this place more than anyone else. But Masayuki was a representative of each country, the leader of the Responders. Since he was burdened with the role of a symbol of hope, there was no way that his wish to run away would be granted. He was more aware of this fact than anyone else. That's why he was still spacing out gazing into the distance.

Next to Masayuki was a peerless beauty. It was Velgrynd.

She had used the "Space-Time Link" to gather heroes from all over the country, and had been extremely active. She gathered heroes from various countries by "space-time connection" and was very active. Now she has canceled all the "separate bodies" and was ready to protect Masayuki. Behind Masayuki was Venom, who was now his best friend.

Naturally, Calgurio and Minutes were also there, standing upright and motionless like statues, faithfully performing their duties.

Away from the round table, Ultima was relaxing on a sofa. Tea was prepared on the round table, and Zonda was serving it.

Veyron was waiting with a cool look on his face, but he had only just recovered from fatigue.

Ultima's two confidants had also been working hard behind the scenes in the previous battle. Starting with holding back Dino and the others, and then the life-or-death battle with the Giants, on whom magic had no effect on, they had no time to rest, both physically and mentally. But there was no way they could complain in front of Ultima...

Middle management was a very difficult position.

In comparison, Adalman and the others were carefree. Adalman and Gadra had rejuvenated their appearances and were seated at the edge of the round table. Albert((Also translated as Alberto KEKW)) and Venti were standing behind them, chatting away happily. Even though it was before a conference where the fate of the world was at stake, they were still going at their own pace. But, perhaps because seeing them relaxes the tension, no one complained.

Because everyone thought that was fine. The same could be said for those sitting at the bottom of the round table. This group had nothing to do with nobility, and if anything, they looked like a bunch of thugs.

That was to be expected, as they were the ones who controlled the underworld of human society.

The person presiding at the seat as the representative was Glenda Atley herself, who had come to this occasion with the elite soldiers dispatched from "[Three Wise Drunkards][Riega]". With the world facing a crisis, she had no choice but to act, and so she chose only the strongest members under her command, the "Musketeer Corps", who numbered about 100, and only the strong ones she selected from those who have been trained up recently. The number of these strong men was about 50. About two of them were also participating in the meeting.

Standing behind Glenda was Girard, the former leader of the Green Apostles (Welt), and Yang, who led the Black Claws, a militant mercenary group made up entirely of A-rank soldiers. The

strong members of the Three Drunkards (Riega) are traditionally baptized in Tempest, the land of monsters. At the moment, various arrangements are still being made, but the people she brought this time were all those who had passed a rigorous test. Although the total number is less than 100, they have undergone hellish special training using the labyrinth, given special equipment suitable for each individual, and now have terrifying combat capabilities.

There is a collective name for these successful candidates. They were given a badge with a lotus flower motif, as their loyalty to the "Three Drunkards" was likened to faith, and Rimuru called it the "[Suiren] badge" ("Badge of the Drunkard") to mean "those who serve the drunkards".

Thus the name of "[Suiren] group" ("Drunkards") was born. Their mission destinations were different, but this time they were urgently summoned and rushed from all over the world. Yang was at the top of the group, and even Girard and Glenda recognized as a promising candidate. Ain, a [Spirit Envoy] [Elementalist] and former leader of Team "Green Rebellion" and Girard's right-hand man, was directing the ritual summoning outside. He was trying to summon as many high-ranking spirits as possible, such as [Fire Giant] [Ifrit], [Earth Knight] [War Gnome], [Water Maiden] [Undine], and [Wind Maiden] [Sylphid].

Although they looked like nothing more than roughnecks, they were well qualified to be here. As an aside, unlike Sare and the others, Glenda had a very dignified attitude. Although they were in the same position of having betrayed Hinata, she seems to have already put it behind her. The difference in courage is what separates her from Sare and the others, but whether or not it is worth learning from is a matter of opinion...

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Just as the meeting was about to begin, Velgrynd raised her face. After drawing everyone's attention with her powerful presence, she slowly began to speak.

"My sister — "White Ice Dragon" Velzard, and the battle of the Demon Lord Guy —"

She started speaking casually, but that alone caused the hall to fall silent. Compared to the fate of the world, it was less important, but under normal circumstances it was still a major incident. Not only that, but this was something they couldn't ignore. After all, if Guy was defeated, they could be attacked from behind by the threat that was Velzard. The current human race did not have the strength to spare to prepare a countermeasure for that. Everyone was tense, waiting for Velgrynd to speak.

"--A third party's intervention has been confirmed."

" " "—!?" " "

It was a report that they did not want to hear, next to the worst that they had assumed. The worst, needless to say, was Guy's defeat. Although it is better than that, no one had good feelings..

"I'll ask just in case, is it an aid to Guy?"

Luminas asked on behalf of everyone. While thinking that there was no way that could be, it was a question with a slight hope.

"Unfortunately, it's not."

Tent drowned in murmurs. They did not think that the situation would improve, so the place was enveloped in an air of "as expected." However, Velgrind's next words brought everyone back to their senses.

"Don't worry. Testarossa has taken action to find out his true identity."

Hearing that, everyone felt relieved. Because she is a terrifying enemy but a reliable ally — that is the White Queen, Testarossa. Ultima and the others also smiled upon hearing the name of their rival.

"Oh, I see. I thought it was my turn, but I'll leave it to her ♪"

While saying this, she acted as if the matter was over. It was impressive how quickly she was able to change her mind, but in this situation, it was the right thing to do. If she left his worries unresolved, she might be caught off guard in the coming war.

Luminas seemed to agree with Ultima, and went along with what she said.

"Well, that's true. There's no point in thinking about it now, so let's get straight to the point."

And with that, she urged Velgrynd to continue the conversation. In response, Velgrind stood up.

"Before I begin my explanation, there are some people I should introduce to you. I think some of you may know them..."

Saying this, Velgrind performed a "Spatial Transportation". And then, the people who were called out were the commanders of the Magic Knights, subordinates of Demon Lord Leon.

"We serve Demon Lord Leon. We are the guardians of El Dorado, the Golden Country. We came here after hearing about the world's situation from Velgrynd," said Commander Alrose with a greeting.

The other knight commanders nodded in response. In fact, the scars from being targeted by Feldway have not yet healed, but this is nothing compared to the crisis facing the world. In this situation, if they only think about their own country, all that awaits them is destruction. With that in mind, they decided to enter the battle with only their respective knight commanders, led by Alrose.

They are worried about [Golden Country] as well, but its people were strong. Jaune, I mean, even after being constantly exposed to Carrera's nuclear attack magic, they still had the nerve to enjoy it as entertainment. Even this time, they laughed and said, "We'll manage it!", giving the unsure Alrose and the others a push.

And so, Leon's greatest forces were gathered here.

The knights' instructor, Claude the Black Knight.

The leader of the White Knights, Maetel the White Knight.

The leader of the Blue Knights, Oxian the Blue Knight.

The leader of the Red Knights, Fran the Red Knight.

The leader of the Yellow Knights, Kizona the Yellow Knight.

A total of six people, with Alrose at the head. Everyone participated without exception.

And there were other people that Velgrynd had called.

"Nice to meet you all. I'm Misora. I'm sure many of you don't know me, but I am the [one of the pillars] of the [Demon Tribe]. I never dreamed of joining forces with humanity, but this time, circumstances are what they are, so we'd like to do what we can. It's only temporary, but I'd appreciate it if you could put aside any resentment."

Misora, the head of Rain's subordinates, greeted them and smiled. The girls, who had been helping with the defense and reconstruction of El Dorado, rushed to the scene at the time of emergency.

--Or rather.

With their king taken away by Guy's orders, it was no time for them to just relax. Misora's colleagues Skoll and Ulrich agreed.

(If only we were having an easy time, we would incur unnecessary resentment. Mizery-sama wouldn't mind, but unfortunately, our Rain-sama is...)

Even thinking about it would be disrespectful. Misora doesn't intend to slack off. She loves her beloved Rain-sama, so she is always and everywhere giving her all. However, when she remembered the sad eyes of Rain, who had been taken to a dangerous area, she felt that "we cannot be in a place where only we seem to be having an easy time."

Therefore, she volunteered to join Velgrynd.

(Oh, Rain-sama...is she really okay? Will she be scolded by the great Guy-sama again — or make him angry — and driven to tears?)

Well, there's no end to her worries. But things can be thought of in various ways, and Misora thinks that Rain is unexpectedly shrewd, so she will be safe. In any case, Misora prays for her master's safety and tries to focus on the problem at hand.

Meanwhile, Mizeri's subordinates are also here. Their representative, Kahn, greets everyone following Misora's introduction.

"Tch, it's completely unexpected that we'd be active in the public eye. Normally, we wouldn't be able to join forces, but..."

As he says this, Khan glances around the venue. Even in this tent, there are some who are wondering why they are here, but if you talk about it, Kahn and the others((Mizery subordinates)) are also in a position closer to the weak.

It is interesting that the primordial adjutants, who had become "Demon Dukes" and are now powerful enough to rival the old Demon Lords, are among the weakest in this place. Showing off here was out of the question. Khan had never intended to sell favours, but he found himself wondering if they would even have a role to play.

(Hmph! We won't be able to operate behind the scenes, but that's a story for another time. For now, let's prove that we are competent!)

Khan concluded. To begin with, Mizari's subordinates were all earnest and competent. They were all well-rounded in talent, and while there were no outstanding individuals, there were many high-quality people.

Apart from Georg, who is a member of the Red family, they are also characterized by their high level of cooperation. By the way, Ulrich, a member of the Red family who was assigned under Rain, somehow ended up in the position of a hard worker. He was originally a proud type who thought he was number one, but strange things do happen. If you mix with vermillion((red)), you will be dyed vermillion((red)), but since the master, Rain, does not seem to be having a hard time, perhaps he has been dyed by his colleagues. After all, Rain's subordinates, led by Misora, are all super talented. No. Even though there were many lazy people, they somehow grew up to be competent.

Even Ulrich, who was supposed to be a hothead, had a calm expression and had erased his presence, and there was no sign of self-assertion at all. That is what can be said to be proof of growth, and even Kahn could not understand what kind of education would make him like that.

Mizari, Kahn's master, says, "That's what's so wonderful about Rain," and so on, which is a somewhat incomprehensible interpretation... there was no point in delving into this.

Anyway, education can turn anyone into a capable person. Kahn thought that he could not be defeated and concluded his greeting.

"This time is special. We'll support the unreliable people outside so that they don't get into trouble."

With that, he sat down in the chair that was prepared for him.

His colleagues Alban and Georg didn't seem to have any complaints about Khan's declaration. They stood side by side behind Khan, and quietly went with the flow.

By the way, the announcement of the participation of the [Demons] in the war would normally cause a great commotion, but no one on the human side made a fuss. The Demon Lord was the initiator, and even the "Dragon Kind" appeared as a matter of course, so it felt like it was too late. Testarossa has become famous in the Western Nations Council, so there were little surprise when Misora and the others showed up. Everyone nodded in agreement and the meeting proceeded without incident.

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The main players are all gathered. Finally, Velgrind begins to explain the situation.

"We have received words of apology from the Ingrasia royal family. The scars from the recent attack have not yet healed, so they would like to minimize the deployment of their forces."

While saying that, Vergil turns her eyes to a corner of the tent. There, the Ingrasia representatives who came as messengers were sitting. It is a minimum amount of fighting power, but there are some strong people. Even so, they are the weak among the members gathered in this place, so they have little influence. Nodding at Vergil's words, they prepared to watch how things develop.

"So, you should assume that there will be no more reinforcements."

Velgrynd declared this to urge everyone to be prepared. There may actually be some, but we can't count on it. At the very least, it will only be a small amount from Velgrynd's point of view. She said this with that in mind.

Luminas nodded and asked, "So?", urging her to continue.

Velgrynd responded by disclosing the information she had shared with Testarossa.

"In Old Eurasania, my sister Velzard and Guy are fighting. As I said before, a third party intervened, but Testarossa stopped it and the war situation has returned to square one. Several people are working hard to ensure that this planet is not affected, but..."

The situation was not looking good. If Guy or Velzard got serious at this rate, the impact will be immeasurable. Ideally, the matter would be settled before that happens, but it won't be that easy.

In the worst case scenario, Velzard could be freed if Guy is defeated((free to do whatever?)).

"If Velzard attacks us from behind, it will be the end of humanity. Pray that this does not happen."

Vergil only stated the facts, but the emotions of those who heard it were stirred. However, they could not argue and could only swallow it. They had no choice but to pray that this would not happen and deal with the problem at hand.

"Now then, regarding the current threat, the 'World Destruction Dragon' Ivarage, I would like to discuss our response."

The one who spoke was Cien, who was standing by without taking a seat. He volunteered to act as the emcee for the occasion and stood in front of Velgrynd.

"We must complete the planning before the Cryptid forces arrive.

Currently, the entire perimeter of Heaven's Passage is a security zone, but even if we disperse our forces, it will be difficult to cover the entire area. I would appreciate your opinion on this," — Cien asked Velgrynd.

She is the wisest person here, so Cien naturally expected her to take on the role of commander-in-chief. Velgrynd had no objections to this. Having held the position of marshal in the empire for a long time, she speaks of strategy without hesitation.

"Deploying soldiers around the entire perimeter is a foolish strategy. First, create a situation where the battlefield is advantageous, and then lure the enemy in."

"--What do you mean?"

"There are barriers, right? I can use my 'Eight Gates Formation,' but it will not be possible to capture all the armies with that alone. So —"

Velgrind turned her gaze to the Holy Knights. Hinata nodded and took over.

"I see, a Holy Purification Barrier. Am I right in thinking that the bodies of the Aggressors from another world are also made of magical energy?"

"Yes, half of them are made of magical energy. They probably contain unknown substances that don't exist in our base world, but the Holy Barrier should be effective against them."

Everyone was convinced that it was so.

In fact, the Eight Gates Formation is useful for slowing down the enemy, but it is a formation that puts the defending side at a disadvantage. It is useful when you want to control the battle situation from an absolutely advantageous position and want to hold back the enemy's main force so that they are not interrupted, but it is not a spell that is suitable for defensive battles. Also, now that the total number of enemies is unknown, it is difficult in many ways to set up a formation that would engulf them all.

When the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivalage appeared, only Velgrynd would be able to face him. Velgrind thought that even Hinata and Luminas would be no match for it. Since she had to focus on Ivalage, the leader of the enemy, she needed to conserve her strength as much as possible. In fact, Velgrynd wanted to leave dealing with the subordinates to Luminas and the others.

In that sense, the Holy Purification Barrier was the optimal solution. Even if it was a circular tower that could be entered and exited from anywhere around it, if it was wrapped in a "barrier", it would be possible to guide the enemy's movements.

But there was a problem.

"However, the Holy Field cannot be established unless it is tied in the sky. The "Heaven's Passage" is an ancient structure that reaches the heavens, I am afraid that the conditions for the establishment of the technique cannot be met."

Cardinal Nikolaus, who was standing behind Hinata, pointed out the problem. Hinata was also aware of this. To activate the Holy Barrier, at least three or more casters must be placed at equal intervals and form a polyhedron that connects to a single point in the sky. It does not have to be a regular polyhedron, and it is said that the most effective way to use it is to form a pyramid-like structure. The problem this time is that the tower is in the way and it is impossible to form the key part that should intersect in the sky. It is not that there is no way to solve this, but...

"Even if it is impossible to surround it with a surface, there is a way..."

Hinata muttered.

"Hmm, that's right."

Luminas nodded.

The "Heaven's Passage" had a series of doors where it touched the ground, but once you got to a certain level, there weren't even any windows. In other words, there was no need to worry about flying Cryptids spilling out of the top of the tower, and if they made the top window into a relay point for the barrier, it would have been possible to form an irregular Holy Barrier.

However, the risk to those stationed at the top was too high.

"It has been decided that troops will be deployed in all directions of the "Heaven's Passage" to wait for the enemy. That is the safest and most reliable way."

They must guide the enemy and create a formation that can reliably counterattack even if they were few in numbers. If the tower was surrounded by an equilateral triangle, the overflowing magical beasts would concentrate on three sides. This would increase the density in each area too much, and it was possible that one of the apexes would be taken down.

On the other hand, if they set up a square formation, the enemies would be spread out on all four sides. If the tower is surrounded by an equilateral triangle, the spilled magical beasts will concentrate in three directions. In that case, the density per location will be too high, and one of the vertices may be dropped. On the other hand, if a square is set up, the enemies will be dispersed in all directions. The density per location will be reduced, and the number of enemies in contact with the "barrier" will also be reduced. There was also the advantage that even if one of the bases was dropped, the effect could be maintained somehow by irregularly moving the base and deforming the "barrier." It was only an emergency measure, and it was a tactic that would be difficult to sustain for long periods of time, but there was a big difference between having the possibility of recovery and not having it.

For this reason, it was preferable to set up a square formation of four bases on the ground to set up a [Holy Purification Barrier]. If that were to happen, what would happen to the upper echelons?

A minimum of three people would be needed, just as if it were activated on the ground.

However, if a square formation was set up on the ground, four people would be needed on the upper echelons to correspond to it.

That was the difficult point.

When this method is used to create a Holy Barrier, the bottom is square, but the top is circular. The divine power must run along the tower walls, forming a circle at the four points that connect to the ground. This means that forces are needed to protect all four locations. Not only are the

airborne forces scarce, but they must be dispersed and fight while protecting the casters. It will be a difficult mission, but failure is not an option.

"It would be difficult, but we have no choice," Hinata concluded.

"If we don't do it because it's difficult to defend, it will be a disgrace to our reputation. Now is the time to show the true value of the Holy Knights and the Crusaders."

Leonard nodded vigorously at Hinata's words. In response, the other captains who control the sky, land, water, and wind also put in their spirit.

"The four of us will take care of the sky. We have learned to handle "Holy Spirit Armament" through training, and we can fly, so we are suitable, right?"

Arnaud Baumann declared. The audience was impressed by his determination to volunteer for a dangerous place. The other captains are not defeated either.

"That's true. Compared to that training, this mission might be easier."

Bacchus agreed, laughing. Following him were Litis and Fritz.

"That's right. It was hell, that."

"It's fine to come back to life even after dying, but we're the only ones without pain immunity. Isn't this harassment? Thanks to that, everyone has acquired "pain nullification..."

Fritz was just complaining. Masayuki was frozen, not knowing whether to laugh or comfort him.

"Do you have any complaints?"

"No."

When asked coldly by Hinata, Fritz quietly answered. This exchange has become a routine. Fritz deliberately acts frivolous to ease the heavy atmosphere of the place.

Hinata understood this, and was deliberately sticking to being the bad guy. The small laughs lifted everyone's spirits a little. This made it easier for them to express their opinions, and Hinata touched on the core of the issue.

"Then, the remaining three people —"

At the moment, including Leonard, there are five people working on the core of the operation. To activate the [Holy Purification Barrier], three more advanced holy magic users are needed.

"Nikolaus, you can do it, right?"

"Understood."

Cardinal Nikolaus Schpertas--Hinata's confidant and her enthusiastic [follower] [fan]. Although he holds the highest rank as a cardinal, the object of his faith is Hinata. Nikolaus, who thinks of himself as Hinata's loyal dog, had no other choice but to answer yes, since he was ordered. By the way, Nicholas's powers are obvious from the fact that he can activate [Disintegration] by himself, so he has naturally reached the "Sage class". Moreover, he is a capable person who ranks higher than the vice-captain Leonard, so he is more than capable of fulfilling his duties. The fact that he is not inferior to the captain class of the [Crusaders] was kept secret, but Hinata saw through it. So, this big promotion was decided.

With that, there are only two left.

Hinata's gaze pierced Sare and Gregory, who were desperately trying to look away.

"How long do you intend to keep quiet?"

Asked so directly, Sale finally gives up. While raising both hands as if giving up, he reluctantly raises his face and opens his mouth.

"Okay. I'll take one corner. Gregory, you'll take the other corner--"

"Wait a moment."

"--Hmm?"

"I'm not very good with barriers and stuff."

" " "....." " "

Everyone was silent. Gregory the "Giant Rock" - a man who everyone knows, a guardian of mankind.

Originally, he was one of the heroes who was active as one of the "Three Martial Saints" of the [Luke Genius], the [Pope's Direct Guard Division].((?)) He was on the same level as the captains of the [Holy Knights] and was a force above average in terms of combat ability. It was assumed that he would be able to use the [Holy Purification Barrier] magic. And yet, this shocking confession came out of nowhere.

".....Eh? Are you kidding me?"

Sare asked honestly.

"I'm serious," Gregory replied, blushing. Everyone realized that he was really unable to use it.

If they are [Holy Knights] belonging to the [Crusaders], everyone is a powerful person above A rank. Anyone can do it just for assistance, and there were those who could handle the normal [Holy Purification Barrier] without problems. However, this time it is a different story.

If there is someone who is significantly inferior in ability, the "barrier" cannot be maintained, and if it is activated to match the weak, the barrier strength will be weakened and it will be meaningless. Since the goal was to guide the Cryptids, the operation would fall apart the moment the barrier was broken. In that case, it would be necessary to match the abilities of the casters...

Luminas was the creator of the spell, so she could use it without any problems, but since she couldn't take on such a role in this situation, it went unmentioned.

Hinata could do it too. But like Luminas, not being able to use her fighting ability would be a waste. Naturally, she was rejected.

Demons are too incompatible, out of the question.

Leon's subordinates, White Knight Maetel, who specializes in healing magic, and Blue Knight Oxian, who specializes in support magic, would probably be able to use it with a little training, but... I'm not sure they'll be the main users. In fact, she was worried about whether they would have enough time to practice now.

The host, Cien, looked at Luminas to encourage her to come to a decision.

Hinata has no choice but to take on one corner, with a great loss in mind. Luminas thought so too, and was about to open her mouth to explain her plan.

It was Queen Mulan, Miu, who raised her hand here.

"I'll take one corner. I'm good at barriers and stuff, so I think I can do it."

You can't bet the success or failure of the operation on the word "probably." That's what everyone would normally think, but this time it was different. If she said she would do it, she should take responsibility and take charge. In fact, Myulan has a track record of maintaining a large-scale barrier together with Shuna. Learning from her mistakes during the Farmas invasion, she also independently researched the Holy Barrier. To devise a countermeasure, she needed to touch the real thing. To solve this problem, she asked the Holy Knights to actually experience it. She did not anticipate that this kind of situation would occur, but if she cannot make use of it here, there is no point in being saved by Rimuru. Myulan thought so and made a decision.

"Then I will assist Queen Mulan. On top of that, I will learn the technique and prepare so that I can take over in case of emergency." Maetel offered.

Taking advantage of this, Oxian also gave his opinion.

"Then I'll do the same. I'll cast as many support magic spells as I can first, and then I'll help the two of you."

Oxian also intended to be a replacement just in case. Not everyone can be safe. Since you never know what will happen on the battlefield, it is necessary to be as prepared as possible.

These opinions were approved. And so, the people who would activate the key [Holy Purification Barrier] [Holy Field] were decided.

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Arnaud Baumann of "sky" would be in charge of the upper echelons in the east.

Fritz of "wind" would be in the west.

Litis of "water" would be in the south.

Bacchus of "earth" would be the remaining north.

Nikolaus would be in charge of Arnaud. Their abilities were comparable, so it was a well-balanced combination.

Leonard was with Bacchus. In terms of ability, Leonard was superior, but they were comrades who had shared joys and sorrows for many years. He could provide some support, so Bacchus would be able to steadily demonstrate his abilities.

Myuran, a fellow woman, will be in charge of Litis.

Sare will be in charge of Fritz, but this combination seems bad at first glance. Because they are both foul-mouthed, they will soon quarrel. However, Sare actually likes Fritz for his honest nature. He also appreciated his courage to make fun of Hinata, so it was a surprisingly good combination.

Thus, the key personnel for the four sides are decided. The next problem is the placement of forces.

"We'll protect the south," Youm proclaimed.

He has no intention of entrusting the role of protecting his beloved wife to another man. No one objected to this, so Youm's group will protect the south.

In addition to that, Leon's subordinates were also decided.

"If Maetel and Oxian are involved in the 'Barrier', I think it would be best for us to protect the south as well. What do you think?"

Luminus nodded magnanimously at Alros's remark and the decision was made without a word.

Next to speak was Gregory, a friend of Sare.

"I'll naturally protect Srre."

"Yeah. I'm counting on you, Gregory."

No one complained either. Razen looked worriedly at his disciples, but he is in a position to protect Youm, so he cannot move.

But, there was no problem. Although they are not in the tent, the members of the [Crusaders] were fond of Sare and the others, so it was decided that they would be under their command as they were. Sare and Gregory shook hands firmly. It was a beautiful scene of friendship, but Glenda also raised her hand.

"I'll go there too."

If even Glenda joins, the former "Three Martial Saints" will be all together. However, from Sare and Gregory's perspective, this was not a welcome news.

"Don't joke around, you! It's because you betrayed us in the first place that we ended up living as fugitives!!"

"That's right! I was shocked when I heard about it later, you can't be trusted!!"

Sare and Gregory were quite angry, but their feelings were understandable to those who knew the situation. Nevertheless, Glenda snorted.

"You two are such cowards. I betrayed you because I knew I was going to lose. If you're upset, make arrangements to make sure you win."

Glenda also said something outrageous. Everyone thought the same. In particular, the people who this was aimed at were furious.

"Hey, seriously, get your act together! I was at my best back then too, and I thought I'd win easily! He was just a bigger monster than we'd imagined!"

In fact, when Sare heard Diablo's true identity later, he was horrified and was surprised that he hadn't been killed. At that point, it was no longer a question of winning or losing.

The same goes for Gregory. If he'd been up against Diablo, he would have suffered a more tragic fate than Sare. Even Ranga was terrible, but a primordial demon like the materialized fear itself is an existence that he cannot even think of confronting even once in his life.

After hearing that Sare had lost, he could only think that it would be so. They were both thankful for their good fortune.

That's why they can't forgive Glenda's betrayal. Even so, Glenda was nonchalant.

"I won't betray you this time. There's no way to escape, so I promise I'll do my best."

She said it boldly, without any sign of remorse. Saare and the others could not argue with this. It was infuriating, but Glenda's words were true. The precondition that there was a way to escape didn't exist, so there was no reason to doubt her words.

"Tch, it can't be helped. I can't trust you, but I can trust your strength."

"Yeah. I don't intend to rely on you, but since Saare can't move because he has to maintain the 'barrier', I'll let you do your best to help us."

Thus, Saare and Gregory reluctantly agreed to cooperate with Glenda.

Although there was some minor fussing, discussions were held among each force about which point they would protect. And so, the plan was decided. Once that was done, the rest was quick. Using Velgrind's "Space-Time Link," they headed to the site and quickly completed preparations for the interception. It was confirmed that the commander-in-chief was Luminas. She was the initiator of this whole operation, and there was no one else suitable for the job, so it was only natural.

Luminas floated in the sky and grasped the battlefield. Although she would not be in charge of command, she would be reinforcing the vital [Holy Barrier], so she would play an important role.

Next was Velgrynd, it was decided that she would place "separate bodies" on all four sides to prepare for the appearance of the [World Destruction Dragon] Ivarage. Therefore, she was not included in any of the forces, and was given independent discretion. She will probably stick to Masayuki, but no one could stop her anyway, so that was left to Velgrynd's judgment.

The others, excluding these two, would be assigned to the four sides to guard them, but before that, the necessity of reserve forces was suggested.

"Just in case, if even one of the four sides collapses, wouldn't it be better to prepare a force that can respond immediately?"

That was what King Gazel said.

The 500 Pegasus Knights he led are excellent air forces. There will likely be flying Cryptids, so it will also be their mission to eliminate those threats. No one opposed this opinion, and this was also decided smoothly. The remaining people will be the main force. In between meetings, the forces were slightly increased and deployed in various places.

In the east—a total of just over 600.

Deployed to protect Arnaud and Nicholas were 300 members of the [Holy Knights] [Crusaders] and 100 members of the new [Imperial Guard]. Hinata and Masayuki were the leaders of both groups, but Hinata was the one in charge. Calgurio had no objections and was content to support them as a staff officer. Cien had been ordered by Testarossa to protect Hinata. Two hundred members of the [Black Numbers] [Black Corps] under Testarossa had also gathered and were under Cien's command. Preparations for battle were complete. Venom was now acting of his own volition, to protect Masayuki. Mintis was now on the front lines as the actual commander, and if an unexpected strong person appears, Hinata and Calgurio will be ready to respond. Next to Masayuki was Velgrind, who had become a minimal "separate body"... but as planned, the operation was made assuming she was not there.

The western land - a total of about 1,280 people.

The maximum number of forces were deployed to protect Fritz and Sale. Like the eastern land facing the Dead Desert, this was also a terrain that made it easy to deploy a large army. However, this place is a beloved hometown for the [Giant Tribe]. They volunteered to protect this land, as if they would protect their own land by themselves. That's why there are more than 1,000 elite warriors of the "Binding Chain Giant Legion" alone, but the fighting power is not limited to that. Shion, who was Dagura superior, and 100 of her subordinates, the "Yomigaeri", were also included.

"You guys, get pumped! Death is scary, but a meaningless life is even scarier! Live, survive, and prove that your lives are worth living!!"

The warriors responded to Shion's rallying cry with enthusiasm. It also feels a bit misguided, but they are a reliable presence in this situation. Unlike the group, who were united and in high spirits, there were some who had a tense atmosphere.

Glenda and Gregory.

In addition to the 30 members of the [Pope's Royal Guard Division] and 100 members of Glenda's direct control "Musketeer Corps," 50 elite members of the "Three Wise Drunkards," the

"[Suiren] group," will participate, but the former leaders of the "Three Martial Saints" are at odds with each other, which is a cause for concern. What on earth are they doing at a time when humanity is in danger? However, no one tries to stop these two, and the fruitless argument continues.

If that makes them feel better, then they should do as they like, thinks Sare. Having been betrayed once before, he has no reason to trust Glenda. But she is capable, and he doesn't think she'd be stupid enough to betray him now. And so Sare tacitly accepts the situation.

"Preparation is complete. I was able to summon four high-ranking spirits, so I'll use them to help defend the base."

Ain, an [Elementalist], announced.

He performed a ritual summoning, draining the magic power of his subordinates, summoning high-ranking spirits of earth, water, fire, and wind. He has even succeeded in "unifying" with one of them, the [Water Saint] Undine, into his own body.

"The one that is compatible with me is "earth.""

Gregory said that while saying so, he unhesitatingly "unified" with the [Earth Knight] War Worm. His teacher, Razen, was good at spirit summoning, and he was accustomed to handling spirits. Ain was surprised, but he was content to be convinced that it was as expected of the former "Three Martial Saints". Girard took in the [Flame Giant] Ifrit. This was as planned. In Ramiris's labyrinth, he repeated actual combat many times with Ain, and it was the result of his hard work. He worked hard to play the role of the boss of the "Three Wise Drunkards" given by Rimuru and others. That was what he was making use of in this situation... Girard said with a bitter smile, "You never know how life will turn out."

"Hmm. Then, I'll take the [Wind Maiden] Sylphid."

The last remaining spirit was to be housed by Glenda. She had also trained with Girard and the others. Glenda, who excels at long-distance attacks, has an excellent affinity with wind spirits. Thus, with the spirits in their proper places, they were all set.

In the south, the total number of people exceeded 700, approaching 800. Heroes from all over the world were deployed to protect Litis and Myulan. Among the heroes, there were also captains of the [Magic Knights]. Maetel and Oxian were assisting Myulan. They were given the very important role of learning the "barrier" in actual combat and having to respond immediately in case of anything. To protect their colleagues, Leon's subordinates had taken it upon themselves to be the last line of defense.

Of course, the heroes who had fallen in love with Youm were also full of motivation and spirit. They weren't organized, so they couldn't be called an army, but they were strong enough to rival

a thousand men. Although they were hastily put together, they had organized their chain of command to a certain extent, so they weren't lacking in strength.

Also, in this area were the Black Numbers under Ultima's command. They were tired from the previous battle. They numbered 200 in total, and they understood that they wouldn't be allowed to complain. Everyone participated as expected, and even now they seemed to be working hard to recover their magic.

"Hey, Kahn."

"What is it, Misora?"

"Shouldn't we call our subordinates here?"

"Hmm. If they're allowed to see Demon Lord Guy-sama, then they're more capable than the humans over there."

"Right? They are scattered all over the world, but it will still be in time, right?"

Misora made her decision calmly.

It was an unprecedented thing to cancel all active operations. But Misora put her proposal into action without changing her expression. This proved Misora's ability and decisiveness.

Cold-blooded Misora. She was Rain's most capable confidant. Without her, Rain would have been fired from her position as Guy's maid a long time ago. By the way, the only one in this world who can change Misora's expression is Rain...but that is a trivial story in this place.

And so, the demon summoning ceremony was also held in secret—

" " "We have come to your Majesty's presence!!" " "

Sixty named Archdemons, abandoning all their duties, rushed to the scene. Normally, they would be a great force that would shake the world. But now, they were reliable allies.

The northern land—a total of about 500.

The terrain is narrow and crags are scattered everywhere, so the number of people is the smallest since they can take advantage of this and concentrate their forces. Just under four hundred Bloody Knights are deployed to protect Bacchus and Leonard. With this as the key((?)), they are ready to intercept the enemy with a mobile unit.

Leonard muttered as he looked at his troops in formation.

"...I understand it in my head, and I thought I was fully convinced, but to be protected by monsters that I was taught were the enemy of mankind, especially from the higher-ups of the Vampires...to be honest, it's still hard to believe."

That was what Leonard was really thinking when he blurted it out. Bacchus nodded gravely.

"Well, I agree. If you told me that a while ago, I'm sure I wouldn't believe it."

The Pope Louis that they served was the boss of those Vampires. It's not like he wants to believe it now, but his instincts are more likely to reject this than his reason. However, that doesn't affect their current strategy. Leonard and the others understand that monsters aren't all bad. They had trained in Tempest, the land of monsters, enjoyed delicious meals and sake with the monsters, and even made close friends. So, Leonard and others' sentimentality was a self-mockery of their own hardened stereotypes. Even after seeing all these facts, he felt a little pathetic that he still had such feelings in his heart.

"Hmph, that's what humans are. They seem unchanging, but people's thoughts change easily. The difficult thing is that there are good cases and bad cases."

Günther comforted Leonard and the others after hearing their conversation.

Even the "Seven Luminaries" were once heroes who did not disgrace the name of guardians of mankind. They eventually became senile and were destroyed, but Gunter, who knows the shining era of such people, did not want Leonard and others to lose the brilliance of their "souls." The seven great nobles, the "Transcenders," had similar ideas, and each of them was willing to act to protect Bacchus and Leonard.

In contrast to those who focus on defence, Adalman and Gadra were full of willingness to intercept the enemy. Both of them have unexpectedly beautiful appearances, making them unfamiliar to those who only knew them as skeletons or old people. However, a dangerous group clothed in black uniforms gathered around them. Among the [Black Numbers], it was the 100 people directly under Diablo. Even though Gadra was a newcomer, he had found himself in a position to lead this group of ultra-elites, each with their own quirks. Even in a strange group, Adalman and Gadra's unique personality did not blend in, so no matter what they looked like, everyone knew they were there.

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With that feeling, the warriors finished their preparations and waited for the time to fight. And sure enough, the time had come. However, it was accompanied by a sudden and terrifying despair that seemed to mock their thorough preparations.

"Kyaha♪ Let's play, let's play♪"

It was a tone that heralded the end.

The warriors were filled with fear.

Those who heard that "voice" understood the difference in their nature, which was too overwhelming to describe, and instantly lost their will to fight. The place where this misfortune was faced was the eastern side. The warriors had deployed their [Holy Purification Barrier] and were preparing for the enemy's appearance, when suddenly, a young child appeared.

A small child who is out of place on the battlefield.

Her face was flat and undefined, but she looked to be a girl. However—

There was no time to wonder why she was here. Only three people were able to respond to the threat. Hinata was the first to shout.

"Scatter and lie down---!!"

With a strong will, she desperately ordered, praying that there would not be even the slightest delay. The moment Hinata saw Ivalaje, she "saw" a despairing future with her constantly activated [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] [Fortuna].

It was a scene of the majority of the warriors turned to dust, and the few survivors lying on the ground, lingering between life and death. It was a despairing future that could hardly be reversed. It was unclear how much damage her warning would reduce, but it was an order that expressed the desire to increase the number of survivors even if only by a little. There was no one here who was incompetent enough to not comply with this. All six hundred people tried to move instantly. But it was already too late.

『Kya-ha♪』

The [World Destruction Dragon] Ivarage unleashed a merciless flash of light. An unknown destructive ray filled the space at a speed beyond human comprehension.

The second person to respond to this was Velgrynd.

The [other body] next to Masayuki became her main body without any time lag and deployed a [protective barrier] at full power. It was undoubtedly unlucky that the [World Destruction Dragon] Ivarage had appeared in this direction. If Velgrynd's [other body] had not been there, everything would have ended at this point. Fortunately, Hinata's thoughts reached her and she moved at the same time, so the [protective barrier] was activated in time.

However,

The reality was not so sweet that it could be saved by that. Even with Velgrind's full strength, it was impossible to completely block the power of the "Destruction Dragon" Ivarage. The majority of the people died in the aftermath alone. It was impossible for humans to resist the power of a god. The battle line collapsed. The east instantly turned into a hellish scene, but then the third person made her move.

"Awaken - 'Sanctuary Resurrection'"

Luminas, who had been watching the battle from the sky, activated the sacred magic 'Resurrection', which was maximized by using the brain power of those who believed in her in parallel — [Sanctuary Resurrection].

As a result, the dead were resurrected by the expanding magical effect of the sanctuary.

Of course, if the body was lost, resurrection on the spot was impossible. However, thanks to Velgrind, although the damage was enormous, a fatal situation was averted.

Nicholas, who was in charge of the "barrier" on the ground, died instantly, and the [Holy Purification Barrier] [Holy Field] also collapsed for an instant, but Hinata restored it. Nicolas was also resurrected, and as if there was no pain of death, he took over the maintenance of the "barrier" from Hinata as it was. This shows his determination, as he could not show could not show such a shameful sight to the woman he worshiped.

However, no one cares about such a beautiful story.

This resurrection took place in an instant, but the losses on the human side were immense. Even tho the death toll was kept to zero by Luminas, it was a different story whether they could continue the battle. People like Nicholas were the exception, and the majority were unable to recover from the terrifying experience. The Holy Knights, Crusaders, and the new Imperial Guardians were also veteran warriors, but perhaps that was precisely why they felt the awe at the overwhelming presence.

Everyone had experienced dying and coming back to life before. Some had been resurrected during training in the labyrinth, or by the hands of Demon Lord Rimuru, and although it was a great shock, it wasn't so great that they couldn't recover. However, facing the absolute presence of the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivalaje, their hearts were broken.

If you lose your will to fight, you will lose even battles that you could win. Even if they understood that, no one was able to move in the face of despair.

It's no wonder.

After all, even the strongest fighting force in this place, which can be called the support of their hearts — Vergil, has suffered great damage from the attack just now...

In fact, Velgrind was on the verge of collapse at any moment, and was being supported by Masayuki. It would have been better if she hadn't used her full strength, but all of her "separate bodies" had already been integrated. That was how powerful the blow was, and if Velgrind hadn't risked everything, this area would have undoubtedly been annihilated.

It was a stroke of luck that she managed to withstand it, but there would be no next time.

"Hehehe, what an incredible monster. I have to admit that my expectations were naive."

Velgrind was impressive enough to be able to mock herself like that. However, to anyone's eyes, that was nothing more than sour grapes... Even Masayuki, who was supporting Velgrind, had reached a state of half-resignation, saying, "This may be the end..."

It wasn't just Masayuki, everyone was the same. What frightened the warriors more than anything was Ivalaje's appearance. Still a child. And a young child at that. In other words, it is a figure that makes you think that there is still room for growth — no matter what. She was already too strong to handle, but what if she got even stronger... they were consumed by such anxiety.

Everyone thought. It was useless anyway, so what's the point in fighting any more? But the battle continued. From the sky to the ground in the east, a battle had begun between the Cryptid forces, who had succeeded in escaping the Holy Barrier, and King Gazel's Pegasus Knights. They responded in place of those who could not move, but the fighting power that should have been conserved was consumed from the beginning.

Immediately after the war began, they were in an overwhelmingly unfavorable situation—but even so, humanity had not yet lost. Even in times of despair, they had not yet given up hope.

Luminas commanded as a god.

"Don't give up! Even if you die, I will revive you, so put aside your fears and challenge the enemy!!"

Hinata followed suit.

"That's right! I would rather live proudly as a warrior to the end than give up and die miserably here. You all feel the same, don't you?"

Those words resonated in the hearts of the warriors.

The will to fight that had been cut off and about to disappear was barely connected.((?)) Inspired by this, Calgurio gave a rousing speech.

"Listen!! Our goddess has risked her life to protect us. Even if we band together, we cannot compare to her in terms of fighting power!!"

In the Eastern Empire, there is not a soldier who does not hear these words. Because everyone understands that they are protected by the mercy of the goddess—Velgrind. And now, they have experienced that blessing. If they are not inspired by this, they will be criticized as "weaklings who do not deserve to be here." It no longer matters if the enemy is despair itself. The Imperial soldiers will not retreat, even if they are killed in battle. Seeing the changes in the humans, Testarossa's confidant Cien bursts out in loud laughter.

"Fufu, fufufufu, exactly, that's exactly right!! If you guys were seen in such an unsightly figure by Testarossa-sama —"

It seemed to be enough to say that much. Before Cien could finish his sentence, two hundred members of the Black Numbers rose to their feet. They stood motionless. And then--

They directed their murderous intent at the Cryptids and bravely resumed the fight. And thus, the human side also regained momentum. Even if they were going to lose, they were determined to fight to the end.

And thus--

The long, long despair welcomed the beginning of the end.

Chapter 3: Decisive battle

The monster country's executives gathered in the "Control Room." More than a day had passed since Luminas's announcement.

"Souei contacted me. We've annihilated the threat of Zelanus and driven away the calamity of Vega, but it seems we still can't relax. I'm sure you're all exhausted, but please continue to stay alert."

That's what the Supreme Commander, Benimaru, said. Souei had also deployed to be able to respond immediately to the battle situation. There weren't even any "clone bodies" left here, and now he was only connected to Benimaru through "thought transmission." That's how urgent the situation was.

The assembled executives nodded with worried expressions. It's pointless to have protected our homeland if the world is destroyed. Although not everyone is in perfect condition, they are full of spirit.

However, there are some who cannot be helped by spirit alone. Zegion was the most notable, having fallen into an evolutionary slumber and therefore absent. Speaking of absences, Diablo was also missing. He had gone off somewhere, saying that he had some personal business to attend to. Benimaru was concerned, but had a rough idea of where he was headed. He gave a wry smile, thinking that it couldn't be helped, and decided to let him do as he pleased.

"So, Benimaru-chan. How should we proceed from now on?" Ramiris asked on behalf of those gathered here.

"All the forces that have returned from the former Eurazania will be dispatched to Damargania."

The atmosphere in the "Control Room" became tense.

"I will take command."

Benimaru declared before anyone could object. More than half of the "Kurenai" were left behind in Old Eurazania, and had turned into ice statues. Despite this, he had no intention of carrying out a rescue operation.

The executives, such as Gabil and Geld, upon hearing this decision, could only realize that Benimaru's resolve was extraordinary.((?)) Gabiru was worried about Suphia, who had just become his girlfriend. However, this was not the kind of atmosphere where he could say that. Since Benimaru had made his decision after looking at the overall situation, it was the duty of a warrior to follow his orders.

Geld felt the same way. Not all of Geld's subordinates, the Yellow Corps, Yellow Numbers, and Orange Corps, Orange Numbers, had returned. Those who had shouldered the damage that Geld had received through [Ultimate Gift] 'Belzebub' were likely still waiting for rescue.

Both Gabil or Geld, if it were allowed, would have felt like marching out to Old Eurazania immediately. However, that was not allowed. It was not that Benimaru was cold-hearted. On the contrary, he was the most compassionate man of them all. Since it was Benimaru's decision, no one could argue with it. If there was any doubt...

'How will we travel?'

The pregnant Alvis asked the tactical question.

Even the 'Hiryuu', the fastest fighting force in the Demon Country, would take more than a full day to reach Damargania. And that was without sleep or rest. Not to mention the other army corps. If they didn't march out immediately, there was a strong possibility that they wouldn't make it in time for the critical battle.

If Rimuru was there, he would have used a large-scale "transportation technique" to solve the problem. But now they had to do it on their own, and the concept of "logistics" that they hadn't had to consider much until now weighed heavily on them.

Alvis was concerned about this and intervened, knowing it would dampen their spirits. But Benimaru was unfazed. That problem had already been solved by his sister, Shuna.

"There's no problem. Shuna will "transport" us."

"Yes. I've analyzed Rimuru-sama's technique, so I'll transport everyone safely to their destination."

Benimaru declared, and Shuna nodded with a smile.

It's not like there won't be any problems. There was a large gap in the amount of [magic essence] between Rimuru and Shuna. No matter how simplified the technique was, it was expected that the burden of "transporting" so many people at once would be considerable. However, no one pointed this out. Everyone sensed Shuna's resolve and understood. If Shuna herself said it was no problem, then there was no problem.

Rimuru's teaching – "Never say you can't do something" – Shuna would never break that, so success was all but guaranteed.

What happens after that is something to be considered when the time comes.

"Ramiris-sama, I'll leave the defense of the labyrinth to you."

Shuna's request was a declaration that she would be unable to use her powers((to defend the labyrinth?)). Ramiris was not stupid enough to not notice this.

"Of course! Leave it to me, the supreme demon lord Lamiris, I'll take care of it!"

She accepted with her usual smile, as if to reassure Shuna. Benimaru nodded vigorously.

"Apito, I'm entrusting you with the defense of the labyrinth."

"Understood."

"However..."

"?"

"—As soon as Zegion awakens, abandon the labyrinth and go out to battle."

"But..."

Everything Rimuru left behind was inside the labyrinth. There are even Alvis and Momiji, who are more important to Benimaru than his own life.

But even so, Benimaru did not waver.

"I'll leave the defense of the labyrinth to Beretta and Treyni. I don't want to die either, but depending on the situation, I don't know what will happen. If you can contact me, that's fine. If not—Apito, you will have to judge the war situation yourself."

Leaving the defense of the labyrinth in someone else's hands is an unbelievable order under normal circumstances. However, that was proof that the current situation was dire. Realizing Benimaru's feelings, Apito nodded gravely. Benimaru, who is a confident man, was practically declaring that he couldn't even tell if he was safe. Since Apito was left behind as insurance, she had to live up to that trust.

"That's right. Now is the time to protect the fate of the world--"

"Exactly."

"We will surely be victorious!!"

Win. And then they all laughed together. That determination was something that everyone shared.

"Kumara, you'll also be heading out."

"Understood."

Kumara replied with a fearless smile. This wasn't the first time she'd fought outside the labyrinth, so she weren't shaken by it. Nodding in response, Benimaru announced the final decision.

"As for the "[Crimson Corps]", Hakurou will lead them until Gobua returns!"

"Leave it to me."

"I'll leave the 'Goblin Riders' to Gobta. Ranga and Kumara will support him. Run around the battlefield and show your strength!!"

"Roger!"

"Understood!!"

"I'll look forward to it."

"As for the "[Flying Dragon Corps]", I authorize each of you to fight freely."

"—?"

Hearing Benimaru's words, Gabil made a "huh?" face. He thought that he would be the one to command them. As if to answer this question, Benimaru continued.

"Gabil, Geld, I want to give you two a different mission."

If it was a separate mission in this important situation, it was clear that it was something extremely important. Gabil and Geld held their breath and waited for Benimaru to elaborate.

"I might not even need to order you to do this—"

Benimaru began explaining the plan. It was very dangerous...but Gabil and Geld expressions brightened. Because, as Benimaru had said, it was exactly the order they had wanted.

"I understand! I'm entrusting the [Hiryuu] to Yashichi, Sukerou, and Kakushin!"((lizard posse))

"Yeah, leave it to me!"

"Indeed."

"Do your best, Gabiru-sama!!"

As if responding to the motivated Gabiru, his three confidants took on the task in their usual tone. It was exactly as always. That made him((them?)) feel as though success was guaranteed.

And Geld too.

"Even if it means my death, I will definitely fulfill my role!!"

He declared with a spirited "fushuu."((~bang))

He hadn't fully recovered yet, but he didn't care at all. And so, each member of the counterattack was given a role.

Over 100 members of the Kurenai, 100 members of the Hiryuu, and 100 members of the Goblin Riders - a total of 300 plus people, led by Benimaru, were to march out. With Zegion asleep and Apito remaining as a liaison, all the other "[Twelve Guardian Lords]" were dispatched. The defensive strength of the labyrinth had never been so low before.

And everyone hoped deep in their hearts that this would never happen again.

Jahil was pondering. What was the right move going forward? Zalario's betrayal was a painful blow. There was also the [Insect Demon Lord] Zelanus, but that was an existence that Jahil could not possibly handle.

To begin with, he wondered how much he could trust Feldway.

(Even if I follow Feldway, I won't be able to have a say in anything. That wouldn't be profitable, and besides—)

He remembered Benimaru. He was a detestable enemy, the worst of the worst. Despite being overwhelmingly inferior in rank, he had toyed with Jahil, the Great Sorcerer Emperor. That was an unforgivable act of folly. For a lowly demon to defy Jahil was an evil act that should never be allowed to happen. Therefore, he had to be punished, but... Benimaru was troublesome.

If he had faced them alone, Jahil's victory would have been certain. However, allowing Benimaru to have a fighting force to command was a mistake. Defeating them one by one was the right answer. He didn't think he could have killed him with [Wide-Range Blood Magic Heat Wave], so he thought he would stand in Jahil's way again. If that's the case, he should be dealt with before it gets too troublesome—

(Hmm. I also have enemies that I must defeat. The most prominent of them is—)

The Demon Lord Luminas.

She was a hateful enemy who destroyed the "God Ancestor" whom Jahil revered. Not just Benimaru, but the Demon Lord Luminas too. He had many enemies and few allies he could rely on. The army that Feldway had entrusted to him had also mostly scattered, and now only about 700 remained. This was far from enough to be a fighting force.

In any case, there was no point in sitting back and waiting, so Jahil decided to start gathering information. He sent his subordinates to various places to investigate the current situation. They were Old Eurazania, Lubelius, Damargania, the labyrinth, and Sarion, a total of five locations. He thought that Sarion, which he had attacked himself, was unnecessary, but he had them investigate just to be sure. Even if it was unnecessary, it would not hurt.

And so time passed.

Reports continued to arrive... and they were something that Jahil could not ignore.

Old Eurazania was sealed off in a world of ice. Even if they tried to investigate the inside, they would not be able to reach the center with a half-hearted force, and the details were unknown. It was assumed that the battle between Guy and Velzard was still ongoing.

The problem was the remaining four locations.

First of all, Dagrue! was defeated in Lubelius.

"Not only Fen, but Dagrue!, the God of Destruction, was defeated!? I can't believe Veldora has grown that powerful..."

Even from Jahil's perspective, an existence superior to him was easily defeated. That fact surprised Jahil more than Zalario's betrayal.

(It'll be hard to recover from this. So, what are you going to do, Feldway?)

At this point, the existence of the "Three Star Commanders" had become nothing more than a mere formality. The various army corps had also collapsed, and the damage would be too great to conquer the Base World. It would be fine if they still won, but...

The battles in other regions were also of concern.

The movements of those who entered the labyrinth were one of them. It seems that communication had been cut off, and their whereabouts were unknown. What was even more surprising was the fact that even Zelanus had appeared. With such a strong person participating in the battle, it seemed like it was only a matter of time before the labyrinth collapsed. And yet, there had been no progress since then.

This was a serious situation. But Jahil's judgment was wrong.

(No way. Vega might have been a different matter, but there was no way Zelanus could have been defeated. Even if that Benimaru person had returned, it would be impossible for him to win.)

He thought so because he was too set in his own common sense.

The reason there had been no news was probably because the battle within the labyrinth was still ongoing. No matter how much they tried to manipulate him, there was no doubt that Zelanus would win in the end. If that happened, the area centered on the labyrinth ruins would become Zelanus's territory.

This was an undesirable development for Jahil. To begin with, the reason Jahil was cooperating with Feldway was to fulfill his own ambitions. To avenge the God Ancestor and rule this Axis World. That was Jahil's wish.

When he found out that Zelanus also wanted territory, he gave up on taking over the entire world. However, he had no intention of giving up any of his important strongholds.

What Jahil wanted was the fertile Jura Forest or the prosperous western nations. If he could be greedy, Jahil would like to have the entire Central Continent, including the Jura Forest, in his hands.

If Zelanus were to take Jura Forest, he would have to give up his ambitions. Jahil wanted to stop that, but he couldn't come up with a good plan, so there was nothing he could do. However, even if he gave up Jura Forest, he didn't intend to give up the wealth of the Western nations as well. Since his values regarding territory differ from those of Zelanus, he believed that coexistence would be possible. He could seal them off in Jura Forest as a living area for the Insectars, and Jahil would reap the benefits of civilization.

However, there was a problem. Feldway would likely bring the eastern empire under his control, but Dagrue's aim, like Jahil's, was aimed at the Western countries. He was racking his brains over how to find a compromise, but he had a plan.

He would cede a large part of the Western countries. Specifically, he would hand over the northwestern part of the continent, including Lubelius, Ingrasia, and Farmentas, to Dagrue. Then, he intended to make the lower half, the southwestern part of the continent, including Sarion, his domain.

In this way, he would divide the world into four parts, and they could cooperate and develop together. Then, as he accumulated power... it would be great if Jahil were to eventually rise to the top. He would also annex the former Eurazania, depending on the circumstances. It would be meaningless if he could not remove Velzard's power, so this area was an issue for the future.

In any case, what was important was his own profit. Jahil thought so, and had the situation in other regions investigated. It was not his intention to have the territory he was meant to take to be ravaged, so it was a stroke of luck that the final battle took place in the direction of Lubelius. Dagrue's defeat was unexpected, but it could be said to be a good result, since it means that the territory will not have to be divided.

While Jahil was pondering his future plans, he received a report about the remaining areas.

After Milim unleashed her [Drago Nova] at the [Heavenly Tower] in Damargania, she went in the direction of Sarion.

"What are you doing, Feldway!!"

Jahil was furious.

The current [Stampede] Milim is the very definition of annihilation, and if left to her own devices, she poses the risk of destroying the world. If things continue as they are, even the wealth that Jahil should have obtained may be lost.

Damargania is in chaos, and Lubelius is hastily gathering forces. Luminas herself revealed her true identity, and even gave a speech to the whole world about the world's crisis, summoning heroes from all over the world.

Jahil laughed at her exaggerated behavior, but as he learned about the rapidly changing situation, it became more and more of a concern for him. Milim's movements were also of concern, but Luminas' "End Proclamation" could not be ignored. If it became a threat that even Velgrind had to be mobilized to deal with...

"Ivarage!"

The king of another world - a being that could be called the true god of destruction, an entity that would destroy the world. If such an Ivalage were to manifest, it was clear that Luminas and the others' response was not an exaggeration.

In Sarion, the battle to stop Milim continued.

Jahil also tried to burn down the Sacred Tree, but only after determining that it could be regenerated. If Milim's [Dragon Star Explosion] [Drago Nova] had been aimed at the Sacred Tree, the downfall of Sarion would have been inevitable.

(They seem to be holding out against Milim, but it's no longer something that can be called a battle. It's better that they've not being overrun, but that will only be a matter of time.)

While Jahil was feeling bitter about this, a new report was brought to him. A mysterious being had appeared and was fighting Milim on equal terms. He was curious about its identity, but the report continued.

"What!? Veldora has appeared, you say?"

Veldora, who had defeated Dagrue, had come all the way to Sarion.

"I don't understand. I thought we would return to the labyrinth and deal with Zelanus..."

If the situation in Lubelius had settled down, it would be natural to return to your own [base] [home]. Moreover, right now, that base was in the middle of an attack. Naturally, Jahil had thought that they would call back Veldora to deal with Zelanus. The ideal scenario would have been for Veldora and Zegion to destroy each other. Even if it didn't go that well, if Jahil could have finished off the one who remained...

It was too greedy to expect that much, but in any case, information about the labyrinth remained unknown.

He was more concerned about the battle in Sarion, between Veldora and the others.

No, more than that—

Fierce battles had broken out all over the world.

In the labyrinth, Zelanus should be rampaging.

In Old Eurazania, it was speculated that Guy and Velzard were clashing.

In Damargania, the threat of Ivalaje was about to emerge.

And in Sarion, an out-of-control Milim was wreaking havoc.

So... Jahil pondered. In this chaotic situation, what should be prioritized? Jahil struggled and then made a decision.

"Since Feldway is controlling Milim, there's no problem with leaving them alone. Personally, I think I should settle this long-held grudge here."

Jahil turned his attention to Damargania. He thought he'd take advantage of the confusion to eliminate Luminas, who would likely be there. Jahil sneered((in an evil manner)) and reluctantly got up.

((*))

Each side of the Human Defence Front was fighting bravely against their respective enemies. The eastern side, which suffered the most damage, was fighting in a desperate battle. The moment of defeat had not come, thanks to the barely maintained Holy Barrier. However, this was merely postponing the final moment a little. Everyone understood this, but continued to fight with unyielding spirit.

The only good thing was that the "World Destruction Dragon" Ivarage had stopped moving. Sitting on the shoulder of a large monster, it((she)) had become quiet. It was watching the battle with a seemingly cheerful expression, but showed no signs of moving..

There was a plan to take this opportunity to launch an attack, but no one could carry it out. Velgrynd was also focusing on recovering her strength, and anyone other than her was too weak. They came to the conclusion that it was better to wait and see rather than recklessly provoking it. Besides... if they could buy time, there was a possibility that the situation might improve.

(Although, that too depends on Rimuru...)

Luminas scoffed at herself. That was a very fleeting possibility. There was a chance that Rimuru's subordinates might come to their aid. It seemed that Zelanus the Insect Lord had appeared in the labyrinth, so there was no way they would have any strength to spare. Even so, for some reason, Luminas was hopeful.

The others were the same, and the reason they hadn't given up fighting yet was because of such hope.

And speaking of hope—

(I can't imagine that stubborn and impudent Rimuru would just let himself be defeated. He seems to have been banished somewhere, but I can't help but feel like he'll come back nonchalantly.)

She had been told that he had vanished, but that was her true feeling. The image of Rimuru that she had heard from Chloe was idealized, but the Rimuru that Luminas herself had observed was generally similar. He was confident, competitive, good-natured and kind, and exuded a presence that made her want to rely on him. Even Hinata, who used to be as tense as a sharp knife, looked her age when she was with Rimuru, which was quite impressive. She was probably still confident that Rimuru was safe.

(If I admit defeat now, who knows what he'll say to me later? I'd hate to be mocked by him, so I'd better stay alert until the end.)

Thinking this, Luminas steeled herself so as not to show even a moment of weakness. The battle situation wasn't bad—or so she thought. If we could reduce the number of Cryptids before Ivalaje made her move, perhaps we could do something about it? It seemed to her that she was gaining the upper hand.

The battles in other areas were similar, and they seemed to be managing to minimize casualties. The [Cryptids] were strong individually, but they were a race unfamiliar with group warfare. While there were some who cooperated with each other, so they couldn't let their guard down, it was good news that they hadn't fallen into a situation where they were completely overwhelmed.

If only we could do something about the [World Destruction Dragon] Ivarage...

That's what everyone was thinking when they started to think that. The situation suddenly changed. Ivarage, who was sitting on the shoulder of a large monster with her legs dangling, grinned.

"I've given you more friends♪"

Everyone was confused by his sudden statement. But the next moment, they understood what it meant. It was unknown what kind of ritual had been performed beyond the door, but the nature of the appearing phantoms had changed. To be more specific, they had become humanoid.

Most of them were grotesque creatures without even eyes, noses, or mouths, but some of them had a non-human beauty. It seemed that the higher-ranking individuals had higher combat capabilities.

"Tch, that's troublesome. I wonder if they learned from how we fight?"

Hinata grumbled.

Until now, they had been fighting against beasts, but the humanoid phantoms had begun to use their hardened skin as weapons and even use something like swordsmanship.

The strength of the outer skin, which had been uniform until then, had also changed, with the weaponized parts being strong and the rest weaker. It may seem that they became weaker because of the increased number of weak spots, but it could also be seen as more dangerous because their attack power has increased.

Moreover, they seemed to be learning tactics in real time. It is not unreasonable to suddenly increase their power, but if this continued, they would gradually become more and more disadvantaged.

"There's no end to this, what do we do, Calgurio?"

"Don't ask me. All we can do is try to kill them with one blow, without showing our hand as much as possible."

Even if they understood this, it was difficult to put it into practice. It's not a feat that anyone can imitate, except for skilled people like Calgurio and Mintis. Moreover, the existence value of the higher-ranked individuals exceeded that of any previous enemies. Not only were they highly durable, but some of them even became capable of "Super-Fast Regeneration."

At this point, it would become difficult to defeat them before they could learn.

"That's bad. Ivarage has been watching us the whole time."

As Hinata pointed out, Ivarage had been observing the battle all along. In other words, it was constantly learning and adapting their fighting style. The ominous premonition she had felt at first was becoming a reality. Everyone felt it, and they had to fight against the anxiety that welled up from the depths of their hearts.

*

The situation was the toughest in the east, but the other lines of defense were also struggling.

First, in the west—

A beast came out of the door with a swaying sound. It had the presence of a king. A beast that runs through the void—Kakeashi.

Contrary to its cute name, it had an extremely ferocious appearance. It was close to a wolf in shape, but far larger. It had the body of a lion, the head of a dragon, and its total length reached ten meters. Its height was also over five meters. The jet-black dragon scales covering its entire body stood on end like a mountain of needles. And they were so sharp that it would not be an exaggeration to call them spears. Its tail was divided into eight branches and wriggled like a poisonous snake. It had six glowing crimson eyes, glaring at its surroundings. It might seem that it would have many blind spots due to its huge body, but that was a mistake. That's because it had bulging eyes growing all over its body. They were not fixed. It seemed that it could make them appear at will, and they could even be created on the dragon scales.

Sharp claws dully shone on its sturdy four legs. In addition, countless small protrusions grew in the gaps between the dragon scales, giving it a truly mysterious atmosphere. And those fangs—

They were [fearsome], like a symbol of a predator, evoking terror in the hearts of those who saw them. Kakeashi glanced at the waiting warriors, but quickly lost interest. Instead, his attention was focused on the world he was experiencing for the first time.

He snorted and took in the smell of the wind.

Satisfied, it let out a roar.

The wind trembled.

It became a shock wave, blowing away those who lacked the strength.

"What a guy..."

Gregory, who hated dogs, shivered as if his trauma had been stimulated. Even so, with the pride of a former "Three Martial Saints" in his heart, he took a stance towards Kakeashi. It was Shion and Dagura who stepped forward, restraining Gregory.

"Ridiculous! A mere beast like that, we can easily—huh?"

Shion cut his words short and stared at Kakeashi. It had ignored Shion and the others and lay down gracefully. However, it didn't seem to be that it had no intention of fighting. A group of beasts that seemed to be Kakeashi's brethren were steadily walking out.. They were of the

same lineage and similar in appearance. The only differences were their slightly smaller bodies and the fact that they only had four eyes instead of six.

How different the extent of their combat abilities would be unknown until they fought.

"Everyone, prepare!"

Shion shouted. Her voice was the signal for Kakeashi's followers to move.

And so, the battle began. Kakeashi's followers were different. While the Cryptids don't usually gather in groups, this was a group that worked in perfect harmony. Even when viewed individually, their combat abilities were extremely high. According to the standards set by the Free Association, they were at least A-rank. Moreover, there were many S-rank and above individuals mixed in, making them incredibly dangerous.

Even the heroes of humanity gathered in this place had individual abilities above A-rank. They were by no means inferior, but if asked whether they could win in a one-on-one fight, the reality was that it would be difficult.

Moreover, this group excelled in group battles. For the human side, which was a ragtag bunch, they were far too dangerous an enemy.

"You guys, gather with those you get along with! Never be alone!!"

Glenda shouted. That was a very astute instruction. The Kakeashi clan members that continued to appear increased in number to over several hundred. Facing them alone was nothing short of suicidal.

The front line was only being maintained thanks to the Holy Barrier, a favorable condition for humanity.

"These damn dogs—!!"

Gregory was fighting like a lion, blowing away Kakeashi's minions. The enemy was not a dog, but it would be rude to correct him.

Shion's [Beheading Demon Blade] crushed several minions at once. She was demonstrating incredible fighting ability, but the number of enemies was still huge.

Everyone must have thought that it didn't feel like the numbers were decreasing at all. Enemies continued to appear. They were still outnumbered, but there was no telling when that would be reversed. The never-ending game of cat and mouse was wearing down the warriors' minds.

Perhaps understanding this, Kakeashi did not move. He gazed out over the battlefield with an intelligent, cold gaze, waiting for an opportunity. And finally, the time had come.

Takeashi stood up and roared. It was the second roar of the day, but this time there was something different. Takeashi was a beast, but even compared to humans, he was highly intelligent. He was cunning, cautious, and had the judgement to avoid fights he couldn't win.

Takeashi had made the decision to attack. This meant that he was sure of victory.

His roar made the air tremble. Unlike the first threat, this time he had issued a serious order to attack. This caused his followers to change their behavior. They no longer feared sacrifice and now attacked with abandon.

"Well, this is tough—wait, what's this unpleasant feeling...?"

Glenda, who had reloaded with divine skill and shot down one of them, was about to complain. But then she noticed something and frowned. Immediately afterwards—

"Everyone, hold your breath and prepare for defense! If you let your guard down, you'll die!"

Glenda's voice roared. It was not inferior to Takeashi's roar and reached her allies as a "thought transmission." Immediately after that—

Takeashi was using his roar as cover to launch another attack. Small protrusions sprouted from the gaps in the dragon scales that covered his massive body, and viscous decomposing enzymes were spewing from their tips. This was mixed with Takeashi's [magical energy] and spread into the atmosphere by the roar. It was harmless to Takeashi's subordinates, but it was a 'poisonous fog' that was fatal to other living things.

If Glenda had not warned him, many people would have died.

Some of Shion's subordinates, the "Yomigaeri", were vomiting blood and suffering. They had probably tried it out of curiosity, but the result was that their lungs were burned and they could not breathe, their internal organs were rotten and blood was leaking out, their eyes were crushed, and the mucous membranes in their noses rotted and bled, causing them to endure the hellish pain for about three hours. Unfortunately, even healing potions could not negate the effects. They would not die, but they would have to repeat the destruction and regeneration until the effects of the "poison mist" faded.

Seeing the devastation, everyone was grateful for Glenda's "Danger Sense".

"Tch, that's why I hate dogs!" Gregory spat out sourly.

Still, it was amazing that Gregory could bitch in a situation like this, and it was true that it gave those who heard it a little peace of mind. In addition to this, Shion made a move.

"The True Birth of Heaven and Earth's Life and Death [Chaotic Fate]!!"

Shion's great sword — "God • Gouriki Maru" cut through the sky. With just that, Kakeashi's 'poisonous fog' was detoxified.

The absurdity of the [cancellation ability] boasted by the [Ultimate Skill] '[King of Tyranny] Susanoo' was still alive and well, and it was a great achievement that was worthy of Shion's reputation.

"Whether it's an enemy or ingredients, cooking is my specialty! I don't feel like I'm going to lose this match!!"

This declaration greatly encouraged the warriors. As long as Shion was there, they knew they couldn't lose, and they became even more motivated.

Even so, the battle was still in its early stages. With Kakeashi's second roar, the battle on the Western Front also intensified.

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What appeared on the Southern Front was an extremely strange existence.

It was Swim, a fish that swims through the stars. When it appeared, Ultima muttered

"Oh, too bad. That guy looks dangerous. Honestly, I don't think we can defeat it without casualties."

That was a fair assessment. In response, Veyron immediately ordered.

"Everyone stand back. I'll take the lead!"

The heroes from each country looked at Veyron with eyes wondering who this old man was, but before they could raise a cry of dissatisfaction, Youm gave the command.

"Hey, you guys! Get behind us quickly!!"

This is where Youm's communication skills came into play. Thanks to the trust he had earned, the heroes, who were full of quirks((basically differences of opinion I think)), obeyed. Some people complained, but that was just a formality. Before Swim could show his whole body, the only warriors remaining within the barrier were Ultima and the demons.

"Good judgment. If you were a little later, you guys would have died♪"

She said it in a light tone, but it was no laughing matter. However, the correctness of those words was proven immediately after.

"What is that eerie monster...?"

"A fish...?"

There were also flying fish monsters, like Megalodons.

That remark was made under the mistaken impression that the Swim, that had just appeared, was also of that lineage.((?))

Swim is an image of a squid swimming in the sky, but its torso alone, excluding the tentacles, is about ten meters long. The tentacles are three to five meters long, and it would be classified as a fairly large monster.

However, that was an inaccurate assessment.

Compared to gargantuan monsters like Calybdys, it was small, but it was not such an easy existence that its strength could be measured by the size of its body. That is now being proven.

The Swim swayed.

The tentacle part, a collection of small strange creatures that had been parasitizing Swim, detached all at once and danced in the space. Their speed reached the speed of sound in five seconds. The maximum speed is unknown because the distance is short, but no one wanted to know. Because it was clear that being hit by it would result in instant death. Its figure, spinning and moving straight ahead, looked as if it were raining spears.

In fact, the aberration's entire body was covered in [biological heterogeneous steel] [Arionium], so it didn't matter if they were small; on the contrary, it was the opposite. They had become extremely dangerous beings that could pierce through everything.

"Seriously..."

"If I'd been in there, I'd have died before I could do anything..."

The sight of those tiny monsters dancing wildly was fantastical, but terrifying. With perfectly coordinated movements, they were rampaging through the [Holy Purification Barrier].

However, the reason they had the time to admire the beauty was because there were no casualties. Ultima's warning, and the subsequent shouts from Veyron and Youm. If this had not happened, a mass slaughter in the first move would have occurred.

And so, the two hundred or so demons that remained on the battlefield fought with all their might, putting their pride on the line.

"Annoying!"

Ultima shouted in frustration, instantly eliminating the plethora of monsters. It was truly a miracle, but Ultima's only target was the big boss - Swim.

Swim swims through the sky. It swims with complete freedom.((sorry about all that shwimming)) He can move at any speed. In other words, it means that it can move at maximum speed from the start. Swim's maximum battle speed is near the speed of light.

Light speed is about 880,000 times the speed of sound. Swim's speed does not reach light speed, but it can fly at a speed close to it. Although his speed is greatly slowed down in the atmosphere, he can still move at more than 100,000 times the speed of sound, making it impossible for ordinary people to even see him.((not sure what fuse was smoking writing this))

However, it won't affect Ultima. The moment she grasps its existence, she can ignore physical laws and respond. It was fortunate that Ultima was in the battle in the south. She countered Swim's superhuman speed with skill and magic. The outcome will unfold in a realm that no one can predict. Furthermore, the battlefield itself is undergoing changes—

Following the first Swim, a succession of grotesque creatures appeared one after another. The Cryptids created by Ivalaje are diverse and have no sense of unity. Among them are humanoid monsters like the Insectars. The heroes who escaped the first attack were forced to deal with these new threats.

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The Northern Front had become hell.

It was being ravaged by the appearing bird that flies through dimensions—Habataki. The Bloody Knights and the Black Numbers were defeated by the Habataki without any means of resistance. Blood splattered and limbs flew into the air.

"What's with this!?"

"What just happened...?"

Ultima wasn't here. Therefore, they didn't realize how dangerous the enemy was until they was face to face with it.

"This is bad," Adalman muttered.

He finally realized the situation, but this is not because Adalman was slow.

The massacre had begun without a warning signal, and not even a minute had passed. There was no time to observe the situation, so they had to consider countermeasures from now on.

In response to Adalman, Gadra gave his opinion.

"Hmm, 'transfer', huh? Moreover, judging from the brilliance of its whole body, those feathers are [Hihirokane], huh?"

A two-headed eagle wrapped in golden feathers—that was the visage of Habataki. Its total length from the tip of its head to the end of its tail was about three meters. Although it is large for a bird, it is small for a deformed phantom beast. However, its ferocity and fighting ability made it the strongest among the [Cryptids].

Swim are the fastest, and excel at long-distance travel.

In contrast, Habataki are slower than Swim((gemini translated it as “Swims”, gonna call it Mr.Swimms from now on)), and are not as fast when traveling long distances.

Even so, Habataki is stronger than Swimms.

The very reason for this was the 'transfer'((teleportation)) that Gadra pointed out.

"Hmm hmm. It accelerates and 'transfers', and cuts the enemy without killing its momentum. It seems to be similar to Glenda's ability, but—"

"There doesn't seem to be any spatial fluctuation. It's refined to a level close to teleportation, so it's difficult to grasp its location with 'Magic Perception'..."

With Glenda's unique skill '[Sniper] [Neuramono]', a distortion occurs in space when 'space connection' is established, so the location of its appearance can be predicted. However, in the case of Habataki, the appearance location could be freely set. It appears at the same time as the space is distorted, so it is a similar but different ability. If it is not possible to avoid it after perceiving it, then this is, as Gadra says, an ability that is almost close to 'instant movement'.

"You guys, this is not the time for a rambling explanation."

Pope Louis lashed out at them. Seeing the miserable state of his subordinates made him ((appear)) furious. However, the [Bloody Knights] are almost immortal, so not a single one of them died. They are repairing the loss of their bodies with 'self-regeneration'. They cannot immediately return to the battle line, but they can be revived after some time.

As expected of the [Black Numbers], they are maintaining the front line. Although there was some initial confusion, it seems that they are making it easier to predict Habataki's appearance

by spreading 'multiple barriers' around them. As expected of Diablo's direct subordinates, they are a group that is incredibly used to actual combat.

Adalman and Gadra exchanged looks as Louis warned them. Habataki are not the only enemies, a wide variety of strange monsters are gushing out of the door. If this is left unchecked, it seems that it will be an irreversible situation.

"Indeed, it seems that this is not the time to be idle."

"That's right. Well then, I will head out as well."

The two nodded to each other and switched their attention to battle mode.

"Everyone, rest assured. My god is alive and well. Let me show you a miracle as proof of this!! Sacred Magic: [High-grade wide-area recovery][Great High Heal] & [Wide-area body part regeneration][Great Regeneration]—!!"

By obtaining a body, Adalman had perfectly regained his senses((?)) and even the skills he had used in life. Moreover, he was extremely adept, and was able to switch between monster and human recovery magic. This was truly excellent, and helped the warriors who were working hard to regenerate themselves. The warriors who were instantly resurrected attacked an enemy that matched their strength.

Albert and Venti took stances to protect Adalman. Seeing this, Gadra made his move.

"I also want to annihilate the enemy with large-scale magic, but it seems difficult to capture that thing. Well, be that as it may, there are ways to deal with it."

With that said, he charged into the melee battlefield.

Gadra, who was reborn as a [Metal Demon], had also become a master of close-combat magic. His martial arts skills are still lacking, but he can make up for that with magic, so he has a fair fighting ability. It was enough for the [Cryptids] who had no knowledge of martial arts, and he began to wreak havoc on the battlefield.

Gunter, who was listening to the conversation, looked back at himself with a sigh.

"I was outsmarted from the first move, but I can't be defeated like this."

"That's right. It seems that other enemies have appeared, and it's not the time for you to be watching from the sidelines."

Louis nodded at Gunter's words. These two are not so close, but they are not bad either. They just hate to have their respective territories invaded, but when they cooperate, they can demonstrate their true value.

"Since Lady Luminas is watching, let's get serious here."

"That's right. Let's make the power of Gunter Strauss known far and wide, so that I don't bring shame to the name of Divine Ancestor's disciple!!"

In this flow, Luminas turned her attention to the north and shouted a rousing voice.

'Don't be foolish, you guys should hurry up and counterattack.'

A minute and a half had passed since the start of the battle. In the north, they didn't hold back from the start, and it became an all-out war. Thus, fierce fighting was unfolding on all sides, with the tower at its center.

Luminas was keeping an eye on the entire battlefield, but the eastern area where Ivarage was located was particularly tense. [Million Class] like Hinata and Calgurio were fighting against multiple humanoid phantoms. Skilled people like Cien and Mintis were fighting against single individuals and reliably defeating them. The others are taking on one enemy with three people, trying to minimize casualties as much as possible. These warriors were supported by Luminas's sacred magic.

"Hmm, was there a mistake in my strategy?"

Luminas wondered if she should have placed more healing magicians on each side, but then she realized that this was still the best combination. Thanks to Ramiris' Labyrinth, the number of users of sacred magic had also increased. Although she hadn't expected such a situation, she could say that this result was fortunate.

Still, there were many problems. Even if there are enough healers, you still need the strength to protect them, so it's not as simple as just splitting them up equally. It's important to distribute them in a balanced way, and it's inevitable that there will be times when healing doesn't come fast enough.

For this reason, Luminas had to keep a close eye on the entire battlefield... and it was only natural that she would bear the greatest burden. And so, while keeping a close eye on Ivalaje, she was also responsible for healing at key points, but then an unexpected disaster befell her.

The remnants of the angel army led by Jahil attacked like a nightmare.

"Gyahahahaha! I've taken the trouble to come myself, Luminuuuus!!"

Seeing the evil majin flying in from the sky and laughing loudly, Luminas clicked her tongue in disgust.

"Tch, getting in the way at a time like this, you're still a man who can't read the atmosphere."

Luminas hated Jahil from the bottom of her heart. Moreover, his arrival at this timing would do more harm than good, no matter how you looked at it.

In fact, Jahil's target was Luminas, and he charged in as if he didn't care about the small fry. Hinata noticed Jahil and tried to fly up to intercept, but Luminas stopped her. There was no room to spare on the battlefield, and on top of that, Jahil's forces had joined the enemy, making the chaos even worse. She judged that if Hinata were to leave here, the balance of power would collapse.

Just as Jahil had intended, Luminas was in the perfect situation with no one to protect her.

"The heavens are on my side. Well, that's only natural. I, the Great Sorcerer Emperor Jahil, will be the one to rule the world!!"

Jahil said this arrogantly and with a vulgar smile. Luminas retorted, outraged.

"Ridiculous! How can someone as base and immoral as you become a ruler!"

Don't make me laugh—she dismissed him with a laugh. The two were like oil and water. Luminas and Jahil stood facing each other in silence.

Luminas's true intention was to eliminate Jahil. However, unfortunately, Jahil's strength was genuine. Moreover, he held the [Ancestor's Blood Spear] in his hand, which greatly amplified Jahil's power.

(Fighting him head-on is a foolish move. If I could at least set a trap and come up with countermeasures, I could have gotten rid of this guy...)

Even if she fought here, she could manage to avoid defeat. Luminas believed that she could do it, although it would be difficult. However, it was impossible to destroy Jahil. There was a fatal difference in the amount of [magic essence] [energy].

Luminas's strength lies in her indirect tactics.

By having the warriors on the battlefield use their faith and their brains as computing devices to perform 'parallel processing', she can unleash large-scale techniques that reach the realm of the gods. This is the true nature of the divine art "[Sanctuary]".

By making full use of this, it becomes possible to use sacred magic that exceeds the limits of the individual, but it is impossible in the current state. This is because prior preparation is required to utilize the calculation domain of others.

To put it simply, only the techniques that have been set in advance can be used.

In this case, there are only two magic spells: "[Regeneration]", which is always active, and "[Resurrection]", which is activated in emergencies. If one thinks of it as a support magic, it would be the optimal solution, but to defeat Jahil, "[Disintegration]" is needed.

(I don't have the luxury of changing the technique now. However, it will be impossible to destroy this guy with "[Spiritual Disintegration]" activated with my own power.)

First of all, the range is too narrow to hit him.

Once activated, "[Spiritual Disintegration]" moves at the speed of light, but before that, it is necessary to capture and surround the target. This is difficult, which is why it is said that it does not work against powerful opponents. After beating down the enemy and immobilizing them, you can unleash "[Spiritual Disintegration]" as the final blow. This would be ideal, but Luminas judges that she is not strong enough.

Jahil, on the other hand, is not letting his guard down against such Luminas.

(That damn bastard! I don't know what kind of plan or secret weapon he has up his sleeve, so it would be foolish to attack carelessly.)

As expected, what else can I say? As they were born to the same father, they had similar thoughts.

However, Jahil thinks that he can somehow manage even by relying on brute force. But in that case, there was a fear that she might be able to escape. Even the Ancestor, who was a god to Jahil, was destroyed by Luminas, who was right in front of him. If he didn't finish her off while he could, he might be the next one to be killed.

(From the state of the battlefield, there was no sign of a trap like the one that killed the Ancestor...)

If there is no trap, it is as good as winning, Jahil sneered evilly. And, carefully, carefully, he kneaded the karmic fire of [Ultimate Enchant] '[King of Flames] Agni'.

Luminas sensed danger.

(It's a tremendous power, but what should I do—)

Luminas is confident that she will not lose to an opponent who pushes with simple power alone. However, naturally, there was a limit to that. She was aware that even if she used any tricks or used secret techniques, she could never completely defeat a "Dragon Kind" like Veldora.

Because the recovery speed is faster than the damage given. So, as a tactic, she would stick to harassment and look for a way to settle the matter.((Basically harass him until he fucks off))

But it didn't work against an opponent like Jahil. Compared to Veldora, Jahil is nothing much... but if they fight as is, it seems that it would not be fun for Luminus.

"Die!!"

Jahil unleashed a large fireball, containing enough energy to burn Luminas to ashes.

Rather than face it head on, Luminas put up a compressed "barrier" in both hands to deflect the energy, and activated "Superspeed Regeneration" to make up for the remaining energy, avoiding instant death. Pushed by the fireball, Luminas landed on the ground. The surrounding ground was boiling like magma, showing just how dangerous the heat of the large fireball was.

But Luminas kept a cool head.

"Don't take me for a fool!"

She said boldly towards Jahil. The energy she lost has already been recovered with [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] [Lust King] [Asmodeus]. If she only had to continue a long-term battle as it is, there were many ways to deal with it. However, she doesn't have a decisive way to defeat Jahil, and she was in a cornered situation where one wrong move would mean checkmate. While maintaining a strong attitude so that Jahil doesn't realize this, and waited for him to wear himself out and make a mistake.

Luminus was superior in terms of [skill]. While this [advantage] remained, she prayed that the situation would improve.

—Here, the luck of the god Luminus explodes—((?))

Unexpected helpers appeared. Two people, a beautiful woman in a suit and a small girl—Kagari and Tear.

"Demon Lord Luminus, that person is also our enemy. We would like to join forces. What do you think?"

Kagari offered with a stern expression. Luminas was not one to refuse. Using anything that can be used is Luminus's creed and way of life.

"Very well. You'd better be useful to me!!"

She said arrogantly, and decided to join forces with them.

*

Kagari and Tia had been tracking Jahil without being noticed. Jahil has tremendous power, but he was careless about his surroundings. Perhaps it was because he was so strong that he was careless, or perhaps because he was arrogant.

If he was a real powerful person, he would have noticed that they were following him, but Jahil showed no sign of it.

"As I thought. He hasn't had time to refine his power since he awakened. It's just as I expected."

"Yeah, yeah. It seems we could fight him, but... even so, we still can't win by ourselves."

Kagari and Tia had been observing Jahil while following him, trying to find his weaknesses. As a result, they had concluded that he was not an undefeatable opponent. However, they were well aware that they couldn't do anything about it on their own.

They needed something to shift the scale. What they came across without finding it was the fierce battlefield, Damargania.

Jahil's target was the Demon Lord Luminas.

The girl who was thought to be a follower of Demon Lord Roy Valentine was an ancient being who was longer-lived than Kagari. She learned that fact by watching the videos projected in various parts of the world. Luminus's combat ability was higher than Kagari's. Even so, she was no match for Jahil, which was Kagari's assessment.

Even if Kagari and Tia lent a hand, there was no chance of winning. But Jahil was not the only enemy. If they let Luminas die here, humanity itself would be defeated by the Cryptids.

"That's ridiculous," Kagari said to herself with a hint of self-mockery.

She wanted to avenge her comrades, but that was now difficult. If she had continued to wait for an opportunity to kill Jahil until the very end, perhaps her wish would have come true. To throw away that possibility and choose the survival of humanity...

Kagari was surprised to find out that she was still clinging to life. As if she could see through Kagari's thoughts, Luminas spoke.

"You guys have a thankless role to play."

"Oh, are you trying to comfort me? Or have you given up?"

"Don't talk nonsense. Even if you die, I will revive you, so be prepared to die and buy time."

It meant, "Don't give up."

Of course, Kagali nodded firmly. Even if they can't destroy Jahil now, reinforcements will surely come. If Benimaru is there, the chances of winning will greatly increase. There were also many other powerful people who were all lined up as subordinates of Demon Lord Rimuru. From what she could sense, they didn't seem to have arrived yet, but if they could buy some time, they would surely come. If they waited until that moment and then counterattacked, they would be able to destroy Jahil.

They could do their best because they had hope. That's what Kagali thought. The same was true for Tia, who believed in Kagali, and Luminas had also regained her composure, thinking that she had now seen hope.

However, not everything in this world goes smoothly.

The next moment—the scorching ray of light cut Tia, who had been shielding Kagali, in half.

"What!?"

Kagali was shocked, but then she realized that her own chest had been burned through and she began to lose consciousness.

"I won't let that happen! [Resurrection]!!!"

A mysterious glow enveloped Tia and Kagali, and they were revived.

"Hmph!"

Jahil's powerful arm struck and sent Luminus flying, taking advantage of her momentary lapse in focus. In a continuing barrage of attacks, Luminus was enveloped in flames.

This was the price of underestimating Jahil.

If there had been an overwhelming difference in power, the story would have been different, but it was not enough to overcome the actual heat. Also, it could be said that Luminus lacked a sense of crisis, as she was fighting Jahil while simultaneously trying to grasp the entire battlefield with 'magic perception'.

She was not dead yet.

Luminas was not the type to die from something like this. But there was no doubt that it was a fatal blunder. Though she had taken a lot of damage, Luminas recovered with the magic she automatically activated and stood up. As if to say that showing weakness meant defeat, she laughed and pretended that this level of injury was nothing.

But Jahil was not one to be fooled by such an act.

"Gyahahahaha! As I thought, as I thought! You, you seem to be unable to use the technique that defeated the God Ancestor now!!"

Jahil was not familiar with Luminas's abilities. However, he had inferred from the circumstances of the God Ancestor's defeat that it was due to a powerful "Disintegration". He thought that she would unleash it at the decisive moment to try in attempt to turn the tables.

That is why he attacked Luminus now, while leaving some of his power in reserve. If he had used all his power, he would not have been able to devote his power to defense, so he deliberately showed weakness.

But Luminas didn't react.

(No! It wasn't that she didn't react, but that she couldn't!!)

At this point, Jahil was certain of his victory.

*

Tia and Kagali, who had been revived by Luminas, were painfully aware that their judgment had been poor.

"Oh my, this is tough. Kagali-sama, what should we do? Should we run away?"

Right now, Jahil's attention was on Luminas. If it were just Tia and Kagali, they could have retreated from this place. However, Kagali refused.

"No, Tia. Even if we run away now, we'll just remain losers."

They will not be happy, and they will have to continue to hold miserable feelings until the world is destroyed. Rather than living like that, they wanted to make their remaining lives something that could shine.

Kagari resolved herself to die here.

"Laplas and Yuuki-sama died protecting me. That's why we should survive to the end. But there's no point in surviving if we remain unhappy. I don't think those two would want for us to live like that."

"That's right! I think so too!"

Yes, they had to be happy. Even if it is a short time, they must be able to think that the last moment was happy... otherwise, the lives of your dead comrades will be worthless.

She could not allow that. Therefore, she decided to fight without running away.

Kagali held up the [Ruin Scepter]. She used her [Ultimate Enchant] '[Book of Prophecy] Agastia' to 'predict and calculate' Jahil's next move.

The same was true for Tia.

She held up the "[Tear Scythe]" and made full use of the [Ultimate Enchant] '[Melody Player] Orpheus' to unleash her full power.

"Even if I burn out in an instant, I will take you down with me!!"

"The grudge for killing Footman and Laplas, and the boss—I will never forgive you for taking away something precious from me!"

Kagari and Tia worked together to attack Jahil.

Jahil was trying to finish off Ruminas, but he couldn't ignore the combined attack of these two. He wouldn't die if he was hit directly, but he wouldn't be unscathed. Besides, he knew from the previous battle that it would be troublesome to let him run free.

"Hmph, you good-for-nothing dolls, you're getting carried away!!"

Jahil left Luminas alone and decided to finish off Kagali and the others. He tried to burn them to ashes by firing a large fireball.

But they didn't panic.

Jahil's reaction speed exceeded Kagali((and Tear)), but no, they had already taken that possibility into account. With that life-risking blow, she was going to get revenge on Jahil. Before the fireball hits them directly and burns them to ashes, they struck with a final blow, wringing out the last of their strength. With that determination they challenged him.

(Tch, damn it!! You're always getting in my way!!)

Jahil braced himself, preparing for the attack. But at that moment...

A black whirlwind swept through, holding Kagari and Tia in its arms. The large fireball, which was launched into the empty sky, scattered, leaving behind the smell of burning air. The one who set Kagari and Tia down on the ground and stood up was a woman in a maid outfit.

Dark skin. Grey hair tied in a braid. Amethyst-like eyes peek out from behind the faceless mask.

"Who's that?"

"[The Heartless Jester] (No-Face)"

"How sly!"

Jahil unleashes a large fireball, but the woman who called herself [The Heartless Jester] (No-Face) easily dodged it.

Her movements were light and graceful. However, she sustained burns from the aftermath of the fireball.

"What are you doing, Eva! Run!"

Kagari shouted, but the masked woman called Eva did not budge.

"Kagari-sama, you should retreat. If only you are safe, my life will have meaning."

"What—"

"I was incompetent and couldn't protect Clayman-sama, but I have my pride!!"

Please, please retreat—the woman, Eva, did not yield.

Eva was a woman who served Kagari since she was a princess, and she is a [Dark Elf]. She has lived a long time, and was a confidant of [Kagari] [Kazalim] when he was a demon lord. She was a secret member of the moderate clown gang, who was entrusted by Kazalim with the management of the ancient city of "Amrita" in the [puppet country] Jistav.

After Kazaream and Clayman passed away, she lived like she was dead as an elder of the [Dark Elves]. She was reunited with Kagari when welcoming Rimuru and his party, and was ordered to cooperate with Demon Lord Rimuru as her new mission, to watch over him and not arouse suspicion. However, upon learning of the current crisis she could no longer remain silent. She rushed to protect Kagari and the others this time, abandoning everything.

Therefore, even if it was an order from her beloved Kagari, there was no option to run away. Eva is not a [Deathman], so she cannot be resurrected even if she dies. But such a thing doesn't matter, if she can prolong the lives of Kagari and the others even a little, it would be her greatest wish.

The skills she had honed were for this moment—Eva even felt joy with her whole body. Eva's existence value is less than 200,000. It is excellent as a confidante of an average demon lord, she was nothing but a piece of wood that would fly away when faced with the unparalleled evil of Jahil.

Even so, Eva attempts to buy time against him with only her honed [skills] and speed-specialized body enhancement. It was nothing but a suicidal act—

"Stop it already, stop it!!"

Kagali's anguished cry echoed across the battlefield. The edges of Eva's costume were burning. The heat melted the mask, revealing Eva's true face.

She had a fleeting smile.

In contrast, Jahil had a cruel smirk.

He had seen through Eva's strength and had come up with an appropriate way to deal with it. Instead of targeting agile Eva, he could just burn a wide area to ashes. Jahil, who was irritated and boiling with rage, was not stupid if he made a calm judgment.

Listening to the hackneyed conversation between Kagali's party, Jahil was feeling annoyed. He thought that while he was clearing out these annoying nuisances, he might as well punish them for angering him.

"Well well, you trash who get in my way, I'm going to make you feel the pain of hell! You'll regret having defied me and suffer in the flames of hell!!"

Jahil grinned. Everything had gone as planned. Kagari and Tia stepped in to protect the [small insect] (Eva) who had interfered.

(Fools! The weaker they are, the more they tend to flock together, but I can't understand the thoughts of these fools who protect the weak and die themselves—!!)

What unfolds in front of Jahil was a familiar sight.

Those insect-like things called Yuuki and Lapplas also died protecting their companions like Kagari and Tia now. It is so comical that Kagari and the others, who were the very people being protected, are doing the same thing and dying in vain.

Jahil was very pleased by the irony.

After taking care of the rest of the obstacles, it was time for the main course, Luminas. She was still preparing to activate her Resurrection in preparation for the death of Kagari and the others. She is a very impudent and troublesome opponent.

However, Luminas's plan failed. This is because Jahil releases a large fireball with all his might, including the power of the [Ancestor's Blood Spear]. Leaving aside weaklings like Eva, Kagari and Tia are quite strong. Million Class] are not just for show, and they had high resistance to

Jahil's abilities. Jahil intends to break through this and burn them to ashes, leaving not even a piece of bone. If he does so, it will be difficult for Luminas to revive them with Resurrection. Even if it succeeds, it should take a great deal of time for the resurrection.

Jahil thought this much in a blink of an eye, and now, the deadly giant fireball was complete. The released large fireball swells up just before the target, creating a fiery hell—or so it was supposed to. The moment the large fireball swelled up, it made a sad sound, "posun," and then—disappeared.

"Huh?"

Jahil was confused. Unable to comprehend what had happened, he was put in a stupor.

The large fireball turned into a flash of light, engulfing and annihilating all those in the way. That was supposed to be the end of it, but... all that remained was steam, drifting vainly as a remnant.

"Impossible..."

For the first time in a long time, Jahil felt the sensation of being unable to keep up with reality.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the steam, a figure moved. Naturally, Kagari and the others were safe. Anger arose in Jahil's heart, and he was determined not to let a fluke happen twice. Putting aside the investigation into why such a phenomenon had occurred, Jahil tried to plan his next attack. But at that moment—

Jahil heard an inappropriately cheerful voice.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, everyone!"

That voice sounded familiar. It was someone he was sure he had killed—

"Why are you—!?"

"Boss? Are you safe!?"

"Yuuki-sama!? Hehehe, you're still tenacious as ever."

—Overlapping the cries of the astonished Jahil, the voices of Tia and Kagari, who were confused but joyful, echoed.

Yes, it was no wonder everyone was surprised. The owner of that voice was none other than the man who was supposed to be dead—[Kagurazaka Yuuki]. He stood there dashing, holding a woman whose face was hidden, as if protecting her. By the way, there is one more person with him.

"I'm here too..."

Laplace's muttering was drowned out by the cheers of joy.

[Mai Furuki] was unable to grasp her own situation. Honestly, it's a wonder that she was still alive. She had intended to commit suicide with Vega, and had jumped into an unknown into the gap in dimension, but she was caught in a tremendous spacetime storm. She had prepared herself for death the moment she lost consciousness, but for some reason she woke up. It was a stream of energy that seemed to transcend time, space and dimensions, the scale of which was impossible for someone like Mai even to measure. It was a miracle that she was safe after being caught up in such an incredible supernatural phenomenon.

But that was not the only miracle. Since she didn't know the coordinates of her current location, there was nothing Mai could do. It was a place where there was no earth, not even an atmosphere. There was no sense of direction, up or down, left or right, and nothing to see. No, there were colorful rays of light like a rainbow, drawing geometric patterns. It was like a snowflake, and it was probably not a figure intended by anyone. It was a beautiful and terrifying sight, like a scenery seen before death.

Mai thought that she would continue to wander without being able to do anything. She thought that the moment her energy hit zero would be the moment her life would end. However, that judgment was wrong.

"Hey, are you awake?"

Someone spoke to her very casually. It wasn't a voice, but a thought.

The dimensional gap where Mai was is a place that had no air or anything. Magical energy may or may not be present, but even if you make a sound, it will not become a voice.

Anyway, that "voice" sounded familiar.

"Eh, what? Could it be, Yuuki-kun!?"

It was someone who shouldn't be here. It was her great benefactor, who had picked up Mai, who had wandered into another world without knowing anything, and had even taken care of her. He was a cunning, unfathomable, and more reliable boy than anyone else. However, that is only a story of appearance, and she thinks that he is actually much older than Mai.

Otherwise, the story wouldn't make sense. He was summoned to a parallel world known as the Axis World, and in just a dozen years he established a foundation within the empire. He was burning with ambition to conquer the world, but...

When Mai heard that he had been killed by the Sorcerer Emperor Jahil, she became desperate. She believed that Yuuki would find a way for her to return to her original world. The fact that she heard Yuuki's voice like that meant—

"Ah, is that it? Hallucinations. Before you die, there's definitely something like that, isn't there?"

"No. I'm right here."

"Hahahaha! No need for such a realistic explanation.((?)) It was just a dream anyway. But, that was surprising. I thought of Yuuki as reliable, but I never thought I'd remember him on my deathbed."

Mai couldn't believe that Yuuki was real. She had convinced herself that this was a hallucination she had before she died. She didn't remember particularly liking him, but maybe she was in love with him? And so on, she immersed herself in girlish thoughts, since it is a hallucination anyway. However, the hallucination showed no signs of ending... and the conversation between Yuuki and the other person began to permeate Mai's thoughts.

"Hmm, maybe it's because there's no light or anything in the space that she can't see us?"

"Yeah. It took us a while to get used to it, so this girl won't be able to do it for a while."

"Well, we have plenty of time, right?"

"I mean, does time flow here?"

"I wonder..."

"As I thought, even the boss doesn't know..."

What should I do—Mai thought.

Could it be, could it be that this is not a dream or a hallucination, but reality? Somehow, she can't help but feel that way. Also, just as the people in the conversation had said, Mai was beginning to see a faint shadow of a person. By making full use of "Thought Transmission" which uses magical energy, or "Magic Perception" which recognizes magical energy, she could grasp the situation even in this empty space if she was close by. This is because measures have been taken by Yuuki's ability to prevent the magic essence from leaking out, but it is irrelevant to Mai. In short, she was able to recognize Yuuki and the others as soon as she got used to it.

"Eh, is it really Yuuki-kun?"

"I'm here too!"

"Ah, Laplace?"

"Yeah!"

At this point, Mai was finally convinced. Ah, this is real—she thought.

At the same time, she remembered the words of delusion that she had been spouting, and in her shame, she roared in her heart with a cry that could not be heard,

"Aaaa—!!"

*

After waiting for Mai to calm down, they started over.

"So, Yuuki-sama, what is the situation now? "

"It's too late, so you don't have to use 'sama' anymore."

"... Alright."

Mai gave up, realizing that she couldn't deceive him. She changed her mind and looked around to try to assess the situation. What she was able to understand was that Mai and the others were still drifting in the gap between dimensions. Thanks to Yuuki's mysterious "barrier", "magic perception" was activated even in the other world. They say that what lies ahead is darkness, but outside the "barrier" was truly an unknown world. A shining rainbow could be seen in the distance, but it was impossible to see what was happening over there.

A rainbow-colored sphere expanded nearby, then popped and disappeared. She had no idea what had happened, but she guessed that it was an outrageous situation. Mai gave up trying to understand the events outside and returned her gaze to the inside of the 'barrier'.

"I still can't understand it. It's Laplace, but it looks like he only has the upper half the my body..."

When Mai declared with a bit of anxiety, Laplace laughed it off.

"Don't worry, that's the correct answer. I lost my lower body when I was blown away by Jahil."

Mai thought this was no laughing matter, but she was relieved to know that her perception wasn't strange.

"Haha, isn't it funny? Well, it's Laplace, so there's no problem!"

"No, no, there is a problem! If you revive me as it is, my lower half of the body would be naked, won't I?"

"You can just make some clothes out of magic."

"You say something like that with a straight face? I'm always the straight man, so I want to be the funny man sometimes!"

((shit translation of the skit, sorry))

"No, no, you're usually the one who plays the funny guy too, aren't you? "

Mai was greatly stunned that there was no straight man. However, thanks to the comedy of the two, Mai's gloomy mood lifted. Although there was still no hope for the future, it was strange that she felt like things would work out somehow.

"So---"

Yuuki asked Mai with a serious look on his face. He told Mai that there was plenty of time, so he made her explain in detail what had happened since they died.

"I see. Demon Lord Milim went out of control, Feldway manipulated her, and Rimuru-san was blown away and went missing."

"What? It's getting really serious."

"On top of that, Ivalaje is on the way, right? The world must be in disarray."

"You're not concerned."

"Well, that's right. Because we are in this situation, right? Even if we want to do something, we can't do anything."

"There, well, we can all work together and somehow..."

LLaplas interrupts the carefree Yuuki, but his words trail off.

"After all, even Yuuki-kun can't do anything about it?"

"Well, I've been trying various things."

In fact, Yuuki has tried everything he can. Thanks to that, even though he was thrown into this incomprehensible place, he was able to skillfully create a 'barrier' and try to preserve himself. But that's just a temporary solution, and it will disappear if it continues like this...

"It seems like even time doesn't flow in this place."

"Huh?"

"Eh?"

This is the answer to Laplace's question from earlier. Yuuki isn't sure, but there's no other way to explain it.

"Hmm, I've been observing it for a while and noticed something, didn't that rainbow-colored sphere swell up and disappear there earlier? I think that's probably one world, a universe."

"Universe?"

"One world—..."

"In that sphere, time is flowing. It seems that a time flow occurs around it due to the aftereffects, but I can't observe it..."

Strictly speaking, time does flow. However, since there's no way to observe it, Yuuki guesses that "time doesn't flow" or "it flows very slowly" based on his own fatigue level and the fact that he doesn't get hungry. Yuuki can't interfere with the "information particles" and can't observe them. So everything is just guesswork, but he fully demonstrated his genius and came up with the right answer.

But that doesn't mean anything since there's no way to return...

"Then, is one of those rainbow-colored light spheres the world we were in?"

"I don't think so. I think that's a derived world. From the generation to the end of the light sphere varies."

Considering the amount of energy that can be observed, it was thought that the light sphere that can be observed here is a place unrelated to the world where Yuuki and the others were in.

Mai agreed with Yuuki's opinion.

"Certainly. If it were in a visible place((place she visited?)), I could easily return with my ability..."

Even with Mai's computing ability, she was able to derive that the coordinates around here are greatly different from the base world.

To perform 'space-time jumping' with Mai's [Ultimate Skill] '[King of the Star Realm] Terra Mater', you need the coordinates of where you are now, the coordinates of the destination, and in addition to this, the energy required for movement. On a planet, it is a convenient ability that can

be used without requiring that much energy. That's why Mai remembered the coordinates of places she had been to before. Therefore, when she had no idea where her current coordinates were, she gave up on returning.

When she explained the situation to Laplace he sighed and hung his head.

"It's a dead end."

Laplace was disappointed because he had hoped that Mai's power might help them return home. That's understandable, but Yuuki's reaction was different.

"Wait a minute? Could it be that Mai's ability has evolved?"

"Well, yes. Princess Shuna worked on my ability for me—"

Mai explained the situation.

In order to escape from Feldway's 'domination', they messed with their abilities, she said. As a result, Mai's ability had become easier to handle. Mai, who has only feelings of admiration for Shuna, who easily performed an incomprehensible act, said that she had no other choice.

"I don't know, it's just abnormal. Not to mention that slime itself, but his companions are also abnormal."

"I agree. I wish people wouldn't say it's normal to play with other people's skills..."

Even Yuuki was astonished when he heard Mai's explanation. But at the same time, he had come up with a certain hypothesis.

"By the way, Mai, why do you think you jumped all the way here?"

"Eh...? "

When asked why, Mai couldn't answer. After all, she had suddenly found herself here. She hadn't activated her powers intentionally, so it was only natural that she couldn't explain it.

"A coincidence?"

"Well, that's..."

When you put it that way, it really was unnatural. The probability of running into someone she knew in this far-flung dimensional gap was close to zero.

"What happened when you were drifting with Vega?"

When asked that, Mai remembered. She'd been caught up in a powerful space-time storm and was separated from Vega.

"...A violent spacetime storm, huh?"

Hearing that, Yuuki understood. But without saying anything, he urged Mai to continue.

"Yes. It was too large in scale to be called a supernatural phenomenon, and I couldn't even grasp the whole picture, but..."

'You were caught up in it, and yet somehow you were safe?'

"That's right. I find it strange too. I don't know if I can say it's luck, but it's certain that it wasn't bad luck...?"

Mai answered unsurely. Yuuki didn't answer, but pondered.

'What? What? If you found out anything, please tell me.'

"It's better not to disturb him!"

'Mai-chan, you're still on the boss's side, huh?'

'No, it's not what I meant!'

Yuuki thought for what felt like a few seconds. However, since the concept of time here is distorted, it is unclear what actually happened. Anyway—Yuuki asked one last question to be sure.

"So, what were you thinking about in your last moments, Mai?"

Was it a place you wanted to return to? Or was it someone you wanted to see? Whatever it was, it must have had an effect on Mai's powers. That's what Yuuki thought.

To this, Mai answered.

"T-that is——"

Mai remembered. The last thing she was thinking about was Yuuki.

"Just a little bit about how Yuuki encouraged me.."

Mai mumbled as she answered. That's not what I meant! She wanted to make excuses, but the more she says, the more she seems to make a mess of things.

"No, really, I don't have any such feelings at all, okay?"

Mai replied and kept quiet. But that was enough for Yuuki. Of course, he wasn't a romantic like Mai, and he understood Mai's powers almost perfectly.

"Yeah, yeah, I understand. More importantly, I know how your ability has changed."

"Really? That's good, but—eh!?"

Yuuki's cold response made Mai sad in its own way. What's more, Laplace's gaze was painful. He looked at Mai with pity. Mai wanted to shout loudly that it's really not like that.

Of course, she thought Yuuki was reliable, but it wasn't romantic. But, to be completely ignored like this hurt her pride as a woman. But saying that would make her feel like she'd lost— Just as she was thinking that, Yuuki dropped the bombshell.

"I think if you use that power, you can go wherever you want."

"Does that mean—"

"That means you can go home!"

Yuuki was a true genius. Just by listening to Mai's story, he had seen through the essence of '[King of the Star Realm] Terra Mater'. That ability—'the ability to transcend time and space' was correctly inferred. This was truly amazing. However, even if that was revealed, the energy problem had not been solved.

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Yuuki thinks.

He considered using "[Greedy King] [Mammon]'s "[Power Steal]" to steal Mai's power and use it himself. But he didn't think he would be able to go back that way. Even though Yuuki had more energy, the difference wasn't that great. It was a gamble that didn't seem to have much hope of being able to reach the coordinates they needed to return to. Instead of that, he should think of another way.

(That's right... How about first stealing '[King of the Star Realm] Terra Mater]' from Mai, and then using '[Steal Life]' to converge the energy?)

He would gather the energy of Laplace and Mai and use that power to jump in one go. Yuuki thought it was possible, but quickly realized it wouldn't work. In that case, Yuuki would have to

bear the entire burden. A strong feeling will be needed to return, and Yuuki knew that he wouldn't be able to do it on his own. Besides—

(To begin with, the fact that there are three of us here is a bit odd. A space-time storm? Encountering such a rare event, as rare as the beginning of the universe, weathering it safely, and then being lucky enough to be transported to a place where we know someone, that definitely can't be a coincidence.)

It was inevitable. It was reasonable to think that someone's will - well, there was only one person I could think of - was involved. If that's the case, then there must be a meaning to the three of us being here together.

(That's right...Laplace is probably the one who wants to go home the most. If that's the case, then we should set that feeling as the target coordinate and converge the energy of me, Laplace, and Mai—)

I have a desire to rule the world in order to make it a better place. But it doesn't have to be the base world. Mai is the same, and it's probably her original world that she wants to return to. For that reason, it was best to use Laplace's thoughts to set the coordinates.

Next was the energy issue, which was quite tricky. He had thought of a way to transfer Laplace's and his own energy to Mai, but it was extremely difficult. It wouldn't be one thing if Yuuki were to control the stolen energy himself, but he would have to synchronize it with Mai's power and continue to transfer it smoothly. Not only was Laplace's condition far from perfect, but if he got it wrong it would be over immediately. Careful judgment was required, and calculations were required that did not allow even the slightest error.

Mai's powers were delicate, so it was difficult to predict how foreign energy would affect them. If the synchronization failed, it would be impossible to reach the target coordinates.

(That's the most likely way, and I have to do it, but it's a reckless act, like walking a tightrope...)

Always controlling his skill and syncing his and Laplace's powers with Mai's is easy to say, but it's difficult to put into practice. Yuuki cannot decide to do it because this method does not allow any leeway. In a place like the gap between dimensions, lost energy never recovers. Therefore, there is only one chance. It was only natural that the confident Yuuki would be a little cautious. It was at that moment—

《How pathetic, how pathetic》

A familiar voice echoed in Yuuki's mind.

(Huh?)

Yuuki was instantly irritated. That voice was the same as that of the girl he could call his nemesis.

(What are you?)

Though it seemed ridiculous, Yuuki tried to ask the voice. He had a slight hope that it might be some kind of hallucination, but...

《I am Maria. I am Maria.》

(.....)

Yuuki unintentionally lost his train of thought, and as soon as he rebooted, he almost shouted "Don't be ridiculous."

Maria - Mariabelle is someone who has tormented Yuuki for a long time. The grudge was not forgotten against her for preventing the complete domination of the Western countries, even after he had wiped her out with his own hands.

For some reason, Mariabelle was speaking to his heart. This is something Yuuki can no longer ignore. The truth is, this being who calls herself "Maria"—

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When Masayuki unleashed the true power of the [Ultimate Skill] '[King of Heroes] Shinaru Eiyuu]', Maria Bell was also summoned along with Granbell. However, because she appeared using Yuuki's "soul" as a guide, she ended up in an incomprehensible place.

If she stayed there, she would just disappear naturally, but then Mariabelle's ego came out. She thought that if she didn't get revenge on Yuuki for killing her, the name of "Greedy Mariabelle" would be a disgrace.

This was a mistake.

She should have just quietly left, complaining or grumbling, but instead she came up with the idea of imbuing Yuuki's power with her own ego... This is an example of how being too clever can also be a problem.

Because "Dead Heroes" are of the same nature as digital lifeforms, they can be said to be composed only of information. Therefore, Mariabelle thought that she could write her own information into the skill. When she actually tried it, it worked better than she expected.

Yuuki's Ultimate Skill, 'King of Greed, Mammon', was originally an evolved version of Mariabell's unique skill, 'Greed', so he got along well with Mariabell and it felt like she was returning to her old nest and it blended in smoothly. At the time, the being that had been residing in Yuuki's 'King of Greed, Mammon' had vanished, leaving a mysterious void. As a result, Maria Bell got stuck there.

This was good so far... But then something strange happened to Mariabell.

(That's strange, that's strange. The skill is eating away at me, no, that's not it. I'm trying to take over the authority!!)

Right.

By the time she realized it, it was already too late.

Mariabell was like the incarnation of greed, and it was no exaggeration to call her the King of Greed. Because her compatibility with the "[King of Greed] [Mammon]" was too good, she somehow fused with the authority and took root.

It was like merging with [Greed King] Mammon, so to speak, but this was a miscalculation from Mariabelle's point of view. She'd only intended to lightly harass Yuuki, but she hadn't anticipated that she would not be able to get out using her own power.

Thus, even after "[Dead Heroe] Mariabell" disappeared at the same time as Masayuki's ability was released, "Maria," who unintentionally became Yuuki's [Manas], was left behind.

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While it was unexpected from Mariabelle's point of view, it was a nightmare for Yuuki.

(Hey, hey, what's with "Maria," isn't it Mariabell herself!)

Yuuki grumbled in disgust. To this, she replied defiantly.

《I don't know, I don't know. I am Maria. I am not Mariabell.》

In fact, she herself does not know well whether she is Mariabell or Maria. When she was completely assimilated with the Authority and became a [Manas], her ego and memories were separated. She still has memories as Mariabelle, but they are merely referable data. Her personality is the same as Mariabelle's. That's why Yuuki wants to complain, "Isn't her personality, voice, and even tone of voice are same?" What is so good about having to be stuck with Mariabell, who was his nemesis? It's the worst, that's the real feeling.

But, Maria doesn't care

《That's not important. More importantly, you're so pathetic, so I'll help you.》

She offered, as if mocking Yuuki. This made Yuuki angry.

She said that she wasn't Mariabelle, and after listening to the explanation, he was convinced that it was indeed the case, but Maria's reaction was exactly like the Mariabelle he remembered. And sadly, she is an existence like the embodiment of the ability, so he cannot ignore her.

Yuuki thought, "Oh dear," but at the same time, he was of the opinion that he should use anything he could, so he quickly changed his mind.

(Hmm. So, what will you help me with?)

《I am in charge of processing and controlling the power. All you need to do is focus on synchronization.》

I see, Yuuki thought.

(Does that mean she'll forcefully collect energy from Laplace while converting my desires into energy? If that is possible, it is surprisingly usable.)

Setting Laplace's feelings as the destination, I'll continue to supply Mai with optimized energy. If that's all I had to do, Yuuki alone would be able to handle it.

(So, can I trust you?)

《What a foolish question, a stupid question. Personally, I want to harass you. Forever. So I don't want you to die in a place like this.》

That's a nasty answer, Yuuki thought. But that overly honest answer was laughably typical of Mariabelle. That incarnation of greed probably wouldn't easily break the [toy] [Yuuki] that she had finally acquired. Besides—

If I can't trust you, then I'll just die here.

(Fine, I'll entrust our fate to you.)

《Leave it to me.》

And thus, their relationship was established. This was the moment when the worst duo, the greedy ones, was born..

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Yuuki raised his head and declared.

"Okay, let's all go home together, the three of us!"

With a bright smile, Yuuki exuded absolute confidence. Lapplas and Mai also became interested in this—

《It's not three, it's four.》

(Shut up, you are my [partner] [extra])

Yuuki lightly brushed Maria off when she said something troublesome. It seemed that she had already mastered how to deal with this troublesome roommate.

From the end of an unknown different world somewhere in the gap between dimensions, the wanderers dreamed of returning and [jumped and flew].

And now.

Yuuki stood in front of Jahil. Lapplas has also completely recovered with the support from Luminus along with Mai. His lower body was not completely exposed, so they had probably taken measures to deal with that. Yuuki smiled defiantly, and Jahil gritted his teeth in frustration.

"You worm."

He spat that out, but right after that, Jahilu laughed wickedly.

"I'm surprised you're still alive, but you're nothing more than a small fry. You probably nullified my ability with your power, but there won't be a next time"

Jahil had already uncovered Yuuki's secret. It was clear that it would be impossible to drown out a vast amount of energy if he were to strike with overwhelming power.

That's why he was so composed.

Yuuki, however, remained unwavering.

"Look, just because you succeeded once doesn't mean it will be the same again, right? That kind of assumption can lead to your own downfall."

These were words that came from his own experience. That's why he felt it so strongly, but Jahil laughed it off.

"Gyahahahaha! Stop talking, you little shit. I, the Great Sorcerer Emperor, won't be lumped together with you little mortals!!"

While laughing, Jahil casually lobbed a lump of energy toward Yuuki. It was a manifestation of Jahil's fighting spirit, and it contained a pressure that made the atmosphere creak.

Jahil hadn't just manifested. He fully understood his own abilities, and was able to control the power of pure destruction at will.

Yuuki was in dire straits after the violence, unleashed without the need for a pause - or so he thought. However, the results were surprising.

"It's useless," Yuuki said in a casual tone and deflected Jahil's violent attack with his left hand.

"Huh?"

Jahil was stunned, unable to comprehend what had happened.

"Boss, what did you just do?"

Laplace, despite being an ally, also seemed to feel the same way, involuntarily asking Yuuki. Yuuki smiled mischievously in response.

"It's simple. To me, power that isn't enhanced by abilities is like an invitation to take it,"

He explained with a grin. His attitude was [relaxed and confident], completely looking down on Jahil. But in reality he was walking a tightrope.

(Phew, seems like it worked.)

《Of course it did, with me here.》

That's exactly what I'm worried about—Yuuki thought, but buried that thought deep within his heart so Maria wouldn't read it. As explained before, Yuuki's [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "Greedy King [Mammon]" is specialized in stealing. Although there was a limit to this. After suffering a crushing defeat against Velgrind, Yuuki was painfully aware of this. That's why he's being careful this time.

"I failed against Velgrind, but..."

"I'm here too, you know? Using my name without honorifics is not appreciated."

Yuuki panicked.

(I tried to rile up Jahilu, but I got sidetracked...)

Actually, he was in the middle of trying to figure out who was on this battlefield, so he hadn't noticed Velgrynd's presence. He didn't think she would actually be here, so he inadvertently said her name.

Being called out at this moment was an unexpected miscalculation.

(I mean, she's too good at hiding her presence. I wish dragon species would act more like "dragon species" and show some aura.)

After biting down on the complaints he couldn't say out loud, Yuuki rephrased.

"I failed against Velgrind-san, but it's a piece of cake against someone like you!"

""It's good to be honest. I'll overlook your slip-up from earlier."

"Thank you."

Yuuki was more considerate of Velgrind than Jahil. Seeing Yuuki like that, Masayuki thought.

(Ah, even Yuuki-san is no match for Velgrynd-san—.)

His favorability towards Yuuki was already high, but now he felt even closer to him. In contrast to that, Jahil looked indignant.

"You stole my power?"

"That's right. This time, I didn't get greedy and shared the portion I couldn't control with everyone else."

Yuuki replied to Jahil's question.

Rather than trying to absorb Jahil's energy with [Steal Life], he only absorbed what he could and distributed the rest. By doing this, he avoided a repeat of the fight with Velgrind. This was also the result of the『Jump Flight』he had successfully pulled off on the fly. With the support of Maria, who had become his [Manas][Wisdom Core], he was able to control even overwhelming amounts of energy.

And just as Yuuki said, the effects extended to those around him. By distributing the energy Yuuki had stolen, even Laplace and the others were restored to their perfect condition. It was precisely because he had received this benefit that Laplace was astonished at the abnormal

actions Yuuki had taken. Mai, and even Kagali, Tia, and Eva, were all feeling better. Thanks to the effect of Luminas' healing magic, they were completely unharmed.

"I don't think we're going to lose."

"Right?"

"Boss, you're really amazing!"

"Pretty much ♪"

Yuuki exchanged lighthearted banter with Laplace and Tia. It was a familiar sight to Kagali, a dependable boss that couldn't be defeated by anyone. That's why she couldn't help but ask.

"So, Yuuki-sama--are you seriously going to take on Jahil?"

Yuuki laughed fearlessly at Kagali's question.

"I'm not going to take on Jahil. I'll take him down easily, and that'll be the end of it."

It was half a bluff, half serious statement. Yuuki had made a calculation in the current exchange that he could win against Jahil.

"Are you serious?"

"Yeah, I guess. Well, I'll be taking out your revenge target, but please forgive me for that"

Yuuki winked playfully at Kagali. No matter how you look at it, it seems like he's just joking, but Kagali knows. Surprisingly, Yuuki is the man of his word. That's why she entrusted him with it.

"I'll take care of my share too."

"Leave it to me!"

Thus began the battle between the Great Sorcerer Emperor Jahil and the Demon((majin?)) Yuuki.

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"Is it really okay to leave it to the boss?"

"Laplace, what's important is 'friendship, effort, and victory'. I don't understand why you're trying to throw away friendship."

"Ahaha, it's not like that! If I go out there, I'll just get in the way, and as long as the most important thing, 'victory', remains, it's all good, right?"

"Yeah. I agree that 'effort' isn't something you show off to others, and results are important, but..."

While laughing and talking, Yuuki gave instructions to Laplace with just his eyes. He was used to it, and Laplace read his intentions and moved with precision. He stood in a position to protect Kagari, Tia, Eva, and even Mai, and kept a close eye on Yuuki and Jahil's movements. However, there was another purpose to this action.

(Well, if a stray bullet hits us, we'll be done for in an instant, but I don't think boss would screw up like that. After defeating Jahil, we'll retreat immediately, that's the plan.)

Yes, Yuuki had already considered retreating after defeating Jahil. He was an extremely cunning and shrewd man.

And the battle began, but observers' expectations were largely split. Calgurio and Mintis knew how troublesome Yuuki was. They had a mysterious confidence that even if he lost, he wouldn't just give up.. Luminas thought that Jahil had the advantage.

(That little brat is quite capable, but Jahil is in a different league. It would be suicidal to take him on, unless he was fighting alongside his companions.)

With Luminas present, even if he died, he could be resurrected. It may have been a reckless challenge in anticipation of this, but she judged that Yuuki's chances of winning were slim.

Velgrind was of the opposite opinion.

(Hmm, he's gotten quite strong. It's incompatible to when he fought me.)

His energy has increased significantly, and he has obtained a [Mythic class] [God] weapon, but there doesn't seem to be any big changes in his visible strength. However, Velgrind felt that he was like a different person.

Even with a difference of more than ten times in existence value, an even fight would be possible. A skilled fighter, like Testarossa, would have been able to stand in front of Velgrind with just [skill]. Judging from that experience, Velgrind was curious as to what Yuuki was hiding.

Hinata was also observing the battle. From Hinata's perspective, Yuuki was an opponent with whom she had a deep connection.

He was a fellow countryman, and studied under the same master, Shizue Izawa, but he was also a conman who had betrayed and used her. But she couldn't bear to hate Yuuki. Hinata

thought that she was at fault for not seeing through Yuuki's true nature. That's why she was somewhat sad when she heard that he had died, and she is also happy to see him safe and sound now. But she also had other feelings.

"I haven't gotten my revenge for being deceived yet, so I won't allow you to lose here."

Hinata couldn't forget the anger she'd felt, and felt the need to at least complain, so she said this to encourage him. ((sometimes I wish I've read serious literature more often so I'd know how to fix this kind of repetitive garbage while still maintaining original structure of the sentence)) Yuuki, completely ignoring such voices from the sidelines, stepped calmly towards Jahil. And in the same flow, he lightly kicked out. Naturally, Jahil was not shaken. He easily caught the kick with his left hand, and struck Yuuki with his right hand.

His fist was covered in super-hot flames, and it possessed a heat that would burn anything it touched in an instant — but Yuuki calmly crossed his arms and received Jahil's fist.

"Mm, you bastard..."

"Fufu, just as I thought. That body belongs to Footman, and even though it is filled with a huge amount of energy, it doesn't seem like your physical abilities have been greatly enhanced."

Yuuki's speculation turned into conviction in the current exchange. Seeing through the clue to defeating Jahil, Yuuki's eyes changed to those of a hunter aiming for prey. Even Jahil felt that Yuuki was an enemy he should not let his guard down against. After all, his power was completely ineffective against him. He thought he could crush him with overwhelming power, but that turned out to be difficult.

(Grrr, this guy...)

The attacks imbued with the [Ultimate Enchant]『[Flame King Agni]』were all sealed by『[Anti-Skill]』. And even if he unleashed a huge amount of magical power, it would be absorbed by『[Steal Life]』.

(I should have killed him completely back then—)

It's too late to regret it now. For Jahil, he was a natural enemy, an extremely troublesome opponent. And so, the hunt began in earnest—

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At this point, the overwhelming difference in [magic essence] amounts became meaningless. Then, it was necessary to use [techniques] [arts] to overcome『[Anti-Skill]』, but Jahil's forte was magic.

Even if the [Ultimate Enchant]『[Flame King Agni]』is used together((?)) optimizing and maximizing the magic, since it is classified as a skill, it would be sealed away by Anti-Skill. Even if he hits him with pure energy, it will just be absorbed by Steal Life. The only thing he can do now is physically attack with [Ancestor's Blood Spear]『[Origin Blood]』..

"Don't underestimate me, you trash bug!!"

Jahil lightly spined the spear around and stopped the tip pointing at Yuuki. Surprisingly, his spear technique stance was quite impressive.

"Huh, so you've gotten used to Futman's body, you must have put in some effort."

"Don't be ridiculous! Effort is a word that has no place in my heart as the successor of God!!"

Jahil shouted and charged at Yuuki. A lightning-fast speed that didn't suit his large build. In an instant, he was within range of a spear attack. But Yuuki had read this perfectly.

"Well, I thought that was coming."

Since he had blocked Jahil's means of attack with his own power, there were few options left. It is only natural that he would anticipate this and set a trap beforehand.

Jahil tripped in front of Yuuki. His stepping foot fell into a pitfall that Yuuki had created with his psychic powers. It's simple, but it's extremely effective. Yuuki's kick exploded on Jahil's face, who lost his balance. Since that kick was also under the influence of『[Steal Life]』, Jahil ended up losing more stamina than receiving damage. Jahil rolled away from Yuuki to gain distance, but Yuuki didn't let this go. He pursued him and delivered a flurry of punches and kicks in a smooth motion.

"Wow, he overwhelmed that monster that we couldn't beat even if we tried to stand on end..."

"It's hard to believe, but that's what Yuuki-sama is like. From my point of view, you and Yuuki-sama seem almost evenly matched..."

"Well, it's fine as long as the boss is strong!"

Laplace was completely stunned.

Recalling her first meeting with Yuuki, Kagalri began to question herself what strength was.

Tia praised him frankly.

All three of them reacted in unison as they watched the outcome of the match. Mai, who felt left out, was on her guard, ready to retreat if something happened.

(Yuuki-kun is really amazing after all. My position has become ambiguous, and I wonder the right thing to do would be just to keep following him?)

Mai had no intention of serving Feldway. Now that she has finally regained her freedom, she was thinking of living according to her own will this time. Her ultimate goal is to return to her original world, and she thought that Yuuki might make that possible.

The only thing that bothers her is that Yuuki's camp was in an antagonistic relationship with Demon Lord Rimuru. She heard that they are now in an alliance, but she remains anxious about whether they have incurred any strange grudges..

(No matter how you look at it, it's no good making enemies of those people. If I could do something about that, my worries would go away, but—)

From Mai's point of view, Demon Lord Rimuru's subordinates were too dangerous. She had attempted to conquer the labyrinth with Dino and the others, and had experienced the danger firsthand. She trusted Yuuki, but that was a separate matter.

(If he were to make an enemy of Demon Lord Rimuru, I would risk my life to persuade him.)

Mai pondered and made up her mind.

Others were also paying attention to the battle between Yuuki and Jahil.

Luminas had returned to the sky and was spreading her consciousness over the entire battlefield, so naturally she was observing the battle as well.

(How surprising. I was aware that this Yuuki was working behind the scenes in the Western Nations, but it was unexpected that he would grow to this extent.)

That was Luminas' honest impression.

She had some ill feelings towards Yuuki, such as resentment for nearly taking Chronoa away from her. But even so, the moment she saw him fighting Jahil, she used healing magic based on the theorem that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

That was the right answer. Yuuki overwhelmed Jahil, who had been troubling Luminas. If she had fought Yuuki herself, she was confident that she would win. However, she felt that it would be tough against Jahil.

It was a matter of compatibility.

Luminas could have prepared multiple countermeasures against Yuuki. Therefore, she would win. However, Jahil did not have any effective means of attacking Yuuki. Even though he is an overwhelmingly strong person, he cannot win. To Jahil, Yuuki was like a natural enemy.

(If he defeats Jahil, I would be delightful)

Contrary to appearances, Luminas has a rough personality, so she thought it would be fine if it meant removing one enemy.

By the way, Velgrynd muttered, "I thought so," and continued to be on guard against Ivalaje. Since it was as expected, she did not seem surprised.

Hinata, for her part, continued to slaughter her enemies while thinking in the back of her mind about how she would deal with Yuuki if it were her, saying, "He's as unpredictable as ever."

And finally, came the time to settle things.

"Well, I'm tired of playing with you, so let's finish this already."

Yuuki grinned.

Jahil became very impatient in response.

"W-wait! I am the Great Sorcerer Emperor, Jahil!! I am the next God who should rule the world!!"

Jahil was desperate.

Being killed by a small fry he didn't even notice in a place like this was something that should not happen. Because Jahil was the rightful successor of Veldanava, the "Stellar King Dragon". The Godslayer. Divine Progenitor Twilight came to mind, who had been forced to bear this burden. There's no need to bother his father, the God Ancestor. He thought that if he could do it himself, everything would be fine.((none of that made sense to me tbh, couldn't find a translation that would make this clearer))

By killing a god and obtaining that power, Jahil was supposed to become the next generation's creator god. Jahil repeated reincarnation and achieved that goal. It was, in a sense, a great feat, but it was also a foolish act that plunged the world into chaos. The world entered an era of war, and the small country ruled by the king that Jahil possessed was destroyed. No results were achieved, and everything was buried in history.

So, he targeted the Dragon Empress Milim next, but the results were as everyone knows. Even so, it is a fact that Jahil accomplished "God Slaying," and that is why Jahil could not accept that it would end here like this.((Seems like he's probably referencing the killing of the milim's dragon

that had the essence of Veldanava. I'm not sure tho... Why are you asking ME!? Turn this shit off, get the plane off the ground and get me back to California! ©))

But—

Such circumstances were irrelevant to Yuuki.

"So? I'm not interested in the next generation or anything."

I'm more important—Yuuki said brazenly.

"You bastard..."

"Oops, it's useless to try to escape. We have Mai here."

Jahil also knows how convenient Mai is. The target of the destination is applied not only to the geographical coordinates but also to the person. No matter where the target person is, you can 'jump' anywhere.

As Yuuki said, there's no point in running away.

"Alright! I'll make you my number one subordinate. How about it? Why don't we join forces!!"

Jahil desperately tries to win over Yuuki with his words. At the same time, he desperately tried to think of a way to escape from this situation, but he couldn't find a good way...

The positions have been reversed. The hunter and the hunted. Once that becomes clear, the winner will be decided.

"No. You did terrible things to my friends, didn't you?"

"Th-that's--"

"I don't need excuses. Because the answer won't change."

Yuuki's smile disappeared.

《Ufufu, good. That's the way! You inherited my power, so use it effectively!!》

Yuuki was already using that power without Maria telling him. The power that made the greedy Maria Bell the strongest—

"Then die--"

"I'm not dead yet--"

Yuuki activates his power--『[Thirst for Death] [Lost Entropy]!!』--.

Jahil's heartfelt desire to "live" was reversed. At that moment, Jahil's "soul" met its death.

"You'll keep regretting even after you die"

These were the last words Yuuki said to the dead Jahil. The incarnation of evil who spread misery throughout the world was completely destroyed by the incarnation of greed that surpassed even his desire, so that he would never be able to rise again.

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Seeing Jahil's death, tears flowed from Kagali's eyes.

"It's over..."

Recalling the hardships of the past, Kagali was overcome with emotion.

"Princess, I'm so glad---"

Kneeling before Kagali and rejoicing with her was Eva, who called herself [No-faced Clown].

A pure-blooded lady-in-waiting who served Kagari from a long time ago when she was still a princess. She is a [Dark Elf] woman who swore loyalty to Kagari and lived through history with her.

Eva did not know the circumstances, but she guessed from Kagari's appearance that Jahil was her archenemy. She had no way of knowing that his true identity was the ancient evil that took over Kagari's father, but it was enough to satisfy that she had risked her life just to see Kagali happy and unharmed.

Yuuki approached the group.

"How is it? Was I able to fulfill my role as the boss?"

Kagali and Tia replied.

"You were the best, Boss! I will continue to pledge my loyalty to you."

"Yeah, that was really cool! We avenged Footman, so I'm satisfied too!!"

Laplace nodded arrogantly and agreed.

"Yeah. Well, if I'd helped, it would've been a lot easier though."

That's not true at all, and in fact he would've been a hindrance, but Yuuki laughed.

"Ahaha, I'll count on you next time!"

"Leave it to me!"

And thus, while they were peacefully enveloped in the emotion of reuniting - there was someone who poured cold water on it.

"Looks like it's over."

Luminas, who had been watching the battle in the sky, descended in front of Yuuki. He gave a wry smile.

"Oh, I'm tired now, so could you hold off on the complaints for next time?"

"Don't be so wary. This is not the time to settle old grudges."

"I'm mainly grateful" – Luminas declared magnanimously.

In fact, she is truly grateful that he took care of the troublesome [Calamity] [Jahil].

"If that's the case, is there something you need?"

"Yes. What are you guys planning to do from now on?"

If possible, Luminas would like them to join the battlefield. However, she also understood that this would be difficult.

Those on this battlefield are not all as broad-minded as Luminas. It was human nature to not trust someone who had betrayed you once. Yuuki was aware of this, and had no intention of getting close to them in the first place.

"Well, we're busy with various things, so please stop interfering, okay?"

"Hmph, do as you please."

She had assumed that would be the case, so Luminas didn't try to stop them. Having given them a chance to reconcile, she lost interest in Yuuki and the others.

But then Yuuki added one more thing.

"Oh, right. We're going now, but Mai will stay here."

"Hmm?"

"Look, that bird over there. It seems to be able to use 'Spatial Teleportation' freely, and it's quite a hassle, isn't it? With Mai here, I think it would be much easier to defeat it."

Yuuki pointed out the battle against Habataki. It cannot be seen from this position, but Yuuki has already grasped the situation of the entire battlefield. He's quite a man, Luminas thought.

"You over there, then join the battle quickly."

Luminas ordered Mai. She had the dignity of a ruler who was used to using people.

On the other hand, Mai, who was suddenly talked to, felt like "I didn't hear about this!?"

She had decided to continue to trust Yuuki and follow him, but it felt like the ladder had been pulled out from under her.

"Um, I..."

Mai was confused as to what to do and was at a loss for words. She glanced at Yuuki for help and he gave her a nice smile.

"That's how it is, so do your best!"

Yuuki said casually and pat Mai on the shoulder.

[I'll consult with you if you have any trouble, and I remember our promise!]

The farewell message was sent to Mai only by "telepathy" so that no one would notice. When Mai tried to reply, Yuuki and the others had vanished.

"Eh, what? No way...instantaneous movement..."

As far as Mai knows, there is no one among Yuuki and his companions who can use [Instantaneous Movement]. Or rather, she thought that no one else could do it except herself.

They can probably handle elemental magic: [Base Movement] [Warp Portal], and some can even handle [Space Transfer], but that requires prior preparation and signs, and it is impossible to disappear in front of their eyes without leaving a trace.

What's going on...? Mai was stunned.

(Maybe when he helped me return, he saw, experienced, and learned it...?)

She had a feeling that that was probably the correct answer, but she didn't want to admit it. She knew that the boy named Yuuki was a genius, but she never expected him to be this good.

"Yuuki-kun is definitely lying about his age."

She couldn't believe that he was the same age as her. A boss who was so cunning that it was suspicious, yet reliable. If such a boss had left Mai behind, there must have been a reason for it. ((here we go again..))

(Maybe he noticed that I was worried...)

Mai sighed and sharply switched gears. Either way, the world was on the brink of destruction. Mai hadn't caught up with the situation yet, but she could feel it. Mai had a strong sense of responsibility and couldn't just leave it at that. So she made up her mind and took a "leap" of her own volition to join the Habataki battle as instructed by Yuuki.

**((there should be a chapter break here, or at list an in-chapter break, but it's missing for some reason. There were suppose to be images here tho))*

The second battle for the Sacred Tree was still barely maintaining balance.

Chloe and Veldora were playing psychological warfare, preventing Milim from becoming more violent. Although it was an impromptu duo, it was functioning well under Chloe's leadership.

The impromptu team led by Zalario, who was facing Feldway, also maintained their fighting spirit despite feeling helpless.

Thus, the world was still protected, but even that was nearing it's limit.

"Okay, you should cast a lightning-based spell on Milim--"

"Are you talking about my cool, [Thunderstorm Roar] ☆ Humanized Version ver. II?"

Veldora was boasting about a lot of things, but Chloe abruptly cut him off. It's not that she was irritated by the minor points like the overlap between "version" and "ver."

"I don't care about the name, but don't use that, ever."

Her warning made Veldora realize. Chloe had seen the future again.

"Could it be that I've done it again...?"

"That's right. If she takes that, Milim will be covered in lightning. It will become difficult to even get close to her, and you'll have no way to attack."

Without showing her abilities as much as possible, she physically deals with Milim with an appropriate amount of force—which is almost her full power. This is the best course of action.

Using release-type techniques carelessly will lead to a great loss of power, and it may even lead to the strengthening of Milim. Chloe can jump back to the past and redo things every time she fails, but that is only a tightrope-like measure. However, that's why she can endure it...

"Hmm, even showing my abilities carelessly can lead to Milim's strengthening. My niece is growing at a frightening rate..."

Or rather, my magic is not something that can be easily imitated—while grumbling, Veldora obediently followed her instructions.

And again, Chloe gave orders.

"This is no time to be impressed! You're going to take the next magic bullet without dodging!!"

Veldra was a little off, describing Milim's strengthening as growth. He was off, but on the other hand, that made him more reliable, which was troubling. Even now, he was blocking the magic bullets Milim had fired, as Chloe told him to.

"Ahh?! Grrrr, that's tough! If it wasn't me, I'd be crying!"

Despite making a fuss, he desperately endured it and extinguished the vicious magic bullet. By the way, Veldora's eyes were teary. Anyone could see that he was crying. But no one would laugh at this. This is because, if it were anyone other than Veldora, they would have been annihilated without even having time to cry.

In fact, if he had evaded it, that magic bullet would have hit the branch city of the Divine Tree directly, causing great damage. The residents have already evacuated, but not everyone is in a safe place. Not everyone has fled outside the Sacred Tree, some have taken refuge in evacuation centers inside the city. The Sacred Tree is a myth of safety for the people. In a way, it is inevitable that they cannot even imagine it collapsing.

Chloe foresaw such a future and avoided the result. Veldora, who followed her instructions, was also remarkable, but unless Milim is brought back to her senses, the limit will inevitably come.

"This is troubling..."

Chloe was fed up with the situation where she had no other options, but she had by no means given up. If she was broken down by something like this, she would not have been able to make such an unimaginable journey through time.

She had a different kind of courage.

"Well, I'll do my best until the very end!"

"Yeah, that's right!"

The fact that she nodded slightly at the carefree Veldora was proof of that. Without any basis, without any doubt—the two of them sincerely believed that the final result will always be good. Besides, Chloe and Veldora weren't the only ones who hadn't given up.

The Little Dragon Gaia, who had led Chloe to this place, had also been calling out to her master, Milim. The results of that effort were finally about to bear fruit.

Occasionally, Milim's movements have become sluggish.

"We can do it!"

"Kukukuku, it's all thanks to me!!"

"I don't think so, but I do acknowledge your efforts."

The two of them worked surprisingly well together, and also Milim's pet Gaia. Thanks to the efforts of these three, the world was still alive and well.

Meanwhile, Feldway was pissed. On the surface, he remained calm, but he was deeply irritated that someone had interrupted him just when he had been able to manipulate Milim and was going to destroy the Sacred Tree.

(Damn those guys. To interfere with me so many times, that annoying "Hero"...)

Feldway truly hated Chloe, who always got in his way at the perfect time. It made him feel like he should have gotten rid of her sooner, and that he had made a mistake in his judgment. With Veldora now joining the "Hero", they were able to deal with Milim more stably.

And against the rampaging Milim no less.

(Unbelievable. The more they fight, the more Milim should be gaining power, but why is it still at a stalemate?)

It was an abnormal situation. Milim's powers have a terrifying nature, and no one should be able to do anything about it. The last time she went berserk, Guy and Ramiris did their utmost to fight her. As a result, Ramiris, who was the planet's "administrator," lost her powers and was only able to use limited abilities.

However, the reason they only got away with that was because Ramiris was truly amazing.

By isolating Milim from the real world with her abilities, she reduced the influence of her power. Meanwhile, Guy worked on Milim, and eventually he succeeded in bringing her back to her senses. That was a miracle that was achieved because there were two of the strongest people. Even Feldway turned pale when he heard the report that there was no other option.

But—that's why he couldn't accept the current situation. There was neither Guy nor Ramiris here. In the first place, Ramiris hadn't regained her powers, so she couldn't be called useless—but she still didn't have the authority to do anything against Milim.
(Why? Why isn't Milim's power increasing? Why—)

At this point, Feldway also realized. The fact that the two people facing Milim are always coming up with the best possible moves.

(--A perfect response. However, it is impossible for even me to make it work on the first try. If that's the case--)

Feldway observed and came to a conclusion.

(It's her. She can manipulate time. Then, she's rewinding time from the future--no, she's jumping to the past!!)

Feldway saw through Chloe's powers almost exactly. Rather than rewinding time, he thought she was "recalling memories of the future." Given the way the "Hero" was giving orders to Veldora, he was convinced that this was the case.

There was a way to block this.

If he stopped time, she would no longer be able to send her consciousness to the past. The reason why Feldway didn't stop time was because there were people who could deal with it. He thought that it would only require unnecessary effort and could even create an opening. And above all, Feldway had a personality that disliked waste. Since the analysis of the enemy's strength was complete, he thought that there was no point in rushing the battle.

But now, it was a different story.

(It's troublesome, but let's activate "Suspended World" until Milim eliminates the obstacles.)

Feldway thought so and was about to put it into action. However, more obstacles appeared—

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"Hey, Leon. You seem to be having a hard time, we'll help you."

In such a lighthearted manner, Yuuki and the others joined the battle.

There were now eight powerful people at the top of this world against Feldway alone. Those who didn't know the situation would think that it was an almost unbeatable lineup...

"Listen. Feldway has learned all of our abilities. And by the way, you should think that the techniques you showed once will never work again."

Zalario kindly warned them.

Yuuki and Kagali were also under Michael's control. Therefore, it was assumed that all of his powers were understood((~stolen)).

Tia and Laplace probably don't have their hands known, but even so, they can't be careless. In front of a powerful being from another dimension like Feldway, any unnecessary intervention could be fatal, or so Zalario thought.

But even upon hearing this, Yuuki's reaction was very nonchalant. It would normally be enough to make someone despair, but Yuuki was no ordinary person.

"That's a common occurrence, isn't it?"

He said without any fear, saying that it was a common development in manga.

"Well, I guess he thought he had control over me, but that was a decoy. I haven't shown all my cards, and I have abilities that I got after that. I don't intend to lose easily, you know"

Yuuki was so confident that he even went so far as to provoke Feldway.

Zalario was stunned by this.

I don't know about the concept of manga, but if it's common, maybe there's a countermeasure—For a moment, He wanted to hope that's the case, but then he reconsidered.

"--Then I ask you, how will you deal with it?"

"It's simple. Kill him on the first try before he can imitate it."

Assuming that they don't know your tricks, if he could do that, there wouldn't be any problems.

Zalario sighed deeply.

"Or find a technique that can't be copied."

This was an idea that anyone could come up with. In fact, Zalario knew that it would not work because he had tried it himself.

"Don't do that. It benefits the enemy."

"Is that it? Because if I try, he'll get stronger?"

"Well, that's how it is."

It may sound blunt, but it would be troublesome if Yuuki did anything unnecessary.

That being said, Yuuki thought that Zalario's worries were none of his business - or rather, it's a misunderstanding in the first place.

This is because he came here cause Laplace asked him to.

Now that he had regained his memories and found out he was Sarion, abandoning his wife and daughter wasn't an option. Laplace had been trying to live for himself, ignoring even the crisis that was threatening the world, so he appealed to Tuuki that he wanted to go and help them, even if only on his own. Yuuki was selfish, but he cared about his friends. He was moved by Laplace's sincerity and accepted his request. Kagali and Tia felt the same way and went along with it without complaint. Eva was the same way, their hearts as one.

And so, they came here to help Elmesia and Silvia, not to defeat Feldway. Their goal of holding out until Veldora arrived was achieved, but that wasn't the end. As long as Milim hadn't returned to her senses, someone needed to hold Feldway back. Depending on the situation, he would have joined the battle with all his might, but as they were only buying time, Yuuki no longer had any intention of fighting in earnest.

So, he would just provoke and then run away. Having reached such an irresponsible conclusion, he had no intention of revealing his hand, even without Zalario's warning. It might be unbelievable to the earnest Zarario, but that was Yuuki's true nature.

Laplace was similar. He's good at toying with his opponents. He doesn't fight in vain, and he's not very assertive. He was the type who would not hesitate to play the clown if it meant achieving his goal. So this time too, Laplace tried to get through it in the same way. He tried to fly into the sky to line up with Yuuki, but he failed. He was caught by a woman who came down to the ground at lightning speed.

"Hey, why didn't you say hello to me?"

With a smile so fierce it sent shivers down his spine, Sylvia, who had left the battlefield to switch with Yuuki, was strangling Laplace with a terrifyingly splendid smile. She realized Laplace's true identity just before the pure magical energy bullet released by Jahil exploded and became a

large fireball. In the flash, Silvia saw Laplace's bare face and realized that he was her beloved husband who had passed away long ago. It was a wonderful reunion, but Laplace and the others had vanished. There was no time to even converse, and now they would never see each other again.

But, there was no time to be sad. Silvia swallowed her personal feelings and fought with all her might. But then...

Laplace appeared nonchalantly. Silvia's patience was at its limit.

"Wh-who might you be?"

At this point, Laplace foolishly chose to deceive her. Although his name was called at that time, he had not yet admitted it. He thought he would deceive her by saying he was someone who looked like her husband, or he would pretend not to know her and get through it.

Naturally, this angered Silvia.

"Huh? So that's what you're saying. You're going to say that? I'm angry now. Then I'll break our promise and cheat on you."

"Wa-wait a minute!? Time out, time out!"

Sylvia applied more strength to her hand that was strangling Laplace. Sensing his life in danger, Laplace thrashed about. Suffocation alone wouldn't kill him, but his body was reacting to Silvia's murderous intent.

"Until you remember me, you're not worth waiting for!"

Tears welled up in Silvia's eyes. Seeing that, Laplace was shaken.

He now had his old memories. Before he remembered, it would have been different, but there was no way he wouldn't react to the tears of the woman he loved. Laplace gave up, realizing that it was impossible to fool Silvia.

"We need to talk! This is not the time to do this, so let's have a long talk later, Sylvia!!"

Silvia was overjoyed to be called by her name by her beloved husband, whom she had thought was dead and had tried to forget.

"Sarion. If you are alive, why—"

Sylvia was overcome with emotion and began to cry. She clenched her fist and let it flow—

"Whoa!? A fist is no good!! At least--!?"

Laplace, eyes wide, tried to run away, but it was already too late.

"If you were alive, why didn't you contact even me once!?"

Putting all her anger into his scream, she turned her golden right fist into a corkscrew blow, piercing Laplace's left cheek.

Laplace, you've made a lifelong blunder. You've done it so many times.
This brings back memories—Laplace was so carefree that he couldn't be saved.

Anyway, he was fired up. Laplace removed his mask and smiled at Silvia.

"Well, we can talk later! I know I can't defeat him, but I'm good at buying time. Well, leave it to us and rest for a while!"

After postponing the problem like that, Laplace also stepped forward. And this time, just as he was about to take to the sky—

"You're in the way," he was suddenly grabbed by the shoulder and pushed back towards Silvia.

"Wh-what!?"

A man suddenly appeared. Even while talking to Silvia, Laplace never let his guard down. And yet, he didn't notice the man's presence at all. He turned around and understood.

"Huh?! Isn't that Diablo?"

That man was indeed Diablo. He had told Benimaru and the others that he had some personal business to attend to and had come all the way here on his own.

Laplace thought. This guy is seriously dangerous. He didn't know Laplace that well, but he remembered having had a few conversations with him. The fear of not knowing what would happen if he gave the wrong answer. He was remembered as an extremely dangerous existence, ranking at the top of the list of people he didn't want to get involved with.

It's not just Laplace who has a hard time with Diablo. Most people should have similar feelings.

"Wh-why did you come here?"

Sylvia asked on Laplace's behalf, and Diablo answered with a fearless smile.

"Kufufufufu, I have some personal business to attend to. Shall we let me take care of that person?"

As Diablo spoke, his gaze fell on Feldway. Laplace and Silvia looked at Diablo and immediately decided that it was better not to get involved. Diablo was the kind of man who would frighten even his allies.

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Diablo spread his wings and flew up to Feldway.

"Tch, I didn't expect you to come here. Are you trying to get in my way?"

Feldway, who was thinking of stopping time, realized that Diablo had 'transferred' and stopped it. He'd then been on high alert, waiting to see what was going on. The reason he was letting Sylvia and the others do as they pleased was because he was concentrating on Diablo's movements.

In terms of [Magic] [Energy], he was overwhelmingly superior, and now that he had the main body, even [Skill] [Level] was superior. Feldway was confident in that, but Diablo was a troublesome opponent. If they were to fight, he wanted to settle things here.

The two opponents glared at each other in the sky, with the Sacred Tree as their background. Sensing that Feldway's attention had strayed from him, Zalario called out without thinking.

"Diablo, are you going to stop Feldway? Then, we should join.."

Zarario was about to offer to join forces, but he couldn't make the suggestion. Because Diablo had clearly refused before then.

"Stop Feldway? No, I'm going to make this fool understand clearly here."

"What?"

"His place."

Diablo smiled faintly as he answered. That arrogant attitude was not that of someone who considered Feldway a threat.

(.....Seriously, how can you think you can win against Feldway when you have less [magic essence] [energy] than me?)

Zalario was astonished. There's no doubt that Diablo is strong. Zalario acknowledged that, as he had struggled as well. Diablo's accumulated [skill] [level] was so great that it surpassed even

Zarario's, so he understood that strength could not be judged solely by the amount of [magic essence] [energy]. But even so,

It would be impossible to beat Feldway with a level of skill on par with Zarario's.

"I admit that you're strong, but..."

As he was about to say that, Zalario felt something was off. Diablo was strong. He wasn't the kind of fool who would overestimate his own strength. Moreover, if he said this after seeing Zalario and the others struggling, he thought that there must be some chance of victory. Leon and Elmesia, overhearing the conversation, agreed.

"He probably has some kind of plan. If he fails, we can go out again."

"He's dangerous, so let him do what he wants!"

In short, they were saying that they should leave it to Diablo and take a break for a while. Yuuki didn't disagree either.

(He's not just dangerous, he's terrifying...)

His "danger prediction" was reacting more than when he saw Feldway. It wasn't his first time meeting Diablo, and he had even talked to him before. At that time, he didn't think he was this dangerous, but now Diablo didn't even bother to hide his true nature.

What's the difference between then and now?

(I see. He was "wearing a mask"...)

Yuuki intuitively understood. Rimuru was there then, but he's gone now. Diablo had become an extremely dangerous presence, like a runaway car with the brakes removed. Since Yuuki understood that, getting between them here wasn't an option. He gladly gave up his turn.

For the earnest Zalario, it was hard to understand why they wouldn't all cooperate in a difficult situation... but the opponent was Diablo, who showed no signs of cooperation whatsoever.

"Alright."

Zalario nodded, which was inevitable.

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And so, Diablo and Feldway ended up having a one-on-one fight.

Feldway was furious, but he believed that if he let himself be swayed by Diablo's pace, he would lose. He didn't interrupt the conversation and calmly analyzed Diablo.

(Is he really planning to defeat me on his own?)

The reason he wondered was because he couldn't sense any signs of a trap. Diablo seemed to seriously think he could defeat Feldway. That made him wonder if he had some secret weapon up his sleeve.

(--No, that's impossible. There's no way anyone could defeat me right now--)

To revive Veldanava, he had taken most of his power into his own body. The only one who could possibly defeat Feldway was Milim, who would continue to evolve. Of course, he intends to take action before that happens, so Feldway wasn't worried. He decided to make an example of Diablo, to make him pay for irritating him.

"Good grief. It seems that your standards are not enough to measure the peak of a god."

"Kufufufufu. Now then, what do you think?"((?))

"You should come down. I'll show you a little of my true power."

Feldway tried to find out Diablo's aim, but instead of worrying about it, he decided to use force. He wanted to cut off his bad relationship with Diablo here.

"Very well. I'll let you choose where you die."

Diablo nodded arrogantly. He had no doubt that he would be the one to win. Feldway landed on the ground and prepared his "[Void] [Arc]". Diablo also took out his [Scissors].

"I'll tell you first. Feldway, the reason you lost is because you underestimated your opponent."

"--What?"

"The proof is that you haven't killed a single person weaker than you."

Diablo said this with a displeased look on his face. He continued, adding words of mockery.

"Didn't you hold back because you thought you could kill them anytime? Or did your pride not allow you to be serious against those weaker than you?"

"..."

Diablo's remark was painful for Feldway. It was right on the mark. So he couldn't help but retort.

"If you say that, then you're the same, aren't you? You liked to fight while holding back against the weak."

Diablo rarely showed his true power. As Feldway said, it was true that he often fought in a manner that looked down on his opponents. But even when he was pointed out, Diablo was unfazed.

"So what? In my case, it's just a 'hobby'?"

Diablo and Feldway had fundamentally different motivations. Diablo loved to bring out his opponent's full potential and then crush it. Besides, he wasn't holding back, he was just matching his opponent. After adjusting the power balance to the same level, he enjoyed a pure skill comparison.

As such, there was no reason for Feldway to complain. It was bad taste, so it was only natural that he would be criticized by the person who was defeated. In other words, Zalario.

"Hey, what did you mean by that?"

Diablo honestly answered Zalario, who asked this with a straight face.

"So, I love to surpass my opponent's techniques. It's both a hobby and a benefit, so it's not meaningless at all."

No, that's not what he wanted to hear, Zalario thought. If he asked in a roundabout way here, it might not get through to Diablo. So Zalario asked directly, trying to suppress his anger.

"I'm asking if you were holding back when you were fighting me!!"

This question was also interesting to Feldway. The maximum amount of magic essence that could be sensed from Diablo was less than one-third of Zalario's. Compared to Feldway, it was less than one-twentieth. And yet, he was fighting on equal terms with Zalario.

(If he was holding back at that time? I might consider him a threat.)

Feldway thought.

Diablo answered.

"Kufufufufu, you're joking, going easy on you. Of course, I was serious."

"You'd better have..."

Then, it's impossible to win against Feldway--Zarario wanted to say.

Sadly, he was made to understand that he could not reach him. Even if Diablo, who was at the same level as him, joined here, there was no chance of winning against Feldway. And yet, Diablo was fully prepared to fight alone--it was a foolish act that could only be thought of as a death wish.

"Well, a long conversation like this is boring, so let's get this over with."

"That's what I wanted to say."

Feldway responded lightly to Diablo's declaration. And then, he swung down his "Void Arc".

It was a very casual blow. But it contained a tremendous power that far exceeded the imagination of those present.

If there was anyone observing this planet from space, it would have looked like a very thin light was being emitted from the planet. That's how far the blow has deviated from the power that could be produced by a weapon called a sword. Diablo received the blow, and the scissors on his left hand were smashed into pieces, and he was blown away all the way to the base of his left arm. Rather, it was strange that he only suffered that much damage...

"—!!"

Everyone was speechless. That blow had made them realize that Feldway hadn't even shown a glimpse of his true power.

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"What was it? Was it, "Let's finish this quickly?" I agree with that opinion."

Feldway said with a menacing smile.

"I was planning to end it with that blow in response to your request. I didn't expect you to react."

"Kufu, kufufufufu. It was unexpected that my "Scissors" would be shattered."

"Hmph, that's just a [God][Mythical] class weapon, right? It can't be compared to my "Void," one of the seven [Genesis] class weapons in this world."

Feldway answered with a cool look on his face. With that, Diablo understood.

"I see, so you've been recognized as the master and are using it skillfully."

As he agreed, he repaired the damage he had received. Ignoring that, Feldway nodded.

"That's right. My [Temporary] body couldn't withstand the power of the sword, but now I can handle it without any problems."

Diablo agreed.

"Good grief. I thought your sword was on the same level as Guy's "World" and the Milim's "Asura""

"That assessment is correct. It's just disguised, but if you use its original power, it's a [Genesis] class weapon."

The weapon created by Veldanava, the "Stellar King Dragon," is a [Genesis] class, of which there are only seven in the world. It was originally meant to be bestowed upon the "Seven Angels of the Beginning," but only Feldway could handle them. So Veldanava passed them onto promising people and friends, disguising them as [Mythic class] [Gods].

"Guy, Rudra, Ramiris, Twilight, Milim, and Lady Lucia. These are the ones who possess the [Genesis class] [Genesis]. I intend to collect them into my hands later."

There was no one else who could use it but him, Feldway remembers. And that was only under the condition that he was residing within the main body and in perfect condition. Its power was so great that it corroded the body of the user. Veldanava, who had lost his power, was not even able to hold the sword - "Asura" [Heavenly Demon], so he left it in Guy's care.

By the way, if Milim, the current owner, had picked up the Asura while rampaging, she would have undoubtedly unleashed its original power as a Genesis class. Its destructive power would have been unimaginable, and it is highly likely that Chloe and Veldora alone would not have been able to deal with it. It was fortunate that this did not happen.

Feldway spoke calmly, not even seeming to doubt victory. In fact, Yuuki and his party were at a loss for words, and Zalario and Elmesia were in half-resignation mode, thinking, "I guess we can't do anything."

Only Chloe had not given up, glaring at Yuuki and calling out, "Instead of just staring blankly, help me out!!"...

That was something that only Chloe, who had a reputation for not giving up, could do, and the others were in a state of unparalleled despair.

But there was one other person. There was one person who didn't feel any despair in particular. It was Diablo, the one who had declared that he would defeat Feldway.

"Kufufufufufu, interesting! It was a very interesting story."

He began to laugh with an attitude of complete composure. There was no sense of despair, let alone a sense of crisis. Feldway was taken aback by this completely unexpected reaction.

"That's fine. The difference in weapon performance seems like a good handicap."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm saying that I'm going to show my true power for the first time in a while."

He says it's been a while, but Diablo sometimes fights with a fair amount of seriousness.

However, this time he was truly serious. He removed all the various conditions and, true to his word, unleashed all his power.

"Whew, inside the labyrinth it's not a big deal if we fail, so there wasn't enough tension. But this situation is great! It looks like I'll be able to experience the greatest, most thrilling thrill I've ever experienced!"

Saying this, Diablo grinned. It was a cruel smile that terrified those who saw it.

"A thrill? Foolish--"

Not wanting to put up with Diablo's nonsense, Feldway made a move. The godspeed attack was filled with the power to cleave even stars. It was an incredible slash that would have cut Diablo in half and then reduced him to powder. And yet--

Cracks ran across the earth, and dust floated in the air. The atmosphere was scorched, and a life-threatening smell stimulated the nose. However, the result that everyone expected was completely off the mark.

Feldway tried to push the sword in. In response, Diablo was standing there, receiving it head-on. The "Void" that emitted the brilliance of a swaying nebula and the rainbow-colored "Scissors" were intersecting.

"Kufufufufu. I was a little frustrated after I gave up Zelanus to Zegion. You seem to be a good experimental opponent."

"What?"

It was expected that Zelanus, who had left Old Eurazania, would attack the labyrinth. This is because there were surviving Insectars within the labyrinth. Now that all his subordinates had been wiped out, Zelanus, the Insect King, would move to recruit his own kind. Feldway had this in mind when he ordered Vega, Dino, and the others to attack the labyrinth. Vega and his group alone were not reliable, but Zelanus, a strong man even Feldway acknowledged, was sure to be able to conquer the impregnable Ramiris Labyrinth.

Even if that was impossible, it didn't matter. It was thought that it would take a long time to capture the labyrinth, so it would suffice to hold back the enemy forces. The remaining troops under Rimuru's command were in the labyrinth. Diablo's coming here was unexpected, but in terms of holding back the others, Zelanus was thought to be a good decoy.

In short, it was only a matter of time. Of the three bases remaining in this world, only Ramiris Labyrinth was independent. If the remaining two, "Heavenly Tower" and the Sacred Tree, were destroyed, Ramiris Labyrinth could be easily neutralized.

It was a matter of isolating it, not necessarily capturing it. That's why Feldway's plan was as good as successful when Zelanus went to the labyrinth--but there was a slightly ominous sign in Diablo's current statement.

"You gave up Zelanus? That's arrogant, Diablo. Though not as strong as me, Zelanus is also a strong man. He should surpass even the "Dragon Kind" and become the ruler of this world. You are no match for him."

Even as he said this, Feldway realized that something strange had happened to Diablo the moment he received the [Genesis]. Perhaps seeing through Feldway's anxiety, Diablo's smile deepened.

"Arrogant? That's Guy's specialty."

While waving it off with such a flippant remark, Diablo began his counterattack as if it was his turn now. His speed was not inferior to Feldway's. For a demon, especially the highest-ranking existence, the "Primordial," rewriting the laws of physics with magic is a piece of cake.

If you move ignoring the substances that fill the atmosphere, you can even break the sound barrier without creating a shock wave. Although the principle is different from teleportation, it is truly a divine feat. And Diablo is well versed in such skills.

Feldway, on the other hand, has the skills he has accumulated so far. By making full use of it, he will not be left behind by Diablo's movements.

The two heroes, not one to back down, began to alternate their attacks. Flowing and dancing, Diablo parried Feldway's sword techniques. The previous blow had made it clear that blocking head-on was inefficient. He had taken a fair amount of damage, but he hadn't shown it on his face.

No. It was more than just a fair amount. It was as if he had succeeded in somehow receiving it by scraping together the energy of his entire body. Combined with the damage of losing his left arm first, he had lost more than 90% of his energy. And yet, Diablo appeared calm on the surface, showing just how impressive his ability to deceive others was. It wasn't that Feldway

was incompetent that he couldn't see through it. It was because Diablo's technique was outstanding.

.....
.....
...

Diablo was using his [Ultimate Ability][Ultimate Skill] ``[Temptation King][Azazel]" to deceive. He was rewriting information by applying the "Temptation World," which activates absolute power in a virtual world, to his own body. Even if he used it as is, it would not have worked on Feldway, but by using it in an unintended way like this, he was able to make excellent use of it in battle. This skill in using it was also one of Diablo's outstanding aspects.

And there was another reason. Diablo had been secretly absorbing the power of "Void Collapse" to replenish the energy he had lost. It was an extremely dangerous act, and something that someone like Benimaru would never do. Anyone who knew their own limits would judge that the risk of failure was too great.

But Diablo was different.

Even though this was not a labyrinth where you could start over if you failed, he used an overwhelmingly strong person like Feldway as a test subject and put his terrifying plan into action.

"Wonderful. I can really feel the connection with Rimuru-sama!"

Diablo, who said so with an ecstatic expression, was, in a sense, pure. He was putting all his effort into what he loved, so he had no fears or regrets. He wasn't afraid of failure, and in fact was very curious, so he would accept any outcome.

That's why he succeeded.

Just like Zegion, Diablo circulated "Void Collapse" in his own body. However, if he simply imitated it, there was a 100% chance of failure, so this time he once again used his [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "Temptation King [Azazel]".

He had convinced himself that his own body could withstand "Void Collapse".

.....
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...

It was a plan that wouldn't normally occur to anyone. However, Diablo was convinced of success.

He had intended to test it against [Insect Demon Lord] Zelanus, but handed that role over to Zegion. Thanks to that, he was able to observe the process of Zegion absorbing "Void Collapse". Therefore, Diablo understood that his theory was not wrong.

In Zegion's case, it was only thanks to Rimuru's omnipotent cells that he was successful. Diablo has no such privilege, but he has a "body" given to him by Rimuru. If he optimizes this for "Void Collapse", he will be able to make effective use of energy without having to push himself too hard.

--That is purely theoretical.

"Void Collapse" is, in the first place, an "event" that is essentially uncontrollable. It's like forcing Testarossa to use the "Void" that she has poured her heart and soul into controlling as pure energy.

The abyss of hell that has collapsed, or -- "the chaos before hell was born" is the essence of "Void Collapse." It would be strange for someone to survive using such dangerous energy.

Diablo was no exception.

His body was being swallowed up by nothingness faster than it could be optimized. He accepted this with a calm face, using his [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] "[Temptation King] [Azazel]" to pseudo-regenerate, and by believing it to be the real thing, Diablo was able to maintain his current state and continue the battle.

It was not a matter of being out of the ordinary, but a destructive act that made one doubt his sanity.

But Diablo didn't let anyone else realize this. It wasn't a problem for him, and he was enjoying the fight. That was Diablo's greatness.

Feldway was a stark contrast to this.

He truly believed that if he was at full power with his main body out, no matter who the opponent was, he would be no match for him. And yet, he was having a hard time against Diablo. Feldway didn't want to admit it, but from a third-party perspective, it would be considered an even fight.

"--Don't be ridiculous, how can someone like you compete with me!?"

"Kufufufufu. Are you surprised? I let you off the hook last time because you weren't the main body, but today I'll fight you to the end. I told you, didn't I? I'll prepare a way to kill you."

Hearing this, Feldway's heart wavered. To Feldway, Diablo was just a nuisance. He was an eyesore, but he didn't see any value in fighting him so hard. Instead, the destruction of the Sacred Tree should be given priority right now. If that was achieved, the world would be easily destroyed by the hand of the "Destruction Dragon" Ivalaje, who would likely be coming through the "Heavenly Tower" by now.

If that happened, naturally, Diablo would be destroyed as well. As Feldway, who dislikes waste, it was not unreasonable to think that there was no value in being his opponent here.

However—

He, who aspires to be the ruler of the world, could not accept the reality that he would struggle against Diablo, even with the best body and the strongest weapon given to him by Veldanava. Feldway did not want to accept it.

And so he spoke.

"You damn demon! If that's the case, I will show no mercy! Before I destroy the world, I will bury you with my own hands!"

That was the pride that remained in Feldway's heart: "When I get serious, I can't be defeated by anyone."

Finally, Feldway recognized Diablo as his true enemy.

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As Diablo intended, Feldway became serious.

(Kufufufufu, how delightful.)

Diablo chuckled. It wasn't some underhanded plan to rile him and create an opening. It was simply a selfish wish, typical of Diablo, to win after letting his enemy unleash his full power. That's why he's so bad...

Anyway.

With both sides now serious, the battle began anew. Feldway poured all his skills into cornering Diablo. As if he had been waiting for it, Diablo parried this. Surprisingly, both power and skill were evenly matched.

"Kufufufufu. Feldway, you should be proud. You're the first person I've shown my hand to this extent."

"Tch, I didn't expect you to be hiding this much power..."

"You are not making the most of your power because you are inexperienced."

Diablo pointed out in a condescending manner that the balance between body and technique was poor.

"Shut up! There's no point in trying to shake me up."

In contrast to Diablo, who seemed to be enjoying himself, Feldway was not amused.

He believed that there was an overwhelming difference in strength between them, even more so than between an adult and a child. And yet, instead of defeating Diablo, he was content to fight on equal terms. To Feldway, this situation was nothing but humiliation.

The skill that Feldway had accumulated so far was the culmination of all kinds of swordsmanship and martial arts. If he used it without hesitation, he should have been able to defeat Diablo in an instant. But it didn't work. Diablo's readings were spot on, surpassing Feldway's. The reason for this was clear. Feldway was unaware of it, but Diablo's battle sense had reached the realm of a god.

Diablo always maximized his opponent's strength and then spent his days fighting to surpass it. Unlike Guy, he didn't act aloof and strong, but instead enjoyed fighting, including the use of techniques. That's why he was strong. Strength and technique - adding heart to these was Diablo's true worth.

Even now, with a flash, Diablo's claw grazed Feldway's cheek. A few drops of bright red blood painted Feldway's beautiful face.

"You bastard! How dare you damage my precious body that I received from Veldanava-sama--!!"

Feldway cried out in rage. But Diablo didn't care.

"Kufufufufu. I guess my body, bestowed by Rimuru-sama, is superior." ((Chef's kiss rate of banter from the bad boy))

He even made a statement that was like stroking Feldway's reverse scale. Naturally, this made Feldway lose his cool. Just as Diablo had intended, he lost his composure. At this point, the flow of the game was in Diablo's hands.

It's not that Diablo has room to spare. He's fighting with a long-term battle in mind to some extent, but how long his body can withstand the "Void Collapse" is unknown.

Diablo's worship of Rimuru is at a pathological level, so he himself has no doubt that "no matter how much he overuses it, it's okay." This is the problem, and it was like walking a tightrope about where it would break down.

Moreover, Diablo was abusing his abilities while provoking Feldway. By activating "Temptation World" from multiple angles, he had created an environment that was absolutely advantageous.

First, maintain the body. The moment this breaks down, Diablo's defeat is decided.

Next, he countered his powers. He made it so that Feldway's abilities wouldn't work in his "Temptation World."

((I was expecting discombobulation next))

It was a truly impressive move. Most abilities affect matter called magic essence. By freely moving magical energy and rewriting its laws, they cause supernatural abnormal phenomena. For this reason, if one were to disrupt the surrounding magical energy with something like "Magical Power Interference," one could disrupt the activation of magic, etc., but...

On the other hand, what about the higher-level [Ultimate Abilities] and [Ultimate Skills]?

There were god-like abilities that could interfere not only with magic essence, but also with "spiritual particles," the substances that make up magic essence, and even "information particles," the smallest substances. This was the power Feldway wielded, and the fact that Diablo was interfering with it meant that he also knew how to handle "information particles."

In other words, Diablo had disrupted the "information particles" in the "Temptation World," sealing away Feldway's power. Even though Feldway was dedicating his power resources to controlling Milim, it was as if all of his other [Ultimate Abilities] [Ultimate Skills] had been sealed away. It was truly an abnormal situation.

It was the result of Diablo's exceptional fighting sense. Diablo had sealed away Feldway's strengths, and used his magic and military strength to match Feldway.

Feldway was no fool either. Instead of just being swayed by Diablo, he quickly regained his composure and analyzed the situation from a calm perspective. And then he realized just how dangerous Diablo's actions were.

Feldway doubted Diablo's sanity when he realized that the energy of the "void" was dwelling in his body. It was a power that could truly destroy the world.

"You're insane!!"

"Kufufufufu. I'll take that as a compliment."

The words he spoke without thinking ended up making Diablo happy. This is why he was so annoying, Feldway thought. Since his goal is to destroy the world, Feldway would be very happy if Diablo failed to control the Void.

But, however...

(I don't think this guy will fail...)

He didn't want to admit it, but Diablo was truly strong.

They knew each other for a long time, and even after Feldway became the Demon Lord, many of his plans had been thwarted. Diablo had many bitter memories of him, too.

That's why he had recognized him as a "true enemy," but it was frightening that even with Feldway's full strength right now, he was unable to subdue him. Under normal circumstances, he should have been overwhelmingly inferior. And yet, the current situation was one in which they were evenly matched.

Now Feldway realized that he had underestimated Diablo. Feldway truly felt that he should have disposed of Diablo sooner, before he met Demon Lord Rimuru...

However, he still had his trump card remaining.

(Good grief, I'll have to hurry them too...)

Finally, Feldway decided to launch an all-out battle to put an end to this operation.

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Zalario, who was watching, was stunned. Just as Feldway had noticed, Zalario also sensed what Diablo was doing. Or rather, he should say he had come to understand.

(What are you thinking, Diablo--!!)

He screamed in his mind. If he could, he would have liked to break into the battle right now and stop Diablo, even if he had to punch him. But that would only benefit Feldway, and more than anything, it was frustrating that he had no other options. He had no choice but to leave it alone, and rely on Diablo.

Zalario felt helpless in that situation.

Zalario was not the only one to react like that.

Following Zarario, Silvia also sensed it. At almost the same time, Elmesia also understood.

"You're kidding..."

"Hey Rim-chan, if you don't come back soon, the world might disappear, you know?"

"Really..."

Only Rimuru can stop Diablo. This is common sense to Elmesia, and it is what she finds comforting. Her mother, Silvia, had also heard the story from Elmesia, and generally agreed. She believed that no one other than Demon Lord Rimuru could do something so unconventional as to subjugate the Primordial, which is a source of fear for humanity.

And then Demon Lord Rimuru was gone.

The turmoil among Rimuru's subordinates that Elmesia was concerned about did not occur, but that was only because the situation was beyond that. In fact, Diablo, whether he had overestimated his power or not, was taking actions that made him doubt his sanity.

Elmesia had never expected Diablo to have common sense, but...

He was using the "Void" that could destroy the world as energy within his body. If it were normal times, she would have done everything in his power to stop this reckless act.

"He's doing something so dangerous so nonchalantly."

"El-chan, you should tell Demon Lord Rimuru."

((snitches get stitches..))

"I'd like to do that, but you see, Rim-chan is not here..."

Sylvia also knew that Rimuru had been wiped out by Feldway. But she couldn't help but think that Rimuru would come back soon.

Elmesia was the same, and seemed to believe that Rimuru was safe. So the two of them decided that they would definitely tell on Diablo's foolish act.

"What, what? Is that person doing something that dangerous?"

Laplace tried to join the conversation. To Laplace, Silvia and Elmesia were his wife and daughter, separated from him long ago. It was only recently that he remembered this, so the memory is still fresh. Well, it was a little unsettling to see his unborn daughter grow up to be just like her mother...

(I'm so happy that she grew up to be such a beautiful woman!)

That was what Laplace really thought. But it had been a long time since they had been ((split? torn?)) apart. From Laplace's point of view, it was only a recent memory, but from the mother and daughter's point of view, it was a memory from a distant past.

(Sylvia's questioning was only overlooked because of the circumstances. It would be a good idea to start with a light conversation and close the distance!)

Or so Laplace, a man who could read the atmosphere, thought. But it was a bad topic.

"If you don't realize how dangerous that is, it's better not to know."

Sylvia replied coldly. Elmesia's reaction was even harsher.

"Well... I mean, the father I heard about from Mom was very cool and I admired him, but..." She glanced at Laplace with appraising eyes, then let out a big sigh of disappointment.

Hearing this, Laplace panicked.

"W-wait a second! Dad is really cool, isn't he?"

"A clown wearing a weird mask isn't cool or bad((ass)) at all..."

Elmesia answered indifferently. It was a very reasonable opinion. Silvia had also told her about the "Wandering Hero," so she knew that he was her father, but it was difficult to equate him with the clown in front of her.

So Elmesia asked the main question.

"I mean, I'm kind of confused if you suddenly tell me you're my father. Are you really the real deal?"

Looking at her mother's reaction, she thought he was probably the real deal. But she didn't want to admit it. He disappeared before she was born, so this was her first time meeting him. She wasn't a young child, so it felt like it was too late.

"I'm the real deal! No doubt about it. So, El-chan—"

"I don't allow you to call me El-chan."

Here, Elmesia showed a serious look.

Her dignity as the Heavenly Emperor didn't matter, but her inability to be honest with herself was complicated. It seemed she still needed some time before she could open up to Laplace.

Laplace, a man who could read the mood, swallowed hard and nodded.

"I, I understand. Daughter."

"..."

"I, is that no good?"

"Sigh, just call me Elmesia, please."

At the point of being exasperated, Elmesia had lost.

The first step.

This was the first step towards a compromise between father and daughter. At any rate, Laplace was allowed to call her by her name. At this point, Kagali interjected to change the flow.

"Laplace's father-daughter drama is important, but could you explain to us what's happening?"

"That's right. I don't intend to interfere, but if that person, Diablo, is doing something dangerous, I want to prepare for the worst-case scenario."

Following Kagali, Leon also asked for an explanation.

Diablo was fighting Feldway evenly, but it seemed that there was a dangerous secret to that trick. Kagari and Leon had judged so from listening to Elmesia and Silvia's conversation. They didn't know what they could do, but they wanted to share information.

By the way, Yuuki had been called by Chloe and had joined the Milim suppression battle. He had learned "instant movement" at some point and was quite active, which was impressive.

That's why Kagari thought that she couldn't afford to lose either.

The same goes for Leon. The memory of being used by Yuuki is still fresh, and it would be a lie to say she doesn't harbor any grudges. But, there are aspects of his way of life that he can sympathize with. Leon was prepared to commit any evil deed in order to find a girl named Chloe.

Yuuki, too, was probably just affirming all kinds of evil deeds to realize his ideals.

(In that case, I have no right to blame him.)

Leon thought that grudges were grudges, and that what should be acknowledged should be acknowledged. Whether they could become friends was another matter. Someday, they might

be able to get along—to prevent such a possibility from being extinguished, they had to deal with the threat in front of them.

"Tell me. Is there anything we can do?"

Zalario answered with certainty.

"No."

It was a blunt statement, but it also applied to Zalario himself.

"Well, right now, the best thing to do is to recover your strength."

Sylvia nodded.

"In truth, if Diablo's 'Void' goes out of control, the world will end, so I can only pray that Rim-chan returns before that happens..."

This was Elmesia's grumbling remark.

(Rimuru-ccchi, just as I was worried, the 'Primordial Black' is going berserk, so please stop him as you said you would—)

That was all Elmesia could hope for. Upon hearing what Elmesia said, Laplace, Kagali, and Leon were all speechless at the same time.

"The world will end..."

She said it so easily, but there was no exaggeration there. It was precisely because they understood that they couldn't say anything.

"Wow, this is terrible."

Only Tia seemed at ease. It wasn't that she didn't understand how difficult it was, but she was more than anything happy that everyone was together. It was unfortunate for Clayman and Footman, but she was determined to do her best with the remaining comrades.

(Then, when we get to the other world, we can brag about it!)

Thinking like this, Tia was feeling very positive. That atmosphere was conveyed to everyone. Even if there was nothing they could do now, there was no need to lament. They could only believe in Diablo's victory and pray for the safety of the world.

But, if it didn't work out—

"Well, then I'll complain to Rimuru-ccchi!"

That was the conclusion she came to. If the world were to be destroyed, it would be Rimuru's fault.

((another subchapter only denoted by images))

The moment Guy and Velzard got serious, the danger level of the battlefield rose several levels.

"Moss? This 'Defense Barrier' is going to hold up, right?"

Testarossa's cold gaze pierced through Moss.

"Will it?"

Testarossa asked again, pressing the point.

That's the question I want to ask! Moss thought, but he couldn't dare say it out loud.

Moss wanted to shout, "Of course it's impossible!" But if he did, he'd suffer a fate worse than death at Testarossa's hands before the world even ended. That was completely unacceptable, so Moss refocused his energy and strengthened the 'protective barrier'.

"I'm giving it my all!"

It wasn't a real answer, but he tried to appease Testarossa with that response.

Can I count on Moss like that? Support chimed in for Moss.

"Indeed! We're also giving it our absolute best. If this 'Barrier' breaks, I'll even call you Onee-sama!!"

It was Rain's remark.

In reality, Rain was the one who had taken control of the 'Barrier' from Moss, so that was her responsibility. That's why she intervened, but Testarossa was utterly dumbfounded by her rather irrelevant response.

"Does that give me any benefit?"

Testarossa pondered with a serious face... then let out a big sigh and shifted her focus.

"Well, whatever. Prepare for the impact."

Testarossa casually announced.

"Eh?"

– Moss and Rain were about to ask back.

Misery, sensing the danger, quickly braced herself. Without even seeing her, Souka, following instructions she didn't fully understand, also took a defensive posture like a turtle. This is the difference between a capable women and the rest.

Immediately afterwards—a violent shock ran through the 『Protective Barrier』. The sound arrived a moment later.

“—[Whiteout Absorb]—!!”

It was Velzard's ultimate attack, unleashed with all her might.

.....
.....
...

Velzard had a unique power that she excelled at. That was—『Stop』. She could freeze the kinetic state of matter as it was.

It didn't just reduce kinetic energy to zero, but made it impossible ((for particles)) to move in that state. It was a highly convenient power with various uses that could even prevent the outflow of energy. In addition to this, she had an authority bestowed by her brother—the ultimate skill 『[King of Patience] [Gabriel]』, which boasted absolute defensive power.

Its true nature was—『fixation』. It is possible to solidify any substance and create it as a single mass. These two powers - 『Fix』 and 『Stop』- were highly compatible.

Creating ice walls by solidifying moisture in the atmosphere was a piece of cake. It wasn't necessary just water molecules that could be solidified. Her influence extends to all molecules, unifying them into a cohesive structure increases the strength. On top of that, since it also enhanced the appearance, Velzard had simply made it a habit to add this extra step.

When skills are this compatible, they can produce tremendous synergistic effects.

If she could even stop the flow of energy, it would be like she could nullify any and all attacks. And since it could only be broken by attacks that exceeded Velzard's bottomless amount of [magic essence], it was almost impossible. Looking only at the defensive side, it is no exaggeration to say that Velzard is invincible.

But what about the offensive side?

These two powers are suited to fighting in a way that restricts the opponent's movements and weakens their abilities. It's like applying a debuff to the opponent after having perfected your defenses, and this alone is quite useful.

But Velzard also had another power.

[Ultimate Ability][Ultimate Skill] "Envious King Leviathan" - a power that specializes in degrading the opponent's abilities. It could reduce the opponent's power in proportion to the user's own ability. Needless to say, the effect of weakening the opponent's abilities was a perfect match for Velzard's power. Not only is it effective in any combination, but Velzard's amount of [magic essence] is far superior to others. Therefore, she was strong.

After fortifying herself with an impenetrable defense, she weakens others to the maximum extent. In this way, creating a situation where she cannot lose was Velzard's surefire way to win.

There were hardly any enemies who required her to go that far. This strategy was devised with the battle against Guy in mind.

That's why she had an even bigger secret weapon.

That was—

Velzard's own skill, 'Cessation Lost', combined with the 'Ultimate Skill' 'King of Patience, Gabriel's' 'Solidification of All Things', and then integrating the 'Ultimate Skill' 'King of Envy, Leviathan's' 'Absorb' to unleash her maximum and most powerful attack—"Whiteout Absorb".

.....
.....
...

The white impact struck Moss's "Protective Barrier", but it was merely an aftershock. However, its power was immense—

"Onee-sama, I'm so sorry~~~!"

"That's a pain in the ass!!"

It was so powerful that it pulverized the "Protective Barrier" in an instant. Inevitably, Rain, who had spoken so cockily, was calling Testarossa "Big Sister" as if he was following through on her word. You could even say that the flag had been raised.

From Testarossa's perspective, this was the height of irritation. While vowing to settle the score with Rain later, she responded to the situation immediately. They were unharmed thanks to an intruder.

"I have arrived!!"

It was Gabil, the "[Dragon Lord]" [Heavenly Dragon King].((fyi all translators(AI and otherwise) calling him Draglord))

Immediately upon arrival, before even grasping the situation, Gabil sensed it instinctively. Now was the time.

The [Ultimate Gift] [Mood Maker] that Gabil had obtained had a special power that could only be activated once a day. Although there are many limitations, the power which could make any tragedy as if it had never happened, was called 'Fate Alteration'.

Gabil spun his 'Vortex Spear' in a wide arc and shouted in a loud voice.

"World, change to the form I desire—'Fate Alteration'—!!" ((with all the deus ex machina shit that fuse has used to justify his bullshit instead of writing a compelling story, this is just playing fucking silly. At this point he is just a glorified power scaler that was writing a fanfic about building a country with like 5-6 actually interesting twists. Prob not gonna translate the 23, tired of this garbage. There is not perseverance, no development trough merit, no intricate politics or spycraft, just fucking magic man and "I'm to stupid to know hot to fail"))

Gabiru had just prevented the tragedy that would have occurred had the [Protective Barrier] been broken. He wasn't the only one to intervene.

"Phew—! Is everyone alright?"

It was the "Barrier Lord" Geld who asked. He had come via "Spatial Transfer" on Benimaru's orders, and arrived just in the nick of time.

Even Benimaru hadn't read through the entire situation, but he was aware of the danger from Souei, who had received a report from Souka((report about what, fucking witeness? She cant fucking see anything)). So he sent Geld to strengthen the "Protective Barrier". Geld bought them a little time by deploying his own "Barrier" under Moss's "Barrier".((Yeah, "multilevel" multilevel barrier, that's gonna help against power that can disrupt fkn entropy and affect spiritrons))

Normally he would have been one step too late, but the fact that Gabil was here changed the outcome. If the timing had been a little off and Gabil's "Fate Alteration" had not been usable again, this outcome would not have happened. It was only thanks to Rain's support, Gabil's "Fate Alteration", and Gerudo's "Barrier" that Moss was able to deploy the "Protective Barrier" again.((this garbage deserves to be just MTL, no wonder slime reader guy/gal stopped))

This combination of good fortune had barely allowed everyone to survive.

"Well, it was a close call," Rain summed up, as if it were his own achievement.

Everyone ignored this. Rain looked dejected and cried fake tears, but this was also ignored.

Meanwhile, Gabil found Souka and called out to her.

"Oh, Souka! Are you okay!?"

"Brother! Why are you here?"

"Well, of course, I was worried about my beloved sister—"

Gabil was nervous at this point.

"Ah, I understand. You're Syphia, right?"

Gabil was startled to be called out on his true motive.

"She's okay. She's still frozen, but that's why she's okay."

Souka's words seemed contradictory, but they were the truth. Velzard's ice was also the strongest shield protecting the victims. Gabil was relieved to hear that, but he himself hadn't yet realized how powerful the 'Fate Alteration' he had just used was. Although it could only be used under many restrictions and conditions, its range of influence was far wider than he thought. This fact was not yet known, but everyone would eventually understand.

The miracle wasn't over yet—

*

Guy intuitively knew that Velzard was going to use her trump card.

They faced off against each other, and after an evenly matched back and forth battle, the probing of each other's intentions was over. Now that there was no reason for either of them to hold back, it was only a matter of time.

"-- [Whiteout Absorb]--!!"

Velzard's beautiful voice rang out after the impact had pierced Guy's body. Feeling pain for the first time in a long time, Guy grimaced.

Then again, it was all there was to it.

In Guy's hand was a slender longsword, cleaving through the blades of cold air woven by "Whiteout Absorb."

"You can be proud that you made me draw my sword," Guy told Velzard.

The "name" of that sword was "World"—one of the seven Genesis-class weapons that exist in the world. Unlike the [Asura] that he had given to Milim, the blade of [World] that Guy held was well-maintained. Its rainbow-colored luster was beautiful, and it was adorned with a mysterious blade pattern. The pulsating, resonating demon sword was well-suited to Guy's hand. Even though it had been a while since he had held it, it felt like a part of his body.

That was only natural, as Genesis class, like Myth class, had the property of lending power to their owners. Although it depended on the owner's ability, its existence value was equivalent to tens of millions.

Naturally, Guy was able to make the most of "[World]".

He couldn't handle it well when he first received it, but now he could wield it as freely as his own limbs. In other words, the moment he got it, Guy's existence value became equal to Velzard's.

If she lost her advantage in power, Velzard had no chance of winning.

Guy was versatile and strong((est)). Because Guy had the "Ultimate Skill" "King of Pride, Lucifer." His whole body was covered in wounds due to Velzard's ``Whiteout Absorb". The freezing effect also sealed Guy's "Superspeed Regeneration," but it didn't really matter. By replicating Rimuru's skill—"King of Gluttony, Beelzebuth"—and "Predating" the damaged areas along with the freezing effect, he was back to normal. His own healing power alone allowed him to recover completely in an instant.

Incidentally, he had already analyzed Velzard's "Patience King Gabriel" and "Envious King Leviathan." Velzard's own unique ability "Stop" was troublesome, but Guy found it easy to overcome. Satisfied with the comfortable sense of unity with "[World]", Guy looked at Velzard with a grin.

"That was your trump card, wasn't it? What will you do? Will you continue?"

At this point, Guy was confident of his victory. He had indulged Velzard for a long time because he didn't know what hidden skills she had. Once her secrets were revealed, Guy could deal with her without any problems. The moment Velzard was unable to finish off Guy with her hidden power, the outcome was decided.

That was a fact, and Velzard knew it well enough. But she wouldn't admit it. No, she just didn't want to admit it.

"—It's not over yet, I didn't hear no bell!!!"

"You're satisfied now, right? How long are you going to pretend to be controlled?"

"...Shut up."

"Hahaha. Don't be sulky."

"You think you can solve everything on your own, don't you?"

"Yeah. I'm strong, after all."

"Arrogant, more like."

"That's me."

"I know."

Velzard's heart remained frozen. But only when she was talking to Guy could she feel a faint warmth. She was about to go with the flow—((yeah, disney this bitch. Fuse not even trying to ponder to a mediocre audience by this point, he's just using any lazy trope he can remember. Japanese industry keep producing "successful" burnt out writers that do this by the end of the story they were initially excited to do. I'm tired boss))

But that was not allowed.

(So, you were harboring jealousy after all. Did you think you could deceive me, Velzard?)

That was the [Curse] engraved in Velzard's heart.

The cunning and careful Feldway had been controlling Velzard with "Ultimate Dominion", but he had doubts about its effectiveness. Because Velzard's [Love] [Wish] was genuine, the outcome would be unshakable—or so Feldway had seen through. He assumed that she would eventually be swayed by Guy, suppress her true feelings, and follow him with some kind of excuse. Therefore, he had made a plan based on the assumption that Velzard would turn against him. He had set up a mechanism in his "Control Circuit" so that he could keep an eye on Velzard at any time.

He had set up his "Regalia Dominion" to be activated in case of emergency, so that it could be used as a trump card.

However, this effect was only built in like a time device, and only had a momentary influence. However, this effect was merely a built-in time bomb, with only momentary influence. Feldway, who was focusing all his efforts on controlling Milim, couldn't even dream of controlling Velzard.

However,

Twilight was in Velzard's heart. Feldway had negotiated with Twilight and secretly made an agreement with him.

(Twilight, are you still planning to slack off?)

Twilight had been waiting for an opportunity without Feldway even asking.

(I've been waiting for this moment!)

Twilight has awakened. This time, not a counterfeit like the "Pseudo-Dragon Body," but the real body of a "True Dragon." Velzard's body glowed faintly, and her build changed into that of a man.

The figure was unmistakably Twilight.

"Yo, Guy. I was caught off guard earlier, but this time I'll take the win,"

"You..."

For the first time in a long time, Guy felt anger welling up from the depths of his heart.

(I won't forgive you. How dare you lay a hand on what's mine! To deceive and exploit my cute Velzard... You've got guts, Twilight—)

((yea, I'm not even going to comment this meh anymore, hope you'll enjoy this more than I did))

"If you want to die that badly, I'll kill you."

Guy's hair stood on end, bright red, in a searing, intense rage.

"Oh, how scary, how scary,"

Twilight laughed mockingly.

(Just finish this quickly.)

The [Curse] [Noroi] engraved in Velzard's heart - the remnants of Feldway, which could hardly be called a "separate body", commanded Twilight. Twilight nodded in response.

(Yes, I'll dispose of Guy right now—)

Twilight tried to respond to Feldway in his mind, but his "thoughts" were cut short. At that moment, a single path had opened in the "void" that enveloped Guy and Velzard. And, as if

piercing through that path, a single bullet was fired. The name of the bullet that could destroy anything was - "Judgment."

*

"Hey, Carrera? Aren't you going a bit too far?"

"No matter how powerful my 'Judgment' is, I don't think it can take down a 'Dragon-type' in one hit. So it's fine!"

"Well, I guess so. But I didn't expect you to blow a big hole in Lady Velzard's heart..."

The miracle Gabil created didn't just protect those in the 'Protective Barrier'. Its main goal was to free those who had turned into ice statues.

Gabil's main target was his beloved (new) lover, but the miracle's effect was to rescue Carrera, who was closest to him.

Thanks to that, or perhaps because of it, Carrera, who had revived in rage, went berserk, saying, "I sense something bad happening." She unleashed her trump card, which could only be used once a day, without hesitation.

Everyone was shocked by this, but Testarossa was different. Just like Carrera, she had sensed an unpleasant presence from Velzard, so she instantly perceived Carrera's movements. She manipulated her 'Void' to match Carrera's actions, opening a trajectory to Velzard. This coordinated play resulted in a direct hit from the 'Judgment' bullet at Velzard. It pierced the 'Curse' that Feldway had set up, destroying it. In the end, it also dispersed the remnants of Feldway.

At the same time, even Twilight, who had become the 'Manas' and was residing within Velzard, was not able to escape the effect. Normally a Manas coexists within the "soul," so their location cannot be pinpointed. It is impossible for anyone to target and attack only the 'Manas'. However, Velzard's case was a different story. She and Twilight were only in a cooperative relationship, and Velzard was merely its host. Therefore, Twilight, as a Manas, had secured a solid existence. The fact that he could reside in a "Pseudo-Dragon Body" was also because he was completely separated.

This was not enough to be called a weakness, but Twilight was confused by the direct hit.

(That's ridiculous! What's the probability of something like this happening...)

He lamented, but this was the reality. And just like that, Twilight's consciousness was consumed by darkness. With his heart, which had been protected by Velzard, being shot through, his existence completely vanished from the scene. However, it couldn't be denied that this smooth

turn of events was a result of Gabil's 'Fate Alteration'. Understanding this, Testarossa secretly reassessed Gabil.

By the way, it wasn't that everything went smoothly.

Twilight had only just taken Velzard's body, but she was forced to relinquish control. As a result, Velzard returned to her original form, but the impact of "[God-Destroying Bullet] [Judgment]" was enormous. She lost her senses and went into a state of rampage.

"Hey, you! Think about moderation!!"

Guy, who had received the brunt of the blow, complained to Carrera. Although Velzard was not as threatening as Milim, her rampaging state was still more than enough to be dangerous.

Moreover, the ice sculptures were being gradually removed, and the [Blessing of Absolute Defense] [Velzard's Divine Protection] was being lost. Guy was doing everything in his power to avoid that.

"I know it's bad, but I don't regret it. In the first place, I was the one who got frozen by Velzard-sama, right? Surely it would be only fair to punch her in return!"

That was Carrera's counterargument. It was a typical Carrera-like point that seemed to make sense, yet also seemed a bit illogical.

"That blow was too big! Think about the consequences before you act!!"

Guy's words were accurate. Carrera went "Gunuunu..." She couldn't argue back because she had unleashed her strongest technique at the very beginning.

"Tch, well, whatever. This is no time to be arguing with you."

Guy clicked his tongue and grappled with Velzard.

"I guess there's no other way."

Testarossa followed suit. Seeing the unconscious Velzard, there was no doubt that something had happened to Twilight as well. She guessed that Carrera's "[God Destruction Bullet] [Judgment]" was probably affecting him, so she switched to a plan to counter the magic bullets Velzard fired with "Void." Additionally, she were trying to deal with the ice and snow by sealing it with the "void." It wasn't a problem for them, but securing visibility was important for those evacuating.

"You girls, this is not the time to be slacking"

Testarossa pointed out in a cold voice.

"It can't be helped. I'll take responsibility and help out the useless Guy!"

"Hmph, it seems I have no choice but to show off my skills."

Carrera was eager from the start.

Rain, on the other hand, reluctantly agreed.

Even Guy was dumbfounded by this.

"Of course! Stop complaining and hurry up!"

He yelled at them, allowing their participation.

On the ground, Testarossa, while concentrating on offensive defense with the "void" and clearing away the ice and snow, asked Misery.

"Aren't you going to join the fight?"

"Well, I think I'll stay on the defense."

"Yeah, that would be safer."

Even Geld couldn't create a barrier that could protect such a wide area, and Moss's "Defense Barrier" was still the main defense. With Rain gone, who had been reinforcing it, Misery's burden had increased. However, with Geld's reinforcement, the barrier's strength was even greater than before Rain left. That was reassuring, but the problem was that Velzad's freezing was being undone.

The revived Esprit and others also joined in reinforcing the "barrier" with a sigh of relief.

"I wish they'd at least explained the situation."

She complained, but she did what she had to do. The others were revived one after the other, and as soon as they realized the situation, they either left the battlefield or started guiding the evacuation.

In the pure white world, the view had finally just begun to clear. There were many occasions where they had to rely on other senses, such as smell and hearing. For those who didn't know the situation, it was hell itself. Their faces turned pale as they felt the thundering sounds of battle and the accompanying shock waves and vibrations. Most of them probably thought it would have been better to die in their sleep.

The higher-ups reassured them and were guiding them. The ones gathered here were veteran warriors, so it was fortunate that there wasn't too much chaos. Of course, there were also those who stayed to watch the battle.

"It's getting serious..."

Gobua muttered, looking up at Guy and the others fighting.

"Yeah. Even though I can only vaguely grasp the situation, I'd believe it if someone said the world was ending..."

Phobio nodded, standing next to Gobua.

Some, like Karion, were optimistic.

"There's no need to be scared. Guy will take care of it."

He said as he tried to put his arm around Frey's shoulder. He was so detached that it was almost refreshing, but he had quickly given up, realizing there was nothing he could do.

"Fool. We may not be able to help build the barrier, but we can reorganize the army. Hurry up and use 'Thought Transmission' to gather the warriors and reassure them."

Frey replied as she grabbed the hand that was stretched out to her shoulder. Karrion gave a wry smile and raised his hands in surrender.

"Alright, Guy! I'm counting on you!"

"We'll be back, so please take care of things until then."

With that, Karion and Frey left to gather up the warriors who were being revived one after another. Guy gave a wry smile.

"Oh dear, using me like that is so typical of Karion. Well, I would do it even without being told."

Guy was friendly towards Karion. He would like to live up to his expectations if he could, but the situation was not so easy. Velzard's violence is tremendous and knows no bounds. Guy was confident he wouldn't lose, and he was sure he could win if it was just a contest of strength, but killing her would be difficult.

It would be possible if he took his time, but the damage that would occur by then would be extraordinary. More importantly, Velzard was important to Guy, so killing her wasn't an option.

"So, what do we do?"

"Guy-sama, what should I do?"

Carrera and Rain stood next to Guy and asked.

"Well, then..."

Guy pondered. He felt it was one of the most difficult questions he had ever faced.

Feldway was panicking.

The [Curse] he had cast on Velzard had been suddenly destroyed.

In contrast, Diablo wore a broad smile.

"Oh? Is something the matter?"

He asked with a smile, but he didn't ease up on his pursuit of Feldway.

"Silence."

"Why?"

This was a perfect example of a conversation where the two parties weren't on the same wavelength.

That was only natural, since Diablo only wanted to provoke Feldway. There was no reason for him to shut up when he was told to in the first place, so there was no point in him complaining.

"You..."

"Hmph, it seems you've reached your limit. All your plans seem to have failed, and it looks like this will end with our victory."

Said Diablo. In reality, he didn't have that much leeway. Diablo's body was already worn out, and it was unclear whether he would be able to defeat Feldway. Besides, he couldn't ignore the presence of Ivalaje. Even if things didn't go as Feldway expected, it would be unreasonable to declare a victory for them.

However, it is true that having a psychological advantage gave you an upper hand in battle. Diablo was faithful to the basics and was laying the groundwork to defeat Feldway.

This was also a technique.

"Phew, what a pain. It seems you've really made me angry."

Feldway's mood changed.

(Rather than continuing to control Milim...)

Feldway made a decision.

Milim was invincible. If he continued with the operation as it was, he would eventually succeed in annihilating the enemy and destroying the Sacred Tree. Feldway's reason told him that this was the right answer.

However, he couldn't go all out against Diablo.

Victory was certain even as things continued. And yet, Feldway wanted to show off his full strength to silence this insolent opponent. If he carried this out, the operation would surely be a success.

However, Feldway himself would have to take risks. His strength would be greatly reduced, even if only temporarily, putting him in a very dangerous state. Still, he thought defeat was impossible, but the proud Feldway wanted to insist on a complete victory.

But Diablo changed his mind. Feldway decided to prioritize the success of the operation even if it meant some humiliation. He resolved to abandon control of Milim and use all his strength to defeat Diablo.

"Milim, destroy the Sacred Tree!!"

Feldway put all his heart and soul into controlling Milim and issued a compulsory order. With this, his power of control lost its influence. But there was no problem. Even if Feldway's control was released, the last command he issued would be carried out. Besides, Milim's "Stampede" remained, so Feldway decided that he could simply eliminate the interlopers and then regain control.

It couldn't be stopped now.

Milim would destroy the Sacred Tree. When that happened, the world would end. Feldway felt his defense power drop drastically and braced himself.

But Diablo just grinned.

(What? It's a perfect opportunity to defeat me, so why isn't he moving?)

Feldway, wondering that, noticed that Diablo's gaze wasn't on him.

And indeed, beyond him—

*

Yuuki was being worked to the bone.

"Hey, this is power harassment—"

"Shut up. Next coordinate!"

"--Okay, okay."

Complaints were not accepted.

Chloe's demands were one-sided, leaving no opportunity for Yuuki to interject. Seeing that, Veldora nodded happily, "Uh-huh, uh-huh." He seemed to feel a sense of kinship with Yuuki, but that just made Yuuki even more irritated.

(Geez, why do I have to go through this...)

Yuuki lamented, and it was no wonder he felt that way. After all, Chloe was ruthlessly using Yuuki.

First of all, it was quickly discovered that Yuuki had learned to use "Instantaneous Movement." He had been seen through the moment he appeared. In the first place, "Teleportation" was a skill that allowed for "Transfer" without even a moment's delay. Its usefulness goes without saying. If used in battle, it makes it possible to avoid almost all attacks. However, there is a condition that it is limited to high-ranking beings above a certain level...

First, if you can cover a hemisphere with a radius of about 100 meters with "Magic Perception," you can evade even light-speed attacks by pre-programming a code to activate "Instantaneous Movement" as soon as you perceive an attack. Yuuki had cleared this, so there was no problem. He could easily evade even Milim's charge and fierce attacks that would be fatal even if they grazed him. If Milim had been rational, it wouldn't have been so easy. But that's hypothetical. It worked on the current Milim, so it should be fully utilized.

As a result, stability had significantly improved. By forcing Yuuki to play the most dangerous decoy role, they only had to be careful not to let Milim launch wide-range attacks. There was another advantage to this strategy. In fact, it could be said that this was more important. And that was that it prevented Milim from becoming stronger. There were several times when Veldora and others failed to adjust their strength and activated Milim's [Ultimate Ability] [Ultimate Skill] ``[Wrathful King] [Sataniel]". When that happened, Milim's power multiplied, and she became stronger and stronger.

With Yuuki, there was no need to worry about that.

(Well, I understand Chloe's intentions, but isn't that underestimating me?)

Yuuki was a genius, so he had already seen through why they were using such a roundabout strategy. That's why he realized that he couldn't be a threat to Milim, and he was secretly depressed.

《Pathetic, pathetic》

Shut up, Yuuki thought, annoyed. This [Manas]--Maria was annoying beyond words. Even though it wasn't important, it was annoying that she kept repeating it twice. What's more, her malice was palpable towards Yuuki.

Since she copied the personality of Mariabelle, his former enemy, their compatibility was terrible. But her performance was on point, so whenever Yuuki made a mistake, she would attack him as if she'd caught the culprit. Even when there was no mistake, she would sometimes make mocking remarks like she just did.

(Ah, I have to turn off her voice somehow.)

Yuuki secretly vowed to himself. But even so—, Yuuki thought.

(This is terrible harassment, but it's definitely that person's doing.)

He thought as he remembered Rimuru, who was no longer with us.

Yuuki believed that it was thanks to Rimuru that he was able to return here. The probability of meeting up with Mai at that place was so close to zero that it was just dizzying thinking about it. Yuuki was convinced that this was proof that Rimuru was involved, and in other words, proof that Rimuru was alive.

If that was the case, now was the time to work hard.

"Geez. There's no one but Rimuru-san who can handle this ferocious Demon Lord Milim..."

"If you understand, then move!"

"Yes, yes."

"Alright, I'll do my best too!"

"Veldora, don't do anything unnecessary!!!"

"Uh, okay. Of course..."

As usual, Chloe took charge. She sent out accurate instructions, preventing Milim from approaching the Divine Tree. It seems that not only Yuuki, but even Veldora couldn't disobey her.

"So, what should we do next?"

"Attack with your proud psychic powers to attract Milim's attention."

"Huh? Did I ever tell you that I can use psychic powers?"

From Yuuki's point of view, this was like meeting the "Masked Hero" for the first time. He knew that her true identity was Chloe Aubert, a student at Jiyu Academy, but she was now a completely different person. He didn't think she knew any of Yuuki's secrets either—

"I'll explain later! Let's hurry up!!"

"Okay."

Yuuki was completely defeated by Chloe's spirit. He gave up on asking for an explanation and had no choice but to obediently follow her instructions. And so, some time passed—

"—Ah!!"

Chloe muttered softly.

Yuuki instinctively turned his gaze to Chloe. He thought that he detected a hint of joy in her voice. However, Chloe's expression remained cold. For a moment Yuuki wondered if he had misunderstood, then the situation suddenly changed.

"Milim, destroy the Sacred Tree!!"

Feldway's thought wave roared in the vicinity. In response, Milim fixed her gaze on the Sacred Tree.

"This is bad!"

Yuuki moved in a panic. He attacked Milim, but she didn't flinch at all. She showed no signs of taking damage, not even as much as a mosquito bite, and didn't even pay attention to Yuuki.

"Damn, it's no use!"

"Then I'll use my [Dragon Claw]!!"

This time, Veldora attacked. But Milim paid no attention. She fixed her gaze on the Sacred Tree and prepared to unleash her ultimate technique - [Dragon Star Explosion Overlord] [Dragon Nova].

As the Dragon Nova was about to be unleashed on an unprecedented scale, the thin membrane that spread out to protect Milim shone with a pale blue light. Veldora, who had tried to punch her, was repelled by it. When Dragon Nova is unleashed, a barrier is deployed to protect the caster. This is the true nature of the pale blue membrane, a cocoon of star particles, and it is impossible to penetrate unless you are well-versed in its properties.

"Mmm, what a strong [barrier]. It doesn't even budge against my [Dragon Claw]..."
Veldora was surprised that this wasn't for defense, and had to admit how dangerous Milim was. He was shocked that his attack was so easily blocked, as he had been quite confident.

But he couldn't give up now.

"I have no choice. I'll use all my strength to manipulate the probability and change the trajectory of [Dragon Star Explosion Flame Pain] [Dragon Nova]..."

The probability of success was almost zero, but Veldora knew that Fertile Paradox could interfere with star particles. At worst, he should be able to aim for a cancellation, even if it meant taking a lot of damage.

"Yuuki, help me!"

"...I guess there's no other way. What should I do?"

"Well, you need to calculate the coordinates—"

As he gave these instructions, Veldora suddenly noticed something. Chloe, who had been annoyingly controlling up until now, had strangely calmed down.

"Has she given up?" he wondered, but something seemed off. She had already taken up a position in front of the Sacred Tree, glaring at Milim.

(Does she have a plan? If so, I should join her.)

If she didn't, she would be taking a direct hit from Dragon Nova. To be honest, that would be suicidal, but Veldora decided that since he and Yuuki were there, they could at least survive.

"--Before that, let's join up with Chloe."

"Understood."

Yuuki and Veldora "teleported" behind Chloe. And then, with Milim in front of them, he saw—

Star particles sparkled between Milim's hands, and an otherworldly destructive power was swirling. It was like a nebula. The extraordinary energy was compressed to an ultra-high density, harboring the potential to destroy even a star system with ease. Milim was irrational right now, so there was no way she would go easy on them. At this point, the power had already reached over a hundred times that of what she had unleashed on Zelanus.

Understanding this, Veldora muttered.

"Hmm! Even I can't nullify that!!"

He gave up quickly, but everyone thought that was understandable. Anyone who could see and understand this could easily predict that it would cause destruction on a level never before observed in the Cardinal World. It wasn't surprising that the force that could destroy the Sacred Tree could shatter even the stars.

Feldway laughed triumphantly.

"Hahahaha!! Wonderful. Wonderful, Milim!! Now, unleash it and fulfill my ambition!!"

In response to that command, Milim fired Drago Nova. Everyone prepared themselves for the end of the world. A pale blue light wrapped in discharge burned the atmosphere at a speed nearly equal to the speed of light, approaching the Sacred Tree. Chloe, Veldora, and Yuuki floated in front of it. The warriors who tried to protect this land looked up at the three of them.

No one despaired.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves," as the saying goes, and everyone, except for a few, felt a sense of satisfaction that they had made it to the end. Experiencing the brief moments before the end of times came—and then, they witnessed a miracle.

In that instant, space wavered.

Someone appeared.

Their shining moon-white hair fluttered in the wind, catching everyone's attention. Time that had felt like it had stopped started to flow again, but everyone's senses seemed numb. No destruction occurred. The Sacred Tree was safe, and the world had not been destroyed. However—

"Ouch!? I mean, seriously, that really freaking hurts!?"

A dejected voice rang out. The Dragon Nova, which held the power to destroy the world, had vanished without a trace. As if she had known what would happen, Chloe moved.

"Rimuru-san!!"

She hugged the most reliable back without hesitation. Wow, that was a close one. As soon as I came back, I saw Milim in a berserk state right in front of me. Well, that was as planned, but it was the worst timing because it was the moment Drago Nova was fired. Ciel had boasted that she could return whenever she wanted with [Time Warp], so I made a mistake by trusting her words and leaving it to her. As a result, an accident occurred along the way. She tried to brush it off as if it was just my imagination, but I wasn't fooled. Because of that, I ended up coming back at this dangerous timing.

《No, it was perfect timing》

You're lying!!

If it was perfect, you should have returned before Milim unleashed her Dragon Nova! If I had done that, I wouldn't have had to go through such a painful experience.

Besides, wasn't it better to just nullify it with brute force instead of isolating it in the "Imaginary Space?" You were bragging about how much energy you had saved up. If that's the case, surely it would have been easy to just offset it?

《No. It was the perfect solution because it was processed without causing any damage.》

Is that really true? It feels like I've got a terrible hangover from eating it? I feel sick, and I have a headache...

--But wait a minute? Perfect timing... did you mean you ate [Dragon Nova] on purpose?

《...》

Seriously?

《It's over now, so maybe we should move on》

...Phew. I swallowed my anger. I guess I've gotten used to being pushed around by others. I even felt a sense of relief at Ciel-san's usual behavior. Anyway, I'll call it a day since I made it back safely.

"Rimuru-san!!"

The one who called out to me and embraced me was a charming beautiful girl. A beauty of national level that made me unconsciously excited—wait, it's Chloe.

"O-oh. It's Chloe, right? Weren't you evacuated to the labyrinth?"

"Yeah. That's right, but Gaia was trying to rush to her master's side, so I helped her and came along."

I see, did she sense that Milim was berserk? Gaia and Milim seem to have a bond, so it's possible that she got worried and ran out. Thanks to that, everyone seems to be safe, so it might have been a great achievement.

Gaia herself was still calling out to Milim, "Kyu, Kyu!!"

As for Milim—

《It seems that the state of control is weakening in response to Gaia's call.》

It seemed that the influence of control was rapidly disappearing after she finished firing Dragon Nova. At this rate, there was hope that she would soon regain her senses.

While thinking that it was a really good feeling, I unconsciously stroked Chloe's head. I snapped back to reality and hurriedly apologized.

"Oh, sorry, sorry. I ended up stroking your head like a child."

"No. It's okay, just praise her more."

Oh, if Chloe says so—

《No. That would be sexual harassment.》

Oh, I guess that's a no-go. Now that it's been pointed out, Leon was glaring at us, and it's not the time to be so leisurely. I gently patted Chloe's shoulder and asked her to step away.

At that moment, Veldora cut in and put his arm around my shoulder and said.

"Kuuhahaha! I'm glad you returned safely, Rimuru. I wasn't worried at all, but I was working hard as Chloe's hands and feet in your place. You can give me a reward later!"

"Yes, thank you. And what about Dagrul?"

"Of course, I achieved a complete victory!"

"Wonderful. I knew you would live up to my expectations!"

"Didn't I? Didn't I just!"

Kuahahaha, Veldora was overjoyed.

He seems to be looking forward to the reward, so I'll prepare some magical weapons for his avatar. The pseudo-MMORPG that was being played in Ramiris's dungeon using avatars had recently gained popularity with an increasing number of players.

It seemed that team battles could be possible in the future, so leveling up was important. Equipment upgrades were also essential, and novelty equipment was a very popular item.

Right now is wartime, and no matter how you think about it, it is not the time to play, but it is because you think that fun things are waiting for you in the future that you can work hard.

"I'll prepare some wonderful items for you when it's all over!"

"Yes! As expected, Rimuru understands things. I have high expectations!"

Veldora said, nodding in satisfaction. It seemed like a lot had happened, and I thought I'd listen to the story later and reward him. So, I was happy to be reunited with Chloe and Veldora, but Yuuki was also there.

"I'll resent you, Rimuru-san..."

"What's with this all of a sudden? I didn't do anything."

"Of course you did! Why did you force such a nasty person on me?!"

I didn't understand what he was talking about at all, but Yuuki was complaining. Milim seemed like she was about to move, so there wasn't time to listen to him, but... I was curious about why Yuuki was so angry. Well, we're in an alliance, but he's someone who tried to use me, so I don't think I have to be so sympathetic. But he was Shizu-san's disciple, after all. It would be unsettling to abandon him, and I might as well listen to what he has to say.

While I was thinking that, Yuuki started speaking, without any regard for my convenience. He even used "Thought Transmission" to unilaterally tell me that Mariabelle's ego had taken up residence inside him. He said that she talked to him without considering the time and place and made fun of him.

After listening to the story, I thought, "That's certainly unpleasant."

But that's all.

"Please do something!"

"Impossible."

Why should I have to do that?

In the first place, I'd be delighted if Yuuki had a hard time.

"Besides, that's a Manas, right? It's a very rare skill, so you should get along with her."

Like Ciel-san, Manas is beneficial. It would be wisest to cooperate.

Before that, I don't think it's possible to separate her if she's gained that much ego.

《That's right! Manas and the host cannot be separated.》

I thought so.

"I fused with Chronoa, though."

Chloe interrupted. I remembered that there was such a pattern, and Ciel-san declared with a big nod

《Rest assured. I'll always be with Master.》

Hmm.

I was happier that we remained a pair rather than fusing. It was sometimes troublesome, but I accepted that. So, Yuuki's complaint was dismissed.

"Give up."

"N-no way..."

My heart didn't ache even when I saw Yuuki lamenting. Rather, I thought, "Serves you right."

*

Well, I'd like to celebrate my return more, but I should take care of what I need to do first. Before Milim could move, I decided to capture her so she couldn't rampage any more. I grappled with Milim and thought I could breathe a sigh of relief—but just then I got a powerful headbutt. Even though I was immune to pain from certain attacks, it hurt so much I nearly cried.

Damn Milim, just because she's out of control doesn't mean she can do whatever she wants...

Now, what to do from here? Getting my head bashed in like this isn't any fun, and to be honest, it hurts. Maybe I should turn into a slime and entangle her. It looked like a no-go, so I hesitated, but my patience was about to reach its limit.

Just as I was thinking about making a move, someone started complaining at me.

"Don't screw around! Why are you acting so nonchalant, thinking you've already won!?"

Who? Oh, it's Feldway. I don't feel like I've won or anything, Milim is still out of control.

However, I could see her responding whenever Gaia called out to her, and she also responded to Veldora. I thought that if I kept holding her back like this, she would regain consciousness. If that happened, I'd start my counterattack.

It's too early to think I've won, but I never thought I'd lose from the beginning. I aim for the best when I do something, and I always win. The problem is where to set the victory conditions.

《...You've conveniently relaxed the victory conditions too much》

Yeah, I suppose so. It's just to leave a record of victory, so that's sometimes the case. Well, it doesn't seem necessary this time!

"Our victory was decided from the start!"

I'm good at trolling as well. Feldway looked frustrated when he heard my reply. It was exactly the feeling of "serves you right." Diablo agreed with me.

"Kufufufufu, as expected of Rimuru-sama!!"

Without wavering at all, he played the role of my cheerleader in his usual way. Looking more closely, he was in tatters.

"Diablo, you're okay, right?"

It seems he's done something reckless, and his body is starting to break down. I'd overlooked it because he was as calm as usual, but Diablo had sustained so much damage that it wouldn't be surprising if he disappeared at any time.

《It seems he was using "void," but his body couldn't withstand the power. It's also impossible to regenerate using magic essence, so it's only a matter of time before Diablo's body completely collapses.》

Wow, this is a serious situation.

"Kufufufufu, there's no problem. It's a pity that I'm losing the body that Rimuru-sama bestowed upon me, but I'll definitely revive and serve you again someday."

With that tone, Diablo didn't seem to care at all. I was stunned, but impressed.

He risked his own life to fight Feldway. I should have done something about it.

《...Well, there's one option.》

Oh, what's that?

《Just like we did for Zegion, we could give him Master's omnipotent cells—》

Ah, I see... So I'm giving my cells to Diablo... Hmm. It didn't bother me with Zegion, but with Diablo I hesitated. He'll probably praise me excessively and thank me more than necessary.

But seeing the collapse starting right in front of my eyes, I feel guilty about just letting him go without doing anything. I have no choice.

"Diablo, use this."

Saying that, I threw a part of my body disguised as a healing potion at Diablo. I also made good use of "[Teleportation]" to make sure Feldway didn't intercept it. Once you learn it, it's a pretty useful technique. And just like that, it was in Diablo's hands.

"Oh, Rimuru-sama! Thank you. This will be a family heirloom—"

"Just drink it right now. That's an order!"

What do you mean by family heirloom? I wonder if demons even have a concept of a "family" in the first place? Diablo is capable, but sometimes he has strange ideas, which is scary. He showed his bad side this time too, but he followed my orders and drank the fake recovery potion, so I'll call it a day.

"Kufu, kufufufufu. I see, wonderful! With this, there's nothing to fear."

The breakdown has stopped, and it seems that his body has completely recovered. He's boasting as if there's nothing to fear, but he should be afraid of Souei.

After all, he was in the middle of searching Diablo's room. It's been postponed because it's wartime and it's not the time for that, but I think he'll definitely be afraid and wary when the investigation resumes.

Well, that will be a sight to see, but it's not just someone else's problem. I've also made a secret pact with Rain, so I need to take Diablo as a reference and think of a countermeasure.

《.....》

Well, I do have money.

Preparing an impregnable secret base outside of the labyrinth would be a manly dream. That's why I want Diablo to do his best as a diversion.

Even if Feldway is the opponent in the future. Until we can return Milim to normal, we can only rely on Diablo. Feldway was a formidable enemy. Diablo knows that well enough. He's probably thinking of stalling for time by bluffing against Feldway.

《I don't think so...》

Eh, really?

He's been so badly injured, he can't gain an advantage just by healing his wounds, can he?

《No, that wound was Diablo's own——》

Ah, it was self-destruction. Hmm, even he makes such mistakes. A little sense of kinship. I decided to cheer Diablo on a little, to encourage him.

"As expected, Diablo. You're the only one I can rely on, so do your best!"

When I said that, Diablo rejoiced. I was really exaggerating. I could even see tears in the corners of his eyes, so he must have been very happy. Well, he seems to be even more motivated. At this rate, it seemed like I could leave Feldway to him.

"I'm counting on you!"

"Leave it to me."

As soon as I heard Diablo's reply, I focused my attention on Milim.

I wanted to quickly end her rampage and set her free.

*

While continuing to call out to Milim, I decided to investigate the situation. The only people Milim responded to were me, Veldora, and Gaia. I felt like she was responding most strongly to Gaia, but she still had no signs of regaining her senses. However, doing it was more hopeful than not doing it. At this rate, the situation might just remain as it is.

There was no point in doing that, so I thought of a more effective method. The important thing was to influence Milim's consciousness. Our voices had reached her, so I tried to find a solution by telling her something stimulating and relieving her anger. I activated the surveillance magic "[God's Eye] [Argos]" and projected the current state of Old Eurazania.

"Ah, Frey and the others have been revived..."

What was projected was an unexpected sight. I don't know what happened or how it happened, but those who had turned into ice statues had revived. Frey stood out because she was flying in the sky, but my comrades seemed to be safe.

Oh, I found Testarossa! Souka and Gabil were there, as well as Rain and the others. It's good that Carrera and the others have been revived, but it doesn't seem like Velzard did it herself, so I wonder what method they use?

I wouldn't have been able to cancel it either—

《Nah, we'd surely figure it out!》

The word "surely" makes her seem unreliable. Ciel's competitive spirit is the same as always, but now is not the time to argue.

"Good work. What's the situation over there?"

I called out to Testarossa.

"—!! Rimuru-sama, you've returned safely!?"

As soon as I casually called out to her using "Thought Transmission," she responded with surprising joy.

"Ah, yeah. It's not that big of a deal..."

No, she was just worried about me. I didn't think it had been that long since I was sent flying, but that's not the issue. It seems I made everyone worry that we might never see each other again. It was a stroke of luck that I was able to come back, and I'll apologize later—but it's not like I'm to blame...

This is all Feldway's fault, so he should take responsibility after releasing Milim.

Anyway.

Testarossa was amazing, and she swallowed her emotions and told me about the situation. It seems that a lot happened in the battle with Velzard.

Damn you, Feldway!

He's doing whatever he wants here and there—I was filled with anger towards Feldway.

"But, well, it's fortunate that there were no casualties. Please continue to be careful not to get caught up in the battle and get hurt!"

"Understood!"

Testarossa readily agreed, so I was relieved.

Well then. Let's solve the problems one by one.

"Hey, Milim! Can you hear me? All of your comrades are safe! Stop rampaging and regain your senses!"

I spoke to Milim gently, as if a police negotiator calling out to a criminal.

"Kyui! Kyui kyui——!!"

Gaia chimed in, matching my tone. Thinking that this was the way to go, I continued to call out to her relentlessly.

"If Frey-san saw you like this, she'd cry! Is that okay? I can even send the current footage over there!"

"..."

"There's Karion too. He'll probably laugh at you and say it's pathetic!"

"..."

"Guy's there too. Don't complain to me if he makes fun of you--"

"... Wait. If you don't send the video, no one will find out, so you can complain to Rimuru, right?"

"——Huh? No, no, it's bad to do something that would get you sent. Besides, everyone already knows you're rampaging—wait, what!?"

Suddenly, I realized that Milim had returned to her senses. And before I knew it, her appearance was no longer sinister. I was stunned at how naturally it happened. Was it because I projected the battle situation there with the surveillance magic "Argos," or did the words that everyone was safe reach Milim? It's also possible that Gaia's calls and such had an effect. But even so...

A crimson horn grew from her forehead, parting her beautiful platinum pink hair, and her eyes shone with reason. Her dragon wings spread out on her back, and she wore jet-black armor without a single scratch on her body. In other words, despite all that rampaging, there was almost no damage.

Chloe was also surprised, saying it couldn't be true.

Not only Chloe, but Leon and El-tan were also looking up at Milim with eyes that saw something unbelievable. In any case, it would have been difficult to defeat Milim, so it was great to see her return to her senses. However—

"Stop playing dumb, okay? Your rampage won't be forgotten, you know?"

"Grrr, you're still rambling on about such a small thing..."

"It's not a small thing."

Really.

She may have come to her senses, but I'm determined to stop her from trying to cover up his mistake. I vowed firmly in my heart that I would make her apologize to everyone she had inconvenienced.

"Come on, Rimuru. Thanks to my efforts, there wasn't much damage, so why don't you forgive her with a smile?"

Veldra said nonchalantly. Chloe didn't seem to care, but El-tan stopped me. She flew in front of us and tried to appease me.

"Milim didn't mean any harm, she was just being manipulated. I think it's a bit wrong to hold her responsible for this."

El-tan is usually strict, but she says she's going to let this one go. If the Heavenly Emperor is okay with that, then I have no complaints...

"Yes, that's right! As expected, you understand me well!!" Milim praised El-tan in a good mood, but I don't think that person is that lenient, you know?

"No, that's true, but Sarion was the one who suffered the most damage, right?"

"Of course, that's something we need to discuss! I'll have you help with the reconstruction later, Rimuchi!"

Huh? Why me?

"No, no, Milim should take responsibility for that, right?"

"What are you talking about? You are the guardian of Demon Lord Milim, so it's not wrong to ask Rim-chan for the money!"

As she said this, Elmesia winked at me. I see, so that's how it goes. It's true, it's probably impossible for Milim to help with the reconstruction work, and of course I'll help...

I gave up and accepted, thinking that I couldn't refuse the proposal.

*

Now then, it was a stroke of luck that Milim had returned to her senses. Feldway looked frustrated, but Diablo was holding him back and he couldn't move. Chloe and Veldora seemed exhausted and had descended to the leaves of the Sacred Tree.

"I'll leave the rest to you, Rimuru-san."

"Yes, it seems Milim was causing trouble at The Heavenly Tower as well. Some troublesome person has appeared, and that's what I'm concerned about."

Oh come on. Milim, did she do something at Tentsukaku as well...

"I-I don't know! I didn't do it!!"

"..."

There's no point in arguing about whether she did it or not. Milim was unanimously judged guilty.

"You see, according to the information I received, Milim also used [Dragon Star Explosion Flame Pavilion] [Dragon Nova] at the 'Tentsukaku'."

El-tan said with a big grin.

"What the hell are you doing?"

"I-I don't know! It's not my fault!!"

"You've really messed up. There's no way you can talk your way out of this..."

"Ugh!?"

Milim groaned at my brutally honest remark. This... this happened after I was blown away. There's no way anyone would believe her if she tried to hide her rampage now. While I was dumbfounded, I tried to project the surroundings of the 'Tentsukaku' with the surveillance magic 'God's Eye' [Argos]. What I saw was a massive battle, with forces from all over the world gathered there.

"Wow, this is amazing."

"That's because of Demon Lord Luminas's call. It seems a huge war has broken out over there against invaders from another world."

"Seriously..."

"That..."

At this point, El-tan glared at Feldway and continued, spat out with resentment.

"That damn idiot who's spouting nonsense about wanting to destroy the world has caused us a lot of trouble. Milim's rampage is also his fault, and he needs to take responsibility."

Even El-tan seemed to understand that she couldn't win by herself. I could tell that she was planning to push everything onto me. I ignored Milim, who was still insisting that it wasn't her fault, and resigned myself to it. After making me jump, Feldway probably did whatever he wanted. To stop that, Luminas took the lead, which led to the current situation. Since Guy was preoccupied with Velzard, Luminas had no choice but to act.

Well, you know. Dagrue was against us, Leon is here, Ramiris is doing her best in the labyrinth, and Milim has been rampaging up until now, so...

I don't know what Dino was doing, but we can't expect anything from him. The reality is that Luminas was the only one who could act. Good job, and thank you—I thought to myself.

Anyway, first I'll do something about that stupid fool El-tan mentioned, and then quickly start dealing with the situation.

"For now, let's blow Feldway away."

"Yes! I'll help too!"

We were all fired up. At this point, Silvia-san arrived.

"It would be a blessing if you could defeat him, is that okay? His appearance is just like that of 'Stellar King Dragon' Veldanava-sama."

Oh, really? Well, I thought he looked cool, but I dismissed it as irrelevant since he's an enemy. Milim looked back at Silvia-san with a puzzled expression. Or rather, seeing Milim reminded me.

"Ah, I see. So he looks just like Milim's father."

"That's right! The hair color is different, so it's definitely not him."

"Then there's no problem! I don't remember him anyway, so I don't care!"
If Milim doesn't care, there's no need for me to care. Defeat the enemy. That's all.

And so, I decided how things would go from here on out. Ignoring Sylvia and El-tan, who were looking at us with expressions that said, "Is that okay?" I told Milim my plan.

"After defeating Feldway, I'll go and help Guy. You head to Tentsukaku and help everyone."

"Hmm, I want to rescue Frey and the others—"

"As you can see, Frey and the others have already been freed, and they can manage on their own. Besides, if you don't earn some points here, you'll definitely get yelled at by everyone later."

Milim nodded in response.

"O-okay. Velzad is strong, but Guy and Rimuru will be fine."

She herself seemed to have a vague idea that it was dangerous. She was probably worried about us, but with Guy there, I think it'll be fine.

"That's right. You can leave my sister to Rimuru. So, I'll accompany Milim!"

He ran away. From the start, I had intended to leave it to Veldora to help Shion and the others. So it wasn't a problem, but I decided to put in a warning just in case.

"That's fine, but it seems like Velgrind-san is at Tentsukaku. She seems a bit tense, so be careful not to anger her too much."

She's on edge, or rather, she's wary of someone.

Velgrynd-san's gaze was fixed on a small child.

A child...?

Sitting on the shoulder of a large monster, swinging both legs. It was too out of place and eerie.

《——It seems to be the [World Destruction Dragon] Ivalaje》

I see, that makes sense. The stage of preventing its appearance had long since passed. At this point, it seemed that the only options were to defeat it or drive it away.

"I-I would never do anything to anger my sister... mumblemumble."

He's getting more and more timid, is he going to be okay?
Well, that's Veldora's problem.

"Ivaraj seems to be stronger than expected, so don't let your guard down."

"Yes, leave it to me!"

"It's no match for me!!"

Well, these two should be fine. So, let's quickly get rid of Feldway.

Thinking that, I tried to help Diablo—but...

Huh?

"Hmm, isn't this one-sided..."

"Yes. Diablo is winning."

Right?

While we were deciding on our plan, the battle was almost over. I had a brief thought that Feldway wasn't interfering, but that was only natural. After all, Diablo had cornered Feldway with his overwhelming strength. The moment of truth was about to arrive before our amazed eyes.

For Feldway, Rimuru's return was unexpected. Seeing him safe and sound made him uneasy. He felt that things would get very bad if this continued—but Diablo was interfering and he couldn't do anything. While he was thinking, Rimuru threw something to Diablo. He sensed that it was dangerous. So he tried to interfere, but it was impossible. This is because Rimuru made it look like he was throwing it, but actually "teleported" it to him.

(——"Instantaneous Movement" (Teleport)!?)

He knew how troublesome it was because he could use it himself. It was a power that allowed him to move freely, ignoring time and space. When used well, it was beneficial in all sorts of ways. It was a skill that was extremely useful in combat, as well as for mass movement of the army. Feldway understood that very well.

And yet, he hardly used it in the battle with Diablo. There was only one reason for this. Feldway himself did not have enough accumulated experience. Feldway is a terrifying genius who can even make the skills of others his own. However, his personality is cautious, and he doesn't use unfamiliar techniques in actual combat. As a leader, he always uses only sure-win methods. Even when facing an unknown enemy, he doesn't take risks and uses reliable tactics. That was Feldway's way of fighting, and it was the secret to his continued victories.

However, that means he lacks versatility. Feldway doesn't research techniques himself. That's the role of his subordinates, and no matter how useful a skill may be, he doesn't incorporate it into battle unless an established application is discovered.

That's why he felt a sense of crisis when Rimuru used "[Teleport]". A fear crossed his mind that if he left Rimuru alone, he would grow to an extent that he couldn't be controlled. And that's why Feldway was anxious.

(Phew, Diablo is already on his last breath. Demon Lord Rimuru was also hit directly by Milim's Drago Nova. He's pretending to be calm, but he must be tattered inside. If so, now——)

Taking advantage of the fact that Milim's control has been released, he will use all his strength to eliminate Diablo. Then he would attack Rimuru and destroy him before he became an even greater threat.

However, Feldway's calculations were too optimistic. Diablo, who was supposed to be destroyed soon after the collapse began, has been completely revived by the healing potion given to him by Rimuru.

Diablo greeted Feldway with a fearless smile as he attacked. The moment their sword and claws crossed, Feldway realized that his calculations were off.

(——!? Is he getting stronger?)

Diablo was able to withstand even more powerful blows. He clashed head-on, not even caring about the difference in the performance of their weapons. Diablo's fighting style had changed. Up until now, he had simply shrugged off the blows, but now he went for a show of strength without relying on such delicate techniques. It was a bad move against an opponent with an overwhelming difference in strength. It was a suicidal act, and he should have been reduced to dust in an instant. However, the result was not as Feldway had imagined. Diablo had handled it with ease.

"--!?"

"Kufufufufu, what are you surprised about?"

"Your power is--"

"As you can see, I'm utilizing the energy of 'Void.' Is there a problem?"

"What--"

He was about to say, "What nonsense—," but then he remembered that they were in the middle of a life-or-death struggle. No matter what means are used, victory is justice.

And Diablo showed no signs of straining himself. Unlike before, his body seemed to have accepted "Void".

That's impossible--Feldway shuddered. The "Void" is a destructive force that could collapse the world. It was the same with Testarossa, it wasn't something that could be controlled so easily.

It was possible to manifest it with magic, but there were limits to that. Even if 'Void' was manifested, its negative energy would be neutralized, and in the end, harmony would be maintained as if nothing had happened. The rampage of 'Void' that could destroy the world was impossible unless the "gate" connected to the abyss of hell was opened. Paradoxically speaking—

Testarossa and Diablo were the ones who opened such a 'door'. From Feldway's perspective, who was trying to destroy the world, it would be preferable for them to fail to control it. If that happened, he would be able to achieve his goal without destroying the Sacred Tree.

And yet Diablo was circulating "Void" within his own body. It was far from suicidal, but it was hard to believe that he had complete control over it. It would be one thing if it was his own body given to him by Veldanava, but Diablo's body was nothing more than a mish-mash of unknown materials. There was no way it could withstand such unprecedented power.

But the reality was cruel. Diablo had perfectly mastered the terrifying 'Void'. The reason was in the 'Omnipotent Cells' given by Rimuru. These cells had the power of 'Infinite Regeneration,' and their regeneration speed exceeded the collapse speed of 'Void.'

(Kufufufufu, as expected of Rimuru-sama! To give me such a wonderful body to subdue 'Void'!!)

This was a huge misunderstanding on Diablo's part. Rimuru was simply trying to heal Diablo's wounds. Ciel might have been one thing, but Rimuru had never intended for Diablo to do something so reckless.

However, there was also a reason for Diablo's misunderstanding. With Zegion as a successful example, there was no way Diablo wouldn't do something reckless. Believing in Rimuru, Diablo circulated 'Void' through his body at full power. As a result, he succeeded in determining the limit that his body could withstand and making it his own.

At this point, the rules of battle between transcendents no longer applied.

(Tch, Diablo... to not be swallowed by the power of the dreadful 'Void'... no, this is!?)

Feldway also realized the danger of Diablo. Normally, even the regeneration of the body consumes energy. Like Velgrynd's 'separate body,' no matter how invincible and undefeated one is, there is always a price to pay. Even the "Dragon Species," which has an inexhaustible source of energy, cannot avoid consumption during battle. That's why the rule of the high-ranking battles was to learn how to fight while conserving energy and recovering. In the end, whoever exhausts the opponent's energy will win. Therefore, battles between Transcendents tend to end in a draw, but this concept was shattered.

Diablo was summoning 'Void' and using it as an energy source. The element that made this possible was the 'Infinite Regeneration' of the 'Omnipotent Cells,' but even the energy to do this was being supplied by the energy of 'Void.' What this meant was that--

(Diablo has no consumption?) -- was the conclusion Feldway had reached.

If this was true, then comparisons of total energy amounts were meaningless. The only thing that mattered was the output. There was no victory unless one could wipe out the opponent by unleashing a succession of powerful techniques that overwhelmed them.

And by that logic, Diablo's [skill] were no less than Feldway's; in fact, even during this battle, he was continuing to learn and evolve. Naturally, the power and precision of the technique are impeccable, and he can freely control the difficult-to-handle "void" as if it were a limb.

Feldway's "Arc" cut Diablo's shoulder, but it recovered instantly. The power of the Genesis class was reduced to nothing in an instant.

(Damn!? This guy...is this "power" with recovery power still in reserve!?)

Diablo had been reckless, but that was only until now. Now, Rimuru had given him a new body - or so he believed - and he had found the perfect energy balance. This was the result of Diablo's outstanding fighting sense. Feldway arrived at a truth he didn't want to admit.

Feldway was overwhelmingly superior in terms of existence value. However, Diablo was superior in terms of combat ability. And with that gap not closing, defeat was inevitable if things continued like this.

"Dammit, Vega, what are you doing! Having trouble with something like Ramiris' Labyrinth is bothering—"

Feldway lost his composure and started complaining. Hearing this, Diablo sneered.

"Kufufufufu, Vega? I got rid of him a long time ago. He might still be alive, but wouldn't it be better for him to be dead?"

"What!?"

Vega was a dirty man who was more greedy for strength than anyone else and would do anything to survive, but Feldway had found him reliable.

It was hard to believe that Vega had been defeated. However, the very fact that Diablo was here was proof that the story was true. Feldway understood this and had no choice but to accept it.

Of the "Three Star Generals," Zalarrio betrayed him and Fien was defeated.

"The only one left is Jahil--"

"Oh, I took care of him."

"You!"

The thought of summoning Jahil to find a way out was denied by Yuuki, who had casually dropped by. Feldway tried to get rid of Yuuki in his irritation, but his attacks were easily avoided.

"It's useless. Well, I can't beat you, but I can easily escape."

"——'Instantaneous Movement' (Teleport), huh?"

"Correct! I learned it from Mai after a lot of things happened."

While making such light remarks, Yuuki toyed with Feldway. He relentlessly provoked him, as if to repay his debt.

"Kufufufufu. That skill is indeed troublesome, but if you show me that much, I can come up with a countermeasure."

Diablo sneered, but Yuuki didn't seem amused.

"Tch, Rimuru-san has some dangerous people under his command. I have no intention of getting in the way, so I'll leave the rest to you."

Yuuki said and left the scene..

From the beginning, as he said himself, Yuuki didn't think he could win against Feldway. He just wanted to get a little revenge. He was quite satisfied with retaliating against the mastermind who tried to control him. He had no problem leaving the rest to Diablo.

Besides, Diablo was too abnormal.

(Honestly, I don't think I can win against that guy. If even his subordinates are like this, there's no way I can beat Rimuru-san...)

Yuuki had no choice but to admit it. Even within Yuuki—

《It's impossible, impossible. If you lay a hand on him, you'll be ruined.》

Maria was making a fuss. I know that without being told—Yuuki was very fed up.

And then Diablo's fierce attack began. Feldway's "[Void] [Arc]" was deflected by Diablo's [Scissors]. It was frightening that he didn't care about the clear difference in "rank".

"Good grief, is this his true power?"

Zalarrio reacted as if it were someone else's problem. Even him, who boasts a presence value of over 20 million, didn't feel like he could defeat Diablo right now. It was a statement that reflected the overwhelming difference he felt, to the point where he even forgot his frustration.

Leon nodded gravely, as if he felt the same way. Feldway, who had overwhelmed them until now, was now being unilaterally pushed back. It was impossible for them not to be dumbfounded.

And finally, the moment of truth arrived.

-- [End of World Requiem]--

Diablo put all his energy into a single blow, causing Feldway to collapse to the ground.

Diablo won without waiting for my((?)) turn. It was a wonderful, but unbelievable feat.

"Wow, good job. That was amazing, I didn't think you'd actually win."

Feeling that one task had been reduced((completed)), I congratulated Diablo. In fact, Feldway was strong, and I wasn't sure if I could win. If I had to do something about it, I would have involved Milim and aimed for a sure win. Honestly, I hadn't imagined Diablo to be this strong. Well, he looks even worse now than he did when he was tattered earlier...

"Thank you for your praise, I'm extremely honored!"

Diablo responded to me with a joyful expression, but it was a wonder that he was standing. I'm not talking about his physical condition, but his mental state. His willpower was completely

drained, and his face was lifeless. He looked like a dead person, or to put it more mildly, like someone facing death.

"Are you okay?"

"Kufu, kufufufufu. Of course. I'm ashamed to show such an unsightly figure in front of Rimuru-sama."

He apologized, but Diablo had done nothing wrong. In fact, it was a big victory. I was about to tell him to leave the rest to me and go home to rest, out of consideration. But then, Feldway, who seemed to have turned to dust and completely disappeared, began to regenerate his body.

"Tch, what a stubborn guy. I thought I'd completely stopped him, but he's not gone yet..."

Diablo spat in disgust, his eyes sharpening. It looked like he was still planning to fight, even though he couldn't move any more.

"Wait a minute," I told Diablo, stopping him.

Besides, Feldway had been muttering something to himself for a while now.

"——Don't mess with me... don't mess with me... I will definitely end the world... if I do that... he will stop me. But why... why by someone like Diablo... no, I haven't lost yet. It's not over yet. That's right, one more time... I'll definitely see him. I'll make him regret abandoning me... why? Why did you disappear——"

It sounded like a curse—but it was a bit difficult to understand. It seemed a bit dangerous, so I decided to observe him from a distance without getting too close. The moment I thought that, I made eye contact with Feldway, who had raised his face. His eyes were so empty that it gave me chills. And yet—for some reason, I felt that he had a shade of sadness and despair.

I wondered what to do. Of course, I should defeat him, but if I did, it would leave a bad aftertaste...

I knew I would definitely regret it, but I hesitated to do it.

If I knew I would regret it, I should stop it. But it was bad that I was trying to act cool.

Feldway looked up at the sky, and then, the next moment, he disappeared before our eyes. He had jumped somewhere with that power that was impossible to track—"Instantaneous Movement."

"Hey, Rimuru-san!? He escaped?"

"Wait a minute. Don't make it sound like it's my fault."

"But it looks like Rimuru-ccchi's fault, no matter how you look at it?"

"Hey, hey, hey? I'm just being considerate, you know!?"

This was a disaster.

Feldway's running away was now being blamed entirely on me.

No, no, wait a second.

I did stop Diablo, but I didn't think he would escape, did I? Feldway seemed to have a lot of pride, so "running away" was not an option for him...

I was also complacent, thinking that I could find him even if he escaped. But then he used "Instantaneous Movement."

Unlike "spatial transfer", this does not cause distortions in space when jumping. The only ripples occur when he appears in a different place, but it is practically impossible to find him. Well, it would be possible if you could sense the entire base world—

《It is possible.》

—Impossible, what?

Seriously?

Isn't it impossible to track him?

《Tracking itself is impossible, but by observing the magic essence throughout the world, it is possible to identify the location of his appearance. In this case, he has not appeared on the ground, so he must have escaped somewhere in another world.》

Oh, I see...

In other words, as soon as he arrived in this world, it would be possible to find him, right?

《That's right》

If that's the case, well? He ran away, but it doesn't seem like a big deal.

"Calm down, you guys. Feldway's escape isn't that much of a problem. On the contrary, we can concentrate our forces on other problems, so let's think positively about this!"

I emphasized that while trying to change the subject. I subtly tried to make my responsibility ambiguous and to underestimate the importance of the problem.

"That's right! With Rimuru-sama's deep-laid plans, no matter what Feldway does, it won't be a problem. Besides, I didn't have any energy left, so I couldn't have done anything even if I wasn't stopped."

It was a perfect flow. Diablo's follow-up made it more persuasive.

"If I had pushed myself any further, I might not have been able to serve Rimuru-sama. To prevent that from happening, with my boundless love——"

That's pushing it a bit.

There's a lot of misunderstanding here, so let's get that discussion over with.

"Well, that's how it is. For now, let's put Feldway on hold. Let's split up and prioritize solving the problem."

Everyone nodded at my words.

*

And then, things started to move at a high pace.

As planned, I headed to Old Eurazania. Milim and Veldora headed to Damargania to prepare for the battle against Ivalaje. Chloe insisted on staying with me, but I rejected her request. The ability to "see" the future would be useful in the battle against Ivalaje. I wanted to avoid casualties as much as possible, so I thought that having as much insurance as possible gonna be a good thing. As for the others——

Leon, Zalario, and Silvia. They were mentally and physically exhausted, but they insisted on accompanying Milim and the others.

El-tan, or Elmesia, had gathered the Magi that were still able to move. Naturally, it was Yuuki's job to transport the forces.

"It's me again, isn't it?"

"Of course."

"Oh dear, I don't have any heroic aspirations, like saving the world."

"You don't have to be a hero. Sometimes the process is important, but this time it's all about the result."

If we can't save the world, it's all over. "We tried our best, but it didn't work out" is meaningless in this situation. I emphasized this to Yuuki.

Yuuki understood that he had no choice but to do it, and he would have cooperated even if I hadn't told him. He was just trying to sell me a favor by complaining. He's used me, tricked me, and done all sorts of things until now. I intend to let go of my grudge, but I can't hide my pent-up feelings.

"I'm sure you understand, let's stay on good terms for now, okay?"

I said to Yuuki with a smile. It was a subtle way of saying that I wouldn't forgive him with just this. Yuuki gave a wry smile.

"I understand. We'll talk about that later!"

He's still a tough one. I gave him a wry smile and decided to talk to him again later. Kagali looked at us worriedly as we were talking.

She knew all about the history between me and Yuuki, so she must have been thinking that their fate would be decided by my actions. Well, I have a lot to say, but I've also heard about Yuuki's circumstances. If they agree to be monitored so they don't do anything bad, I don't mind letting them live as they please.

In other words, Kagali's worries were unfounded. But from their point of view, they probably had many other concerns. The biggest one would be where they should return to. They can't go back to the Kingdom of Ingrasia, and they've lost their place in the Empire. Clayman's territory, the puppet state of Jistav, was once their country, but now it's Milim's territory and I'm managing it in it for her.

At this stage, Yuuki and the others have no place to return to. Especially Kagari, who has just taken revenge on Jahil, it wouldn't be surprising if she had burnout syndrome. Unless we save the world and have a happy ending, it might be difficult to motivate her without some kind of reward...

But what's bothering me is the presence of this mysterious woman. She seems familiar somehow--

《She's the elder of the Dark Elves, the Black Demon Ear Tribe, who was at Clayman's castle》

Oh, that's right!

I remember now. She had a somewhat gloomy air about her, but right now she seems to be on guard, protecting Kagali.

I see, if they were originally comrades, then I would be their enemy since I defeated Clayman—but at that time, Clayman was also mentally controlled and seemed to be treating the Dark Elves as slaves... Looking back, I realized that the elder's feelings must have been complicated.

"Oh, it's been a while. You came too, Eva?"

"It's been a while, Demon Lord Milim-sama."

"Have you been well?"

"Well... it's hard to say I've been well, but I'm managing."

Huh?

"Milim, you know the elder?"

"Yeah! Eva is good at cooking, so she took care of me a lot!"

Ah, yes. I see.

With Midday around, only raw vegetables are served in the Forgotten Dragon City. So when Milim wanted to eat something delicious, she relied on the other Demon Lords. One of them was the elder, Eva-san. I see, in that case, why not just...

"Milim, I have a proposal."

"Hmm, what is it?"

"How about we give the Puppet Nation Jistav territory back to Kagari and the others?"

"Hmm?"

"——What!!"

The idea that came to me was that we needed some bait to make Yuuki and the others work willingly. The best solution was the Puppet Nation Jistav, which I was having trouble dealing with.

That place is far from the new capital of Milim's country. Although there were plans to restore the ancient ruins as a tourist resource, that was supposed to be a long way off. I was in charge

of managing it until then, but frankly, I have a lot of work to do. Leaving the puppet state of Jistav in the hands of Yuuki and his friends seemed like a brilliant idea that would kill two birds with one stone. It would be a reward for Yuuki and the others, and I wouldn't have to worry about the difficult management of the territory.

There isn't much interaction between the people right now, so the economic impact would be minimal. It should be possible to transfer it without too much chaos, so if Milim agrees, then this plan is set.

"Hmm, that's a good idea! I think I caused a little trouble too. Let's proceed with that plan as an apology!"

"Milim, you caused more than a little trouble, and I was troubled too. I thought you would agree."

"It's only a little!"

"It was a lot of trouble!!"

"Gunuunuunu..."

There was a bit of a pointless argument, but Milim agreed.

"Are you sure, Rimuru-san?"

"Can we really have hope?"

Yuuki asked me calmly, while Kagali seemed timid.

"It's not my property, so I can't promise anything. Milim agreed, so I think it'll work out somehow."

I nodded.

Those who remain in the Puppet Nation Jistav now are those who follow the elder Eva. In other words, they must be the true comrades of the former Demon Lord Kazalim, so it would be a difficult road to make them surrender to us. If that's the case, then Carion and Frey would acquiesce to the policy of transferring the territory. Well, that's only if the world is protected.

"As expected of Rimuru-san! If that's the case, I might try a little harder."

Yuuki laughed cheerfully. I won't be fooled by Yuuki's suspicious smile anymore.

"Listen, don't forget the conditions that we will maintain a cooperative relationship and that you will prioritize listening to my requests first! I'll be watching you!"

"Of course!"

I can't trust half of it, but I've taken his word for it. It seemed like I'd be spending a lot of time with Yuuki, so I decided to keep warning him from time to time.

In the meantime, the preparations for the Magus were complete. Now that we were ready to depart, Kagari spoke to me with a worried look on her face.

"Lord Rimuru, may I ask you something?"

"Hmm? What is it?"

"You said that you would return our safe haven to us, but that is on the premise that we will win the upcoming battle. Are you confident that you can win?"

Hmm...

It's not that I'm returning the Puppet Nation Jistav, but that Milim is transferring it, but that's okay. If you ask me if I'm confident that we can win, my answer is that I'm not. But—

"There's no point in thinking about what will happen if I lose. I basically assume the worst case scenario, but I'm already in that situation now. So I have no choice but to win with all my might, right?"

So I don't think about what I'll do if I lose. I only think about what I can do to win. You should try to avoid fighting as much as possible. That's why you shouldn't provoke your opponent or corner them. But if it does come to a fight...

At that point, you have no choice but to prepare yourself.

"In other words, you just have to be prepared to win and go for it."

I answered Kagari's question with a smile. Yuuki nodded at this and patted Kagari on the shoulder as he spoke.

"Well, that's just like Rimuru-san. We're the same, right? In short, we just have to win and get our losses back."

That's a very Yuuki-like statement, but life isn't a gamble. Although, it's a bit troubling that those who approach it lightly with that kind of attitude seem to do a better job.

"Yeah, yeah. The chairman is thinking too hard. We've already lost the game, so we should follow the strongest from now on!"

That strongest isn't me, is it? Well, whatever.

"Yeah, well, there's no need to worry. Rim-chan will sort it out anyway, so we just have to do what we can in our own way. Don't get too worked up!"

What are you saying, Empress?

"Stop throwing the responsibility to me!"

"Now then."

"Don't "Now then" me!"

"Well then, let's go!"

"Understood!"

"Ok then, we'll do our best on our end!"

"Wahahahaha! We'll make up for our losses in the battle against Ivaraj!!"

"Rimuru, I'm here so you don't have to worry! Alright, I'm off!!"

"Okay, Rimuru-san, I'll go ahead and wait for you over there!"

And so on, the members left behind whatever they wanted to say. Then Yuuki's "Instantaneous Movement" activated, and I was left alone—

"Kufufufufu. Well then, Rimuru-sama, let us go to the former Eurazania."

"Ueh!?"

I was shocked. I made a strange noise without thinking. As if it were natural, Diablo was waiting for some reason. I didn't notice because it was too natural, and I was surprised at myself.

"Why are you still here?"

"As Rimuru-sama's butler, I am in a position to always serve you."

"..."

Loyalty can be a burden if taken too far. Well, whatever. The current Diablo is battered, so I can't expect him to be a fighting force. If he went to Damargania in that state, he might just disrupt the harmony. It would be safer to keep him under my watch.

...That's what I decided. And so, I switched gears.

"Let's go!"

"Yes, sir."

Diablo bowed his head at my words.

First Milim, then Velzard.

Why are "Dragon Kinds" all such troublesome guys...

Swallowing my grumbling, I used "Instantaneous Movement" to head towards the former Eurazania with Diablo—

Epilogue: Evil God Awakening

Ivaraj was having fun. It was so, so much fun.

When I descended to the Axis world, a large number of people greeted me as if welcoming the Ivarage.

I tried firing a shot as a greeting, but it seemed to be too strong. The strongest one had taken more damage than I had expected.

She seemed to have protected the petty existence of the riffraff, but her actions were incomprehensible to Ivarage

So I observed.

And I understood.

The weak were fighting with their own ingenuity.

Those floating in the sky don't need arms or legs. That's what I thought, but the battle unfolding before my eyes was interesting. The way the heroes fought individually and gave their all was a sight to behold.

But Ivaraj realized that they could easily win by overwhelming them with sheer numbers. So I adjusted the forces by releasing them little by little so that the battle would last longer.

Meanwhile, a change occurred on the battlefield. Reinforcements led by Benimaru had arrived. The group battle was like a work of art. The swordsmanship and fighting techniques were brilliant. A wide variety of magic and skills were flying around. The result was clear.

This time, conversely, the Evil God Army began to be pushed back.

"Kya♪"

Ivaraj was delighted.

Interesting. So, so interesting.

And when the battle reached its climax, Ivaraj had a desire. I wanted to try it myself.

Ivalaje thought, "I see♪".

I finally understood why Veldanava, who had abandoned me, had obtained a human form.

Then I will become an adult too.

I will obtain a form that can fight.

In response to this desire, the "Halloween Carnival," which was in progress deep, deep inside the heart of the "World-Destroying Dragon" Ivaraj, finally transitioned into the final stage.

This also affected the three servants.

"Hey, you guys. Do you want a human form? I'll give you new "power" so you can enjoy the battle even more♪"

At this time, the battlefield was calm.

It was as if it were a prelude to something terrible that was about to happen. It was no mistake.

"Kyahahahahahaha——♪"

An evil laugh echoes through the Base World.

The "World-Destroying Dragon" Ivaraj, who had changed as if reborn, landed on the ground for the first time on its own feet. Its appearance was just like——