

転生したら スライム

That Time I Got
Reincarnated as a SLIME

7

Story by Fuse, Illustration by Mitz Vah

伏瀬 イラスト／みつばー



GC NOVELS

転生したら
スライム
だった件⑦
Regarding
Reincarnated to Slime

Rimuru Tempest

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime



ジュラ・テンペスト
魔国連邦



“暴風竜”
ヴェルドラ=テンペスト
Verudora Tempest



“巫女姫”
シュナ
Shuna



“侍大将”
ベニマル
Benimaru



“指南役”
ハクロウ
Hakuro



“隠密”
ソウエイ
Souei



八星魔王“新星”
リムル=テンペスト
Rimuru Tempest



黒嵐星狼“ペット”
ランガ
Ranga



“狼鬼兵部隊リーダー”
ゴブタ
Gobuta



“第二秘書”
ディアプロ
Diablo



“第一秘書”
シオン
Shion

神聖法皇国ルベリオス



十大聖人 聖騎士団長
ヒナタ・サカグチ
Hinata Sakaguchi



十大聖人“光”的貴公子
レナード・ジェスター
Renado Jiesuta



十大聖人“空”的
アルノー・バウマン
Aruno Bauman



十大聖人“地”的
バッカス
Bakkasu



十大聖人“水”的
リティス
Riteisu



十大聖人“火”的
ギャルド
Gyarudo



十大聖人“風”的
フリツツ
Furitsu



十大聖人《三武仙》蒼穹の
サー
Sare



十大聖人《三武仙》巨岩の
グレゴリー
Guregori



十大聖人《三武仙》荒海の
グレンダ
Gurenda

神
ルミナス
Ruminasu

ヒナタが唯一従う、
ルミナス教の最高神。

七曜の老師

一人一人が仙人級の
超絶した存在であり、
勇者の育成をも務めた
という伝説的な人物達。
西方聖教会の最高顧問。

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Volume 7

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Saint and Monster Collide

Contents

Prologue: Majins' Tributes

Chapter 1: A Deal With the Devil

Chapter 2: Roles to Uphold

Chapter 3: A Saint's Goal

Interlude: The Secret Meeting

Chapter 4: The Second Confrontation

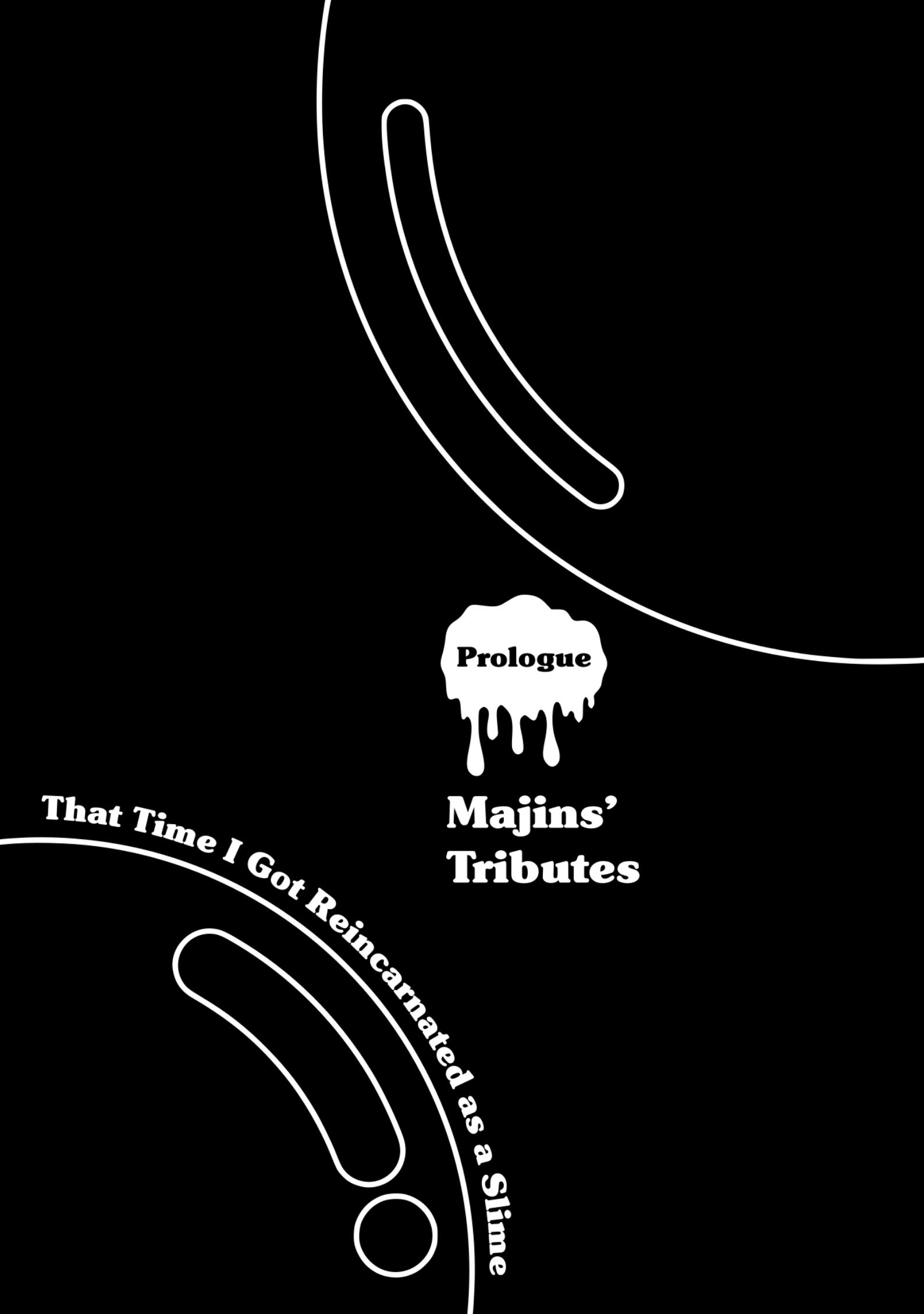
Chapter 5: Saints and Monsters Collide

Chapter 6: God and Demon Lord

Epilogue: New Bonds

Manga

Afterword



Prologue

**Majins'
Tributes**

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Prologue

Majins' Tributes

Clayman is dead.

Laplace delivers the horrible news, and in front of him, everyone falls into silence.

“Impossible! That’s not true!”

Footman shouts vehemently.

But no one else is making a sound along with him.

Laplace may seem casual and carefree most of the time; he won’t really express his true feelings. Right now, he has yet to show his usual attitude, but instead looks quite frustrated. Knowing this, everyone starts to recognize the fact that Clayman has actually died.

“—Last night during the Walpurgis Banquet, Clayman’s connection with me was suddenly cut. He was like my own blood, yet I couldn’t reach him. That means he has really died... How can I accept this? Laplace, even with your report, I still can’t believe that child is really dead, it’s just inconceivable...”

Kazalim says with a heavy heart.

Teare begins to sob.

“It was my fault. I underestimated the Demon Lords. I should have been more cautious collecting information before taking any action.”

Another person says with regret. It’s the black-haired young man.

The Ten Great Demon Lords—They are at the top of this world. But even though they share the same title, one must still distinguish between the strong and the weak.

Clayman ignored this principle after successfully dominating Milim with his spell.

No, not only so—Even believing he could dominate other Demon Lords in the first place was naive.

“If we are being honest, it happened because of my proposal. I had no idea how things would develop, but it’s too late to say this anyway.”

Suddenly, as if to sweep away the heavy atmosphere, Laplace says teasingly:

“By the way, this happened all because Clayman was too stupid. I warned him to be careful. It’s all because he got cocky and messed everything up.”

As Laplace continues to verbally insult Clayman, Footman interjects to scold him.

“Laplace! You don’t have to phrase it like that!”

“But that’s just the truth. He felt so good about himself even though he was *so* weak, that’s why he’s toast now.”

“Laplace!”

Footman, filled with anger, strikes, and begins to beat Laplace.

Laplace wasn’t planning to dodge. Footman’s fist hits his cheek. But that’s all it is. Laplace stops the fist and remains balanced while staring back at Footman menacingly.

“What, do you want a fight, Footman? All right, I’ll fight you then!”

He says arrogantly with a disdainful smirk on his face to provoke Footman. Laplace hopes Footman will pour all his fury onto him.

But Kazalim has already seen through him.

“Stop it, you two! Everyone is sad here.”

He shouts to stop the two.

“Indeed, Laplace, it’s not like you to play a villain like this! If anyone, it should be me. I was the one who hired you guys in the first place.”

The youth says. Footman then finally realizes that Laplace had said those things on purpose.

“So that’s why—Sorry, Laplace.”

“...It’s all right. But president and boss are so mean. I went through all the trouble to be the villain; you don’t have to expose me like that.”

Laplace mumbles while rubbing his cheek. He looks rather comical, somewhat easing the tension in the room.

The majins are motivated once more to discuss future plans.

They can’t comfort Clayman’s spirit in heaven by sighing—Kazalim was able to help everyone focus and conduct their meeting under more tension than they’ve ever experienced.

“—There is no way of knowing what happened there. But according to Demon Lord Valentine, Clayman is indeed dead. As for who killed that kid, we have no idea—”

“If only I had gotten an answer from him...”

“No. It’s already worth celebrating that you were able to return safely.”

“I was just very lucky. It happened to be the night of new moon, and since Demon Lord Valentine is of the Vampire race, his strength was greatly reduced. And with the location being the Saints Church, where the holy aura overflows, my attack was therefore more effective...”

No one doubts Laplace’s words.

They all believe Laplace is capable of winning against the Ancient Demon Lord Valentine, who might even rival Demon Lord Kazalim in terms of strength—There are many reasons behind that belief.

Moreover, Laplace is the strongest lieutenant in the troupe. His strength is second to none other than Kazalim himself. His role as the vice-president of the Moderate Clown Troupe is not just for show. He is also highly capable.

That’s why no one is doubting him, and all have accepted Laplace’s report of his vanquishing

a Demon Lord.

No one realizes the lies in his report, so the meeting continues.

“With that being said, things are getting more difficult.”

“I suppose. The base, army, and treasure that we gave to Clayman are all gone. We’ve suffered a heavy loss.”

The black-haired youth nods in response to Kazalim’s words.

The content of the conversation is concerning, and Teare throws out a question.

“Eh, what does that mean? Wouldn’t his base be fine regardless of whether Clayman got killed by the Demon Lords or not?”

“Even with Clayman’s army destroyed, can’t they still roll back and rise again? Their base still has that crazy saint Adalmann. That Undead King is quite strong, even rivaling us. And while that Undead Dragon wasn’t at the same level as the Charybdis, it still would pose a significant threat. Are the curse spells cast by president still in effect?”

First Teare, then Footman inquires in surprise. Upon hearing so, the young man and Kazalim look at each other awkwardly and make their bitter response.

“That’s what we want to discuss with you today.”

“I handed over the base to Clayman, and it was taken last night. The unbelievable thing is, that slime only sent a few subordinates to do so.”

“What did you say?”

“No way!”

“How is it possible?! Does that mean that the majins we saw during the war are the only majins under Rimuru—no, wait, hold on for a second, then that crystal ball was—”

After hearing Kazalim’s explanation, Laplace and Teare exclaims. Footman raises his face, seeming to have recalled something.

Seeing his reaction, the young man nods and responds.

“Indeed. Didn’t the footage recorded by Laplace include those majins? It’ll be best if we face facts and recognize that every one of them has the combat ability of Special Rank A.”

Hearing this, even Footman became speechless.

“—Seriously?”

Teare mumbles. But no one responds.

“At least that slime named Rimuru did not take part in that battle. If I have to deduce, he may have used the battle as a bait for him to take down Clayman’s base in person. If it’s that slime, it won’t be strange for him to have broken through my proud defense system.”

With Kazalim’s explanation, everyone finally realizes the severity of the situation.

Then the young man opens up:

“That’s why we have to redraft our plans for the future.”

He declares that having lost most of their combat forces, they should halt all on-going operations. Moreover, the death of Clayman has left them all with keenly felt anguish...

Fortunately, they haven’t lost everything.

They’ve kept part of their assets as insurance, as well as their organization based in the West-

ern Nations—With these two resources to back them up, they still have some level of political influence over the nations.

They also sent out fine subordinates, not skilled in direct combat, but excellent in intelligence gathering, to ascertain the movement of all nations.

The youth started this organization from nothing, so there is always room to come back, even from such dire straits.

It is for this reason—

“We will need to lay low for a while. It’s truly a shame what happened to Clayman, but we will have to stand against the Demon Lords in order to avenge him. Yet our power is still too weak for that as of this moment. In order to realize our ambition of world domination, we will have to bear this burden for now.”

This sentiment is unanimous.

“Yes. Our organization has grown a lot in the past ten years. And we may have gotten a bit conceited.”

“Indeed. That’s also why Clayman got cocky...”

“Hmm, although I don’t intend to give up (on revenge), it seems like we’d lose everything if I act too hastily now.”

“I don’t want to admit it either, but patience is the right course now...”

Not everyone agrees, but the majins eventually accept his suggestion as the most reasonable course of action.

“Hahaha, you should try to accept it, Footman. I still have all of you as my trump cards. But I don’t want to lose you too because we acted rashly at this point of time.”

The young man gives a wry smile while giving Footman a comforting pat on the shoulder. These are truthful words from the young man and the reason behind his decision.

After all, if he hadn’t given them this talk here and now, some of them may be have thrown their life away in rage and grief.

Footman then decides to endure after learning where the young man is coming from.

“I understand, boss. I’ll hold on to this anger and let it all out some other day.”

Footman knows in his heart, if he goes after the Demon Lords in a fit of rage, he will only end up getting beaten.

Therefore, he decides to take the young man’s advice.

The young man is satisfied with Footman’s resolve, and glances around the majins.

“With that being said, aren’t you guys roweled by being defeated by others all the time? While we may not be able to work with our hands, can’t we at least use our words? That slime has taken everything from Clayman, so we should give him a taste of the same medicine.”

The young man says with a twisted grin.

“What are you planning?”

Kazalim asks, but the young man does not give a direct response. He answers with a smile:

“That is no simple slime. He was able to accumulate a great amount of power in only a few years. Honestly, it is astonishing, and normally we shouldn’t antagonize him. Instead, we

should determine how strong they really are. To do so, I have arranged a trap.”

The young man pauses after saying so delightfully.

“Seriously, are you being devious again? Right, anything would be better than my mission impossible¹. I’ll go observe their fight from the side this time.”

Laplace shrugs after saying so. The group is then dismissed.

As such, the majins exit the stage temporarily.

They now quietly maneuver in the shadows … And hone their claws for the inevitable day of retribution.

¹If you are the one of the lucky 10 000 , it means a mission that is impossible to complete.

**Chapter
1**

**A Deal With
the Devil**

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Chapter 1

A Deal With the Devil

“Octagram” will be our official title in the future—

Guy’s subordinates, namely his maids, the green-haired Mizeri and blue-haired Raine, are preparing delicate meals for everyone. Their dark maid outfits are of very good taste, and the same can be said about the dishes produced under their phenomenal culinary skills.

Just as Ramiris had said, the Walpurgis Banquet was meant for the Demon Lords to communicate and also to exchange intelligence. Perhaps it is for such a reason that they’ve prepared an additional venue for the sole purpose of leisure.

However, there doesn’t seem to be a rule stating that everyone has to be there for refreshment activities.

Some left as soon as the meeting ended, while others stayed behind to enjoy the delicious food prepared by the staff. The remainder split into small groups to discuss topics of their own. The Demon Lords are all attending to their own interests.

I personally find this opportunity to be rare and decided to taste the food. To be honest, I’m quite interested in Guy’s diet considering his ruler status among the Demon Lords.

As it turns out, the food is delicious beyond belief.

I enjoyed the world-renowned cuisines to my heart’s content—

«Report. Component analysis complete. It is now possible to re-create the recipes black tiger stew, grilled sage rooster, golden peach sherbet, and roast earthdweller dragon steak.»

And at the same time, I am also secretly learning the recipes.

What? Me? Despicable? Cunning?

What do you mean by that? I don’t get it.

It’s too harsh to call my actions “corporate espionage.” It is, after all, an important part of intelligence gathering!

The ingredients are all from monsters above Rank A, so it would be difficult to collect them all. But I have already recorded the recipes, so we can take care of that one way or another.

Lastly, they served a mixed fruit platter.

There are a total of six Demon Lords who remained to attend the feast itself—Guy, Milim,

Ramiris, Dino, Dagruel and myself. Valentine and Leon left long ago.

While Milim was devouring the assorted dishes, I went to complain to her about deceiving me. She tried to play dumb, but I wasn't having any of it.

As for Karion and Frey, we decided to discuss our future plans on another occasion. Once the post-war settlements have been resolved, I am also willing to advise them on the reconstruction of their cities and any other issues that may come up. Their respective kingdoms' structure has been renewed with Milim as their new leader. Hopefully, this works out well for us too.

Ramiris is still being stubborn about wanting to live in my kingdom despite my firm denial, but... I can tell from her eyes that she is willing fight my decision to the bitter end. She also seems to think Treyni-san will come to her aid, since she seems to really adore Ramiris.

Treyni-san has been spoiling Ramiris with everything she has, so I probably can't expect much from her. I will have to keep note of this in the future.

Dagruel and Veldora are having a good chat, and so are Guy and Dino, who are having a cheerful discussion about their daily lives.

Before the feast, I offered them a special product from the Tempest Federation—Brandy distilled from grape wine.

It's one of my tactics to improve our image, which is to spread the words of our unique product and have an upper hand in diplomacy.

This strategy appears to be very effective—even against Demon Lords.

“Delicious.”

“Oh, this is great—”

“*Cough cough*, t-this stuff is way too strong...”

Dino coughs painfully on the side while Guy and Dagruel sang their praises. On another note... Veldora-kun, could you *please* refrain from drinking all of our products in one go?

Even though I still have a bunch of them stored in my “Stomach,” those aren’t for you.

As for Milim, let’s just say I won’t be letting her drink anytime soon.

The situation would undoubtedly spiral out of control if I let her drink. And considering the fact that she tricked me before, I’m not particularly keen on allowing Milim to drink.

“Then I shall take the drink!”

Within the blink of an eye Ramiris plastered herself onto the wine glass (being so smol) and became dead drunk in an instant.

Beretta and Treyni-san came forth wearing panicked expressions, so I decided to leave Ramiris in their care. She’s been pestering me to return to Tempest with her, so it may even be good for me if she falls asleep.

With that being said, the feast concludes, and we decide to leave before Ramiris wakes up.

I was worried about the type of situation I might run into, but as it turns out, I was able to make it through the Walpurgis Banquet safe and sound.

What a busy day.

The Walpurgis Banquet started at midnight and ended at noon of the next day.

I left the meeting and returned to Tempest.

I was able to ignore traveling and instantly teleport with “Dimension Domination.”

Upon returning, I was reassured that the country was still intact and that everyone was obeying my orders to increase security.

Everyone was making an effort to tighten the security on the streets.

There isn’t a single flaw. The guard force built using the blueprint of a police force has been pretty successful.

A thought suddenly crosses my mind—Could our country’s military be already strong enough that any normal country is incapable of standing a chance against us?²

After all, even our reserved personnel for defense alone have all reached Rank B.

Normal beasts and demons wouldn’t even dare to approach us.

Our nation’s security is relatively good. But I am worried about whether the monsters who we’ve now staved off will go on to cause harm in other regions.

Perhaps I should run an investigation regarding the issue—I think as I travel alongside Veldora and Shion, entering the city upon Ranga’s back.

As soon as I enter the town, the residents and the patrolling soldiers begin to kneel down on the side of the streets gradually opening up a path.

Their movements are all well-coordinated, most likely from training that I was not aware of.

What are they doing? As I observe skeptically, Diablo saunters towards us from the end of the road.

His expression is overflowing with joy as he flashes a bright smile.

Diablo then exchanges looks with Rigurd—

“Welcome back, Rimuru-sama!”

“Congratulations on becoming a member of the Octagram! We are most thankful for your safe return!”

Rigurd, acting as the representative, greets me respectfully, followed by Diablo’s congratulatory words.

Wait a minute, what is going on here?! How do you know about me officially becoming a Demon Lord?!

And about that title, it should only have been revealed at that meeting with its debut. Because it was me who came up with the...

I wondered while my head filled with doubts.

Shouldn’t Diablo be taking down the Kingdom of Farmus right now? How would he have the time to plan out such a specific activity?

I feel quite embarrassed, so I decide to ask him directly.

“Very simple, Rimuru-sama. I asked a favor of Veldora-sama.”

Diablo replies cheerfully.

I glance towards Veldora only to realize he was desperately averting my gaze.

²Sierra Note: That’s an interesting thought there, Slime Boy. Don’t get conceited

Oi, excuse me! Mister?!

From his reaction alone, I could tell he did something against his conscience.

I got Veldora to confess after some interrogation. He seems to have made a deal with Diablo. Diablo, in return, offered meals and three servings of dessert. If he did, Veldora promised to tell him what happened during the Banquet in detail...

So that's how it was.

That's how he got wind of how I've been approved to become a Demon Lord in the meeting and also passed on the new title of "Octagram."

Should I praise Diablo for his skillfulness in intelligence gathering?

Normally, one wouldn't even dare to come up with the idea, let alone put it into practice. One must then have sufficient mobility and capacity to bribe someone as strong as Veldora. Although Veldora, who agreed to the deal, is pretty dumb, Diablo's resolve in carrying it out shows he is no ordinary man.

And since the two are willing to give the bait and take the bait respectively, I'll cut myself short on the subject.

With that being said—

"Veldora, do you even need to eat?"

"W-What nonsense is that, Rimuru?! Eating or not is not the point, the point is that I want to eat things. And if that's really the case, you don't need to eat either!"

Ouch! I got retorted.

But he does have a point.

I can't exactly criticize without being called hypocritical on the matter. Lately, Shuna's culinary skill has grown a lot, and she has also produced a large variety of desserts.

Now she can even recreate pastry puffs that have just been introduced at the cafe in the Kingdom of Ingracia . Not even pudding poses a challenge to her.

Moreover, with the addition of a variety of alcoholic beverages, we can now develop even more new desserts. The cafe manager Mister Yoshida would also aid us in the process of developing new dishes. To gain his assistance, I prepared a variety of wines to send regularly, as that was his demand.

Mister Yoshida also said, "Now I can recreate previously impossible cuisines!" with a delightful expression. With all these efforts, we were able to develop several new dishes and incorporate them into daily meals. Veldora is probably also shocked having tasted the food after his resurrection at the festival.

Veldora, you were tempted by the food, weren't you?

With that being said, Milim was also tempted by honey...

An idea suddenly crosses my mind—we may be able to take over the world with culinary supremacy.

My musings were suddenly interrupted by the sounds of Shion and Diablo quarrelling.

"Have you fulfilled your duty as Rimuru-sama's bodyguard?"

"Most certainly! It has been proven that as long as I'm around, you are simply unnecessary."

I should be the one to question you about the progress of the mission assigned to you by Rimuru-sama.”

“Kufufufufufu, it has proceeded without a flaw. In fact, I was just about to report back to Rimuru-sama myself.”

The two flashed each other bright smiles that did not quite seem to reach the eyes.

They simply wouldn’t let up on each other and continue to bicker.

“You two, behave yourselves!”

“That’s right. Rimuru-sama is tired as well. Haruna and the rest have been preparing food. Let’s relax for now and come back to this conversation later.”

Rigurd agrees to my view and scolds the two on my behalf.

As expected of Rigurd. Lately, he’s been acting more and more prestigious. Now he seems very dependable.

We were moved to another spot at Rigurd’s urging.

The town folk all have joyful expressions. I was hoping to start a feast as soon as possible to have some fun with everyone, but Benimaru and the rest have yet to return from their expedition.

That’s why we’ve decided to delay our celebration feast. Right now, we’ll wind things down and have just a bit of fun for resolving our trouble.

We went to take a bath in the hot spring and enjoyed the food Haruna prepared.

We listened to Diablo’s report after everyone settled down and got in the proper frame of mind.

With our victory against Clayman, our only issues left to tackle were building a new kingdom on Youm’s side and what to do with the Western Holy Church.

Apart from that, there’s also the issue of our future relations with Beast Kingdom Eurazania, Winged Nation Fulbrosia and the Dragon Worshipers who worships Milim... We could resolve these diplomatic issues peacefully, so there isn’t too much to worry about there.

I ask Diablo in a rather casual mood while sipping my postprandial black tea:

“So, what is it that you are doing now? Eliminating the Kingdom of Farmus and crowning Youm as the new king—You dropped the mission and returned, do you need any reinforcement?”

I casually turn back to my slime form, which I’ve been looking forward to doing. Relaxed, I am hugged by Shion on her lap. I probed Diablo with a question as I felt two soft mounds pressed against the back of my head.

If Diablo is in need of back-up, I plan to send Souei’s party to aid him.

Right now, they are very much available for order, so there is no need to force Diablo to fend for himself.

However, Shion suddenly interjects and says rather disdainfully: “A Cheap-shot nobody like him only deserves to make tea for Rimuru-sama. I should have been the one to attend to such matter!” But I ignore her since that type of job is clearly not suitable for Shion.

I spoke with the intention of aiding Diablo—But as it turns out, I was worried over nothing.

“No no no, Rimuru-sama. There is no such need. Everything has been going well according to plan.”

Diablo refills my second cup of black tea and begins his report.

Drinking tea in slime form is a pain, so I decide to just appreciate the fragrance of it while listening to his report.

But the previously relaxed atmosphere quickly vanished the moment Diablo began to speak.

“First of all, I had to restore the captives into their original states. After all, it is quite the inconvenience to keep them as meatloaf—”

MEATLOAF?!

Eh? Does he mean what I think it is?

Shion’s body suddenly shivers as she seems to have sensed the source of my disbelief.

That’s right... It was indeed the case. Things really won’t work out if my people keep acting like this.

I visited the interrogation room once, once! I was just planning to have a peek. But now I regret it greatly. It would probably have been best if I had avoided visiting at all.

I left the captives to Shion’s care after seeing them and reminded her to “Don’t overdo things” ...

My logic then was—there was nothing to worry about as long as Shion doesn’t kill them.

Now it is too late for me to regret my actions.

While I feel unease inside but expressing my regret now would not solve anything.

Displaying no traces of my inner turmoil, I ask for Diablo to continue his report.



Regarding Diablo’s first step, it was just as what he has described to Rimuru: to restore Archbishop Reyhiem and Head of Court Mage Razen to their original form.

There were in total two carriages traveling alongside several cavalries as they set out for the Kingdom of Farmus .

One of the carriages carried Diablo and the three captives.

Well, since Diablo is the only person visible in the six-seated carriage, it would be rather inaccurate to call the other occupants as ‘passengers.’ That is because the other three people have been squeezed into the luggage on the floor of the carriage.

—Indeed, they were squeezed in the form of living meatloaf.

Shion has turned them into inhuman abominations.

She skinned them one thin layer of skin at a time, but not so much as to kill them; their peeled away layers of flesh exposed the muscle underneath she then decided to slice off their meat piece by piece... Shion has been practicing fish skinning with living people, and she even ensured that the ones getting skinned won’t feel any physical pain during the process...

Using her Unique Skill ‘Cook,’ she was able to push the captives to the point of psycholog-

ical breakdown. Once they reached their (physical) limits, she would treat them with healing potion and reverse the process to start over.

To witness their own bodies having been dismembered by another while feeling no pain at all—having suffered such repeated torments, the sanity of the three have been completely obliterated.

Their expressions are devoid of life as they lay submerged in the pool of their own exposed intestines.

There is no way they could return to their country in this state. Bearing such thoughts, Diablo, although unwillingly, decided to work on reversing their curse.

“How troublesome... Their senses³ have been completely twisted, so healing magic won’t work directly ...”

Despite his complaints, Diablo was amazed with how useful non-magical skills could be.

He has mastered the art of magic and learnt all about the laws of this world, yet even so, there still exist so many fascinating things out there (that he has yet to know).

This does cheer Diablo up substantially.

With his mood lifted, he expelled the remaining magic housed within the three left behind by Shion.

First one is Reyhiem; then Razen.

This was not done in any specific order. Diablo dispelled the magic with ease. But he stopped at Edmalis, the King of Farmus.

“Blessings, thank you!”

Reyhiem rejoiced as he expresses his gratitude towards Diablo.

“I am not important here, please, the king...restore the king—”

Razen pleaded with Diablo out of loyalty for his king.

Diablo slanted his eyes coldly at Razen.

“Kufufufufu, are you begging me? Then you should understand that such a request does not come cheap.” Diablo grins disdainfully.

A delightfully devilish smile emerges on Diablo’s face.

However, there is not the slightest passion⁴ in his eyes.

“...Ah... No...I...”

Razen went pale with fear surged from his heart. He is regretting—

Razen recalls now.

This Diablo, who has been sitting casually in front of him, is a terrifying demon.

An archdemon—no, he said he isn’t kind (cheap) like that.

On top of that, even an archdemon alone would be quite a threat. If he was to appear in some smaller country, he would have caused a crisis that could bring the whole nation to its demise.

³The principles/laws (such as pain reception) applied to their body have been changed. This is result of Shion’s skill “Cook.”

⁴“passion” or “temperature.” I believe it’s implying how Diablo’s actions often contrast how he thinks internally.

That's why they are categorized as Calamity—Threat level up to Special Rank A.

Basic magic barriers would not stand effective. He could easily destroy a nation's defense by unleashing a bit more of his Youki (demonic aura). He may even be capable of crushing his enemies one-sidedly using magic alone.

Adventurers below Rank A wouldn't stand a chance against him. His presence alone would be the declaration of a death penalty. That is how terrifying the existence of an archdemon. It is a type of demon that even Razen wouldn't want to antagonize or deal with alone.

However, Diablo's presence is rather different.

He seems all too human in appearance without a trace of his demonic aura.

Except his eyes are arresting.

They are akin to a golden moon hanging in the darkness of midnight with a dash of ominous red in the middle.

The most appropriate term to describe them would be "Unforgettable" to whoever looks upon them.

Their appearances are especially unsettling.

Apart from his eyes, the rest of his body all looks very similar to that of a human's—In other words, even though most nations would install defense mechanisms to block out monsters up to certain level (magicule storage), he could easily infiltrate these cities without batting an eye.

The only difference, and perhaps the only advantage humans have over monsters is their intelligence.

Some monsters are intelligent, but these monsters would often want to show off their strength one way or another. For instance, generously having their aura on display to demonstrate how large their magicule storage is.

That is why magic barriers which react to high magicule presence would work against them.

But what would happen if these types of monster decide to conceal their aura?

A Calamity Rank monster suddenly shows up and strolls around on the streets of human cities—Razen shuddered at the thought.

In other words, things would go like this—

A nation couldn't help it if its barrier is being destroyed via brute force, but as the enemies tear down the barrier, the nation could reorganize its defensive force. It can then send out this defensive force to face the enemies.

However...if the enemies can completely ignore the barrier—The result is probably anyone's guess.

These types of monsters would already be at a higher level than archdemons, Diablo is one of them.

Moreover, his real identity is one of the Primordial Demons—

Although in comparison...

There is something even more terrifying that he hasn't considered.

This demon called Diablo is already serving a master.

That person is the master of all these monsters, the fearsome yet beautiful man with golden eyes⁵ and silver-blue hair.

Its hair gives off a feeling of transparency and it glitters like shining glass.

His presence might have been momentary, yet his power was beyond one's imagination. Demon Lord.

It is a being truly worthy of the title.

The scene of him massacring the army of twenty-thousand men still sends shivers down Razen's spine. But Razen was occupied by another sensation after meeting him in person.

When he was taken captive by others to that place—

The way he looked at Razen was as if he was a stone by the road.

When those golden eyes met his, so mesmerized was he, to the point of not only forgetting the excruciating pain of his torture, but for him to abandon all fear of death...

There are beings in this world that you simply should not antagonize.⁶

"Don't overdo things." — these were the words Razen heard uttered by an angelic voice.

It must have been a warning to Razen.

Telling him to not get ahead of himself.

There is no wonder that his country had been destroyed when they are up against such an opponent, who even a Primordial Demon would pledge loyalty to.

—if it's that Demon Lord, he could single-handedly destroy the entire the Kingdom of Far-mus .

Such thoughts keep crossing Razen's mind.

He ignores the bumping of the carriage and stands up from his seat to supplicate (kneel) before Diablo.

"Of course, I understand. Please allow me—No, please grant me the privilege to be your servant! My humble life would be pledged towards you. Please be magnanimous and spare the life of King Edmalis."

Razen offers his heartened loyalty to Diablo in hope of saving the king.

Hearing Razen's wish, Diablo nods rather casually.

"Very well then, although you are still insignificant (to us), you are still considered quite powerful in the human world. If that's the case, you will be of use someday. Moreover, I wasn't planning to kill him without Rimuru-sama's order anyway. Then I should spare his life, however—"

Before restoring Edmalis' form, he will have Razen do something for him.

He will display the disgusting form of the King to all the bigwigs of this nation who foolishly rose against his beloved Rimuru.

Razen gulps nervously while waiting for Diablo to speak.

As for Reyhiem, he has already been petrified due to fear.

⁵In the anime Rimuru has blue eyes, but in the LN he always had golden eyes

⁶Source “触れてはならぬ” Not very sure about the “should not antagonized,” I feel it is “being that cannot be reached (transcendence)”

“I shall be generous this one time. Your performances in the future shall not only determine the fate of the king, but whether or not the whole of Farmus will become a lifeless wasteland.”

He means exactly what he just implied.

As long as they follow Diablo’s—or rather Rimuru’s—will, then everything should be fine, if not...

Whether it is Razen, Reyhiem, or even King Edmalis who’s currently stuck in his abominable state—

They all understand loud and clear what Diablo meant by that.

The three had been foolish but were not stupid. At this point, even if they don’t want to admit, they all know Diablo would put such an idea into action without hesitation.

Their only chances of survival are to cooperate obediently with Diablo.

“That is without saying! I shall attend to whatever duty you demand!”

Reyhiem begins to grovel and kneel down. He seems to be even willing to lick Diablo’s shoes.

“I am willing to pledge my loyalty to your grace!”

Razen also made up his mind.

Whether or not the king is spared is now meaningless. However, his pride at having been the guardian of the Kingdom of Farmus all these years made him desire the continued survival of the king’s bloodline.

Even King Edmalis, who was overwhelmed by anguish and despair understood this.

Razen has given up on not just King Edmalis, but on the Kingdom of Farmus itself.

But it is the right choice, King Edmalis thinks to himself.

A country that defies a Demon Lord will be destroyed.

There are only two options left for King Edmalis—comply or resist and be eliminated.

The king isn’t foolish enough to make the wrong choice at this point. As the ruler of a nation, he has to carry out his last duty of selecting the correct choice.

“I declare, in the name of the last king of Farmus, to be submissive of whatever demands are requested by Diablo-dono—”

He gives up struggling and proclaims so.

Diablo has obtained the three’s verbal assurances. In that instant, he has secretly activated his Unique Skill ‘Tempter.’

As a result, the three become Diablo’s slaves...

“Rest assured. I won’t do anything bad as long as you obey me.”

The demon Diablo says so gently with a smile on his face.



An unprecedeted commotion dawned in the Kingdom of Farmus on this day.

Their ruler King Edmalis has returned, only in a miserable state.

The location is the hall (Throne room) of the king's castle.

The top ministers of the nation all are witnessing the scene with looks of horror on their faces.

A box was carefully placed on the throne.

There were meatloaves in it.

With their king's face buried in the center.

Whatever inside it is still alive. The eyes of the head may seem empty, but they are still conscious.

"Shogo, what in the world happened! How did our king end up this way?!"

"R-Right, what happened to the other two? Where is our nation's army?"

"What has Knight Commander Folgen been up to?! How could this happen with Razen-sama's company!"

The ministers shrieked, barely able to contain the fear and panic in their voices.

You can't exactly blame them for being this way. Razen, who is now playing the role of Shogo (Shogo Taguchi), thinks to himself—

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During the days after the regular magic communication was cut, the people remaining in the kingdom have been on their feet the whole time.

Although they believe their army of twenty-thousand men wouldn't be defeated due to its overwhelming numbers, everything may have an exception. Right now, there is more than enough ground to plant the seed of doubt when they couldn't even confirm the life or death of the king.

Then Razen returned to the nation alongside Archbishop Reyhiem. They showed up in the teleportation room within the castle through the Elemental-based Magic "Waypoint Transportation."

The patrolling soldiers were alerted to the situation as they discovered the two lying unconscious at the location, which led to the event that took place this morning.

The two soldiers hurried to confirm their identities.

One of whom is the otherworlder Shogo Taguchi.

The other one is the king's close acquaintance, Archbishop Reyhiem.

The soldiers, while shocked, went on to take Reyhiem into care, as he has collapsed due to fatigue. They then discover that the young man has been hugging onto a box as if it's a priceless treasure. Without much mental preparation, one of the soldiers peeked in to examine the content of the box.

This soldier belongs to the high-ranking Imperial Guards that serve within the palace, and normally he would never make such a horrified scream.

But he did just that, and the reason being the content within the box...

There were slimy gravy leaking out the box accompanied by a disgusting odor—The box contained distorted meatloaf made up of chopped up intestines.

This is the abominable sight of what was previously the ruler of this kingdom.

Seeing this, the guard began to scream out of fear, which is considered great disrespect, but no one is condemning him. The people who joined after hearing his scream were also scared to death seeing the same sight.

The servants, the ministers were all in panic upon seeing what their master had become.

Some were screaming, crying, and shouting.

Some began to vomit.

And some even fainted out of fear.

No one wanted to believe this is the king.

But this was the reality.

At first, some tried to confirm whether it is the real king or not.

And, as it turned out, it was indeed the real king.

“What are you all doing! Go and save the king!”

Some minister calls out in panic, finally spurring the crowd into mobilization.

All the mages remaining in the palace have been gathered to try out every available spell.

They even summoned high priests from the Western Holy Church to see if they can heal the king.

The sight alone was enough to invoke the deepest primal fear in people's heart. Confronted with such horrific sight, people still made up their mind to try to restore their king to normal. Even though everyone's face has been distorted due to fear, they still kept on working steadfastly. Yet none of them have been effective.

There is no way they could save the king.

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—The time fast forwards to the present.

Having been informed that Shogo has awakened, the crowds bring their questions to him.

Razen is rather sympathetic seeing his former colleagues.

But nowadays Razen is Diablo's subordinate, so he needs to betray his companions without hesitation. Their own choices will decide their fates. But just for a bit, for a tiny bit, Razen feels sorry for them.

Everything has been according to Diablo's plan.

Faking his coma was also part of the plan.

As Diablo's servant, Razen was told what would happen to this nation and what they should do accordingly. Razen has already come to a realization.

This nation is about to become a toy of the Demon Lord.

If the Kingdom of Farmus becomes a stage for them to toy around with human puppets, it

would be the end of this kingdom.

But this doesn't seem to be such an unfortunate fate for the citizens.

As Diablo explains the Demon Lord's plan to Razen, a sense of hope sparked within his heart. An image of the land of Farmus stepping towards a future of prosperity began to emerge in his head.

The ancient institution must be dismantled in order for that future to come true, Razen couldn't help but to think so.

That's why he is acting according to the plan.

"Calm down. I am Razen. I have been protecting the king and was able to escape back to our kingdom with the help of Hero-sama."

"What? You—No, aren't you Shogo?"

"Shogo, that brat... I see, so that's the case."

"But even with that being said, it is still quite confusing. We couldn't believe that Razen-sama has become that arrogant Shogo."

At first, no one was in the proper state to believe this, but upon recalling that Razen is a powerful mage, they begin to make sense of the situation. But then they start to question Razen.

"You mentioned that you managed to escape, does that mean the Farmus army...that our nation's great army has lost to those monsters?"

"What really happened? How dare you all come back after your disgraceful defeat?"

The nobles begin to question out loud.

They are the pillars of this nation, but in reality, many cunning foxes among the nobles only wish to obtain personal gains through the banner of war. To these people, they didn't even consider the possibility of sustaining financial loss as a result of defeat.

"Everyone, please calm down. Let's hear what Razen-sama has to say."

Someone came out at that moment to bring silence to the crowd—It's Marquis Müller.

This, of course, is also part of the plan. Last night Diablo had taken action to establish contact with him through Fuse, the branch head of the Freedom Association in the Kingdom of Blumund .

Everything has been going according to Diablo's plan...

First, to have Razen explain that "The Hero Youm has gone to negotiate the exchange of a cure (healing potion) with the leader of the monsters.." This will cause an order to be passed on to the gatekeeper to make preparations to welcome Youm's party back into the city without the need of identification.

Next, he will explain the situation with the Farmus Army... The crowds are shocked as soon as he begins to explain.

Indeed—because of the line "Storm Dragon Veldora has been revived."

"H-how could this be..."

"Why was that evil dragon revived at that place?"

"I-impossible... Hasn't Veldora been defeated already?!"

"Then we must hurry and report to the Western Holy Church to request the aid of the Holy

Knight Order (Crusader)!"

"We are done for now! If what Razen-sama just said is true, we won't be able to do anything about it. All our reserve combat forces in the nation wouldn't at all be sufficient to face such enemy."

"That's right! We have to get the (Farmus) Knight Order back as soon as possible!"

"Indeed. If "Magic Communication" won't work, we will have General Folgen to relay the message."

"There is no time for that! We should all bail now before the people catch wind of this, or else we won't even have time to escape!"

Some have been struck in panic by fear.

Some are pressing to strike first.

Some even suggest evacuating without the citizens.

Everyone has a different reaction. Then, Marquis Müller gave the crowd a shout to shut everyone up.

"Silence! Even if the Knight Order is fine, the result would be the same. By the way, Sita-sama, would it really help if we panic like you? Where would we escape to? That "Storm Dragon" is a real Rank-Catastrophe monster."

The ministers begin to regain their composure.

Razen continues his explanation after this momentary silence. He then begins to explain what happened on the battlefield.

He retells the complete defeat of the Farmus Army—The tragedy (made-up lie) that led to the disappearance of the entire army as a result of the resurrection of "Storm Dragon" Veldora.

The crowds fall into silence after Razen's explanation.

Everyone is speechless.

The entire thing seems too ridiculous to be true. Everyone thinks that it would be obvious.

It is under such circumstances that some begin to raise doubts about the situation while Razen answers them one by one.

"L-Razen-sama, is this all true? Is it true that our army has disappeared without a trace?"

"Yes. Our army was fighting those monsters when the dragon of that land was awakened."

"What nonsense is this, how strange would that be! Even the Western Holy Church has told us that they've eliminated all the dragons, are you suggesting that they've been lying to us?"

"No, that's not the case. Veldora would disappear for a period of time. However, a "True Dragon" cannot be eliminated. It will eventually be reborn in some corner of the world. But we simply couldn't have anticipated that the interval was so short, and that it was revived so nearby—"

"Razen-sama, what happened to the other survivors?"

"Y-yeah, what about General Folgen? You mentioned that all of the army has gone missing, but shouldn't there at least be a few persons left?"

Upon being asked so, Razen responded, shaking his head.

In reality, they've all been killed by the fury of Rimuru. But Diablo has discussed this with

Razen and ordered him to cover up the matter with the lie that the army has gone missing.

“What do you mean by that?”

“I’ve already told you; they’ve gone missing. With Veldora’s revival, both the knights and monsters at the scene vanished. We were the only ones who remained—”

“No way!”

“I’ll ask this one more time, there is no survivor who escaped at all...and have they really all gone missing?”

“There were supply corps behind the frontline... Are they okay?”

Razen falls silent.

His eyes fell to the ground quietly.

Seeing this, everyone has to take his words for it.

—The Knight Order has truly been annihilated.

A minister suddenly breaks into tears.

He was the one that asked about the well-being of the supply corps. Because he had sent his son to fight his first war.

He even pulled some strings to move his son to the rear to distance him from the dangerous frontline. Yet all of his efforts were for nothing.

At the end of the day, he only allowed his son to join this war because he believed there was a fortune to rob from the monsters, and that victory was ensured. In the face of this twisted turn of fate, he broke down in tears.

But in overview of this tragic event, he is just one of the victims.

The total number of people missing in action amount to an astounding twenty thousand.

That is an unprecedented loss of life.

Even though they are labeled as “missing in action,” the hope of them returning is zero.

They are as good as dead.

Everyone now can’t help but think that this has to do with Veldora’s revival. To be more specific, they think the vanished army was used as a live sacrifice.

Veldora is thus under this false accusation, which works in Rimuru’s favor.

Diablo’s wise plan has successfully manipulated the beliefs of the top ministers of the Kingdom of Farmus through Razen.

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It is during this time, almost as if it is perfectly timed, sounds of footstep begin to echo in the throne room.

It is Youm’s party.

The ones accompanying him are his advisor Myuran, bodyguard Grucius, and Secretary

Rommel the mage.

Diablo, dressed in a neat butler outfit, is the last one to enter. However, his attitude is quite arrogant in juxtaposition of his role as a butler.

The throne room of this castle is normally not accessible to people low in the social hierarchy, such as adventurers. However, with Razen's intervention, their guides were ordered beforehand to lead Youm to this location.

"Sorry to keep you guys waiting. I've finally managed to convince that guy."

Youm speaks to Razen while representing his party.

He still couldn't quite change his rude tone and straight-forward attitude. After all, the noble style isn't bred in one day, so you can't really blame him.

But in the eyes of the nobles, his attitude can only be described as brusque. This led to some vocal discontent.

"Who on earth are you! How rude of you to speak in such plebeian tone!"

Although Youm has arrived with the medicine to cure the king—a matter that was brought up before, one of the ministers still reprimanded him.

Of course, he has heard the name of Hero Youm. He has also seen Youm's portraits everywhere he goes. He knows too that it is Youm who is coming. Moreover, given how special Youm's full-body armor is, he won't mistake him for another even if he had only heard of him.

Yet to this minister, none of these matter. This is the royal palace, and how things work here is different from that of the public sphere—To him it is common sense.

That's why he couldn't stand how rude Youm's tone was.

However, this caused Razen to panic.

He looks towards Diablo to see whether the minister's words have provoked him. After all, he never revealed his plans to the ministers, so the outcome, whatever it may be, will fall on Razen's shoulders.

He understands why the minister shouted out those words. There is nothing wrong with such action if it's any other day. But right now, it is simply inappropriate given the gravity of the situation. Razen regrets having not explained the details of some matters and decides to step in as the mediator.

"Please hold on a second, Carlos-dono. These people are our saviors. We are relying on them to save our King!"

"What? These are the people who saved you?"

"I can't believe Razen, guardian of this kingdom, would say something like this. What really happened out there?"

Even though some of them are still not convinced, Razen remains, after all, the best mage in the Kingdom of Farmus . His power as a magic caster is unquestionable, in addition to his hundreds of years' feat of guarding the kingdom. Razen's words are no comments to pass by their head, the nobles then decide to take it down a notch for the time being.

With that being said, they are only reacting so violently due to the imminent destruction of their nation and the revival of Veldora. That's why they were bluffing. Because of that, they

were able to get the details of how Razen was saved. They've now learnt whether their personal safety can be ensured or not.

Just as Razen is about to answer their doubts, someone interjects from the side.

“Allow me to answer that question for you.”

It's Archbishop Reyhiem.

He is pretending that his body has just recovered, and he came to fill in the gaps of Razen's story.

Razen celebrates internally and exchanges a look with Reyhiem, then surreptitiously glances at Diablo to see him smiling at how things are progressing.

Reassured, Razen allows Reyhiem to do the explanation.

“Then, could you enlighten us about how Razen-sama's party has been saved?”

“With regards to the revival of “Storm Dragon,” Razen-sama has informed you of the matter. The two armies clashed on the war field and engaged in an intense fight. We were advantageous in terms of number, but those monsters had a better fortified position. The battle was harder fought than we imagined.”

The hall falls silent with only Rayhiem's voice.

He eyes Diablo as he continues his explanation.

According to him, the chaotic aura of the war field was key to Veldora's revival. And as Veldora suddenly emerges on the battlefield, he attacked indiscriminately and both sides suffered the consequences.

Razen nods in agreement and adds.

“I was there alongside Reyhiem-sama. We really went all out trying to protect our king.”

He emphasizes on his inability.

Reyhiem continues on top of that:

“Indeed, it was just like that. I was staying in the base behind the frontline alongside Razen-sama. We were truly desperate at the sights before us as the tragedy unfolds. We witnessed Death himself before our eyes as the majestic “Storm Dragon” devastated everything. We were both prepared to die before someone showed up between us and the “Storm Dragon.””

Razen peeks at Diablo.

He nods in satisfaction. Seeing this, Razen and Reyhiem nods to each other.

“—He was the leader of the Monsters, Rimuru-sama.”

“Indeed. Both Reyhiem-sama and I thought our death was at our doorstep. But, Rimuru-sama, ruler of the Monsters showed up to persuade Veldora-sama.”

Razen's words bewildered and shocked the crowds.

“Persuaded? Could they communicate with each other?”

“Speaking of that, it is no different from suicide to get in the way of that evil dragon Veldora like that. Most creatures would be killed instantly if bathed in that concentrated amount of magicule.”

“About that, how did he—?”

A commotion breaks out among the nobles.

If they could communicate, perhaps he could truly calm Veldora down. The nobles thought so with much hope and expectation as they looked to Razen and Reyhiem.

Veldora may not invade the Kingdom of Farmus after all, but it would still be a huge mistake if they just sat here without taking any precautions. But, no one present has a solution to what they need to do next.

Now that they got wind of the disappearance of the twenty-thousand elite soldiers, including that of King's Knight Order, no one dares to come out with a half-baked plan to battle Veldora. The best solution they have at the moment is to eliminate the threat of Veldora through negotiation, or so does everyone thinks.

"As you all know, this Rimuru-sama is the ruler of Monsters and the leader of the Jura Great Forest."

"Didn't he give himself that title?"

As one of the ministers speaks, Diablo frowns in displeasure.

Razen quickly interrupts the minister upon seeing this by replying:

"That's not the case at all. I've seen the Monster Town with my own eyes, it is more than qualified to be called a capital of a kingdom. Moreover, even the Dryads who oversee the Jura Great Forest follows this Rimuru-sama."

Razen explains that Rimuru was able to communicate with Veldora through the aid of the Dryads.

These words added some convincing elements to his claims.

The overseers of the forest are rather famous and are known to be powerful monsters that guard the location where Veldora slumbers. According to the ranking of Freedom Association, they are creatures above Rank A, presumed to be Special Rank A, a dangerous species indeed.

If even the Dryads decided to follow him, the power of this monster known as Rimuru is clearly not be underestimated. Since every noble here is of a high echelon, they all have hired people to gather valuable information; hence, they all started to realize this fact.

"I see..."

"It would seem we have made a mistake in making him our enemy—"

Upon recalling the fact that they were the ones who initiated the attack on the monster Kingdom, the ministers are all troubled by this, although none of them wants to admit.

"This is bad, even if we can negotiate with the evil dragon, we are still enemy with that Rimuru, not good at all..."

One of the ministers mentions this only to resonate the same sentiments across the board. But they aren't considering the option of asking help from Rimuru to negotiate, instead they are worrying about whether angering Rimuru would further instigate Veldora's tantrum.

It is at this moment Youm, who has previously been completely ignored, steps to the center of the hall. He spoke in a calm voice that garnered the attention of everyone present:

"I see how it is then, everyone. You need not worry about that part. When I marched against the Orc Lord, I once worked alongside Rimuru-san. He is a surprisingly good-natured person, and wishes to coexist peacefully with humans—"

However, Youm was cut short as he was halfway through his speech.

"Oh oh! If that's the case, we shall have Youm-sama as our mediator to pass on our demands. We shall discuss that matter later. You may await orders in another room."

The noble Carlos, who has just scolded Youm, interrupts his explanation and gives him the order arrogantly.

The difference in social status is truly troubling. Even as a warrior, Youm is still a civilian in his blood without even a knighthood. Most of noble descent still look down on him.

Carlos is a highly ranked Count and is perhaps the best example of nobles who are too conscious of differences in status. It may be tolerated if he displays this attitude on any other day, but at this instant, given several examples of this poor behavior already, it is most inappropriate to act in this manner.

A few nobles begin to stare at Carlos with discontent, incredulous at his lack of self-awareness.

"Oi oi oi, don't get ahead of yourself now," Youm said. "About that, the man is normally quite nice, but right now the circumstance is different. Surely you all understand the reason behind it."

"What do you mean?"

"Aren't you guys the ones responsible for attacking Rimuru-san's country, right? Bad idea. Some of Rimuru-san's companions ended up dead. He was livid with indignation."

"How dare a mere plebeian spit out such nonsense! Who gave you permission to meddle in state affairs! It is simply convenient that you happen to be on good terms with that Rimuru something, and as a hero, you should also do your duty to act as a mediator, so figure something out already!"

Ignoring Youm's words, the arrogant Carlos says so without feeling a shred of shame.

Youm resents being talked down to.

Tsk, that's why I hate nobles...

Youm complains to himself internally, while still maintaining a calm facade, and continues his explanation:

"Now listen here, y'all need to first listen to what I have to say. You didn't seem to have sent any envoy or declaration of war prior to the invasion. Instead, didn't you send the otherworlders to cause a riot there? I had indeed gone to negotiate a peace and was dumbfounded to learn of this this. But still, the Kingdom of Farmus is nonetheless my home. I don't intend to see my homeland destroyed either, so I somehow managed to calm him down and beg him to negotiate for peace. Besides, Razen-san there has also asked me of the same favor."

Youm suppresses his anger and finishes his explanation.

If the arrogant nobles decided to cause a scene just now during his explanation, the fall of the Kingdom of Farmus would have been assured, Youm thinks to himself having sensed the aura emitted by Diablo behind his back.

Youm only truly realized the meaning of "Evil" after meeting Diablo.

He knows this crowd in front of him are merely petty scoundrels.

True evil would not play along the score of any authority.

They are true egoists who only act out of their own will.

Right now, the only thing keeping Diablo from lashing out is his loyalty towards Rimuru's command. But if he is to lose his temper at this point, it would be bad for Youm's coming kingship.

If he handles the nobles too kindly, it would lead to future nuisances. But if he is to kill them off, it will most certainly lead to a bad name among the public.

The most ideal situation is to have the opposing nobles start a conflict by themselves.

That's why Diablo has kept silent and has only been observing quietly.

But there are still rooms for doubts.

If the nobles are to seriously piss off Diablo, the situation may escalate very quickly. If he thinks "There is no need to keep these lots alive," then the nobles would probably be killed on the spot.

Youm has discussed about this scenario with Myuran and Grucius, they also agree about the possibility.

People who can manipulate someone as strong as Razen in their palms are powerful minorities even among Greater majins. And if such person as Diablo decides to get serious, the Kingdom of Farmus , which has now lost all of its military force, couldn't at all set up a resistance.

Therefore, Youm's party feels much more nervous as compared to the nobles.

Razen shares the same sentiment as Youm.

Diablo clearly doesn't care about human lives, whether those of nobles or civilians.

They are of no value to him.

It is obvious from how he treated King Edmalis.

It is hard to imagine what Diablo would do if someone dares insult the Monster Ruler Rimuru.

It will be fine if the noble Carlos is the only one he inflicts his rage on. But if they don't handle this well, every single citizen may be wiped out.

Knowing this very clearly, Razen tries his hardest to hide how daunted he felt and agrees with Youm's words.

"Carlos-sama, please behave yourself now!"

"What! Razen-sama, are you siding with this damn peasant?!"

"I told you to shut up! Don't butt in when you aren't aware of the circumstances!"

Razen rebukes Carlos harshly.

Surprised to see someone as composed and calculated as Razen break down like this, even the other nobles decided to remain quiet and observe the situation.

"Listen up, everyone. What Youm-sama just spoke of is all true. We were doomed to defeat once Shogo and the other two were killed by the Monster lieutenants (top brass) and the "Storm Dragon" killed off our frontal assault. The only survivors were me, Reyhiem-sama, and King Edmalis. We were captured and were only released thanks to Youm-sama's kind intervention."

Razen begins to recite the prepared materials.

No one is doubting him and things moves on smoothly.

Razen, Reyhiem and Youm take turns speaking while Marquis Müller and Earl Hermann frequently intervene to keep things well in hand. Their play to cover each other up is able to convince the ministers gathered at the location.

“...If that’s the case, the king was cursed on the battlefield and ended up like this, right?”

“The Monster king only agreed to assist us after the King’s promise of peaceful co-existence...”

“How could the great kingdom of Farmus submit to the rules of monsters?”

“But this can’t be helped. Or else do you wish to wage war against them? If we are to fight against them, “Storm Dragon” would become our enemy!”

“No, about that...”

Even the trump cards otherworlders couldn’t win against the Monster Generals. On top of that, they would also need to deal with a revived Veldora.

They look down on the Monster Kingdom of “Jura Tempest Federation,” but right now their military might alone has outmatched the Kingdom of Farmus . It would be absolutely foolish trying to confront them head-on now.

The king must have been forced to admit defeat too—That’s what the crowds believe.

And then, a conclusion is reached.

“Let’s accept this proposal for now. Does anyone object?”

Most people begin to nod in agreement after hearing Marquis Müller’s words. Although Some may be unpleasant about the decision, none of them dared to raise their opinion. There is a consensus among the ministers to halt the war.

Just like that, the Kingdom of Farmus decided to enter negotiation with Tempest Federation.

With the dust settled on that matter, Diablo decides that it is time for him to take action.

“Kufufufufu, wise choice. Then I shall release the king as promised.”

With that being said, he casually steps forward.

“Who are you—!”

“My apologies. My “name” is Diablo; Subject to my majestic ruler, Rimuru-sama and his loyal butler.”

Diablo announces proudly.

Most ministers look confused upon hearing his name, not knowing how to respond. Diablo’s attitude seems all too natural for them to interject at all.

His self-introduction however has rendered someone in fear, that being Razen.

Only Razen realizes the implication of his words.

He understands what it means for a demon to have a “name.”

There are many things in this world that proves the idiom “Ignorance is bliss”—Razen secretly envies the ignorant ones and sighs behind everyone’s back.

Some people remained vigilant towards Diablo and plan to strike when the opportunity reveals.

These are the imperial knights, who have been observing everyone's action in the dark.

Diablo walks straight towards the king's throne. The knights move to block him.

However—

Diablo doesn't even care one bit as he approaches the box on the throne.

Some of the imperial knights were shocked as their bodies becomes numb, rendering them unable to move. They couldn't even make a sound.

The royal guards are considered Rank A by the standard of the Freedom Association. Even the ones not up to Rank A are considered elites of elites among Rank Bs. They remained in the royal palace to guard the members of the royal family as well as the head ministers. They can be considered as the strongest combat force in the Kingdom of Farmus .

There are around a hundred knights in the room, yet all are unable to move an inch before Diablo.

But Diablo hasn't done anything yet.

It is out of fear.

It is out of their sharp survival instincts that they've realized how dangerous Diablo is.

"Be a doll, will you? Or do you all wish to die in vain as well?"

Diablo sounds clearly satisfied as he says so. He then continues to move forward in front of the box where King Edmalis, who has been turned into meatloaf, resides.

Diablo takes out the full recovery potion from his pocket and pours on the meatloaf that is King Edmalis. And without anyone's notice, he removes the spell on the king casted by Shion.

A dramatic change takes place.

With the potion poured onto him, the king's body is instantly restored to its healthy form.

And so, does Diablo's plan come to fruition.

The doctors and mages are all amazed and begin to cheer after witnessing the king being transformed back to human form after they've exhausted all available options.

"W-What is this medicine...?"

"This is the Full Recovery Potion™. This is our nation's special product, top-notch healing potion exported only to friendly nations."

Diablo answers gently to the question of one of the ministers. After all, this potion will become the main commodity of the Tempest Federation.

Full Recovery Potion—An item that could allegedly to be dug up from ruins of ancient magic kingdoms. It is a legendary healing potion that would even heal amputated limbs after consumption, whose fame is only rivaled by that of the resurrection potion.

The recipe for the potion has been long lost, but it is rumored that the dwarves have been trying to recreate it... If it can be mass-produced, there would be countless people coming after the potion.

Gabil has revealed the specifics of it to Diablo prior, and he caught wind of Rimuru's intent of promoting the potion. Unlike Shion, he was able to complete the intelligence collection within a very short period of time.

It is because of Diablo's wit that he was able to put on this dramatic and effective play under

such circumstances by exploiting the King of Farmus.

His dedication can only be described as perfect.

One can see how Diablo never compromises in terms of his personality.

That's why it is terrifying to make an enemy like him...

As for Razen and Reyhiem, who both feared that Diablo would massacre everyone in the castle, Diablo has long sensed their thoughts, but he wasn't planning to do such thing at all.

If he did such things, Rimuru would no longer trust him. And since the plan of crowning Youm as the new king has fallen on his shoulders, Diablo would not make such a simple blunder.

He calculates with cunningness and uses both fear and compassion as his tools.

The two tactics cycled in practice; he is able to puppeteer the beliefs of these highly ranked nobles—the heads of this nation.

He believes it would be wiser to make them obedient rather than pitting them against us. Next, he would single out fools who picked the wrong side and eliminate them. That is the general direction of Diablo's plan.

The crowds hold their breath as the king was restored back to his human form under everyone's eyes.

The onlookers must have thought it was entirely the effect of the Full Recovery Potion.

"Are you all right?"

Diablo asks, while King Edmalis nods with a nervous expression.

"Y-yes...thank you...for saving me."

The king replies in a weakened tone, partly out of genuine exhaustion.

He is dancing to Diablo's score.

Diablo's Unique Skill 'Tempter' is under the same system of law as Rimuru's Unique Skill 'Heartless One.' He is able to use his skill to achieve complete dominance over whomever pledges loyalty to Diablo.

Now that King Edmalis has already been affected by "Tempter," if he is to have any thought of betrayal, Diablo would immediately be aware of it.

Seeing that the king has been restored, the servants quickly fetch his clothes.

The king got a moment to rest with his clothes on as Diablo signals him with his eyes.

The king nods in response.

"Well then, King of Farmus. My liege Rimuru-sama has a message for you."

"Speak then, honorable envoy of Tempest Federation."

At this instant, the King of Farmus has acknowledged the Tempest Federation to be a nation. This is undoubtedly a gesture to everyone at the scene.

It is King Edmalis' proclamation to them that any future affair with Tempest Federation would be that between nations and acknowledging Tempest Federation to be a negotiable subject with a functioning society.

As such, Diablo has been officially received as the messenger sent by a hostile nation Farmus is at war with.

King Edmalis has welcomed him with the highest honor, but personally he did so to avoid

provoking Diablo.

Thanks to the King's announcement, the opposing nobles are no longer voicing their opinions.

Regardless, they don't intend to continue the conflict further. So perhaps the king's announcement was more to protect his own subjects rather than announcing for the sake of Diablo.

"Very well, allow me to deliver the message. A week from now, his grace hopes both kingdoms would send out representatives to sign a peace treaty here. But before we reach a peaceful agreement, here are the demands we propose to your nation—"

Diablo takes out a piece of parchment from his pocket.

—I shall grant you the chance to choose—

With this being the header, the parchment contains the written conditions for a truce demanded by yours truly Rimuru—But only in name, the actual content of the conditions are, in reality, Diablo's demands.

The content is quite excessive.

Option one, the king is to abdicate and compensate for the war.

Option two, Farmus is to surrender and be vassalized by Tempest Federation.

Option three, which is barely an option at all, both option one and two are rejected and the war would continue to burn Farmus to the ground.

What would appear to be the maintenance of their current status quo is, in fact, an illusion. Now that they've acknowledged the Tempest Federation as a legitimate nation, their action of waging war against Tempest Federation without a declaration of war wouldn't stand justified.

At least not by the surrounding nations.

The Western Holy Church would probably be busy fighting Veldora, that's why the crowd think they won't bother to save the Kingdom of Farmus .

The demands are more like threats.

It is telling them to either agree or die. They have to make room for agreement to prevent the destruction of their nation.

Diablo intentionally raises the parchment high and recites its content dramatically. With a delighted expression, he joyfully awaits the nobles' reactions.

As soon as he finishes reading the treaty, some minister begins to mumble to themselves "This is just coercion..."

However, that doesn't much concern Diablo as he bows towards King Edmalis.

"—These are our demands. You have one week from today. Do give us your response by that time."

"W-wait! That's quite rush with the timing! We'll need at least a month—"

"Hush. I don't have such patience."

"No, you can't leave it like this! This is no small feat that we can decide with a palace meeting alone. We will have to gather nobles from around the region and decide through the national council of the Kingdom of Farmus —"

"Did I not tell you to hush? I care not in the slightest of any difficulty you may have in

doing so. But heed this well: don't try anything funny. I'll not accept any excuse to delay the matter. If we don't hear from you in seven days, we will consider that your nation has chosen option three: "War." Consider this before giving your answer."

Diablo finishes what he has to say and leaves the Farmus King and the nobles without even turning his head.

How stubborn! Someone shouts, but Diablo won't change his mind for such a petty thing. He leaves Youm's party as soon as he finishes his business here.



After Diablo's departure, King Edmalis issues orders to summon all of the nobles to an Imperial Conference⁷.

The meeting was planned to be three days later.

Even with the use of magic, the available time is still quite limited for all of the nobles to be gathered.

But that really can't be helped since Diablo has only given them a week. A solution must be drafted before that time.

The timing is indeed pressing.

That's why the king has put out the order in such a rush to summon all the nobles within three days.

The king's servants begin to hasten their movements. The scene becomes rather busy as everyone prepares for the meeting.

King Edmalis looks exhausted as he glances around the crowd.

"I believe my fellow ministers have realized the magnitude of the issue too. We shall draft a plan for the future before all the nobles are gathered. Tomorrow, we will alter the location, so I may share my thoughts with you all. I shall listen to your opinions then."

He says so rather powerlessly while looking at his trusted subordinates.

What he is certain of at the moment is that the Kingdom of Farmus is stepping towards its demise. Because of the high stakes, there shouldn't be any bickering among his inner circle.

But there would undoubtedly be endless conflicts when the conference is held.

That's why the king is trying to get everyone on the same page before the Imperial Conference is held.

In addition, he needed to prevent unnecessary sacrifices.

King Edmalis has secretly made up his mind as he plans these things out.

⁷Imperial conference or Gozen Kaigi is a meeting that is constitutionally required to be held when the Japanese emperor wants to make an important decision. I believe only the concept of imperial conference is used here, not that Farmus has the same constitution as Japan.

The next day, the crowd convened in the conference hall once more.

The ones being summoned are all the most trusted subordinates of the king. Apart from them, for unknown reasons Marquis Müller, the leading figure of the centrists, and his follower, Earl Hermann, are also present.

In order to clear up the situation, King Edmalis begins to explain the ins and outs of the whole event.

Everyone listens to the king in silence.

Even though both Razen and Reyhiem have spoken on the issue, the ministers are now finally plunged into silence having recognized the frightening reality.

Marquis Müller suddenly opens up to ask the king:

“Your Majesty... Is it true? Did you say that Veldora has been revived?”

“Just as Razen and Reyhiem have said. In my opinion, the only issue is which one of the three options are appropriate for us. Moreover, we need to discuss our future plans past this event.”

King Edmalis gives his confirmation and urges the crowd to give their opinions on the matter.

They've been waiting for the king's permission, so the crowd begin to express their views.

“Jura Great Forest is a forbidden land guarded by Veldora. Even the Eastern Empire doesn't dare to march on it unprepared. It would be utmost foolishness for us to challenge it alone.”

“T-that's most true! We don't stand a chance to win. Our country would be destroyed if we continue fighting them!”

“Right. With that being said, it leaves us with option one and two...”

“No way can we be vassalized! We may change our stance on the matter, but we cannot become servants to monsters...”

“Don't hammer it down so quickly. We don't want any more conflicts.”

“How could this be! No landed nobility would agree to such madness.”

“There will be civil unrest!”

“Could this be the true intent of those monsters!”

“Perhaps we should have Your Majesty step down first and pay the reparation. But are you all aware of the details of the reparation? The nation would collapse.”

“Ten thousand stellar gold coins⁸. That exchanges to around a million gold coins. That would be twenty percent of our total national tax.”

“Impossible...”

“But consider our options. Isn't it at least better than having our kingdom destroyed?”

“Indeed. At least they aren't trying to drain our wallet. That means they still have some decency.”

“In the end, we still have to accept those conditions—”

“Hmm, I think so too.”

⁸stellar gold coins seems to be a universal currency in slime world. More on that in vol 9.

King Edmalis remained silent throughout the period and listened carefully to what the ministers and nobles have to say.

He thinks to himself as he listens.

How beautiful—That person possesses both a petit appearance of a young girl and a menacing aura that affirms his presence.

He is the Monster ruler called Rimuru.

The fearsome Demon Lord.

Simply recalling those experiences renews the fear deep down in his heart.

Dignity and what-not are all overruled by fear. The king doesn't even dare to raise an opposition to his enemy again.

Because it reminds him of the days he was turned into meatloaf and force-fed his own hands and feet.

The king does not want to experience that suffering again at any cost, that's why he has made up his mind to convince the ministers.

After the defeat, there are still countless things under question.

The monsters, surprisingly, have principles.

With the birth of a new Demon Lord, the “Storm Dragon” was also revived.

King Edmalis realizes his utter defeat as he begins to accept these realities.

He was blinded by his desire and made the wrong judgement. Had he begun their relationship peacefully, there may be a different future they could paint.

But it is all too late at this point.

—There can't be any missteps from now on.

Diablo mentioned that they can choose whichever out of the three if they so desire. In other words, whichever option selected would all help Diablo to reach his goal. With that being the case, it would be the right call to choose the option with the least potential harm.

King Edmalis begins to ponder on it by himself, which option would cause the least damage.

Option three is obviously a no go.

Not only the citizens, everyone would be killed.

Option two should be further evaluated.

It is an option that can ensure both the well-beings and prosperity of the citizens.

He has had a glance of the beautiful streets of Tempest Federation. In that kingdom, some adventurers are even having a good time hanging out with monsters.

Perhaps they are not bad in nature after all...

It's a beautiful thought that's crossed Edmalis' head, but he still decides to not settle on that option.

It probably won't work. Without witnessing those sights by themselves, people won't place their trust in monsters. Even I would consider these to be tales of a madman had I only heard them in words—

Besides, the nobles have a duty to protect their subjects. Even if the nobles surrender unconditionally, it would be impossible to have them all willingly vassalized. You simply can't

force them into obeying, even with hell breaking loose.

It would most likely invoke protests from the neighboring nations as well, nor would the Monster Kingdom be recognized by the Western State Council. He would most likely end up being assassinated if he is to ignore these hindrances by using his authority as a king.

As for option one, it seems to be their safest choice.

Abdication of king means exactly what it says, King Edmalis must step down. A new heir would swear not to wage war again and would be given the throne.

It is rather coercive considering the amount of reparation they are demanding, but it can't be helped. The cost of peace is much lower than resuming this war.

But that would only be the case if the monsters cease to demand more from his kingdom.

There is also a hidden agenda behind the two demands.

Diablo has also discussed in length with King Edmalis about it. He wants to crown Youm as the new king, and on this basis, he will build a new kingdom.

Edmalis has three children, his eldest daughter, youngest daughter, and eldest son.

Both daughters of his have been married to other kingdoms leaving the crown available only to his eldest son, the prince. But he has yet to even reach the age of ten and is far from mature. If King Edmalis is to step down now, there will likely be a struggle for the throne.

King Edmalis is well aware of the people who desire the throne. The head of the optimates⁹ is his own little brother, Duke Edward.

He can easily tell Diablo's true intent as he analyzes things this way.

Diablo intends to have the royalist and the optimates fight to the death over the inheritance of the crown.

Now that he thinks about it, whichever option of the three would eventually lead to conflict. And their evaluation of which one to choose is all just a part of Diablo's plan.

—In other words, it doesn't matter which option we choose...

King Edmalis sighs internally.

The outcome would be the same. And if that's the case—

“Settle down, everyone. Please heed my thought.”

King Edmalis proposes so after everyone has expressed their opinions.

“I've heard that their kingdom is called “Jura Tempest Federation.” Many different races residing in the Jura Great Forest now follow the ruler called Rimuru. I think we could join this big family as well...”

“Are you suggesting we should be vassalized by them?”

“No, that is not the case. I am simply surprised by how well managed that kingdom is.”

Edmalis pauses upon saying so and glances looks around the crowd with determination on his face.

“This war is all my fault. I did it not for our people, but out of my own desire. Because of that, even god has given up on me. My arrogance has led to the awakening of Veldora to

⁹A person who supports that the nobles should have equal or more power over the royal family in a monarch. Opposite of the royalist.

bring disaster to my kingdom Farmus. Had I listened to the advice of Marquis Müller and Earl Hermann, this could all have been prevented—”

“Sire, that is too kind of you...”

“I am most grateful for your highness’ praise.”

Edmalis replies to the two with a “hmm” sound.

Then he begins to spill his gut feelings:

“There won’t be a second chance, nor will there be a second time. It is because of him, Rimuru-dono, the leader of Monsters, that I was able to survive. So, this will not happen again. If I am to make the same mistake twice, it will not only be me who is doomed, but all of our people. At this point, my reputation and dignity are all irrelevant now. We should prevent our people from being affected by this. As for what we should do to turn things around, and what would be good for the people, we should all aim now to come up with such solution!”

The ministers are all shocked as to freeze at the scene.

That’s because the king, the devious and selfish king has confessed his wrongdoing. Not only so, he has reached out to everyone present for an ideal solution.

No wonder why everyone is surprised.

These ministers also begin to reflect upon their past actions having seen the regrets on the King’s face. In the end they’ve really only used their honor as an excuse to protect their own selfish interests. Now they’ve finally come to realize that deeply.

The ministers rise up from their seats and kneel before the king.

Then—

“Apologies, sire. We’ve also been foolish in the past. We shall find out the best solution, for... For the people of this nation!”

Marquis Müller speaks out for everyone at the scene. The ministers all begin to kowtow¹⁰ without a word of complaint.

After which, they would invite Youm’s party as advisors to continue the meeting, without knowing when it will end...



“—Just like that, I gave them some shock education.”

Diablo reports to me with a smile.

Eh, hold on, hold on! There is too much going on that I don’t even know where to start asking.

But there’s something that has been on my mind the most—

¹⁰Kowtow is a word to describe the bow in Chinese and Japanese culture where one kneels and bows their head on the ground, a display of highest obedience and respect.

“Did you really show it to them?”

“Yes. I think it is most effective to invoke fear.”

So you did... You really showed them that...

“That” being the meatloaf.

I don't intend to praise Shion even though she looks quite happy about it.

No wonder they wet their pants seeing this. I would undoubtedly vomit seeing it if it was me from before (reincarnating).

It is truly that disturbing.

By the way, this is totally what a Demon Lord would do.

My image as an upstanding man with principle has now been turned into that of a blood-lusting monster. Never mind, you can't rewind time to undo it. But in terms of methods, it does seem quite effective in winning their trust by giving them the stick before carrot... Eh, this sounds like how a yakuza (mafia) group would function.

I jump down from Shion's laps.

I decide to turn back to human form and drink some black tea to restore some tranquility in my mind.

“Oh, and about the condition of a peace treaty, I proposed a reparation of ten thousand stellaras.”

I spat out my black tea.

Ten **thousand** stellaras, you...

I did order him to demand reparations to alienate the king and the nobles...but this amount is just ridiculously large.

It is so large in fact that the neighboring nations would probably not forgive such action.

In this world, barter economy is still the mainstream.

There may be transactions with currency in large cities, such as the capital of Blumund and Ingracia, but there are far more population in rural areas who have never seen denomination greater than silver coin.

In simpler terms, the value of currency is surprisingly high.

A copper coin is around ten yens in Japan, a silver coin to a thousand yens and gold coin to around hundred thousand. Even though this is how one would generally feel, such beliefs would only hold true in urban areas.

The reality is far different.

To be more specific, the average income of an urban laborer is around six silver coins a day. In terms of monthly income, it is around one-hundred-fifty silver coins, roughly fifteen hundred thousand yens.

Whereas in comparison, a countryfolk may make less than a hundred silver coins in a year. The wage gap between the rich and the poor is quite significant with the latter earning less than a hundred thousand yen a year.

However, there aren't that many diversions in this world, so there are fewer places to spend the money, which renders currency to be less necessary. That's why there is no fundamental

difference in lifestyle between the two classes even with such a huge wage gap.

In other words, right now this world's economy is still somewhat healthy without the impact of globalization and inflow of financial capital.

Now is the time to build a greater economic body.

Diablo's intelligence is really something else.

When I revealed my plan of coexistence and growth, he seemed to have understood thoroughly the structure of economic dominance. In order make commodities with different value flow in the market, currency is definitely warranted.

If one can control the flow of currency, one would hold the world economy in his grip.

There are many nations in this world that use national currency produced by the state, but right now only the general currency produced by Dwargon are mainstream in all markets.

In other words, it isn't that difficult to build a global economic network by introducing a special currency to this world.

Diablo would probably do so and may have already planned this out.

But we are getting off track.

Let's talk about the exchange rate of currency that has been settled in this country (Farmus).

A copper coin exchanges to around one hundred yens, a silver coin to ten thousand and a gold coin to approximately one million.

A reparation of ten thousand stellaris would be demanding around one trillion yens of war compensation. This world is not as materially abundant as Japan from my last life, so there is no need for any nation to ever prepare such an enormous national budget. It is then only natural that such reparation would be considered a ridiculous price.

"Aren't you demanding a bit too much?"

"Kufufufufu, no need to worry. I've already given them three choices, but in the end they can only choose one. Option three is naturally outside of their consideration while option two is impossible to choose. At the end of the day they will only choose the first and negotiate with us."

But it would save some time for us if they choose option three, Diablo says so laughing.

Of course they have to choose the first option.

They may try to negotiate a discount—no, they aren't that stupid. They are probably unable to pay up in one go, so they may negotiate an installment.

Diablo seems to have seen through me and says:

"A discount is not gonna happen, the Kingdom of Farmus will have to pay in full. But it is hard to achieve in practice. Their economy would probably stagger with all those coins withdrawn from the market."

That's true as well.

It's clear that Diablo has some other intent.

"All they can do in response is to—find a scapegoat."

So that's the why.

Diablo's rationale is as follows:

They will first vouch for a down payment and then pay up the remaining debt with other things than coins. Whoever pays up the remaining debt does not matter; they can go on to cut ties with such individuals from the Kingdom of Farmus .

In this way, they can argue that the Kingdom of Farmus has paid up their reparations. They then get to claim they've done their part even at the cost of provoking us.

Although this strategy would only work if the people they deal with remain reasonable afterward, but it would be truly problematic if they use it against us.

“What would we do if this becomes true?”

“We will proceed as planned. We can at least collect a thousand stellaras, and it would conclude the first phase of our plan.”

Eh, hold on a second?

“On what ground do you conclude we would be able to collect at least a thousand stellaras by then?”

“Oh, so that's what you are asking.”

Diablo says, as if implying “That's easy,” and goes on to explain regarding my question.

In simpler terms, the reason seems to be that the stellaras cannot be directly used in transactions.

So that's how it is, I finally understood.

I quickly come to realize with his explanation.

The value of one stellar would be around ten million to a hundred million yen, so exchanging it to gold coins would be quite troublesome. That's why normally no one would think handing out these coins would cause much of any impact since they have no use unless in large scale transactions. Has Diablo noticed this point?

Gold coins are the primary currency stored for national budget expenditures whereas the stellaras are stored like securities¹¹ and cannot be casually exchanged.

There is no bank in this world, so saving them wouldn't generate any interest. That's why they would probably be more willing to compromise.

Diablo is one hell of a character.

I was just wondering whether we could at least get a hundred to three hundred stellaras through negotiation.

The reparations for each casualty would be one hundred million yens.

On top of that, there are also expenses of destroyed buildings and other things.

I thought this is the bottom line that we won't compromise on. But if we can really get one thousand stellaras like what Diablo said, we won't mind going into a negotiation with them afterward.

One hundred billion yen, that's an amount far beyond my expectation.

But this seems hardly enough for Diablo as he also plans to invoke a civil war.

What a horrifying fella.

¹¹Security in financial sense, a tradable financial asset

“What do you intend to do other than having them compensate our loss?”

“Kufufufufu, King Edmalis may have been released, but he has already become my pawn. To be more specific, under the influence of my Unique Skill ‘Tempter,’ he would in a sense, act entirely according to my will.”

King Edmalis is now under the domination of Unique Skill ‘Tempter.’ Diablo thus has control over his life and death. Although he wouldn’t be able to force his own will onto the king, Diablo can still take his life if he so wishes.

As long as he remains loyal to Diablo, there naturally wouldn’t be any issue. But the moment he bears the thought of betrayal, Diablo would be instantly notified.

In other words, he may be killed at this very moment by Diablo... Having learned of this relationship, he would probably refrain from betraying.

What a terrifying skill that utilizes fear to manipulate others! Be a good dog and live life safe and sound, that’s what the skill is all about.

Later, Diablo mentions that he has been observing King Edmalis’ actions.

He seems to have satisfied all the conditions prepared by Diablo for him to step down. Right now, there isn’t even a need for Marquis Müller and Earl Hermann to step in and hold people accountable as originally planned.

In other words, these people are all now royalists in aid of King Edmalis... This initially seems to be deviating from our original plan, but as soon as one gets to the detail, one would realize that the situation now is far more ideal for the plan to proceed.

King Edmalis would step down and lead to the collapse of his authority. For this reason, the criticism would no doubt be directed to him and he will eventually be held accountable by the others.

“The Royal Knight Order was massacred by Rimuru-sama, leaving the royal family unguarded. Right now, it is suicide for King Edmalis to stand against the nobles. He is left to his own devices. That is what seems to be happening, but in reality—”

The Knight Order that protects the royal family is gone. The nobles wouldn’t let go such a chance to make the King the “scapegoat” as Diablo describes, that seems to be the case.

A conflict is inevitable.

The optimates may be planning to sacrifice King Edmalis, but it seems that the King has realized this and has been fighting hard to avoid such fate.

About this, what could happen next?

How would the royalists without any military to back themselves up avoid their defeat against the optimates?

«Answer. Their solution would be to absorb Youm’s party and stand together against the tide. In this way—»

Oh yeah, Youm is with us.

King Edmalis also knows that I wish to make Youm the new king, that’s why he is assisting his crowning...

It would be too out of place to suddenly give away his throne to Youm. But if they could

build him into a figure of their savior, they could perform the fall of royal family, and their will to be carried forward by Youm.

“King Edmalis is planning to get Youm on their side, that means we would be on the same boat then.”

“I’m afraid it is just as you predict.”

Diablo delightfully smiles upon hearing my answer.

Did I guess it right?

With us as their reinforcement, they would gain the military might greater than that of the Royal Knight Order. The nobles may boss around believing the king to be powerless, but they wouldn’t stand a chance against the hero Youm.

“If that’s the case, all we need to do is to send reinforcement for Youm. Am I correct?”

“Indeed. My servant Razen will contact us, I shall trouble you then.”

As expected of Diablo, now we even have eyes on the matter since he’s arranged his own underling to attend to these concerns. He is the perfect example of someone upholding the belief “Perfection is eighty percent planning and twenty percent working” ¹² as this man elegantly conducts his mission.

By the way, he even recruited Razen.

I heard that he was a really strong person known as the Guardian of Farmus, but it seems he is a nobody in Diablo’s eyes.

Since he has already recruited him, I shouldn’t concern myself thinking about it.

“Would we be able to win in this way? What if, say, someone desiring the throne decides to conspire with some other country and form an alliance?”

“Fuze-san and King Gazel are pressuring the surrounding nations and keeping an eye on them. Although the likelihood of such an event is low... If it truly happens, I would participate in the fight as well, so please be reassured.”

Sensing the confidence in his words, I decide to let him do his thing.

Speaking of Diablo, he really has hidden himself behind the curtain on the issue. It is quite frightening for me to think that he has left the important duty of “Taking over a nation” completely to someone else to take care of.

The probability of opposition forming an alliance is extremely small. But it aligns with the prediction of “Wisdom King Raphael,” so it should be fine for him to hand it over to other people.

“All right, I’ll leave the rest to you. Report to me if anything important happens.”

“Understood! I shall resolve the matter properly, my liege!”

I give Diablo, who’s kneeling on the ground, a couple of shoulder pats and tell him to continue and complete his mission.

¹²The idiom here is 段取り八分 that emphasizes the importance of preparation in doing anything. The english translation was inspired by an Anon Japanese yahooask user so props to the man.

*

With Diablo's explanation, the details of the plan have been confirmed.

It happens so that Haruna is serving us some freshly made dessert to enjoy with our tea.

"Oh, isn't this Matcha Pudding?"

"Yes, Rimuru-sama. It is not as good as ones made by Shuna-sama, but my skill has improved nonetheless."

Haruna-san serves the pudding onto our table with a gentle smile.

Immediately after, Veldora, who has been reading manga without saying a word to us this whole time, suddenly bumped into me looking like it is only natural.

"Oh? Is there a serving for me?"

"Of course, Veldora-sama."

Mr. Swagger here hums in response and reaches his hand out for the pudding on the plate.

"Veldora-sama, here's my end of the bargain as promised."

Says Diablo, while giving his pudding to Veldora.

"GA—HAHAHA! Diablo, you are a man of your words."

Veldora nods in satisfaction as he takes over the pudding from Diablo's hand.

Speaking of that, that's quite the cheap bribe.

"Diablo, are you okay without eating?"

I ask, thinking Haruna could prepare an extra one, but was turned down with a bow from Diablo.

"I am simply paying in exchange of information; you don't have to concern yourself with my humble ordeal."

It would seem he is quite the gentleman having kept every end of his bargain.

Wait a second, is there really a need to be so dramatic for one pudding? I think to myself. But I suppose I should stay quiet since Diablo has already accepted it.

"Is it now? Very well then. By the way, are you back in Tempest because you finished your work in Farmus while I was at the Walpurgis Banquet?"

I mention this to Diablo casually.

When I left at midnight, he was not present. So, my guess is that I didn't catch him returning. However—

"Ah, not quite. After issuing my threat to the King and the ministers, I went to different locations within Farmus to examine their financial status. I was trying to investigate whether there was any flaw in my plan. That is when Veldora-sama contacted me and summoned me back."

He just nonchalantly spilt out Veldora's secret.

With a "Ga-dong" sound, Veldora stood up nervously from his seat.

“I-I’ve suddenly recalled something to attend to.”

He is clearly trying to play dumb here, but you aren’t getting away now.

“Ara ara, don’t act so hastily now, Veldora-kun.”

I clamped my hand tightly on his shoulder in the blink of an eye.



“W-wait! We have to be civil now!”

“Civil my ass! What the hell do you think you are doing meddling with important business of others—!”

Veldora tries his hardest to escape, but I take his pudding from him and order Haruna-san to not give any dessert to him for now.

Veldora is crying, but I won’t forgive him.

How incredibly reckless.

In terms of result, Veldora did help by breaking into the Walpurgis Banquet, but that doesn’t excuse what he did. If I forgive him today, he may end up causing some other trouble in the future.

Thankfully, it was Diablo who responded to him, I can’t even imagine how the other lieutenants would’ve handled it. They would probably panic with Veldora’s casual order to switch duty. That’s exactly why I told Veldora to ask for my permission first before doing something like this again.

At the same time, there is only one more thing left for Diablo to attend to in person, that being the peace conference held in five days. He would be handling most of the details regarding the meeting, but he personally plans to continue the role as my butler.

This is what Diablo has to say— “I am Rimuru-sama’s butler after all, so I must accompany you at all times.”

Shion is very sour over the fact, proving this to be Diablo’s victory.

And about the peace conference.

“Eh, should I attend as well?”

“No, I alone will be sufficient.”

He rejected my proposal.

It would probably be more reassuring to have your boss with you when dealing with such important business. But perhaps such worry is unnecessary for someone as capable as Diablo.

Or rather, my presence would probably reduce the war-mongering sentiments among the nobles.

Although I’m somewhat confused about this implication, things will be fine as long as Diablo is handling it.

Upon thinking so, I can now safely take the great conquest of Farmus Kingdom off my mind.



—Sometime later, things have gone just according to Diablo’s prediction.

The nobles have gathered for the imperial conference.

Unlike the last meeting, the king and the ministers all look very serious as the tension overflows from their expression.

The nobles also sense the difference in atmosphere. Their expression also gradually becomes more tense without them noticing.

The king starts the discussion:

“Our troops marched on to destroy the Tempest Federation, yet they were decimated by the revived “Storm Dragon” Veldora. There are only three survivors, me, Razen and Reyhiem. We’ve been defeated.”

It is an impactful line that incited commotion throughout the room.

King Edmalis begins to recount the horrific fate of the Farmus Army.

The content sounded unbelievable to the crowds, yet what the king said immediately after the account diverted their disbelief to criticism of the king.

It is hardly unexpected.

Because the king announces that he has accepted the terms of the monsters to pay reparations for the war.

The amount of reparation is ten thousand stellaras.

“Impossible! A stellar exchanges to a hundred gold coins. Are we really paying one million gold coins!”

“How can we pay so much money to monsters. We can’t even trust those things!”

“We won’t even be able to gather that sum even if we bankrupt the country!”

By the way, stellaras are commonly used in bilateral trade between nations. Its existence is similar to a form of “Certificates for preservation”¹³. A normal nation would probably own less than a hundred of them. No matter how strong the Kingdom of Farmus is, they could only collect around a thousand coins maximum, in addition to the more commonly used general coins (dwarven coins). Just as the nobles complained, it is an incredibly large amount for them to collect.

If the victors were their trade partners, Farmus could probably replace currency with commodities, but as a new kingdom run by monsters, they didn’t have this option with tempest. Their economy would inevitably be affected.

Diablo’s intent was to make life difficult for them by demanding ten thousand coins, so it is no wonder that the nobles would complain about it.

Besides, these nobles have not personally been on the battlefield themselves, so they lack a sense of urgency. They are not sharp enough to realize the crisis their nation is facing right now.

That’s why many nobles begin to step out in opposition and argue for the continuation of the war against their enemy.

“That’s right. How dare they demand our compliance; it simply cannot happen. There is no way we could know if they would follow through with the deal and not attack our people.”

“Then we can only fight them to the end. It’s just an evil dragon awakened from slumber,

¹³or just another way of saying securities

I shall bet on my honor and march on them.”

“The enemy here is Veldora. The Western Holy Church won’t just sit on that. That beautiful Valkyrie Hinata would also take a move.”

“Oh oh, commander of the Holy Knight Order, Hinata? That vixen may be cunning, but this is the perfect time to send her out.”

“It is common knowledge that the Western Holy Church consider Veldora an enemy.”

“Isn’t there any Chosen Hero out there?”

“Oh oh, there’s Shining Masayuki from the Kingdom of Ingracia !”

“That’s it. The enemies are always beaten without even reacting, he’s known as the strongest hero of this land. His title “The Shining” is not for show, we have to invite him to demonstrate his skill by defeating Veldora.”

The nobles are enjoying their chit chat.

But none of them realized their suggestions are all relying on others.

“Hmm, that’s the spirit! Let’s go fend off those monsters!”

Some even begin to spill such ridiculous claims shamelessly.

The royalists feel somewhat shameful seeing how the nobles are acting. They begin to recall how themselves were acting when the king first informed them of the matter.

Some start to fluster while sighing while others even begin their self-reflection upon imagining how the king must have felt at the time.

King Edmalis is also well aware of what is really on the minds of the nobles gathered here.

Right now, all the nobles advocating for war are simply trying to protect their fortune. It is neither for the protection of the Kingdom of Farmus nor for the life and properties of the citizens.

They are simply putting out the words as if they are justified, while not harboring a real determination to fight the enemy.

King Edmalis has suspected this is how things will turn out. These are all landed nobles who have yet to recognize the reality of the situation.

These people have never experienced the taste of fear and don’t have any intention of joining the frontline.

They just want to remain in safety while others fight their war.

They probably won’t take responsibility either when they are defeated.

It may have worked in the past.

Because the Kingdom of Farmus is a powerful nation that has oppressed surrounding nations in the past.

But that is not viable anymore. Such an old trick of issuing threats to neighboring nations would no longer work.

Besides, their opponent is the Catastrophe-Ranked monster who is capable of decimating an entire army on its own...

Furious, the nobles start to loudly accuse the king for being responsible.

And claim that the reparations should be paid by the royal family.

And that the monsters’ demands must be rejected.

And that they should unite the Farmus military to take a last stand.
The nobles' view, in a sense, is correct.
But they are forgetting an important factor.
That is the military force within the Kingdom of Farmus has been significantly reduced.
Or perhaps, they are simply unwilling to accept this reality...
With this reminded to them, some begin to quiet down with a tense look while some continue their unreasonable protest.

King Edmalis' worries have come true; the nobles can't reach an agreement and the meeting has been plunged into chaos.

At this moment, the head of the optimates—the King's brother Edward speaks up with much preparation:

“Brother, no, Your Highness! Even with you stepping down, you can't evade responsibility! How could a dignified king just surrender like this?”

“...Heed this, Edward. Our enemy is “Storm Dragon” Veldora. My dignity and glory are like trash to that tyrant! I don't want to be tormented by that horror anymore. Or perhaps, you wish to fight for this glory! I won't stop you! But you would be sending the soldiers to die for a lost cause.”

“No, about that... But sire, if what you said is true, are you planning to run away on your own?”

“You fool, where could I run to?! That's why I want to step down and pay the reparations.”

Edward believed that this is his best move to hold the king responsible, but he was confronted by King Edmalis' rare display of verve and fell silent.

Seeing this, King Edmalis lowers his volume and continues:

“If I do not step down, we can only choose to be vassalized or continue the war. Is this really what we want? Our kingdom would be destroyed—”

“Ehh...but, you are asking us to surrender to the monsters without a fight...”

Still unconvinced, Edward mumbles so rather unwillingly.

At this point, the meeting is quiet once more. Earl Hermann carefully opens up:

“Could you hear me out? This morning, I received a letter containing very important information. I would like to deliver the message to you all.”

Earl Hermann finishes and begins to announce the open letter sent by the Kingdom of Blumund.

The content of the letter is as follows, Blumund Kingdom officially supports Tempest Federation and would be sending military force to hold the Kingdom of Farmus accountable.

This is a real open letter in condemnation of the Kingdom of Farmus.

“How dare a small nation like that be so arrogant!”

“They must have been so arrogant because of our defeat, surely they would have remained silent if we had achieved victory.”

Yet the anger of these nobles is quickly extinguished as they learn that Dwargon has made the same statement—The Foreign Trade Minister adds on Hermann' report. Now the nobles

started to panic, their arrogant tones are also now toned down.

“Blumund alone is enough, but if the Armed Nation of Dwargon moves out, things will get difficult. Will the Dwarven King Gazel still remain neutral?”

“No, the problem is his influence and authority. Dwargon is also an important trade partner of ours, so nothing will end well with us angering King Gazel.”

The report of Earl Hermann started the turn of atmosphere in the meeting room for the worse. But at that moment, someone dropped a bigger bomb.

“M-message for his majesty! Urgent news just arrived from the Freedom Association!”

A soldier looking rather pale intruded into the room without the care of the important meeting ongoing. But the guards don’t seem to be stopping him. The reason being the “Highest Urgency Report” on his hand.

The nobles would want to complain, but the word “Highest” have forced their words back to their mouth. This report is only issued for events with the threat level of Special Rank S, whoever impedes its delivery would be given the penalty of treason as by the combined law issued by the Kingdom of Farmus and Freedom Association.

“Speak.”

With King Edmalis’ permission, the soldier raises the report with his hands nervously shaking and begins to announce its content:

“Monster Rimuru has proclaimed himself the ruler of Jura Great Forest. Report states that he publicly announced that he has become a Demon Lord!”

“What in the world!”

“That’s—”

“This crisis may be our opportunity. Our country may still have a chance after all!”

“That’s right. Those Demon Lords won’t sit this one out. That arrogant Rimuru would soon learn the horror of the real Demon Lords.”

“If things go well, the Demon Lords may even take out the revived Veldora along the way too!”

The nobles follow up the report as the herald is halfway through, but what he is about to say would vanquish their hopes.

“—Demon Lord Clayman was discontented and challenged Rimuru—Demon Lord Rimuru, has allegedly eliminated him instead.”

With the herald’s words out, the shock experienced by everyone in the meeting room is unanimous.

“—What!”

“How can this be...”

“What about “Lion King” Karion? And “Sky Queen” Frey? What the hell are they up to? Are they seriously going to give away the rights to Jura Great Forest to a new-comer?”

It is only natural for them to be surprised learning their enemy has become a Demon Lord.

One of the nobles followed up with a question about the responses of the other Demon Lords around Jura Great Forest. In response, the soldier finishes the last sentence.

“The Karion and Frey you mentioned, they’ve given up their seat as Demon Lord to join the reign of Demon Lord Milim. The constituent of Demon Lords is thus altered as well, the now eight Demon Lords in total are called the “Octagram”!”

This line completely silenced all of the optimates.

They’ve probably learnt that their arch nemesis Rimuru is also one of the Octagram.

The royalists have already caught wind of the news prior to the meeting, but this doesn’t mean they’ve accepted it willingly simply for knowing earlier. They again fell silent given how unbelievable it sounds no matter how many times they hear the news.

This information was sent out by the Demon Lords’ side alone. Since there is no point in doubting the authenticity. Each Demon Lord possesses enormous strength to exempt them from the need to deceive the humans with such matters.

The meeting room is clouded by silence before King Edmalis decides to open up after hardened consideration:

“As you’ve heard, everyone. Veldora may be a great threat, but this monster called Rimuru is equally a dangerous character. He is a monster¹⁴ beyond our imagination to have beaten Demon Lord Clayman so easily. Is there still a need to continue this meeting? My will to step down has been determined. It is simply too foolish to talk all high and mighty of how we are for the nation without even considering the capabilities of our enemy. I’ve been blinded by profits; it was my mistake. Had we chosen another approach to interact with them, they might have been a good neighbor of ours.”

King Edmalis implies that his abdication would likely lead to a new relationship between the two nations. The nobles realize there isn’t a point opposing the proposal at this point as they carefully follow the king’s words.

Everyone finally decides to accept reality and follows through with King Edmalis’ proposal, the only viable way.

“I’m stepping down. In addition, I’m recommending Edward to inherit the throne.”

“Brother...”

“What did you say!”

“Aren’t you passing the throne to Prince Edgar?”

The king’s unexpected words have caused a commotion in the room again.

Everyone thinks that as soon as King Edmalis steps down, the throne would be naturally passed onto the prince. That’s why Edward has been trying hard in highlighting himself.

His brother Edmalis would have to step down. Facing such rare opportunity, Edward dreams to take the throne for his own.

Even if Prince Edgar inherits the crown this time, there is still a chance as long as he affirms his authority.

The prince is only ten years old. But with his father still alive and well, Edward wouldn’t be able to take control behind the scenes yet.

¹⁴Yeah so this is the part where the “monster” means “unhuman, unnatural” and not referring to the species “monster.” Me asian anger for Mamono.

If that is the case, he plans to spark discontent among the nobles, so they think in the direction of—“Lord Edward is the proper candidate for the throne.”

But now, the throne is Edward’s to take.

“There are still many challenges ahead of us. Edgar is still too young to conquer them properly.”

King Edmalis says so rather bitterly.

The ministers all hold different views, whereas some nods in agreement with this decision.

“My liege, I think this is a great idea.”

It is Marquis Müller.

Hearing this, Edward laughs internally. Now this decision is likely hammered down since he has even got the approval from Marquis Müller, who is the head of the centrists. He is confident in his ability to overcome the challenges as soon as he has the throne.

They would make excuses to delay the reparation payment while roping the neighboring countries into battle against the monster kingdom. Just as the nobles from his faction claimed, the human alliance with Chosen Hero and Holy Knights as back-up would nonetheless be an effective deterrence.

Besides, they may even be unnecessary...

With the exchange of kingship, it would also mean the exchange of political power.

The demands accepted by the previous government is not required to be fulfilled up by the new government. This would mean there is no need to pay for the ridiculously high reparation.

If anyone is getting punished for it, he would push all the blames to the previous king—his own brother Edmalis.

Edward’s thoughts are rather shallow.

Hehehe, I will definitely make the nation more prosperous as soon as I become the king.

Unaware of his orchestrated role in this grander play, Edward is overjoyed by the prospect of inheriting the throne.

The meeting proceeded smoothly afterwards.

Many questions were addressed with detailed solutions.

They were able to outline a general plan and come to a unanimous agreement on engaging in peace conference with the monsters.

—The scene moves on to the location of the peace conference.

The great and ancient kingdom of Farmus agrees and signs the treaty of truce with Jura Tempest Federation.

The two reach a common ground.

In effect, The Kingdom of Farmus is recognizing the legitimacy of the Tempest Federation as a country, even though they can’t bypass international law nor having not established diplomatic tie.

But with that being said, the Tempest Federation has yet to join the council formed by the Western Nations—the Western State Council. So even if Farmus were to commence another invasive attack, there will be no judicial intervention.

It is only from a humanitarian point of view that Farmus has recognized the status of Tempest Federation among different nations.

But it has been proven that Tempest Federation possesses military strength.

The ruler of that nation is the new Demon Lord Rimuru.

An ally of “Storm Dragon” Veldora, and a monster beyond their comprehension to have dominated the Jura Great Forest in less than two years’ time.

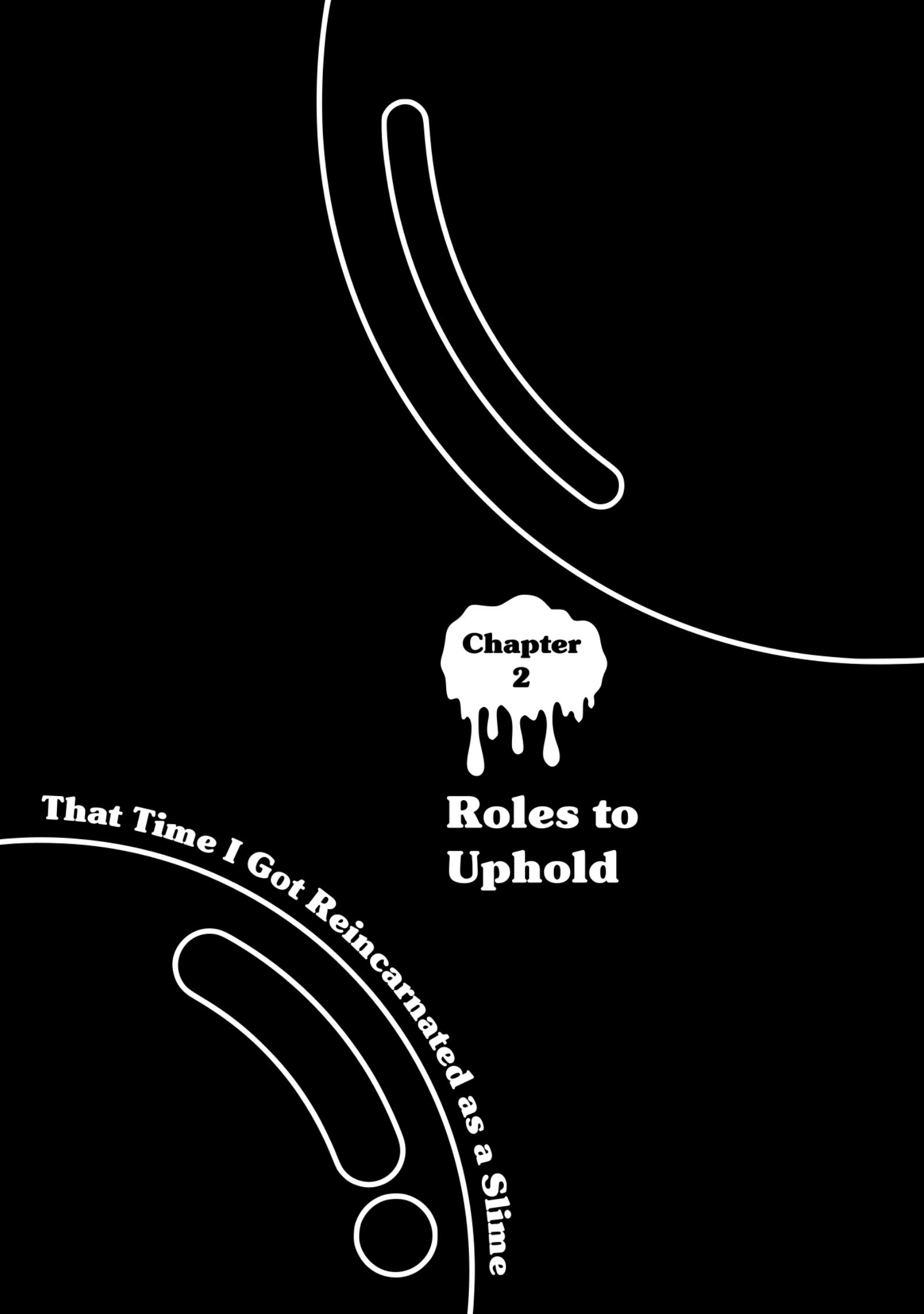
The facts are all listed right in front of them, so no nation would dare to start a war against Tempest Federation. Rather than profits, they think the losses alone would be too much. Moreover, acting too rashly may even lead to the destruction of their nations.

From that day onward—Rimuru has become an existence that no one dares to obstruct.

He has become a Demon Lord of this world, a Catastrophe-Ranked threat.

And phase one concludes without any major issue.

Everything is unfolding according to Diablo’s plan—



**Chapter
2**

**Roles to
Uphold**

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Chapter 2

Roles to Uphold

The day after Diablo's report, Shuna and Souei returned early in the morning.

"We've made it back safely!"

Shuna said so while rubbing me against her cheek. Her battle had depleted her mana, so she needed some time to recover enough mana to cast "Spatial Movement."

While I could cast a large-scale "Teleportation" using "Spatial Domination," Shuna has limited magicule storage and can only cast it a few times per day. Souei could have used "Shadow Teleportation" to get back, but as a bodyguard, he couldn't abandon his charge, so he waited for Shuna to recover. Right now, several "Clones" of his are securing the perimeter of Clayman's base. It seems he's having an easier time with this work than I imagined.

"Right, what about Hakurou?"

"Yes, I've asked him to take care of some business."

Shuna replies with a smile.

Shion quietly averts her eyes from me. It would seem they returned early and left the cleaning up to Hakurou.

Hakurou can't use "Spatial Movement," so it's sometimes unavoidable that he gets left behind. However, Hakurou treats Shuna as preciously as he would to a granddaughter, so he probably wouldn't mind if she's the one asking for a favor.

It seems that he's been assisting Geld in coordinating the investigation of Clayman's castle, the recovery of trophies, and the management of captives.

That's a lot on Hakurou's shoulders—I feel deeply grateful to him.

His work is piling up, but a layman like myself would just get in the way. I should stay quiet until he makes a request (for assistance).

The following night, Benimaru's party also returned.

"Eh? Is it okay for the Generalissimo to return like this?"

As I ask, Benimaru cracks a smile.

"Hehe, since the battle is already over, staying there would just be a nuisance to the others. So, we swiftly withdrew after leaving the command to our outstanding lieutenants."

Benimaru says delightedly, as a man with no responsibilities.

In other words, he left the aftermath for the Beastketeers to deal with. I could almost see the frustration on Alvis' and the rest's faces.

He and Shuna are similar in this respect, but I suppose it is only expected from siblings.

At least try to learn from my strong sense of responsibility—

«Answer. It is concluded that they've learned this from their master.»

Conclusion based on what?!

You must have been mistaken.

Speaking of which, has your analysis ability degraded since your evolution from “Great Sage” to “Wisdom King Raphael”?

«Negative. No such effect is detected.»

And you dare to deny it.

It must have been the case with its evolution.

But I don't stand a chance trying to argue with it, so I shall be the bigger man here and let it slide.

Not being able to win against Raphael, I decide to ask Benimaru how the aftermath was being handled.

“By the way, is Gabil still on the battlefield?”

“Yes. That guy got along quite well with Milim-sama's subordinate Midley, so he decided to help with the wrap-up.”

“I see. So, Geld is at Clayman's base, while Gabil remains on the battlefield.”

I see that Gabil has also stayed to deal with the aftermath.

Whether it is Geld or Gabil, both seem very reliable when tackling real situations.

The war is not over although the battle is won.

The aftermath is more problematic to deal with. Especially since we've wiped out all of Clayman's underlings...

We have profited from the hard labor of the many captives taken from the battlefield and his base. Since we've promised to spare their lives, we need to take responsibility in taking care of them.

They are all majins, so unlike humans, they could probably put up with harsher treatment. But they would still hold a grudge if they aren't provided basic welfare.

Resentment due to their defeat in war on the other hand, couldn't be helped. But the aftermath would have to be handled by the victorious side...

It would be quite tiresome to teleport all of the captives on the battlefield at once, so we have to be careful not to let any of them start an insurgency when we are not looking.

These majins are concerning even when disarmed.

When one considers the magic and skills in this world, it's no wonder no one dares to take captives.

We've got to come up with a way to prevent insurgency—

“Oh, don't worry about that. I've gathered all the captives and explained the matter with

all of them.”

“O-okay.”

I found myself subconsciously lowering my head upon seeing Benimaru’s delightful smile.

I intentionally avoided asking what he said to them.

Some captives have probably already seen how Benimaru incinerated Charybdis. No one would dare to rebel so long as the message is spread.

Besides, there are the Beastketeers. So, I’ll leave the matter of managing captives to the Beastmen.

“I presume then Gabil won’t be back for now?”

“Unlikely. He can’t use “Spatial Movement,” so he would probably return with the Beastketeers.”

I was just thinking that Gabil’s party would fly back promptly after everything was settled. Putting that aside for now—

“Eh? Are the Beastketeers coming as well?”

Why would the Beastketeers come?

Are they returning with the rescued civilians, disarmed captives, and everyone else altogether?

“Please consider this, hasn’t the capital of Eurazania been wiped out by Milim-sama? So, they decided in the end to join our reign for the time being.”

Benimaru told me that the Beastmen are an energetic species, so it won’t be a problem for them to travel long distances by marching.

But that is not what I intended to ask…

“But can we even accommodate all those people?”

Last time we took in twenty-thousand people it took quite a while to clear out an area for camping alone. Moreover, both Geld (who is a highly reliable man) and the orc tribe construction team are on a business trip. Even if there is additional space in the area we have explored, it will still be challenging to provide everyone with a place to reside.

“About that, I’ve discussed with Geld and Alvis. We’ve organized the captives into several major brigades to seek residence in different locations.”

Benimaru explains, telling me to not worry.

They seem to have filtered the members to shelter. (beastmen)

Those who have a village to return to will take care of themselves.

As for those coming to Tempest Federation, they all seem to be Beastmen wishing to learn about our technologies.

Beastmen who have stamina remaining will stay at the battlefield, along with the majins, to follow the orders of Geld’s troops. Under their command, they will construct on the ruins of the now wiped out Eurazania.

Karion has renounced his title of Demon Lord and become Milim’s subordinate, meaning Eurazania has also become Milim’s territory. There is a field of fertile land south of the Jura Great Forest, in the middle of Eurazania. It is likely going to be the construction ground for

Milim's new city.

Shouldn't you just move your city altogether if you will have to rebuild it? I suggested to Milim after the idea sparked in my mind, and she agreed without hesitation.

And I thought we needed more time to discuss... Well, it's Milim we are talking about after all.

She's very quick to make such decisions.

Come to think about it, Milim doesn't have any actual subordinates.

The Worshipers of Dragons may seem to be her subordinates, but in reality, they only worship Milim; they are not under her command. Considering that, moving the capital would be needless.

Still, there's no problem with it—Karion and Frey don't seem to object either, so we can build up new cities without any hindrance, financed by Clayman's treasure troves we collected.

In addition, we have the captives (who are getting split into groups at the moment) to supply the labor force.

There is no need for me to worry since Benimaru and Geld seem to have personally visited the sites to oversee the operation.

Their growth has been astonishing.

I recall my junior Tamura who never seemed to be able to follow my guidance despite repeated instruction—now even monsters are doing a better job than you!

According to Benimaru, Tempest Federation will be receiving less people this time around.

"If that's the case, does it mean we don't need to provide new temporary residences for them?"

"Yes, there shouldn't be a need. But there are more than just Beastmen due to the majin captives. We'd better clarify this to everyone else, and just in case I'll inform everyone to tighten up security."

"All right. I understand, I'll explain it to everyone."

Rigurd nods in response to Benimaru's words.

These two have become really capable.

They are able to carry out their own decisions even without my guidance.

Eh? Does that mean they would be fine even without me? That makes me feel somewhat lonely.



It's been several days since Benimaru's party returned. At midnight, Diablo enters the office holding a dark box.

"Rimuru-sama, I've negotiated with them as planned. This box contains the peace treaty

document as well as fifteen-hundred stellars of reparations.”

Diablo finishes his sentence and presents the box to me.

I almost forgot that today is the day we were to sign the peace treaty with the Kingdom of Farmus.

Since he said that I don’t need to attend it, it wouldn’t matter even if I did completely forget... But I’m still feeling somewhat diffident about it.

It feels as though my subordinate is working hard while I am slacking.

No, I am definitely not slacking.

Besides, my goal is “Power to the people while upholding the title of king,” so it won’t matter.

I try to give myself excuses in order to mask my fear, then I turn and nod to Diablo.

“Oh, that’s great. Speaking of which, there seem to be more stellars than I imagined.”

After all, our demand of ten thousand stellars was unreasonable in the first place. After some inquiry, I also learnt that it is still a mystery whether the total stellars in circulation in this world even adds up to ten thousand.

Here’s what their producer, King Gazel has to say: “The stellar can only be produced once a month. I’ve heard that since the creation of our nation, there has been some periods when no stellar at all is produced. That’s why its rarity makes for its value.” It is rumored that the amount of gold coins circulating is hundreds of times more than the stellars, so it is undoubtedly rare indeed.

And here before my eyes are fifteen hundred pieces of said rare stellars. I can only be amazed at the thought that more than ten percent of all the stellars in circulation are all gathered here.

“As expected from a powerful nation such as Farmus, they were actually able to gather so many of them.”

You can have a peek into their national reserve from the enormous amount of coins they are able to prepare.

“It is certainly impressive, however most of them came from King Edmalis. He has made up this amount from his own treasury.”

According to Diablo, most of these stellars belong to the royal treasury and have lost their luster without much use. They have the Dwarven Kingdom to back them up economically by providing a means to convert the royal treasures with much artistic values to monetary funds.

“Now that the Knight Order who is supposed to protect the royal family is gone, it would undoubtedly be robbed clean by the nobles— King Edmalis naturally understood as much.”

Is that why he decided to hand over all his assets to clear the national reserves?

“I see... Eh, won’t they be fighting each other then as planned?”

“Yes, that would definitely be the case. I doubt the new king would accept having the rest of the debts be kept in forms of ledger.”

Diablo-kun laughs in response.

He has set his eyes on the long run by considering the mind of the new king. That’s probably

why he chose the King's brother Edward to inherit the throne instead of prince Edgar.

King Edmalis has also accepted that this is the only solution available to them now. Normally, Edmalis would receive the treatment of a Duke, but he has refused it.

He gave away his crown and became a viscount. He has now moved to the small rural land near the territory of Earl Nedler McMunn.

From everyone else's viewpoint, Edmalis has completely given up his ambition for power.

With that being the case—

«Answer. The other factions who don't wish to take on the responsibility of repaying the remaining reparations would likely try to pin the rest of the responsibility on Edmalis.»

Of course. It seems that everything is going according to Diablo's plan.

“Youm must have used Nedler's territory as his base so you can travel there with ease as soon as anything occurs.”

“Indeed, just as you have deduced.”

Diablo nods with a smile on his face.

Shion looked pissed listening to our conversation.

No, it's probably going in one ear and out the other. She must have given up thinking halfway through our conversation.

Eh, I'll worry about Shion later.

Hmm hmm.

Nedler's territory directly borders the Jura Great Forest. It is a middle-scale land near the border with a branch of the Freedom Association. Riots often break out, owing to the sheer number of people residing there.

That's where Youm is staying. His heroic deeds are known by many, and as such, he is very popular among the people.

“Would Youm stop the him even if the new king tries to sacrifice Edmalis?”

“Yes. We will have Youm-san accuse the new king for being dishonest in the deal. There would definitely be a riot by that time.”

Is he trying to create a spontaneous confrontation by having Youm protect Edmalis and his acquaintances?

What a perfect plan.

If the new king is willing to pay the rest of the reparations, we won't hold them further accountable, but we'd better have our eyes set on the long run and plan out the slow disintegration of the Kingdom of Farmus. However, even I can't fully fathom Diablo's strategy. His skillful manipulation will lead to ideal results.

Change is coming, and soon.

The new king would most likely take actions to eliminate Edmalis. Our plan would fall apart if the new king managed to take control of Edmalis. But of course, we can always ignore whatever they bring up, even if it would be at the cost of our international reputation.

Whatever you do needs to be justified— That's the rule of human society.

“You must remain vigilant! Could the people manipulating the new king minimize the

damage to the people?”

“If you wish so, I, Diablo, shall deliver to your expectations.”

You are truly talented.

He is a bit too smart, so much so that it is almost intimidating. But it seems Diablo can accomplish anything handed to him.

“I’ll leave the rest to you. If the military funds ever run low, you can always use these stellaras.”

I store a thousand of the stellaras in my “Stomach” and hand over the remaining five hundred to Diablo.

Luckily, everyone was revived, so we only need to compensate them individually. Considering all the reparations, we have to use them to the fullest even with only a thousand coins claimed. We’ve gained plenty of treasure from Clayman’s base to fill in a wealthy treasury. Although city development may cost a lot of money in the future, we still have enough of a budget to support Youm.

Based on all this, I gave Diablo the suggestion of supporting him. However, he turned me down with a smile.

“Rimuru-sama, knowing your heart is there alone is delightful to me. But there is no such need. Our forces will be sufficient with how everything is set up. Or perhaps you would grant me the honor of joining the battle—”

“Ah, no can do. I’ll prepare some extra forces, but you have to lay low yourself.”

I said, cutting Diablo off midway.

I know best how strong Diablo truly is, so I won’t be stupid enough to misuse such power. Unless they encounter enemies at the level of Holy Knights, his power is simply too excessive (wasteful) to be used on an average human nation.

Doing so will only alienate the humans due to fear, and thus achieving mutual understanding will more difficult. We are walking on thin ice towards my goal of peaceful coexistence with the human societies.

Other than that, there is no issue with troop deployment.

Right now, no one would dare to go toe-to-toe against us publicly. Geld’s troops may have been sent to deal with construction work, but the military might of Benimaru’s troops alone would be more than enough. Besides, Farmus these days has lost more than half of its military reserves and would not pose any threat against us. Knowing that, I just need to prepare some reinforcement troops first. The money can be invested in building Youm’s new kingdom in the future.

“Understood. I shall stay low and completely veil myself behind the scene.”

Diablo immediately responds upon hearing my explanation.

“Shion, you should learn more from Diablo.”

“But why! I’ve always stayed calm and followed through with your orders!”

While I often remind her of her shortcomings, Shion seems to lack self-awareness.

Seriously.

I could only hope that she begins to realize things for herself and be more composed.

Sigh. There's still a long way to go before I can send Shion off on a solo mission.

After the report, Diablo suddenly recalled something and decided to ask me a question.

"Rimuru-sama, the Western Holy Church is trying to establish contact with my subordinate Reyhiem. They seem to be summoning him in hope of uncovering the details of our battle against the Kingdom of Farmus... What's your view on the matter?"

This Mister Reyhiem is the archbishop of the Kingdom of Farmus.

Right now, he seems to have become Diablo's loyal lackey, but it would also pose an issue if he ignores his summoning.

"Hmm—It would also be problematic if we just leave things as is."

"Indeed, I suggest we send him to do some explaining, just to investigate what the Church is planning."

"Right... There were only three survivors, it is natural that the church would want to hear his story."

Of the survivors: previous King of Farmus Edmalis, Head of Court Mages Razen, and Archbishop Reyhiem, it is obvious they would pick their own Archbishop for questioning. Or perhaps, Reyhiem is their only candidate.

"It may be a fact that Veldora has indeed been revived, but the timing does not align with our narrative. The Western Holy Church seem to be surveilling Veldora all these times, our story may be exposed if that's the case..."

"Is that so... Then, should we let him tell the truth?"

I begin to ponder.

It may pose a hindrance to our plan depending on how the Western Holy Church acts. It would be best if we could steer clear from them, but their hostile doctrine regarding monsters is truly troublesome.

I want our relationship to be like that between the Church and the Kingdom of Dwargon. The two are not on good terms since the dwarves treat monsters equally, which conflicts with the doctrine of the church. But they didn't become hostile, instead both simply ignore each other.

We must aim for this relationship as well.

I have no intention to deny such religious doctrines that have existed over thousands of years, but with that being said, we can't simply just accept their demands. Surely when they proclaim, "All monsters deserve to die," you can't just simply comply by saying "You're right." We must respect and understand each other. War would be inevitable if one side could not accept the other's views. For this reason, it is essential that we compromise and try to stay away from potential sources of conflict.

Although even with that being said, it will still require their cooperation. If they don't have the same idea in mind, it would be just us trying this out alone.

If the Western Holy Church consider us as the "Nemesis of God," then unfortunately we will have to put up a fight. If things turn out that way, then it leaves us no choice but the destroy them without mercy.

But right now—

“All right, then we’ll try to send out a message first. Didn’t we acquire some video recording magic items from Clayman? Let’s put some of my messages in and see how they would react when Reyhiem brings it to probe the reaction of the Saints Church.”

“Understood.”

“Yes sir! I’ll go prepare now.”

Diablo nods as he receives my order while Shion runs off to find the crystal ball.

Diablo reported to me later that he had sent Reyhiem out. A few more days have passed since then.

Although the man has been sent, there hasn’t been any response from the Western Holy Church.

There seems to be a commotion on their end.

But it can’t really be helped.

After all, both Veldora was revived and a new Demon Lord was born—AKA me. They probably won’t be able to decide how to deal with us so fast.

It won’t matter either if they continue to ignore us.

I’ll put it on hold and observe for now before they reply.



The Beastketeers arrived. Including the captives, the group consisting of tens of thousands of people arrived earlier than I expected.

Beastmen and majins are indeed impressive. Going by stamina alone, they are already far superior to humans. Moreover, since magic is real in this world, they can rely on magic when they run out of stamina and get back on their feet when their mana is depleted. Due to this, they are able to march much more efficiently and quickly. What impressed me more is that even the civilians are able to apply such a method. As expected from the defiant Beastmen. But I haven’t yet seen Gabil; he must be somewhere at the rear of all those troops.

My thoughts were interrupted by the greetings of the Beastketeers Alvis and Suphia. I greet them back only to realize that one of them is missing.

“Eh? Didn’t Phobio come as well?”

“About that, Phobio stayed back to keep an eye on the majin captives.”

Suphia answers.

While Geld was staying at Clayman’s base, he asked Phobio to keep an eye on the majins in case of an insurgency. In other words, he’s been stuck with the chore work.

Phobio-kun, RIP.

But in all honesty, surveillance is still necessary even with Benimaru’s warning. I appreciate

Phobio's self-sacrifice in taking on the tasks from the bottom of my heart on another note, the arrangements for their residence are complete due to Rigurd's leadership.

Additionally, the allocation of work has been prepared as well. Rigurd has been talking to the managers of the production department, namely Kaijin and Kurobee to see how many spots are available for each department. Those who came here are people with a passion to learn technology, but sadly we can only accept limited members. That's why we would be rotating the position within these departments for the people joining.

If that's the case, we should try open up classrooms for cultivating professional personnel. Perhaps it would be a good idea to build a school to pass on these techniques.

Our shelter operation slowly unfolds as these ideas cross my mind.

As Alvis' party enters the town, I see Gabil at the rear of the troops.

“Rimuru-sama, I’m back!”

He exclaims without a hint of fatigue as he descends from the sky.

“Oh, good job out there! I heard you were quite active on the battlefield.”

“That’s not the case, I was far from being good. Milim-sama’s subordinate Midley-san blasted me hard with lightning.”

Oh, Benimaru did mention to me that those people are extremely powerful dragonoids.

“Right, since they worship Milim, it is no wonder that they are war-mongers as well. Is your recent evolution the reason why you haven’t been able to achieve your full potential? You still have a long way to go.”

I’m not sure whether my words are comforting him or not, but I said them, nonetheless. He doesn’t seem quite upset by it. I’m sure Gabil must also be thinking the same thing.

“Yes! I shall continue to improve to meet Rimuru-sama’s expectations!”

My reason for believing so is the fact that Gabil responded so with a smile.

Afterward I took some time to comfort Gabil’s underlings. Suddenly, Gabil takes out a letter and presents it to me.

“What is this?”

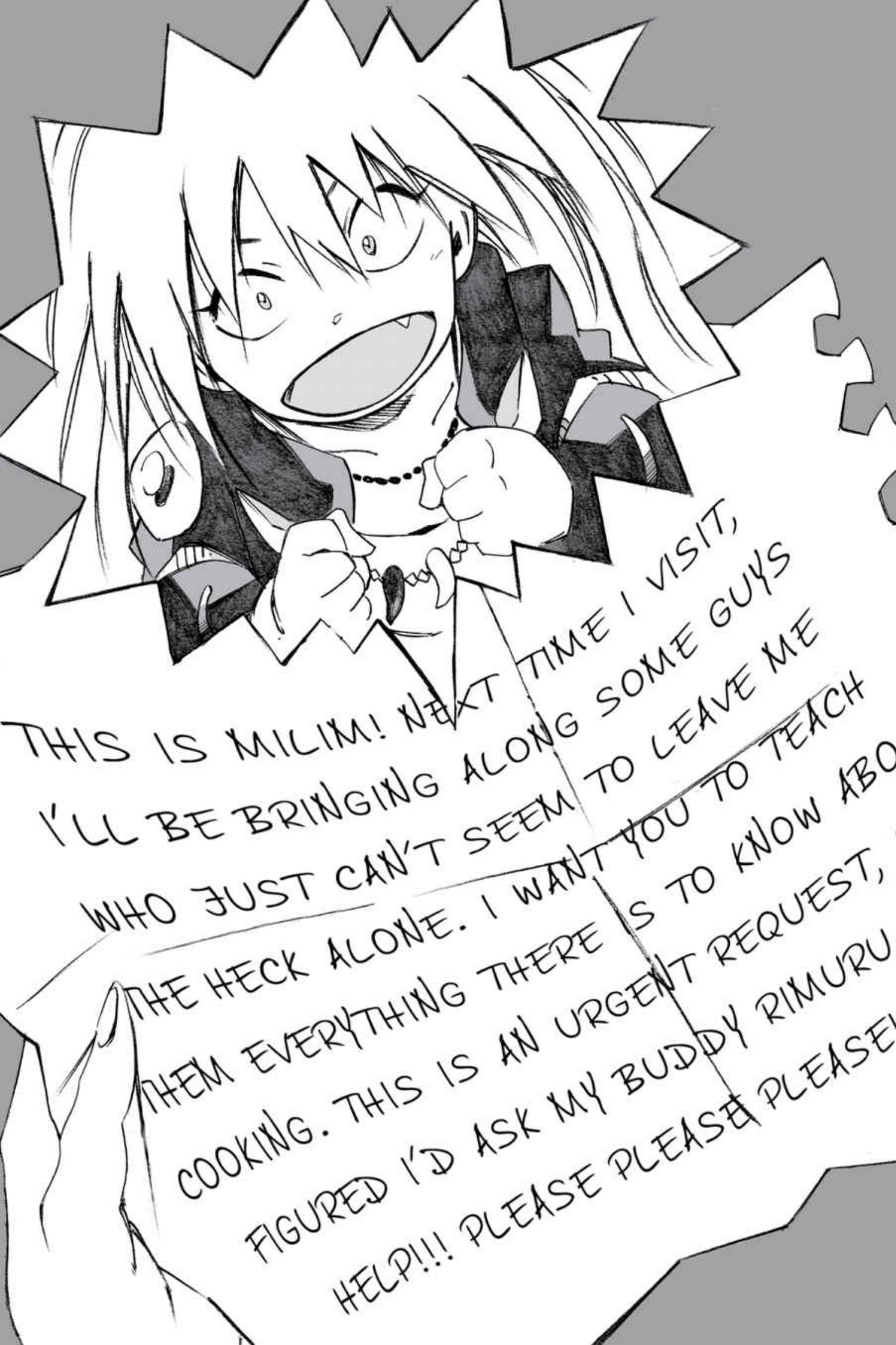
“It’s a letter from Milim-sama. She told me to deliver it to Rimuru-sama—”

What is this? There seems to be an ominous aura around it.

She did mention she will drop by to play with me after I parted ways with her at the Walpurgis Banquet...

As I open the letter, I lay my eyes on the exotic and charming writings (horribly written non-sensible symbols)—

This is Milim! Next time I visit, I'll be bringing along some guys who just can't seem to leave me the heck alone. I want you to teach them everything there is to know about cooking. This is an urgent request, so I figured I'd ask my buddy Rimuru for help!! Please please please!!!



THIS IS MILIM! NEXT TIME I VISIT,
I'LL BE BRINGING ALONG SOME GUYS
WHO JUST CAN'T SEEM TO LEAVE ME
THE HECK ALONE. I WANT YOU TO TEACH
THEM EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABO
COOKING. THIS IS AN URGENT REQUEST,
FIGURED I'D ASK MY BUDDY RIMURU
HELP!!! PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE!

Those are the words written on the letter, though one can tell the effort she put into it due to the sincerity of her writing.

If anyone likes taking care of Milim, it would be the Worshippers of Dragon, right?

“What’s this supposed to mean, have you heard anything about it?”

“Yes, a little bit. I became quite the close acquaintance with Hermann-san from the Worshippers of Dragon and was able to get some inside news from him...”

According to Gabil, this Hermann seems to be a rather reasonable man unlike the warmongering Midley. He is a free-spirited fellow who has even traveled to Dwargon and the Western Nations. Hermann told Gabil that the Worshippers of Dragons have a very simple lifestyle.

“That’s why they believe that there is no need to pay too much attention in moderating Milim-sama’s diet. Perhaps they are like our tribe who consider food such as raw fish as the best type of cuisine...”

Gabil claims so, but I think the two may be different.

The Lizardmen tribe are more suited to consuming raw fish due to their taste buds. They also utilize methods such as smoking to flavor the food, so they are not completely ignorant of culinary techniques. They are also capable of other basic culinary skills and can produce some simple, non-fish foods. In contrast, the Worshippers of Dragon seem to lack the common sense of diet moderation. Although they wouldn’t go as far as eating raw meat, I feel that they only refrain from it in order to avoid food poisoning.

“...I see. Are the taste buds of dragonewts the same as humans’?”

“Yes. Thanks to my evolution, I’ve gained a variety of new taste sensations. Now dining has become a great joy for me considering how tasteless most food was in the past!”

“Right? That’s how one gets addicted to good food. Tasty food gives you the urge to eat more.”

Gabil nods dramatically upon hearing and agreeing with my views.

“I see, so that’s how it is! Perhaps Hermann-san meant that he wishes that such customs would enter their life as well!”

Gabil may have a point.

Whether what we do can be considered as custom is to be determined, but I have an idea about what Milim’s request is. It is rather contradictory to worship Milim as a god while ignoring said god’s will. Why Milim did not complain about these things is beyond me...

Perhaps Milim is pretty conscientious after all. Maybe she knew that they are doing everything for her sake out of good will. That’s why she didn’t complain and kept playing along.

“If that’s the case, we shall treat her to a feast during her next visit.”

“Yes! What a great idea!”

We must get the point across with subtlety without outright rejecting the worshippers’ way of life by creating a scenario for them to realize by themselves how to make Milim happier. This task seems to be harder than I imagined. Perhaps I should seek others’ opinions on the matter during a meeting on another day.

I tell Gabil to return to the cave and continue his research.

Nowadays even with Vesta's aid, there are still too few researchers. Their work would be even harder without Gabil's party.

"Then, I shall depart first."

"Right. Our next meeting would discuss rewards as well, you should join too."

"Yes sir!"

Gabil looks proud, perhaps having recalled the fact that he has become an official (executive/lieutenant).

Then he delightfully leaves for his cave.



It's been a month since the end of the Walpurgis Banquet.

The town has become more and more active with more people arriving.

It is at this point that Geld returned using "Spatial Movement."

Geld, who I've not seen for a long time, looks rather exhausted.

"G-Geld-kun. Good job out there."¹⁵

I greet him out of reflex. Geld glances at me and opens up after taking a deep breath:

"I've once again experienced the greatness of Rimuru-sama."

"What do you mean by that all of a sudden?"

I couldn't help but ask after he blurted out those words with a serious expression. Those tired eyes of his seemed to gleam with a genuine sense of respect.

I haven't been doing anything lately, so I don't quite recall doing anything worthy of someone else's respect.

I wonder what he has gone through the past few weeks.

"Ah, it's really nothing, but here's the story..."

Geld begins to vividly recount the past events, although most of them were just filled with complaints about the new recruits. He allocated the captives into different groups and arranged them into different regiments. So far, nothing seemed off yet.

But when Geld commanded them to conduct site measurements and preparations... That's when the questions started popping up. Since the orcs are able to communicate through "Telepathy Net" with their tribesman, they can carry out work easily without verbal communication. However, this method is not applicable to the groups of majins newly mixed into the regiments.

Even with verbal explanations, the majins don't seem to understand. But it is fundamentally due to the fact that most of Geld's subordinates, including himself as the worst offender, are horrible at communication. These orcs are more like craftsmen who don't know how to explain things in a clear and orderly manner. Having the Orcs give instructions resulted in a nightmare

¹⁵Rimuru seems to be surprised at his return

of low efficiency when the construction actually started. Everyone was overworked and filled with anger and resentment at the situation.

Those majins also seem to be rather uncooperative in regard to taking orders. Even when Geld's men gave physical demonstrations of how to do the work, many of the majins still refused to comply. Besides, even those who are willing to work have yet to master the techniques, leading to disappointing results...

I suppose that's true.

Things are hardly easier with more people. The surplus of workers would mean nothing if none of them knew what they were doing.

That's why professional training is really important.

—Let me demonstrate it for you, let me teach it to you; I will let you try it and I will compliment you for your effort. Tis how I will move your heart—¹⁶

These are words from a great man—Ex-Commander of the Imperial Japanese Navy Yamamoto Isoroku. I believe every leader should keep this quote dear to heart.

The hardship of the education and upbringing of subordinates are all in this quote. Moreover, one would only feel proud for their work if they realize the purpose of their work.

Hearing Geld's complaints brings back memories of my salaryman days.

Operators¹⁷ who ignored my instructions; Juniors who tried to hide their failure; Bosses who tried to push their responsibilities to other people.

My last life was not easy either. Although there were indeed happy memories, it would take until the end of the time for me to finish spitting out all my complaints.

Whenever I feel this way, I always—

“Right, let's go grab a drink! Let's not leave before getting drunk today, Geld!”

I said so while patting Geld on the shoulder, inviting him out for a drink. Drinking and having someone to chat with is the best solution to this type of situation.

Helping subordinates destress is also part of my duty as a leader and improving their mood after they complain is another part of it.

I should definitely spend more time on people like Geld who have a great sense of responsibility.

We drank for the whole night while Geld showered me with his complaints.

Early on next morning, I gathered all the lieutenants to have a meeting. But before that, I went to visit Hakuro. Since I only reached Hakuro through “Telepathy Net” last night, I decided to give him a personal welcome back first thing in the morning.

“I can't believe Rimuru-sama would come receive me in person—”

He seems very grateful having received such a privilege.

¹⁶The idiom here is “やってみせ、言って聞かせて、させてみせ、ほめてやらねば、人は動かじ”。It's an idiom on how to educate other people. I couldn't find any good (or any in general) english translation of this idiom. The English speakers only know Isoroku for his activities in WWII.

¹⁷Clerks, I'm not very sure the specific rank but they are probably coworkers are people working under Rimuru before he reincarnated.

Hakurou doesn't seem as tired as Geld.

"Good job out there."

"You are too kind; I have hardly done anything worthy of such praise. There wasn't really much I could do since all the captives have already been accounted for. Compared to me, Geld is the one that truly worked hard. There is no longer a need for me to return since I've transferred all my work to the others last night ..."

"Geld... He really did work hard. I've been drinking with him ever since I contacted you last night. He seems really troubled. In the past, he could always put his heart to work without being distracted, but it seems that commanding the captives has really taken a toll on him."

"Indeed. Perhaps he would benefit from some relaxation and an open mind, but Geld is simply too serious."

Hakurou has a point. The easiest way to discipline the majins, who all have different interpretation of the situation, is through violent oppression. Granted, violent oppression would probably not bring about the best results since the end result is likely the product of some form of forced compromise.

Geld, as a professional craftsman, probably would not tolerate such unimpressive results.

"Speaking of which, Rimuru-sama, there is something I wish to report."

I'll leave Geld's problem to his own concerns— Perhaps that was the conclusion Hakurou reached as he opened up to me with something unrelated.

"What is it?"

"Well, regarding Clayman's territory of the Puppet Nation of Jistav, most of the denizens there seem to be slaves. There are no other races besides Dark Elves residing there. Most of them have roles related to the management of the castle, with a total of more than one thousand of them expressing a desire to serve us."

"Hmm, and?"

"About that... I've heard rumors that there was once an elven kingdom in Jistav—"

The elves...

I recall that Sorcerer's Dynasty Sarion also seems to consist of elven descendants. Could it be that the two share a common ancestry?

The two locations are quite far apart from each other, so that shouldn't be the case.

"—I couldn't believe it when the captives there told me that they were the grave keepers of an ancient ruin."

"Eh?"

The long-lived dark elves are guarding a tomb—and an ancient ruin?

"In other words, the ruins of an ancient kingdom are located there and untouched..."

This new information is quite surprising.

There are many ancient ruins across the world, and some people would make a living out of treasure hunting at these locations— Professional treasure hunters often go on journeys to challenge these ruins for hidden treasures. However, these expeditions rarely bring back any good news. Moreover, the amount of ruins that have been uncovered is fairly low, so it is quite

unlikely to discover treasures immediately.

And right now, we have a ruin site unknown to the public.

“Hakurou, keep this information confidential. We’ll make the call once we check out the site ourselves.”

“Understood.”

Hakurou also seems to realize the importance of the matter as he nods quietly to my response. The reason being that we may be able to extract Clayman’s treasures from that ruin.

Geld also mentioned that he’s already salvaged all sorts of magic items and treasure.

However, with that being said...

For the time being, we need to sit still and observe the situation. Information disclosed to the public about dark elves is extremely limited, so no one would bat an eye if we keep our mouths shut.

And after all, it is a Demon Lord’s domain. Average adventurers wouldn’t dare to step foot in such forbidden lands. It’s no good to rush things in one go.

For that reason, I decided it was best to approach the matter of the ancient ruins cautiously.



Everyone has now gathered at the large meeting room.

Taking the initiative, I open up to speak to commence the meeting.

“Ahem— Everyone. Some of you may already be aware, but I am now officially a Demon Lord!”

I announce so while sitting in my special slime chair and taking a glance around.

“ “ “Congratulations!” ” ”

Everyone floods me with their best wishes with smiles on their faces, even the ones who already knew.

Hmm, hmm, the sensation of overcoming a huge challenge truly is delightful.

“You’ve finally gained your rightful position after so long!”

“Amazing. I’m so moved that you’ve really become a real Demon Lord.”

“Would this be the start of Rimuru-sama’s reign?!”

Rigurd... You say you’ve been waiting for so long, yet you and I haven’t even known each other for more than two years.

How much has this guy overestimated my abilities...?

Rigurd seems to be moved to tears unlike Shion who looks very proud instead.

Even I feel quite moved by it.

And if there is any problem remaining, it would be the reaction from the Western Holy Church. It would create the most ideal environment for our nation if this problem could be

resolved.

Jovially, I continue with the agenda of the meeting. I have to inform every one of the decisions made during the Walpurgis Banquet as well.

“Right, I haven’t brought this up before, but it’s been decided that my territory would include the entirety of the Jura Great Forest. Right now, I’ve been officially titled as the ruler. Any objections? But anyhow, I don’t think there would be a problem anyways. But we need to defend ourselves should anyone invade. Moreover, how should we inform the outside world which territories are my domain? Is it okay for us to just leave it like this?”

My lieutenants seemed to become increasingly nervous the more I spoke. Some of their faces even sprouting looks of tension.

Eh? Is something amiss?

“About that... Do you mean the entire forest? Is it true?” Rigurd ventured.

“Y-yeah,” I answer with a nod.

“Oi oi, is this for real. Does this include the entire forest including the banks across the river?”

Benimaru asks, to which my response was “Probably.”

With regards to the aforementioned river, he must be referring to the Great River of Ameld.

The other side of the riverbank is territory under the control of the Eastern Empire, so unfortunately we are not very familiar with it.

“Is there a problem?”

“It won’t be a huge problem for us, but I recall that the opposite bank of the river is not under the administration of the Dryads. And since only the residents within the Dryads’ territory consider Rimuru-sama as their leader, the residents opposite to the bank must be having headaches over the emergence of the new Demon Lord.”

Benimaru answers thoughtfully.

It doesn’t sound that bad. He seems to be implying (with a smirk) that “If they dare to protest, we will just annihilate them.”

Hold on a sec this is actually a **HUGE** problem!

“Ehh, that’s really something. Does this mean that all the Demon Lords recognize that all of the resources in this forest now belong to Rimuru-sama? In other words, the collection of resources would all be under Rimuru-sama’s control. That’s an impressive scale of operation!”

Kaijin exclaims excitingly, seeming to speak what was on my mind.

That’s exactly the case. Although, I seem to have the nagging suspicion that things may get out of hand big time.

According to Kaijin, all of our mining operations have been underground (illegal) and everyone is in on it. The Dryad Overseers of the forest for the most part kept their eyes closed, rendering the entire area essentially lawless. It’s a common sight to see people in and out of Dwargon collect and exploit the forest resources for profit.

This has been the norm since there wasn’t a need to ask for permission from anyone. But from now on, they would need my permission for entering and residing within the forest...

Right now, all the denizens of the forest would need to be granted my permission to reside.

“Eh? If that’s the case, would there be more people coming as time moves on?”

“Yes. Since Rimuru-sama has officially become a Demon Lord, those who aren’t coming to greet you would practically be sending an open declaration of war.”

Shuna explains with a gentle smile on her face.

It can’t be wrong if even Shuna says so. But upon considering so, those residents who were previously living a carefree life in the forest suddenly need to get my permission. It is troublesome no matter how you put it.

“But, isn’t it too late to bring it up now? They’ve already been living in—”

Rigurd and Gabil respond upon hearing my mutterings.

“You shouldn’t put it that way. The Demon Lords possess immense power. As for Goblins, even the power of a Greater majin is already beyond our imagination.”

“Indeed, that’s exactly the case. Although the choice to decide whether to submit to Demon Lords and live under their protection or live a carefree life denying their authority is up to each individual, even us Lizard-men have to choose the former. No one would stand opposing Demon Lords. Only fools would ignore their presence. That’s why we normally send our greetings first in order to prevent antagonizing them.”

As Shuna mentioned before, those who aren’t willing to greet the Demon Lords would likely be labeled as rebels. It is said that Demon Lords will send their subordinates to annihilate said rebels if they deem their actions severe enough.

Eh, I’m not the type to rain destruction on others over such trivial matters. But the monsters who haven’t personally met me would probably not get the same impression...

“But hey, at least the Lizard-men would be present to send their regards. I’ve already informed my father of Rimuru-sama’s great deeds in becoming a Demon Lord!”

Gabil confidently announces.

Eh, when did you decide on that?

“Is Abil-san visiting?”

“Yes! I’ve told Shion-san as well, my dad said he would definitely come greet Rimuru-sama in person.”

Things seem to be getting wilder.

The Lizardmen are considered a major tribe within the Jura Great Forest. Such a major tribe’s decision to greet me would inevitably pressure the weaker ones to greet me as well. Those who know me would probably be delighted to visit, while those who don’t know me would most likely shit their pants at the notion alone.

They would probably only be thinking about how screwed they would be if they offended their new overlord. Perhaps, I should come up with a way for everyone to conduct the greeting ceremony in a more relaxed manner to avoid scaring them too much.

But those are just my thoughts ...

I turn to Shion, who for some reason looks quite proud.

Why didn’t she report to me that Gabil’s father is coming? Stop acting all smug over there.

Shion completely fails to notice my reaction. She is the opposite of her diligent secretary appearance. This girl is the picture opposite of reliable.

What a shame.

“Huh huh! It is only natural when the one you are greeting is Rimuru-sama himself!”

Shion spills such nonsense all delighted by herself. I guess I’ll just ignore her for now.

It is quite comforting however that she seems to be happier when I’m the one being praised over herself. But telling her so would only fuel her arrogance, so it would be better to just keep my mouth shut.

To summarize, the news of my ascension to Demon Lord has spread across the lands and I’ll be having a lot of visitors from all over the forest soon. Perhaps they all think it is better to be protected under the Demon Lords than to stand against them.

If that’s the case, a lot of monsters are going to visit this town. We would be busy attending to them all. And next, we will need to investigate the Jura Great Forest and reach out to sentient species¹⁸. While it won’t be a problem for them if they acknowledge my authority as the ruler of the region, that doesn’t mean we don’t have other things to worry about as well.

But regardless, we would be busy no matter what, so we should—

“I’m thinking, aren’t we going to inform the outside world about the news of my ascension to Demon Lord anyways?? If that’s the case, how about we take advantage of it and use the news to advertise our town? Rather than having everyone visiting one at a time, it would be much more convenient to invite them here altogether at once.”

“...What do you mean?”

Rigurd looks at me with doubts. So, I decide to explain the idea that I just decided on in layman’s terms.

We don’t have to make the matter too complicated.

This town is the capital of the Tempest Federation, and more and more monsters in the Jura Great Forest are becoming aware of this place. For instance, the Kobold¹⁹ Merchants led by Kobe. I think it’s about time to expand our population given how some have expressed their interest in joining.

The Beastmen currently studying technology in the town would eventually leave our country one day, so we have to find new members to fill in the void. Furthermore, we have to improve the efficiency of skill training to make individual training sessions more worthwhile. We’ve also improved the efficiency of our food production, so welcoming new citizens shouldn’t pose an issue. However, the main issue here is that our labor force is lacking.

My head floods with countless potential ideas.

But there just aren’t enough people at hand; that’s an issue. We must seize this opportunity to promote the town and encourage people to come and live here.

When people come to visit me, we should also use that moment to show them around town.

¹⁸The specific word here is referring to species that have been enlightened enough, implying monsters who have built tribe/village.

¹⁹In this instance, it is referring to Dog-head humanoid kobold.

Some monsters may even consider migrating.

Killing two birds with one stone, actually, not only two—

“Besides, we’ve been very stressed as of late, so shouldn’t we take a break once in a while?

That’s why I propose we should hold a festival as well!”

We can decide on the date of the festival later.

We will welcome the visitors during the time when the whole town is celebrating.

And since Milim has already requested me to do so, we will have to pull off a huge festival.

By restricting the festival to a certain time frame, we can limit the visitors to one specific time period and avoid having them sporadically visit us.

We can use our vacation time to simultaneously advertise the town.

In other words, taking care of everything in one go.

“A festival...”

“Amazing, that’s a wonderful idea!”

“Let’s do it! We will make it a grand festival!”

Everyone’s eyes are lit up after hearing my explanation. It seems that fighting spirits are burning high in everyone’s heart.

Since we’ve held feasts every couple of months²⁰, we have much experience with festivals and celebrations. And as it turns out, everyone’s getting better and better at holding festivals, with each festival grander than the one before. It would be great if for this festival we could have everyone contribute.

“We are announcing my presence to the world anyway, so we should make it worthwhile!”

“ “ “Yes sir!” ” ”

No one objects.

What do you mean by budget? Pfft, why should I care about budget at this point.

Rigurd can figure that one out. Right now, our treasury is loaded, so being extravagant once in a while won’t hurt.

Thanks to my words of encouragement, we got everything to progress rather quickly. We were able to quickly conclude the meeting and by the time I got back, even the plans for the invitations to national leaders were already sorted out.

Isn’t now a bit too early to send out invitations?

I suppose it’s fine to invite monsters, but is it really ok to invite leaders of human nations too? Though I guess we do have hot springs, as well as hotels for guest reception. There are even guesthouses to satisfy the needs of royals and nobles.

In fact, even prominent figures such as Duke Elalude and King Gazel are extremely satisfied with the service Haruna and the others provide.

Hmm, there shouldn’t be any problem.

We could shift the dates of visits of the heads of states away from the main event and change the venues. As long as we keep the security intact, it would be a great opportunity for the leaders

²⁰Swadian butterlord policy

of the world to learn about us.

Their master— well, that would be me— a proper Demon Lord.

I can very well relate to everyone's sentiments of wanting to celebrate. I was originally a Japanese man who loved festivals as well. And if I'm getting serious this time, I shall show them the true meaning of a festival. Moreover, I'll show the world that I am a not a bad Demon Lord²¹.

And with that, the huge Tempest festival will soon be underway.



My report ends with the details of the festival pending future discussion.

Next, I listen to everyone's report of their recent activities.

I have a rough idea of what they've been up to, but not everyone knows what the other lieutenants are working on. I might even be able to glean some new information from the discussion. Especially Diablo, I simply cannot fathom his train of thought. Should I call him lacking in common sense, or...

The things he deemed trivial always turn out to be important news to me. This discrepancy in judgement continues day after day.

There are many times that I alone won't be able to make the best call. For this reason, it is important for everyone to share their thoughts with each other during regular meetings such as these.

From Rigurd's report, merchants who have traded with us once are likely to return for more. Fuze has spread the news about the safety of our town to more people and, as a result, this town has seen more visitors than ever before.

There hasn't been too much of a reaction from all the other nations. While they all seem cautious of the fact that I've become a Demon Lord, they are mostly just observing the diplomatic relations between us and the kingdoms of Blumund and Dwargon. With how things have progressed, the Emperor (Empress)²² Elmesia El-Ru Sarion has decided to reach out and form diplomatic relations with Tempest Federation. She seems to be implying "Get the roads done fast" to us. But it also carries the confirmation that they are willing to provide us their powerful backing as support.

Their declaration seems to have been broadcasted with magic to the heads of other nations as well, which apparently has given many of them headaches. I seem to have heard of something similar when I was discussing it with Fuze and King Gazel.

²¹The actual line is: that I am a friendly Demon Lord. But why not.

²²The honorific is an almost gender neutral term “先帝” - emperor

“Haha, amazing! It seems that everyone has kept their word and is in turn pressuring the other nations around the world!”

Rigurd delightfully concludes his report.

After Rigurd, it is Souei’s turn to speak.

Given that much of the investigation work has been handed to Souei, the content of his report must be quite enlightening. Souei even has had his hand in the preparation of the road construction to Sorcerers’ Dynasty Sarion. He didn’t help with the construction, of course. Instead, I told him to do some reconnaissance.

I’ll determine the specific route of the road later. So, I basically had Souei investigate things such as whether or not there are monster tribes nearby that would interfere with the construction. We’ve conducted similar investigations during the construction of roads between Dwargon and Blumund, which is why it is so important. We can’t overlook such things; otherwise, there may be potential conflicts in the future.

While most monsters in our sphere of influence so far have been cooperative, some may express opposition when they are forced to move due the construction of the road.

Nowadays, since I’ve become a Demon Lord, any monster with just half a brain wouldn’t want to stand against me. But that doesn’t mean I can just do whatever I want, which I will keep in mind.

I do want to prevent violent suppression, but that’s low hanging fruit. My end goal is coexistence between men and monsters and to achieve racial equality at birth.

Hopefully, this time we won’t have any issues.

I’ve already asked so much from the monsters within my domain.

We gave shelter for people who came to us in order to prevent unnecessary— Oh yeah, we have to tell the residents who live in the path of the new road to move. I want to avoid unnecessary conflict, and it will be best for me to have them come negotiate with us nicely.

It won’t matter even if there are tribes on the planned construction route, I’ll just prepare some decent lodgings for them to move into. I hope to make such locations into the likes of traveling waypoints with many hotels to service both humans and monsters alike. There may be some issues along the way, but at the end of the day, life will be more prosperous.

Just like last time, and the time before that, I hope this one would go smoothly as well...

Such thoughts wandered in my head while I waited for Souei’s report.

“There weren’t any hostile monsters spotted on the planned construction route or the neighboring areas. They all approved of Rimuru-sama’s plan as soon as I explained it.”

Oh oh, that’s wonderful.

Our goal isn’t to drive them away from their homes, so we are very fortunate to have their understanding.

“Is that so? Great then. Since Geld is available now, I’ll have him do the measurements as well as handling some other issues.”

The investigative work is concluded since we finished the exploration of the construction site. After some security checks to ensure safety, we can send in the technical crew to do the

work.

“Another moment if you may, there is still one more issue. Since the Jura Great Forest is now under Rimuru-sama’s control, it will include the Coscia Mountains near the border zone. It is an area with dangerous rapids and steep hills, and, in addition, the hidden village of the Tengu tribes resides at the mountain top. This is a secret gleaned from the local residents that cannot be overlooked.”

On the southwest side of the capital of Tempest Federation, Rimuru, there is a mountainous region connected to Sith Lake. The region is named the Coscia Mountains, where the orcs have also moved to.

It is said that the city of Demon Lord Frey is located on land extending from the Southern Coscia Mountains.

It is a beautiful mountain range filled with steep peaks overlooking the clouds. But it is an extremely mysterious land that would pose quite the ordeal to anyone wishing to visit. According to the construction plan this time, the roads we are building would extend all the way to inside the territory of Sarion. There seems to be some middling-sized cities in the mountains’ vale, and they would likely be the destination of our construction.

It seems that we aren’t involved with the Coscia Mountains directly, so what is Souei worrying about?

“What do you mean that we cannot overlook it?”

“The Tengu tribe may seem to be a peaceful bunch, but they are actually innately aggressive fighters. Even Demon Lord Frey has avoided directly confronting them, so it would be best if we inform them too before proceeding—”

According to Souei’s report, the Coscia Mountains are strictly outside of the Jura Great Forest and hence outside my field of administration. It is an independent land that isn’t included in Frey’s territory either.

Even though I may proceed without informing the Tengus, given my authority as a Demon Lord, it is best if we are to explain the situation and prevent potential conflicts in the future.

Otherwise, they may suspect that the road is some devious act by an ambitious Demon Lord aiming to expand.

Souei seems almost apologetic reporting this to me; however, it is a marked improvement in my book. The fact that he didn’t act recklessly on his own reach out to the Tengu is commendable. How cautious indeed Souei is in his acts, his report of the situation now would contribute a lot.

“Very well, then I shall—”

“Please hold on. If that’s the case, I shall visit there.”

I was just about to propose to talk to the Tengu tribe myself when Benimaru interrupted me.

He claims that a Demon Lord just strolling by without any proper announcements would raise some red flags. I immediately come to that same conclusion thanks to him pointing it out, so I decide to leave that matter in Benimaru’s hands.

“Nii sama, you’ve been quite close to Alvis-san lately, are you trying to sneak on a date

with her?"

What? Benimaru's been hitting on Alvis?

"What's this all about, Benimaru-kun?"

If what she said is true, this would be quite the shocking development.

"That's just a misunderstanding, Rimuru-sama. Shuna, please don't spread such rumors."

Benimaru calmly denies Shuna's words.

He doesn't seem to be lying given his frank attitude...

But given his handsome looks, there's no doubt he is popular amongst the ladies.

"Please be rest assured, Rimuru-sama. It won't matter if Benimaru is gone, Rimuru-sama still has me after all!"

"Huh? What nonsense are you talking about?"

"Hehe, have you been seduced by Alvis into trying to leave this country behind? Gone with the wind have you!"

"I mean, Shion, seriously. What has gone through your brain to have twisted your understanding of the situation like that?"

Shion begins to say some bizarre things only to have provoked Benimaru's retorts.

No way. Although I'm a bit jealous not having a girlfriend and all, I don't think Benimaru would run and leave us behind.

Shion's delusions are truly baffling.

"Oi, Shion, that's just impossible."

"Right, Shion. Rimuru-sama, you believe me, right?!"

"You are my trusted right-hand man, there is no way I will doubt you."

I may have said so given how long he has followed me, but I've not once doubted Benimaru or feared his betrayal. But he is probably getting a girlfriend soon like Tamura.

We'll see about that then.

I get the feeling that this whole conversation is quite silly, so I should just hand the real work to Benimaru.

"Right. If we continue discussing this Shion will get the wrong idea and act like an idiot again, so this task will be handled by Benimaru!"

"Yes sir, understood!"

Benimaru nods with a tired expression and accepts the mission.

Good grief.

But honestly, Benimaru is the most suitable candidate to be sent in my place. His position is just under mine and is high enough to not invite scorn. I didn't expect there to be such a hidden village near our border with Sarion, so it would be best to inform them from a long-term perspective.

Benimaru would probably do a better job at it than me.

I think so while concluding the issue.



The only report I haven't heard is—

“Souei, has there been any significant change in the ecology of the neighboring monsters?”

I ask about the movement of the monsters around the town and the roads.

Magicule concentration is rather high in this area due to many large individual magicule counts.

Areas of high magicule concentration would result in the spontaneous genesis of Monsters²³ and naturally, the birth rate of harmful monsters would also increase. Even monsters below Rank D can be harmful to humans, which is why we have to stay alert and eliminate them.

If dangerous monsters above Rank B suddenly appear, then all the more reason to eliminate them faster. It is due to such circumstances that security work is necessary for everyday life.

The head of the security department Rigur needs to deal with that area of things. His subordinates are all veterans, and even if they were replaced by new recruits, it would only take a few weeks for them to be trained and deliver decent results. Police patrol every street to ensure the safety of human caravans. The security has been made watertight and everything seems fine as of the moment. But they have not explored the entire forest, leaving the possibility of stronger monsters to exist somewhere in there.

But Souei did tell me “Don’t worry about it” ...

What does that mean?

Does it mean we can coexist with those monsters?

As long as those monsters don’t harm us and the travelers, they shouldn’t pose a problem. There is no need to eliminate them if they possess intelligence and can be negotiated with.

With that being said, just like the Armored Spider (Knight Spider) that Gobta encountered before, there is no guarantee whether such Rank A local monster lords would appear or not. This is why I’m very concerned about the security of areas far away from towns and streets. Locations where we have limited control are the breeding grounds for dangerous monsters. But we should have information about such locations since Souei has sent out his ‘Clones.’

Let’s hear about the reports then.

“There is no big trouble. If anything, there were some White Fang Bears²⁴ roaming in the North-west of the forest. I’ve already dealt with them.”

Souei casually adds.

Hmm, there doesn’t seem to be an issue.

«Warning. White Fang Bear is equal to a Knight Spider, with both being Rank A.»

What!

²³Here specifically it's referring to Yoma.

²⁴Species “白刃巨熊” (Giant White Fang Bear)

“Oi, that monster you mentioned, isn’t that a high-rank monster that any normal adventure would have difficulty fighting?”

His nonchalant attitude makes me panic a little.

There is no way for merchants to safely travel when such dangerous monsters are roaming the area. Moreover, it would also put the security force led by Gobta in danger as well.

“Eh? Souei-san, is this true? It would be quite dangerous to send our new recruit out when those types of monsters exist.”

“That shouldn’t be an issue. Aren’t you spoiling them too much?”

“Hold on a second! While those monsters may not be much for Souei-san, they are no easy foes for us.”

Naturally, Gobta starts to complain.

Yet Souei still looks quite apathetic—

“Then why don’t you just go ask for Hakurou’s help and have him train you harder?”

He replies with such scary words looking all serious.

Hakurou nods in agreement. Poor Gobta.

Although I’m more interested in Gobta’s reaction as he doesn’t seem to fear the White Fang Bear itself.

Gobta has indeed undergone significant magicule growth. He is now a Rank B veteran. With that being said, he still has a long way to go before reaching Rank A.

Wisdom King Raphael-san, did you misjudge Gobta’s ability?

«Answer. His power after “Assimilation” with a Star Wolf would increase. However, the change in power cannot be accurately measured.»

Oh oh, I see.

His power should increase to around Rank A-minus after “Assimilation” with a Star Wolf. Gobta is the captain of the Goblin Riders after all, so it’s no wonder he doesn’t take monsters like the White Fang Bear seriously.

Speaking of which, I’ve heard rumors of Gobta taking an attack head on from one of Clayman’s generals. His experience training with Hakurou has made him stronger. I almost got deceived by his unchanged appearance; could it be that Gobta is actually very strong?

Feeling reassured by Gobta’s growth, I decide to move on to the next order of business and mediate the discussion.

“Calm down everyone. Gobta has a point too. Although you yourself may be able to handle it without a sweat, don’t expect everyone to be like you, Souei.”

I interject. It would be bad to spread the idea that everyone has to rely on their own power to resolve problems. Average people will find it difficult to keep up when comparing their strength to the more powerful individuals which in turn would lead to reduced productivity. Forcing them to shoulder all that responsibility may discourage them and in turn cause negative effects.

I raised several specific examples regarding that point to explain it to everyone.

“—My sincerest apologies, I was being inconsiderate.”

Souei apologizes upon listening to my explanation.

Everyone is different. Although Souei's subordinates are strong enough to meet his high expectations, not everyone else has the ability to meet those demands. Hopefully, he will keep that in mind.

Not only Souei, it should also be the same case for Benimaru and Hakurou. I hope they will train our companions properly with an open mind.

In that regard, both Geld and Gabil are very considerate of their subordinates, so I don't have to worry too much about them. I hope Souei can improve his relationship with his subordinates by learning from those two.

But I have something more to say.

"However, training for Gobta and his men is a good thing as well. They can learn to keep their cool when facing unexpected emergency!"

I add.

Hakurou grins at my remark while Gobta hangs his head dejectedly.

The extent of growth that everyone can achieve may all be different, so it is always good to have more training. It's just like reading books! You might acquire knowledge that will eventually become useful one day.

That's why I can only request Gobta to work harder in the future. Well anyways, it's time to cut to the chase.

The issue surrounding the birth of monsters.

My worries weren't unfounded as the forest really did spawn some dangerous monsters.

I shouldn't worry too much about the security force as they've all prepared healing potions just in case, and with how fast the Star Wolves can travel, they shouldn't have a problem escaping from such situations.

However, that same logic cannot be applied to the visitors to our nation.

"With the high magicule concentration within our forest, it's no wonder that abnormal monsters will be born. We have to draft a plan to deal with this before we end up with any casualties."

While strengthening our security net is one way to do it, it won't fix the issue in the long run. Maintaining such a large-scale operation would only increase our burden. The place where monsters gather would naturally have an increased magicule concentration, if we can't get rid of the root cause, we will always have to remain on guard.

Then, what should we do...

As I was worrying about this, an unexpected proposal comes along to save the day.

"If that's the case, how about we apply an anti-monster barrier to the street?"

Vesta suggests.

Kaijin also stands up to speak, almost as if saying "I've just been waiting for that line."

"My lord, I've already built the device—A prototype of a fully automatic magic motor that can activate the barrier."

Kaijin finishes his words with a confident smile.



I am aware that Kaijin has been developing things behind my back, but did he just mention a fully automatic magic motor?

It is said to be an epoch-making magic machine that can automatically maintain the magic detected within. It is like an advanced version of a magic item that has specific magic imbued within it, however, the capacity and efficiency of this version is completely on a different level.

They seem to be quite troubled for not being of much help during the previous incident involving a barrier (Farmus Invasion). That is why Kaijin and Vesta apparently led the initiative in researching these technologies.

Aren't you two too overpowered? (in brain power) To come up with a prototype in such short amount of time, could they be actual geniuses?

That was my initial impression, but it turns out that I may have been overthinking things.

Gabil also participated in the development during his spare time with the help of Kurobee (who unfortunately is not present at the moment). Even Shuna contributed. It is the grand result backed by all of our magic technologies.

It is quite moving.

Kaijin seems to have adapted a life of grinding research 24/7 after having handed over his job in blacksmithing to Kurobee. But since he is the head of the manufacturing department in Tempest Federation, there is no way that he would be able to drown himself in research...

Kaijin explains the mechanism to me in detail.

The automatic magic motor seems to have been set to collect spare magicules floating in the air. And to be honest, this area possesses a high concentration of magicules. He came up with such a contraption knowing that it didn't make sense to leave these spare magicules unused.

The "Barrier of Aerial Magic Silence"²⁵ from that time also cleansed the magicules within it.

Let's use these surrounding monsters as an example, the Monsters will absorb (breathe in) the surrounding magicules in the atmosphere and produce "Magic Crystals." Kaijin and the rest seemed to have taken some inspiration from this and set about researching the principles behind them.

In addition, as previously emphasized, this kingdom constitutes of a very high concentration of magicules. Even though everyone believes that they are suppressing themselves, part of their Youki (demonic aura) is still leaking out into the atmosphere in large quantities. If you consider an average cave where a horde of Rank B-plus monsters reside, the magicule concentration of that location would be very high indeed. By that logic, the magicule concentration would most

²⁵I'm not sure what name yenpress used. May change in the future

definitely be abnormally high in this kingdom.

So, what should we do to face this challenge? It appears that Kaijin and the others have also been troubled by this problem for some time.

“Can we apply an anti-monster barrier with this automatic magic motor?”

“Of course. And there are more benefits to it than just that!”

Vesta adds confidently.

He and Kaijin looks at each other and laugh. The two seem to be getting along really well, making their quarrel in the past almost dream-like. Ah, let's put that aside for now and hear their explanation.

“But isn't anti-monster barrier used to prevent a monster invasion? What benefits are there besides that?”

“Hehehe, don't get scared when you hear it, my lord! This automatic magic motor is equipped with a device to collect magicules. We can lower the magicule concentration in the atmosphere by effectively using this feature!”

Are you serious! I almost gasped at his answer.

Now we have found a solution to our pressing problem!

“Indeed, Rimuru-sama. But there is one problem with this device. If the concentration of magicules is not high enough, the low efficiency would render the device useless.”

“But, my lord, will this really be a problem in this town?”

After hearing the end of Vesta and Kaijin's explanation, I nod to them in response.

Such concern is completely unnecessary since we are after all, worrying about magicule concentration being too high at the moment.

“Does the device activate and maintain the barrier automatically as long as it is collecting magicules in the air?”

“Not exactly, though it can be used like that too. The magic would disappear if the magicules that it uses as fuel run out. That's why we made it so that you can replenish it with fuel directly.”

Here is Kaijin's explanation: There is no need to worry about magicule depletion for the device near the vicinity of Tempest Federation, but the closer it is to the Western Nations, the less concentrated magicule is. It will be an issue if the barrier deactivates without notice. That's why their design uses replenishable fuel to run the motor. Its fuel comes from the crystallization of magicule in the atmosphere—the so called “Magic Crystal.”

Normally, we wouldn't consider using “Magic Crystal” as fuel directly due to its low efficiency. Unlike the “Magic Stone” crafted by the Freedom Association with unique technology, “Magic Crystal” is very unstable. If directly converted to mana, ninety percent of its content would dissipate and be wasted.

That's why people would prefer “Magic Stone” as fuel... However, we had “Great Sage” who was able to find the most effective spell from “Engraving Magic.” As long as the energy output is greater than energy input of the fuel, it won't matter even if it isn't Magic Stone. We were able to benefit greatly before by researching such technology since we didn't have the fund to purchase the expansive Magic Stones.

We can still activate the magic barrier even when the energy loss is pushed to the maximum, good enough performance can be achieved with a mere ten percent of its input power. The lost magicule would not disappear completely either but dissipate to the atmosphere.

And of course, that is also recyclable.

From this, we can see that it will be no fantasy to allow machines to function perpetually with high enough concentration of magicule.

We have even come up with another way to use it. For instance, we can produce “Magic Crystal” in large quantity and deliver them to be processed into “Magic Stone” at Freedom Association. In this way, we will have a much more effective use of the material.

With that being said, the most important thing here—is that the motor will be able to lower the concentration of magicule in the atmosphere. With the magicule concentration lowered, the rate of monster or demon²⁶ spawns will also decrease.

What a truly extraordinary invention.

It will become an indispensable contraption that will make up for the nature of our kingdom.

“We in fact also have discovered the method to extract Magic Stone from the energy source. But we will still require special devices for such extraction. It is quite challenging to do so with our available devices, but we are still trying to figure out a way to directly use “Magic Crystal.””

Kaijin makes such confident claim.

He has found ways to collect magicule from the atmosphere and crystallize it into “Magic Crystal.” And so, the next step of his research became finding out the principle behind the production of “Magic Process.”

The large quantity of Magic Stones I purchased from the Kingdom of Ingracia apparently proved to be useful, yet the conclusion of his research was that there are still difficulties in producing them by ourselves.

I suppose that would be the case. I seem to recall hearing about the need of a factory installed with large-scale devices required to process and produce Magic Stones. In fact, the production of them seem to be extremely difficult. Even though we may know the method, putting it to practice is not going to be easy.

Don’t worry, we don’t have to be worry ourselves over it.

Since we can also just directly utilize “Magic Crystal,” we don’t have to address the said issue so urgently.

On the other hand, the use of “Magic Crystal” as a fuel seems surprisingly simple.

The stones would use their magicule (mana) to cast the spells of “Engraving Magic” to form magic circles.

“Moreover, this motor device can produce more than just a barrier!”

Vesta shouts excitedly.

How surprisingly, there may be a limit to how much magic it can use, yet it can cast more than just a barrier alone.

²⁶The word “demon” is actually referring to 妖魔 (Yōma) which is just another way of saying monster in Japanese.

They have carved the magic spells into a disc made of magisteel.

It is said that by swapping these magic discs, it will execute different kinds of magic effects.

For example, it is like a record disc. The automatic magic motor is the equivalent of a music player. They consume “Magic Crystal” instead of batteries.

Although I told them about media such as record disc and such, I didn’t expect them to craft such magic items by stretching their creativity.

It may develop in the future to become smaller version of the device similar to the size of a CD player and may even be carried around as an equipment, or perhaps upsize and use it to cast tactical magic?

Ahhh, so many possibilities.

As for the current size of the automatic magic motor, it is a cuboidal device with length of one meter. It has a thickness of around fifty centimeters and can take up quite the space. Transportation of the device will not be easy due to its heavy weight. With that being said, if we can replace the loaded “Magic Crystal” directly, we will not need to move the device itself.

Vesta plans to place them alongside the stone tablets on the streets in order to activate for the anti-monster barriers.

By documenting the expiration of the fuel, we can maintain the barrier by recharging them during the patrolling hour of the day.

They also mention that there is no need to recharge if the magicule concentration is high enough. So, in reality, we only need to send patrol to examine whether there is any issue with the barrier.

They’ve really thought about everything.

It is indeed a convenient magical device with versatility.

With one device installed every ten kilometers, we can ensure the complete safety of the neighboring area. And we will also build an outpost every twenty kilometers so that patrolling will be less troublesome.

“Right, about the spell engraving of that barrier—”

“Hehehe, Dold would handle that. The mass production of the motor will be handled by Kurobee-san, we are just waiting for my lord to approve.”

“The people being trained by me have also grown quite a lot, and so we are not giving them lectures as frequently as before. Right now, I am free of duty, so please entrust this mission to me!”

Vesta must also want to confirm the initiation process of the project besides the researching. His eyes are glowing with expectations.

Once the motors are successfully installed, the problem with magicule concentration will also be swiftly resolved. Moreover, the safety of the streets will also increase exponentially.

I need to quickly approve this and launch plans to the install the motors on the streets.

“All right, Vesta, let’s get to work starting tomorrow!”

“Yes sir, leave it to me!”

Vesta agrees with a joyful smile.

What a capable guy.

As for the installation of the motors, he has decided to give the work to the orc engineers. The heavy weights of these devices to the humans only pose a minor burden to monsters. Their difference in efficiency is night and day. In comparison, adjusting the range of the barriers for them to cover the streets is actually the hardest work—Vesta says so while laughing.

However, the harmonious atmosphere is completely ruined in the next instant.

“GA—HAHAHA! When that thing is installed, I can release my aura however I wish!”

As such, it is Veldora who announced these words without shame.

“No, you can’t, you idiot!! If you do that, most of the people in this country will die!”

I rebuke back with my genuine thoughts after hearing his shocking declaration .

Even Vesta’s smile faded as his face turned pale.

“That’s not a good idea indeed. We may still hold up, but it won’t be the same for the citizens in the town.”

“Even if he were to go somewhere else, Veldora-sama’s immense power would have the same effect no matter where he goes.”

Even Benimaru and Shuna’s expressions changed after hearing Veldora’s words.

Which is only natural.

Most people were not even able to approach him due to the magicle leakage when he was still sealed. Corpses would probably pile up in this nation if Veldora releases his aura without a care.

“No, but… I’ve been suppressing my aura all this time, it’s getting tiring…”

“Then endure a bit more.”

Veldora begins to find excuses, which I rejected on the spot.

“…By the way, Rimuru, why are you okay (suppressing his aura)?”

Ah? That’s easy.

“Me? I have stored everything in my “Stomach.””

A long time ago, after being inspired by Rigurd, I put all my suppressed aura into my “Stomach.” Nowadays I have reached a state of perfection with its usage and is able to store the aura without any leakage at all.

After my evolution to a Demon Lord, my magicle storage greatly increased, while my “Predator” also evolved to “Gluttonous King Beelzebuth,” the capacity of my “Stomach” also increased beyond measurement.

That is why I don’t have such a need for unleashing my aura.

“But Rimuru-sama, it is extremely difficult for someone like Veldora-sama to completely suppress his aura. Even Benimaru-sama and the others have some of their aura leaking out.”

Said Diablo.

“Yes! Diablo. You understand don’t you. Tell Rimuru more about just how hard I’ve been working!”

Veldora adds on happily while nodding. And so, Diablo begins to explain things to me.

Apparently, demon race is extremely skillful at controlling their aura and magic, that’s why

they are able to contain their aura perfectly. Assessed by the master of aura suppression Diablo, Veldora's act is of a perfect score.

Veldora indeed possesses extraordinary immense amount of magicule, so maintaining a state with his aura suppressed must be exhausting.

"Is that really the case, Veldora?"

"Hmm! I've been suppressing my aura ever since you taught me how. I really need to release it *somewhere* soon!"

This problem does seem quite severe from the sound of it.

Veldora still seems to be able to suppress his aura, but it will probably lead to grave consequences if I don't deal with it. Wherever he finds to release his aura would probably turn its surrounding to a land of death. He may even cause a bunch of dangerous monsters to be spawned. It may even give birth to monsters at the same level as Charybdis.

If a real Calamity level threat is spawned, even if harmless, will still be treated as a dangerous creature by other nations.

"I understand. I'll come up with a way somehow, just endure a little longer."

"All right then. I can still manage for now, but please hurry!"

All in all, I'll have Veldora endure for a while. I'll think of an idea during this time.

Speaking of this—

Now that the problem with magicule concentration is resolved, I didn't expect to encounter a bigger task like this...

Life just won't be smooth sailing for me all the time...

I sigh softly as these thoughts go through my mind.



With the conclusion of Souei's report, the rest of the executives state their reports as well. There doesn't seem to be any major issue, and just as when I was about to end the meeting—

"Could I say something, Rimuru-sama?"

Geld raised his hand and spoke up.

He seemed quite troubled from just now, perhaps it has to do with what he wants to say.

"What is it, Geld? Speak your mind up. Could it be that you encountered any trouble?"

I didn't think there would be any huge problem considering how he looked last night.

Geld's worries probably have to do with the treatment of the captives.

But if possible, I wish to offer my help.

"I wish to inform my tribesman that Rimuru-sama has become Demon Lord. I want to go patrol the villages that I haven't visited in a while and practice "Spatial Movement" by the way. Is it okay? I've received message that my tribesmen have settled down, some of them may even

want to follow Rimuru-sama.”

Geld opened up after my urges.

Now that he brought it up, he’s been busy with the road construction and hasn’t had the time to visit all the orc villages. I had also caught news that their diet has been improved among other things, but I laid it off my mind afterward.

That is why I approved his proposal.

However—

“Geld, if anyone wish to follow me, bring them for a tour of the town first.”

“—Why is that the case?”

“Hmm. I can understand that your eagerness to recruit them into your team, but I think some training for them before that is necessary.”

But this is merely an excuse.

Geld can contact his tribesmen through “Telepathy Net” and quickly mobilize them to form a team. It is an undeniable advantage and one of Geld’s outstanding skill.

“But, I can immediately...Right now the construction projects at my hand have been arranged full. I need to construct roads to different nations as well as building resident castle for Demon Lord Milim-sama, I’ll need the most efficient labor force to be my manpower—”

Geld is implying that a lot more labor is required for the future, and so he needs to quickly gather some tribesmen here. Yet I am still not willing to green-light it.

“No way. If you want labor, aren’t there captives available? Go instruct them and give them a good training.”

“But...”

“Geld, I understand your feeling. I won’t deny that it is only natural for us to pursue efficiency. But I hope you can have more long-term foresights.”

“Long-term...foresights?”

“That’s right. “Telepathy Net” is indeed convenient. It is practical and can reduce lapses. But, what about the captives if you only give preferential treatments to your own kin that you can reach out to? Did you plan to give these captives simple chores that anyone can do?”

“That, that is...”

Geld seems to come to some revelation having been advised by me.

We indeed require labor force in the future, but while we still have time and energy now, we should also train those captives. Personnel training can only be successfully carried out given sufficient time.

Moreover, if Geld only treats his own tribesmen well today, it may lead to unnecessary hierarchy of treatment in the future. I will not permit such a thing to happen when my goal is to build a paradise for different species to coexist.

That is why we are at a crucial moment now.

“Besides, Geld. You are also an outstanding commander. Should you be able to control those mixed bunch of majins today, you will no doubt further develop your leadership skill.”

“—OHH!”

“Even though there are a series of projects lining up behind you, don’t be nervous about them. Effectively use your past experience and have everyone listen to your command. Also—”

I take out a piece of paper and hand it over to Geld.

“T-this is—!”

“I’ll let you handle this project. It is only a basic draft of design, but I believe you will handle it well. So, do you wish to accept it?”

“Rimuru-sama...”

The design graph handed to Geld—was the graph of a giant building that I slowly drafted over my spare time.

I of course also showed it to Milim and the others.

Those skyscraping height made Frey very satisfied and left Karion shocked by its magnificence.

As for Milim, she was simply delighted by it.

Considering this, the satisfaction of our customers will be guaranteed—But although it may seem like an investment to the future, it would be more similar to doing a free service, so I would be quite troubled if they do have a strong opinion about it.

After seeing the streets of Ingracia, I designed this building that may be less grand in size but just as competent in design.

My initial goal was building a skyscraper, but I changed the idea believing it was too boring. Instead I redesigned it to infuse the building with the features of this world. So, I hope Geld would help to build it. And of course, there is more to it—I also wish (have an excuse) to find reinforcement for Geld to prevent him from being crashed by the heavy burdens of all these important responsibilities.

My eyes turn to Kaijin.

“Leave it to me, my lord. I’ll go assist Geld-san. I’ll also bring that Midley guy along as well. Allow us to take on the task of building the city that you have envisioned.”

It seems that he noticed that I was peeking at him, Kaijin returns my look with a smile.

How impressive! He recognized the sight of a slime. But not everyone is as good as Kaijin, so perhaps it will be better for me to turn back to human shape during meetings.

Putting that aside, I’m reassured that Kaijin is willing to assist.

“Are you fine with your work at hand?”

“No problem. Don’t worry about it, my research has concluded for a while, moreover my apprentices are getting more and more competent as they train. So, it will be fine for me to leave town temporarily.”

Kaijin takes on the mission with a smile.

This is great.

A person’s worries over trivial matters will quickly be erased once he is given a bigger challenge or something worth working towards. If this is Geld we are talking about, then there is no way that he will be set back by such matter.

“You can do it. I hope you can overcome all the challenges and allow me to help you develop in a more mature you. And of course, you can find me to discuss if you ever encounter any difficulties. Why don’t you try to do it with a relaxed and joyful mood?”

“B-but! If I accidentally fail such important task...”

Geld’s body is frozen uptight at his spot, likely due to him being too nervous.

This man is very serious, hard-working and has a strong sense of responsibility.

That’s why I add on.

“It’s all right, all right. Even if you fail, you can learn from it as well. It is not human life we are discussing here, so even if there are any losses, won’t it at most be a city? We’ll build another if we might gather enough money again.”

These words will probably cause the opposite effect on lazy bones, but not so for Geld.

“Indeed! In the past, I was also—”

“Hold on, Gobta, what were you in the past? I need a more detailed explanation, come to my office later.”

“Eh! Is this actually an elaborate trap?”

Seriously, this Gobta. Don’t get ahead of yourself like that.

But his words do seem to have relaxed Geld.

“Hehehehehe. Thank you, Rimuru-sama. I, Geld, was too afraid of failure and was overwhelmed by worries over trivial matters in life. In order not to let down Rimuru-sama’s expectation, please allow me to carry out this significant task!”

“Hmm, I’ll be relying on you!”

Great.

Geld’s worries seem to have gone away as he gives off a delightful smile.

That should do it.

Shion on the other hand is looking at Geld with jealousy while muttering “So unfair...giving all the important tasks only to Geld.”

I answer in response “This is called assigning role according to each’s talent²⁷. You have your own job to do, don’t you?”

“It must be cooking!”

Not at all you idiot!

“Yeah...well... You have many strengths. Though in your case...cooking...is not one of them...”

I replied out of reflex and found a way to make it through the conversation.

If we are being honest here, her talent is probably being my bodyguard and protecting the city. Anyhow, Shion has her own strengths.

There is no need to be hasty since everyone have things that they are good at and things that they are not.

“Right, Shion. You are so incredibly strong that even I may lose to you under some condi-

²⁷The saying is “適才適用”: using the correct role for the proper talent.

tion. That's why you have to protect Rimuru-sama well when I'm absent."

With Benimaru saying this at last, our discussion of the topic ends.



The executive meeting updating situations with reports has finally been concluded.

The meeting could just end at this point of time, but I suddenly thought—

I should ask about Diablo for an update on how his plan is progressing.

"Well then, allow me to explain."

Diablo salutes respectfully to me as he said so and begins his explanation.

The movement of every nation—The situations he described regarding the neighboring nations are just as what Rigurd and Souei had reported. Diablo seems to have gotten hold of this information as both of them frequently nod in agreement to Diablo's report. The movements of the nations have to do with the plan to help Youm rise to power.

As for the status of Youm, I was informed of it among other things from Diablo's report.

Putting aside becoming a king, Youm hasn't even had any noble education. He probably can't even properly engage with any nobles or royalties. Right now, the previous King of Farmus Edmalis has been acting as Youm's mentor under Diablo's instruction.

He probably won't attempt anything devious under Diablo's surveillance. So, I can leave the teaching to him being reassured. Depending on how things progress, it may be quite interesting to recruit and use him in the future. It will definitely be of help to Youm if that's the case.

Diablo mentions about his plan again and explains it altogether to the executives.

While listening, I made a mental note that I should meet this man, Edmalis.

And the new king on the other hand, of course, is plotting some schemes behind the scene.

"But it'll be some time before he can make his move right?"

To reorganize the army and mobilize once again will likely require several months at the least.

Or so I thought, but Diablo answered differently. His reply was completely different from what I imagined.

"Kufufufufu. I wish to resolve the matter as soon as possible, so I'm speeding things along."

He says so with a delightful smile.

"Ah? Eh...then we won't be able to prepare—"

"Not to worry. I've already requested Benimaru-dono to prepare an expeditionary force accordingly."

"Indeed. I've prepared fully for that part. Both the troop that will be infiltrating the public to operate under the sun and the troops carrying out covert missions in the dark have been properly arranged. I in fact spent more time selecting candidates since everyone wanted to participate."

Diablo and Benimaru put on a smooth duet with how casually both explained the preparations.

They've skipped reporting these things to me in the past, almost as if the matter is only as important as telling me the time of their hiking trip.

I personally consider this whole thing to be quite significant, you know...

"However, though not posing a problem, something is indeed troubling me. I haven't bought this up before since it wasn't worthy of a report, but Reyhiem has yet to return."

Erasing his smile, Diablo adds on.

Oh yeah.

I've been wondering what I forgot and now I finally recall.

The message we sent to Hinata has not been replied.

"Is he the Archbishop that you sent out to respond the summoning of the Western Holy Church? Did he not bring my message? Or could it be that the message did not safely arrive?"

"No, I had Reyhiem carry the crystal ball and sent him to the capital of the Kingdom of Ingracia with my men protecting him. A "Teleportation Gate" was set up there for his transportation, so theoretically he should have directly reached the headquarter of Western Holy Church in Holy Empire of Lubelius..."

It will take two weeks of carriage ride for someone to travel from the Kingdom of Farmus to the Kingdom of Ingracia by the coast. Transporting from there to Holy Empire of Lubelius would take three weeks more of time.

With that being said, magic does exist in this world.

There is a special hallway set in between Ingracia and Lubelius called "Teleportation Gate."

You can travel between the two nations instantly by passing special dimension through the gate.

Only extremely high-ranked officials are aware of this gateway, but it probably won't come as a surprise to Reyhiem who was the Archbishop of a strong nation. He must then also possess the status to use that gateway. It is said that he went straight for the capital as soon as he had entered the Kingdom of Ingracia.

The Greater Demon servants summoned by Diablo confirmed that Reyhiem had arrived at the capital. That city is however deployed with barriers which would cause commotions if Greater Demons invade. That's why they reported back to Diablo after Reyhiem entered the city.

"After which, he has not left the capital at all?"

"Indeed. I told my servants to continue their surveillance of the capital and they are supposed to report to me as soon as Reyhiem exits."

Yet he says that his servants still have not reported back.

If that's the case, has Reyhiem remained at the Western Holy Church?

"Could it be that someone tried to silent him by murdering him?"

I couldn't help but comment when the worst-case scenario crosses my mind.

But Diablo rejects my theory.

"No, right now I haven't sensed it. My Unique Skill 'Tempter' would deprive my dominated

subjects of their souls when they die.”

In other words, as long as his soul hasn’t been deprived, the person is still alive.

That’s quite a scary skill, but I’ll put that aside for now.

There were also several Templar Knights guarding him, so he probably thinks the capital there is safe without any hazard. Yet Reyhiem still hasn’t returned.

It may be that the inquiry meeting from within the Western Holy Church has been taking too much time, so it is perhaps not the time to worry. But this is indeed worrying. But it’s fine as long as he is still alive.

Hopefully, he won’t be silenced and cause us to be labeled as the culprit.

“In other words, right now we have no idea what Western Holy Church plan to do.”

“Yes. They may interfere with my plan, but under the circumstances right now, it is hard to make a judgement. We can only maximize our guards in order to take precaution against whatever is to come.”

“Hmm. How problematic if that’s really the case. We really can’t get a clear read on the situation with this limited information.”

If we have sufficient information, I can just leave it to be fully handled by Wisdom King Raphael-san.

“I am most ashamed. The risk is simply too high to infiltrate Lubelius—”

“No no no, it’s all right! No good will come out of forced actions.”

Seeing Souei’s regretful expression, I quickly comfort him.

It will take Souei himself to investigate the domain of Western Holy Church, who are nemesis to us monsters. Moreover, with Hinata as their leader, I have reservations to send Souei out.

Such a task can’t at all be dealt with by Souka and the rest. They will definitely be executed if found. That’s why I have ordered them to act cautiously and never overplay their cards.

But, even if that’s the case...

“Will they be hostile to us or not?”

We implied in the message I sent that I could forget about the things that happened in the past.

Although I also provoked them a bit in the message, I hope they can just overlook that part.

—No, this is not good at all. But since I’ve sent out the message, there is no use crying over spilled milk.²⁸

I basically expressed my willingness to engage with them peacefully, so I hope they will understand my intention.

Hinata is smart, and I believe she will make the right call.

It will be most ideal if they choose to coexist rather than antagonizing us.

Now apart from the Octagram, the only faction to be alerted is the Western Holy Church.

Our relationship with the Eastern Empire is tense as well, but there is no sign of them taking

²⁸Almost like a certain translator sent out a reddit teaser when he could use more time to edit. My bad guys. Cube: I’m still pissed at that

any action yet. So as long as the Western Holy Church does not interfere, Diablo's plan should not fail.

"That's quite a challenging issue. I personally think that we should just resolve things by fighting a war with them once and for all."

Rather than leaving a potential threat, Benimaru prefers a clear result through war.

But we will be done if we are defeated, so I still hope for a peaceful resolution.

Shuna suddenly opens up, looking rather intrigued:

"We were under attack when Rimuru-sama battled against Hinata the Saint. The two incidents must have some connections, and someone probably orchestrated all these behind the scene. Moreover, there is evidence to back this up, since Clayman also implied that there is someone else behind him—"

Reminded by Shuna's words, I recall the puppet master behind the scene that cannot be overlooked.

"Is it not "That Lord"?"

"Most likely. Right now, we are aware that someone is plot against us, so we need to take into consideration his possible actions as well. We cannot get careless."

I mumble the answer before Hakuro nodds in agreement with tension in his expression.

"This enemy, we absolutely cannot spare him."

The crowds express agreement to Shuna's words.

"Right... If that guy intervenes this time as well, Hinata may move out herself—"

But something doesn't seem right.

I feel like that I've missed something.

I suddenly realize what I have been puzzled about.

"—Say, could it be that Hinata came after me, not out of her own volition, but because someone had requested or ordered her to do so?"

I express my doubts to everyone, asking for opinion.

"What do you mean?"

"Rimuru-sama, based on the timing of when you were attacked, is it not obvious that Hinata and "That Lord" are somehow connected?"

While everyone is puzzled as well, Shuna's thought aligned with me as she spoke up.

With that being said, my feeling of something amiss intensifies.

To me, the strangest thing is no other than—

"I'll be straight with you all then, even though I don't think she is likely taking order from others, what does everyone else think? Assuming she is already acquainted with "That Lord," do you guys think it is possible for her to be ordered by this person?"

"—OHH!"

That is what puzzles me the most.

That woman wasn't even willing to hear my words, how could she accept others' request or moreover, obey orders from others.

"Your liege makes a good point. Hinata is the commander of the Holy Knight Order, so it's

unlikely she will follow anyone else's order. That hot chick only listens to the will of the god Luminas. It is famously rumored that even the pope is not able to change her mind!"

Kaijin's words confirm my thoughts.

Hinata is clearly of the highest authority if she can refuse all order than god's.

Then the theory that she is sent on order of others is clearly false.

"I see, so it really is the case? After all, this Hinata would completely ignore other people's words. It would be quite astonishing if she is willing to listen to other people's order."

By the reverse of that logic, we won't have a need to stand against the Western Holy Church if I can persuade Hinata.

"So, there is no one who can order Hinata around..."

"Then, was the overlap of time only a coincidence?"

Benimaru mutters while Shuna seems puzzled.

"Through clever use of words—That may be the reason."

Diablo mutters while pondering.

That seems like something a demon would say, but he has a point.

There is very little chance that such cautious person as Hinata would fall for manipulation, but it is nonetheless a possibility.

"Just as what Diablo said, Hinata may have been instigated by someone. And of course, it may have been "That Lord." But—"

"That person is not able to simply order Hinata around... Could this be what you mean?"

"That's indeed what I meant."

I nod at Diablo.

" "That Lord" was able to instigate the Kingdom of Farmus to march on us and manipulate Demon Lord Clayman to destroy our kingdom, yet is unable to manipulate Hinata with ease..."

Benimaru seems to be examining my view and begins to ponder with his eyes closed.

"Then what does Rimuru-sama think, about whether the Western Holy Church will take action this time or not?"

"About that..."

I couldn't immediately give an answer being suddenly asked by Diablo like this. But considering calmly from our opponents' perspective, even Hinata would probably wish to avoid direct conflict with us right now.

The message I sent to them also made clear that I don't wish to be hostile against them.

With my good intention shown, Hinata wouldn't be so stupid as to still stand against Tempest Federation consisting of me, a Disaster-ranked creature and Catastrophe-ranked Veldora.

By assessing the potential loss alone would show that she stands to gain no benefit from doing so. Even if she triumphs, all she will get is reputation, which obviously would not be enough to make up for the loss that will be sustained by the Western Holy Church. It won't make sense to start such a war without any profit to gain. Hinata may not listen to people's words, but she is not that ignorant as to not see the cost and benefit of things.

With that being said, I still have some concerns reserved.

“—The God Luminas...Luminas? I feel like I know that name somewhere...”

A certain someone (Veldora) has been annoyingly muttering nonsense since just now, causing me to lose focus. But he seems to be rather concerned about something.

“Hinata mentioned that we are obstacles. That is because of the doctrines of Western Holy Church—The Luminas Sect does not tolerate monsters. However, there may be more reason to it—”

Why would Hinata consider us as obstacles?

Sure, the doctrine of Luminism does not tolerate the existence of monsters, but if that's the only reason, it doesn't seem to be particularly rational one. Meaning that, it doesn't seem like the sort of thing Hinata would do.

In which case, there must be some other reason behind it...

Although this may contradict the theory just now, what would it make of the person manipulating behind the scene. Assuming that there is indeed someone other than Hinata trying to meddle with our business.

What would be this person's goal?

«Report. It is most likely that several persons are involved in the matter. The series of events are all connected. But it is speculated that these events were not all carried out by the same person.»

If that's the case, would it mean...?

«Answer. It involves several countries, individuals, dynamics, and other factors. A number of intents have been pinpointed after analysis. The intents may seem to have common goals, there are contradictions among them. Thus, attributing all occurred events to one mastermind is unreasonable.»

In other words, there is more than one person behind the scene.

It does make a lot of sense this way and easier to see.

It means that Clayman was but one of the people being manipulated.

Oh, I see, it makes a lot more sense thinking in this direction.

These may jump at each other's aid when their goals align, but in reality, they are not moving according to each other's order.

These masterminds may also only have instigated them. It may be that Hinata has nothing to do with the people behind the scene in the first place.

Indeed, things are clearer when considering there to be multiple people involved in the grand scheme of things. Moreover, once situation changes, there may no longer be a need to be hostile against certain party. That is how international affairs work without the involvement of personal emotions.

Then—

Clayman saw us as an eyesore and he also tried to manipulate us. That's why he was rejoiced to see that I and Hinata had our fight to the death.

The Kingdom of Farmus thought that me becoming the leader of the federation is an obstacle. They didn't wish to eliminate Tempest Federation, but to take over the kingdom. That's

why they also wanted to see that Hinata would take care of me.

So, what was Hinata herself thinking?

Of course, she couldn't spare a monster like me on the ground of the doctrines she upheld.

Things began to unfold when all three parties' goal aligned. The results were my escape from Hinata's pursuit, defeat of Farmus in battle and the demise of Clayman.

The time forwards to the present.

The situations have changed for every one of the masterminds.

With Clayman's death, "That Lord" behind him is likely focusing on replenishing the lost troops due to the conflict.

If that's the case, will he still confront me directly?

«Answer. The likelihood of which is extremely low. If the individual possesses more force than Clayman, he will have intervened already. Even if he had preserved forces, his attack plan has failed miserably. It is thus meaningless for him to intervene again now.»

So basically, he doesn't have any motive to attack me now. Is that the case?

That person has been hidden behind the scene this entire time, so it shouldn't be the time for him yet to come out under the sun to operate. Even if he tried to strike back, he would know that directly confronting us would be simply foolish.

Based on this deduction, what would the other factions do?

King Edmalis' ambition is all gone after stepping down.

The new king seems to be on the go. His faction is probably not short of people who want to harm us. To him our nation is an obstacle, and so it's likely that they haven't given up on eliminating us with schemes. But these people are being watched by Diablo. It is too late for them to pose a threat now even if they add in on the list of the masterminds behind the scene.

However, I still can't overlook them that easily.

There may be people with concealed identity among them.

That's why humans are hard to deal with.

There hasn't been any news from the Western Holy Church.

Reyhiem has yet to return, which is probably implication that the church is in a chaotic state internally as well.

Maybe Hinata is lost as well?

Since antagonizing us requires a clear justification, and there is no necessity to strike us without a motive. But, what if Hinata continues wish to be hostile even without a motive?

It would mean that she was forced to actions under some circumstances.

«Warning. Reminder that there may be several hidden masterminds behind the scene.»

Indeed, that is the case.

If there are indeed several people behind the scene, how things develop will not be able to be controlled by Hinata.

The situation now cannot be treated with optimism, I will have to be mentally prepared.

"We should think in the direction that there are too many interests involved in the matter that Hinata's will alone will not be able to determine how the overall circumstance develop. Am

I right?"

As I came up with a conclusion, Diablo seems to arrive at the same view.

"Very impressive indeed, Diablo. Those are precisely my thoughts too."

But it is not worth mentioning since it depended on the help of Wisdom King Raphael-san.

By the way, Diablo seems super intelligent, could he be even smarter than me?

Right now, I've activated millions times more of "Thought Acceleration," yet Diablo was able to reach at the same conclusion against that type of processing speed. He has an amazingly intelligent brain even without Wisdom King Raphael—It seems I've been totally defeated it.

"Considering the involvement of Western Holy Church on the matter, I shall be more vigilant."

Diablo says so with his *Kufufufufu* laughter.

It appears that he has put on all his guards from the start, so perhaps my advice was unnecessary.

But even if that's the case, I still wish to alert everyone.

"Perhaps we have been thinking it in the wrong way all this time."

"What do you mean?"

Benimaru asks in everyone's place.

All of the executives focus their eyes on me.

Given this is the circumstance, I should inform them all here prudently.

"As Diablo just said, there may be more than one mastermind behind the scene. I guess that there have been different factions that got involved in the matter to have led things develop the ways they are. And this time, they are acting on their own for their interests are no long in alignment."

My executives soon show expressions of revelation as I explain.

Everyone seems to have very outstanding insights having realized the mystery with what I've explained so far.

Gobta expresses that he didn't get it because he had been sleeping. I'm reassured that he brought it up, but I'll also punish him hard later as well.

"Does it mean that, these people are also connected to "That Lord" mentioned by Clayman?"

"We are not sure. But it wouldn't be wise to assume anything just yet. With insufficient information, it will be dangerous to act on our own speculations."

I shrug in response to Benimaru's doubts.

Right now, in my slime form, I do so by popping up a tiny wave on my body.

"But, if Hinata isn't acting on anyone's orders, but because she felt compelled (obligated) to do it, things will start to make sense."

Kaijin also shows an expression of realization.

"Kufufufufu. Then I should inquire more about the matter. I learnt that it was some merchants who gave wind to Edmalis and the rest, now that I think about it, there are many suspicious points about that."

Diablo's words remind me.

“Wait? You mentioned merchant...”

“What is it, Rimuru-sama?”

“Nothing. The reason why the Kingdom of Farmus wished to attack our town was due to their belief that there is profit to gain from doing so. Since war is money-consuming, there are people everywhere who wants to find army to fight in their place. It is very likely that these merchants have secretly been involved in pursuit of profits from the war.”

“I see—”

This is another big blind spot, since our enemy may not necessarily be someone with military power.

Historically, it has always been human desire that led to devious intents. Military force can be purchased by money—Considering this, merchants are suspects worthy of our guards as well.

I jump off the chair while turning into human form.

Glancing around the crowds, I give order to them one by one.

“Shuna, go investigate the ledger retrieved from Clayman’s castle and single out the records of his transactions with merchants.”

“Understood.”

“Diablo, go and pressure the civil servants in Farmus to speak the truth and investigate thoroughly the merchants that have traded with them.”

“I understand, my liege.”

“Benimaru, reexamine the members of the team that will be dispatched to assist Youm’s army. Make sure they’ll be able to handle any sort of unexpected situation that arises.”

“Yes sir, leave it to me.”

“Rigurd, I’ll leave the town to your care. Please do sufficient preparations for the grand festival that we will be holding.”

“Most certainly!”

“Geld, don’t worry about the issues here and just focus on your work. If you truly encounter any difficulties, I will help you, so please have faith in me and work hard!”

“Of course. There is not a single person in this nation who will hold doubt against you Rimuru-sama.”

“Hakurou is to assist Benimaru; Gabil will be aiding Rigurd; and in light of the many peoples that will be visiting us, Rigur will need to prepare our town’s security force accordingly!”

“Understood.”

“Yes sir!”

“Leave it to me!”

“As for Shion, uhhhh...let’s see... Oh yes! You will be my bodyguard, yup!”

“Yes sir!”

I finish assigning duties for everyone.

I nod in satisfaction while Patting Ranga’s head.

Done and done, now all I need is to let them go and attend to their duties.

“What about me?”

“Oh Veldora, for you, be careful not to get in anyone’s way.”

“Hmm. Rest assured since it’s me you are talking about here!”

I am not assured at all.

That’s why I have a close look at him.

Oh yeah, there’s also—

“Gobta-kun. You seem awfully tired, come see me in my office.”

“AHH!”

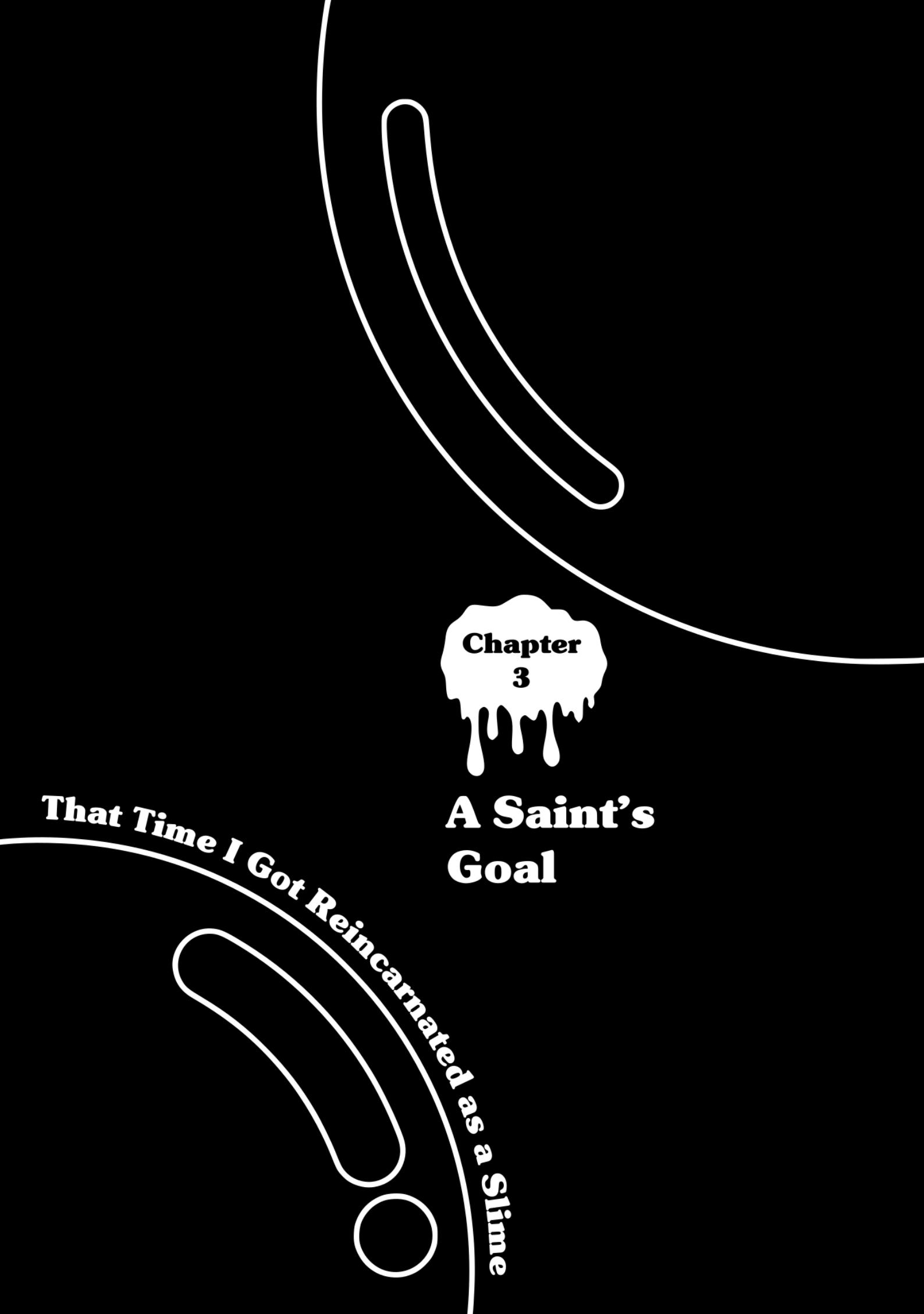
I wake up sleepyhead Gobta and says so to him with a “smile.”

And as such, it’s business as usual even when I am a Demon Lord with the meetings. Now that all the issues have been addressed, the meeting with my executives is dismissed.

ROUGH SKETCHES

HINATA
SAKAGUCHI





**Chapter
3**

**A Saint's
Goal**

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Chapter 3

A Saint's Goal

On this day, the world is shadowed in fear once more.

“Storm Dragon” Veldora has been revived.

The Western Holy Church has announced the fact to the public.

And just before their announcement, they received information from the Freedom Association with regards to a message from the Demon Lords.

With the news of the Ten Great Demon Lords becoming the “Octagram,” nations around the world have plunged into chaos.

Every ruler of the nations has been troubled over the drastic change of situation and are all concerned about what to do in response.

The whole world has been shaken.

The Western Holy Church is of no exception. They have detected an unusual aura of danger.

It’s been several days since the duel between Hinata Sakaguchi and Rimuru. The Church has been unable to reach Archbishop Reyhiem since his march alongside the Farmus Army. It is an established rule to always send regular reports back, yet he has not responded, meaning something has gone wrong with their march on Tempest Federation. When she received the news, Hinata decided to head to Tempest Federation herself. Yet, before she could leave, she received the divine order to stand guard at the Holy Church.

The reason was: the revival of “Storm Dragon” Veldora. She was barred from marching as she was left to wait for the gathering of the Holy Knight Order to rain destruction on the Tempest Federation in her stead.

It’s hard to tell who’s luckier in this situation...

Hinata most certainly would be defeated if confronting Veldora directly without preparation. But now that Hinata is aware of Veldora’s revival, she can strategize a direct invasion of the Tempest Federation. A Tempest Federation without Rimuru would have long been annihilated. Hinata’s goal is Tempest Federation alone, not Veldora. She could have easily achieved this using her powers.

She was the one with the upper hand.

—But that is not considering Veldora's recent activities and the reaction of Rimuru.
In other words, she was able to avoid the worst ending for both sides.



Protected within the gentle light of the domed holy barrier lies the Holy Capital.

This barrier is the product of countless years of research and improvement, the highest level of protective barrier. It is able to prevent all forms of enemy invasion and has defended this city for thousands of years—The prayers of the denizens turned into reality.

The barrier even blocks out sunlight and can automatically adjust the brightness of the interior space. There will be more brightness in the morning and less at night. This created a thermostatic environment within the interior, so the temperature is maintained throughout the year.

The city's farmlands are divided into districts where crops from whichever season can be collected at any time.

It is like an idealized arcadia where the citizens will never suffer famine. Every citizen has a job and all the children receive an appropriate level of education. It is a heaven in the mortal realm where everything is appropriately arranged and managed by the law.

This is the capital of Holy Empire of Lubelius²⁹ —Holy Capital “Ruen.”

On the day of the Walpurgis Banquet, Hinata is on her way to the holy church.

The solemn atmosphere is neutralized by the gentle warmth of the sun.

This is a prosperous kingdom.

Here, no one suffers from starvation, nor are there any beggars on the street. Everyone is given an appropriate job or duty, and they fulfill their assigned purpose to the best of their abilities. They rise as the bell rings and rest as the sun falls. The more capable people would guide the less capable ones, and as such, with proper regulation, the citizens are able to enjoy a prosperous life. In the name of God, they have been granted the ideal, equitable society. This holy city is the greatest representation of that.

Hinata observes the expression of a passersby.

Everyone wears a gentle and kind smile.

However, there is something that concerns her.

She always has some doubts whenever she spends time in this city.

In Hinata's eyes, this holy land is no doubt the ideal heaven on earth.

Turning the Western Nations as well as the whole world into a peaceful society without conflict. That was Hinata's ambitious dream.

²⁹Rather than Empire, the original name is more akin to “Theocracy”

Hinata hopes for a society where the strong do not prey on the weak.

However, the reality of this world is simply too cruel.

The Kingdom of Ingracia and the Holy Empire of Lubelius have differences of night and day, which often troubles her. By nature, Ingracia, the kingdom of freedom, and Lubelius, who preaches no conflict, are the polar opposites from political structure to ideology; Every aspect of either society contrasts each other greatly.

The biggest difference perhaps is—The expressions on the children.

She can hear the sound of children coming from the educational facility next to the holy church. Several children who seem to be running late for class are heading down the hallway towards the building. The faster child is holding onto the hand of the slower one. This is a common sight that she has seen in this city. Yet even now, she can tell the difference from this to that in Ingracia.

So, what would happen if it was in the Kingdom of Ingracia?

She recalls the scene she witnessed there.

What would it be like?

It would happen in the morning, when the faster children would sprint through the door just before the bell and have triumphant smiles on their face. The slower ones would arrive late to be scolded by the teachers by themselves. And when that happens, the children who are not late would mock at the slower children.

What if they are to run like children in Lubelius with their hands held by each other's?

They would probably all be late and get scolded by the teacher. But of course, you can avoid being late by getting up a little earlier.

That's not really enough to hold as a comparison. It's a rather unimportant incident.

She always ponders on that.

What is really different in that scenario?

Were the faster children not caring enough? No.

There is really nothing wrong with the children to mock their peers who arrived late. They were not doing so to look down on them or ridicule them as fools. After all, the children who arrived late were laughing awkwardly as well. They seemed rather delightful even after being scolded.

So, what is the case in Lubelius?

She looks towards the running children to see the same expressions on everyone else.

A gentle smile—

The same expressions of satisfaction that is seen on every adult; the same expression of someone who has lost their sense of competitiveness and personal identity.

This society is built to create constant happiness, yet there is no sense of freedom. Everyone is equal and given their own responsibilities.

On top of that, equity is upheld for those who are able to help those who are not. The people of this kingdom make the basis of their nation.

“Creating an equal society without conflict,” that is Hinata’s pursuit in life.

There will no longer be children abandoned by their parents. Everyone will live a happy life in this world.

This is too idealistic to be practical—That's what Hinata thought as well. But when she almost gave up such dream, she saw that Lubelius was the manifestation of the ideal.

Competitiveness will lead to conflict. Yet this society is so well regulated that there is no form of competition at all, the equivalent of Hinata's ideal. And with regards to the form of government Holy Empire of Lubelius has adapted, it is strictly speaking, close to communism. It's the government that leaves the order of all things to "God" in order to assure absolute equality.

God—as represented by the Pope of the Pope's Ministry.

But if there is any weakness to communism, it would be the existence of a ruling class. Its doctrine of equality is built on the inevitable presence of an authority. And once the people high up in the chain of command are corrupted, it becomes hard for the people under their authority to get rid of their rulers. There would be unjust in the distribution of wealth to widen the wealth gap.

In order to make up for such flaws, the government has handed their authority to God. The Pope's Ministry thus acts as the ruling figure to ensure the equality of their citizens. And of course, diplomacy with other nations is also handled by them.

All are equal under God—That is a clever lie. Yet this has been the reality in the Holy Empire of Lubelius for thousands of years.

It is a truly ideal system, but it is only natural.

Since the true identity of the God Luminas is—

Demon Lord—Luminas Valentine.

Luminas Valentine, overlord, and a True Demon Lord.

Her title "Queen of Nightmares" shows her status as the queen of the Kingdom of Darkness.

She is also the only person who has ever defeated Hinata.



In the eyes of the Demon Lords, all humans are the same.

To Luminas, having a comprehensive system of managing humans is the same as having one for livestock. Yet her system has managed to create the ideal kingdom.

Vampires do not need to devour the flesh and bones of humans. They only require a small amount of blood and the spirit stored within it to maintain their lives. More advanced vampires do not even need to ingest blood to be immortal.

Whenever their human food-stock are happier, their blood tastes more delicious. And it is for that reason, the humans living in this kingdom are much more prosperous than other places. The only possible issue is when a vampire might inhale too many spirits at once, and as a result,

Luminas has such behavior. The lesser vampires would not dare to disobey the Primogenitor Luminas³⁰, and so they obey the rules of this kingdom wholeheartedly.

The equality in this society far outranks that of any of the Western Nations.

And it's for that reason Hinata believes in the fairness of the Luminism³¹ and first joined the Western Holy Church in pursuit of justice. She has devoted herself to spreading this religion and has since treated the doctrines as the words of God. She even became a holy knight who would give a hand to whoever is in need of help to thoroughly practice her justice.

The way of justice held by her mentor, Shizue Izawa, was too slow and gentle. Meanwhile, her fellow countryman, Yuuki Kagurazaka's plan seems too unrealistic to be practical in her eyes. He would only react to events after they occurred, which lacks foresight.

People, by nature, want to overcome challenges through their own efforts, so it's commendable for the Freedom Association to encourage cooperation among humans. Yet their contracts rely on monetary payment to be extant, which cannot be truly fair in Hinata's eyes.

That's why she left her teacher Shizue.

—If you are ever in doubt, come see me for help.

Although Shizue once said so, Hinata has no intention to do so.

Shizue was just being clingy in saying that.

If Hinata is to continue relying on her soft teacher, she will never achieve greatness—She thinks so to herself, apathetically.

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In this world, you can only rely on your own strength.

That's why Hinata wants to become stronger to the point of invincibility.

She no longer wants to lose anything important to her, so she decides to stop valuing things in life. She ceased communicating with others, being solely focused on becoming stronger.

It only took her just one year to become a Holy Knight after joining the Western Holy Church.

It took less than two years for her to take the seat of the commander of the Holy Knight Order. She also started building what would be called the strongest Holy Knight Order in history.

But the higher in rank she climbed within the Church, the clearer she began to see. She was also able to see some of the hidden truths behind the veil of Luminism.

The Pope of Lubelius—His true identity was a vampire named Louis.

More astoundingly, Pope Louis was the twin brother of Demon Lord Roy Valentine.

It was an outrageous act of aggression for the Pope to ally himself with the Demon Lords in order to ensure his authority. It is clearly treating everyone else like fools.

³⁰The word here is “真祖” which is a term often used in Japanese fiction to describe the original/most ancient vampire. Same to the effect of “Primordial” for demon in slime.

³¹The source uses a phrase which essentially consists two words of “Luminas” and “Religion,” which I will be referring to “Luminism” here on.

Upon learning of this fact, Hinata was infuriated.

She ventured alone to the “Inner Sanctum” to eliminate Demon Lord Roy and Pope Louis. Yet she was struck with fatal blows as well during the fight and could only lie there alone to await her death.

Her sense of justice became dim.

She could no longer save anyone as her power faded.

She realized that she couldn’t save everyone, that one must make a choice to give or take in the acts of kindness.

Everything seemed almost comical and pointless at that point.

Hehehehe, is this how I end? The weak are weak even at their deathbed. But at least I was able to cleanse some evil—

But, even if that’s the case...

Hinata deeply believed that she had done nothing wrong.

There was nothing to be ashamed about the evil she had removed from this world. She would carry out her belief even without glory or praise.

That should suffice; Hinata was satisfied.

Hinata vision has already gone dark where she heard sharp footsteps coming her way. Initially she thought it was an illusion, yet then the sounds were accompanied by a cold voice.

“The noise you made have disturbed even my bedroom. What have you all been doing?”

In front of her was a beautiful girl with dazzling silver hair.

The blue and red from her heterochromatic eyes gave off an eerie and creepy shine. She glanced disdainfully at Hinata and the others who were also lying on the ground.



The powerful aura coming from her made the intense battle between Hinata and Louis, Roy seemed like child's play.

—!

Hinata at the brink of death was shocked by the sight.

Such abnormal beauty.

It seemed all too far-fetched from the reach of reality.

The young girl had the dominant majesty of a human ruler.

Good or evil all seemed all too insignificant in front of her.

The proof being—

“You two, I will not allow you to leave me and die.”

Logically speaking, both Demon Lord Roy and Pope Louis should have been killed by Hinata already, yet they were both resurrected by the young girl's power. It appeared to be some sort of superpower beyond Hinata's understanding.

It's all over... Everything I've done has been...

Filled with desperation, Hinata's flame of life was about to burn out—

“You too, human. How could you die with such selfish thoughts. What is justice? Is it really justice to fight evil for the rest of your life? I doubt it. Besides, what I am doing is no evil, so how could someone as insignificant as you make such judgement so hastily? There is no such justice in this world as to fulfill the free will of everyone. It is simply arrogant for you to think you can achieve it on your own. Is it not?”

As her words were caught by Hinata's ears, a warming light fell on her, saving her life.

Hinata was revived without a scar, and the young girl said to her face:

“I'll give you one week. Defeat my trusted lieutenants and you will pass the “Trial of the Seven Luminaries.” Only then, shall I fight you seriously.”

And so, she said.

Hinata accepted the trial and passed with flying colors.

She was also able to obtain incredible power from her mentors beyond her expectations through her skill “Usurper.”

What followed—

She gambled her life to challenge the young girl—Luminas Valentine, and as a result, surrendered to her after defeat.

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Hinata is like a sword that would not break even upon defeat, it only becomes more tenacious and powerful—She metamorphoses.

She has become the right hand of god, a holy sword to cut through all obstacles.

To Hinata, Luminas has become the most important thing to her.

With Luminas, there will be a society of justice and fairness. And without her, this order would be derailed. In order to protect her ideal kingdom, a continuous effort and an unshakable

resolve are both necessary.

Hinata is also a double-edged sword.

If Luminas is to become an enemy of mankind, Hinata will deliver her judgement with her own hands. Although it is mostly unlikely, she has still made such resolve.

That's why even to this day, she continues training to improve herself.



Without her noticing, Hinata has reached her destination. Her now comrade, Pope Louis awaits her.

At her arrival, she receives Louis' shocking news.

"Last night, my brother died."

The night before, Hinata defended the Cathedral from a mysterious invader. She was supposed to meet someone that night, yet by divine order her previous schedule was cancelled. And so Luckily that night ended with the Holy Land undefiled.

At least, it was supposed to be.

"You must be joking, right? Didn't Roy disguise himself as Demon Lord to attend the Walpurgis Banquet?"

"It's true, Hinata. That invader you didn't kill ran into Roy when he returned before Luminas-sama."

"How could this be. The invader ran away as soon as he saw me, that's why I lost him in the end..."

"Indeed, but we can assume it was preemptive. Luminas-sama ordered you to protect the holy land, not to exterminate the invader. That duty was supposed to be carried out by my useless Imperial Guards."

"But I am supposed to be the head of knights among them... But Roy sure is useless having been killed by a cheap-shot like that."

Hinata smiles confidently.

In front of the pope of Lubelius—That is Roy's elder brother.

Luminas Valentine- a True Demon Lord.

Her trusted twin lieutenants are Louis and Roy.

The elder brother takes on the public persona as of Pope of the world, while the younger brother rules over the underworld, acting as a Demon Lord.

And Luminas, who rules over all—as God.

That is the world they are striving for.

It is why Luminas controls things behind the scenes, hidden from the public within the "Inner Sanctum."

Roy possessed the power worthy of Demon Lord title and rightfully became one as a proxy. Upon birth as a vampire, he already had power up to Rank B. His body is highly efficient, with enhanced muscle strength, endurance, reaction speed and other, all several times stronger than an average human. In addition to this, over time he has obtained powerful skills, such as the vampire racial skills: "Immense Strength," "Shadowstep," "Automatic Regeneration," "Paralyze," "Seduce," "Menace," "Transformation," etc.

The members of his race are few in number, but their combat capabilities are much higher than the average Greater majin.

Vampires of high-ranked noble origin that are Louis and Roy have been following Luminas since ancient times. The strength of the two are no joking matter, and Hinata fully understands this. Having once fought them herself, she knows that the strengths of the two are not to be underestimated.

In other words, the invader must have been very strong—At least, that's Hinata's explanation of the incident.

"—But, as long as Luminas-sama is well, there shouldn't be any problem."

Said Hinata before she quietly adds: "But there is no reason to ever be concerned for Luminas-sama—"

Demon Lord Luminas is an entity beyond imagination- the limit of her power unfathomable, even to Hinata. Yet Hinata sees a possibility of confronting her at some point, as Luminas is the supreme being that she ought to aim for as the ultimate target (to surpass). So, it is in fact conceited of her to concern for the safety of Luminas.

Roy on the other hand, to Hinata, is as worthless as a stone by the roadside. It may be unfortunate for Louis, but as far as she is concerned, Roy being killed is completely immaterial.

He died because he was weak.

It was his own fault, Hinata thinks to herself.

"The problem may be more severe than you think. To this day we've been having Roy running around to act as a threat in order to convince everyone to convert to the Luminism. With him dead, the humans may become less faithful to our doctrines. In addition, the Jura Great Forest has somehow become safer despite the revival of the evil dragon Veldora."

"You have a point—"

As she answers, Hinata thinks back to that slime she failed to kill. Her failure is likely the reason for this change .

She has nothing to say about that. It was all due to Hinata's miscalculation, and she is aware of that the most. She may have intentionally spared the invader from last night, but Hinata really did plan to eliminate that slime called Rimuru.

How incredible. It's hard to believe that you actually escaped under those circumstances. I figured you'd be rather cautious, but you far exceeded my expectations, Rimuru—

Hinata gives her genuine praise to her enemy Rimuru.

"—I'm not sure about the evil dragon, but the forest probably became safer because of the slime called Rimuru. The one I failed to kill."

“Hmm. I did my own investigation too. The army from the Kingdom of Farmus was indeed eliminated. Taking into consideration the time of Veldora’s revival, we can conclude that this was also the work of this being called Rimuru. He seems to be quite the problematic foe.”

“I first encountered him when he was caught within the Holy Purification Barrier (Holy Field). It was supposed to my best chance to eliminate him.”

“Did you go easy on him because he claimed to come from the same place as you?”

“No way. That slime’s goal does not align with that of Luminas-sama’s. I can understand his ideology, but if we let him be, he will disrupt our plans. That’s why I refused to hear him out and decided to destroy that town...”

“The angels will probably strike them next.”

“Yeah. Things may be fine now, but at the rate their town is being developed, the angels will definitely move out.”

“That’s troubling. We aren’t prepared yet. I hope we will be absolutely victorious in the next “Tenma Great War” ³². ”

“Right. Those angels: you have to rip them apart to kill them. This advance in schedule would be most troubling to deal with alone.”

Louis nods in agreement to Hinata’s explanation.

As soon as a city advances to some degree, it will be targeted by the angels for invasion. Their motives are unclear, yet their actions are always the same.

Once the great war takes place, countless innocent civilians will be sacrificed. Hinata has been strengthening the army reservation to prepare for such threat by aiming to decimate the angel army.

At the same time, she promotes the Luminism to unite humanity.

Hinata believes this is the way of advocating the will of the God Luminas. And Rimuru’s actions are hindering Hinata’s plan.

In addition to her personal grudge against Rimuru after she caught wind of his killing of Shizu Izawa, Hinata has no reason to spare him any mercy. Hinata feels rather bad about involving conscientious, reasonable, and friendly monsters into such conflict, but the holy will of Luminas that declares monsters to be mankind’s enemies cannot be defied.

Moreover, the most important thing now is to win the “Tenma Great War.” Hinata would do anything so long as it minimizes human casualties.

This is—Hinata, the cruel rationalist.

“But you failed your assassination. However, this may turn out to be quite useful.”

“What do you mean?”

“The Western Nations are likely to unite after hearing of a new threat emerging in the Jura Great Forest. Since Roy is dead, haven’t they become the suitable candidate as the nemesis of humanity?”

“...Isn’t that still up for debate? I doubt things will work out that easily.”

³²Tenma Great War: war between heaven and monsters.

But, Hinata thought to herself. It may be a good after all to switch her perspective a little.

If she is able to make peace with the Jura Great Forest and have them coexist with mankind, she'd call that a good outcome in her book. But with that being said, if Rimuru really massacred the Farmus army, he will definitely become an unignorable threat.

However—

“I was supposed to meet that eastern merchant last night. The one who gave me the tip. Had Luminas-sama not ordered me otherwise, I would have been absent last night.”

“Oh? Then I suppose it was good timing.”

“Indeed, it couldn't have been any better. Those merchants have been trying to manipulate me. Now that I think about it, perhaps it was the right choice to spare Rimuru.”

Although it was quite upsetting to have not killed him, Hinata adds.

But he is going to get his beating after sticking his neck out like that lately.

They made it through the Farmus invasion, but the revived “Storm Dragon” would definitely threaten Rimuru.

Moreover, it seems that Rimuru has declared himself a “Demon Lord.” As a result, the Ten Great Demon Lords are furious.

And because of that, he was summoned to the Walpurgis Banquet last night.

“That's right. Before we can prepare anything, we better let the Forest buffer the east. That is, if that Rimuru can make through the Walpurgis Banquet.”

“You have a point. But would he be able to make through?”

“Rest assured, since Luminas-sama is returning soon. We will see how things worked out then.”

“It pains me to think we need to report Roy's death to her.”

“She will probably be furious.”

“Unlike me, her grace has a very kind heart—”

“Hmm. But according to you, I am not nearly as kind either. I don't feel any sadness even after learning the death of my little brother.”

Hinata can only shrug at Louis' response.

The two fell silent, awaiting Luminas's return quietly.

Soon—

“Luminas-sama is back! Quickly kneel!”

Someone rushes to report as the holy church becomes noisy once more.

Soon Hinata and Louis would hear some most unexpected news.



They gather in the “Inner Sanctum.”

At the center of Holy Empire of Lubelius, the Spirit Hill stands tall and the headquarter of the Saints Church is built on this mountain.

The Holy Church is situated at the back near the Holy Temple, which is also the entrance to the Spirit Hill.

Climbing up the mountain roads, one will arrive at the “Inner Sanctum.” It is the most sacred place in all of Holy Empire of Lubelius that cannot be blasphemed. Its supremacy exceeds even that of the Hall of Pope.

Demon Lord Valentine—No, Luminas takes residence there. She is now resting while retelling what happened last night unpleasantly.

“—And all that happened last night, that annoying evil dragon always gives me trouble.”

Luminas’s bad mood is quite apparent as she lies on the long bench to tell the tale.

It only makes her angrier to hear Hinata’s report about the death of Roy.

Silly child—

This is Luminas’s only comment. As she mutters, there is no emotion in it. She still isn’t changing her usual arrogant expression, even in the “Inner Sanctum.”

She has been calm all this time as she delivers the message about the Walpurgis Banquet. However, as soon as she mentions that Veldora exposed her true identity, anger crawls its way onto her beautiful face. And as soon as her anger breaks loose, it floods out towards Hinata and Louis.

“How could Roy do this! If he had died somewhere, I could reach, I could have revived him—”

“My brother lived a happy life being under the care of Luminas-sama.”

“Hold your tongue! Wouldn’t that make me the culprit for letting him die in such way?!”

“That’s not the case. It was my brother’s fault. Roy failed and thus has betrayed Luminas-sama’s expectations.”

“But—”

If anything, it was due to his bad luck. It was no one’s fault and everyone at the scene is aware of it.

“My apologies. It was my act of sparing the enemy that killed Roy...”

But even with Hinata’s admission, Luminas still persists—

“Enough. You were just doing what I ordered. I should be the one to bear the blame. However, we must not immerse ourselves in the grief over Roy’s death.”

She finishes, switching to a more serious expression.

“Heed this. The evil dragon has been revived, and now there is also the new Demon Lord Rimuru. These are all irrefutable facts and we must plan ahead accordingly.”

“Yes ma’am.”

“Understood.”

Hinata and Louis obeys their orders.

This will soon determine the future of the Holy Empire of Lubelius.

“I shall handle that Veldora in person.”

Hinata proposes.

Yet, Luminas's reaction is rather cold.

"Hinata, you've grown stronger. You've come a long way since last I fought against you. Right now, you have already surpassed the "Seven Luminary Clerics" and are catching up to me. However—"

While you may be able to take down Demon Lord Rimuru, but you can't win against Veldora—Luminas asserts.

"That's right, Hinata. That evil dragon is truly powerful. He is the real Rank-Catastrophe threat."

With his many years of experience, Louis agrees with Luminas.

"Is he really that strong? Wasn't he sealed by the "Chosen Hero"?"

Since someone was able to seal him, Hinata believes she can do so as well. Yet, Luminas and Louis reject her this without hesitation.

"Heed this, Hinata. He is the summation of natural energy. You can contain a frenzy storm using magic, but unlike natural phenomenon, that evil dragon has a will of his own. You can't kill him with your sword or magic. In addition, that guy would go on a rampage if you did so, sending shockwaves and highly destructive magic to shatter the earth."

As Luminas speaks, one can easily see her hatred for him.

Louis nods as she continues, his face strained; seemingly recalling some unpleasant memory.

"It was a nightmare. He turned the beautiful Night Palace of Rose (Night Rose) into ruins too horrible to even look at..."

"Stop thinking about it, Louis. That city was the crystallization of the wisdom and technologies of the vampiric race. Now only the memory of it lingers. There is no use in being nostalgic over something that no longer exists."

"You are most right."

After seeing the two's reactions, Hinata finally realizes how dangerous Veldora is.

—But if things really do go out of control, I would still try.

Hinata makes up her mind internally.

She also comes to a realization.

The reason why this "Inner Sanctum" was built on the Spirit Hill was to act as defense against Veldora.

—It's a precaution so that the constant surveillance can see him approaching if he does come.

And similarly, the reason why the real capital of Holy Empire of Lubelius—Night Garden—was built underground, it is also to prevent the invasion of the evil dragon.

—It won't sustain much damage even if fights break out.

The enemy Luminas holds such vigilance against is none other than the "Storm Dragon"

Veldora.³³

“Hinata, I don’t want to lose you as well. You better behave yourself.”

Hinata can only agree given the extent Luminas has gone to convince her.

The thing is, however, her miscalculation during the encounter with Rimuru still troubles her like a bone in the throat even to this day.

It was her misstep to have ignored Rimuru’s power just because he was a monster. She doesn’t think her actions were wrong judging from the doctrines of the church, but it led to their current situation. Moreover, if she considers that it was all a conspiracy set up by the eastern merchants, Hinata would then have fallen right into their trap.

Annoying. It’s almost like they’ve seen through us to have released such information. Wait, could there actually be a traitor among us?

Despite her reluctance to think there’s a traitor in their ranks, nonetheless, there may very well be traitors within the Church who have conspired with the eastern merchants. Then it is reasonable to assume that the traitors have also learnt about out preparations to strike against the angels. That’s why they’ve manipulated Hinata into assassinating Rimuru.

This is a sensible theory and it makes it even more likely that there are traitors in their ranks. But she will investigate the matter later. Right now, the issue at hand is—

“Right. But… If that’s the case, wouldn’t the new Demon Lord Rimuru—”

“Our best solution now is to leave the matter alone. But it’s worth celebrating that we haven’t declared him as the “Nemesis of God.””

“But…”

“Is there a problem?”

“…Yes. Those monsters are developing their city and constructing roads. These may lead to an earlier assault from the angels.”

“Oh yeah, they are still out there. It would be quite annoying to be harassed by a bunch of Phthiraptera (flying lice), but it would be even more troublesome to antagonize Demon Lord Rimuru and “Storm Dragon” Veldora. Besides, the monsters are bigger threats to them, so the angels will probably focus on attacking them. So, there’s no use in worrying over it now.”

Angels are nothing compared to Luminas. Understanding her thoughts, Hinata complies to her course of actions.

There is however another issue—

“—By the way, Luminas-sama upholds the idea “All monsters are mankind’s enemies” —

Yet the existence of their town has completely subverted the doctrines of Luminas…”

Luminas looks troubled at that query.

She ponders for a while.

She won’t be able to easily eliminate them at this point of time, yet if not, people may instead lose faith in the church’s doctrines for it will lack justification and persuasiveness. And she can’t bear to lose her followers now after spending thousands of years fostering her religion.

³³This is told from Hinata’s perspective since she previously doesn’t know

“Why don’t we make him the evil Demon Lord and build a friendly accomplice relationship on that basis?”

Louis suddenly speaks up.

It is the same idea as what he mentioned before to Hinata, about having Roy as the Demon Lord and Louis as the political machine. But just as Hinata has suspected, Luminas rejects the idea.

“No way. That new Demon Lord called Rimuru seems to want to build a kingdom where people can live comfortably. He mentioned that human assistance is necessary for that effort, and so he would protect them himself. He even declared that “Whoever dares to get in my way, whether it is human or Demon lord, will all be my enemies,” right in front of all the Demon Lords.”

Luminas sighs with melancholy after finishing.

“If only had he not reached out to the humans, we could have just adopted Louis’ proposal—”

She adds on angrily.

Hearing so, Hinata suddenly realizes that what Rimuru said about him being a reincarnated one was true.

But it is too late at this point. Hinata knows she has the problem of being too stubborn to listen to others’ opinions. Now her flaws have found the worst possible way to haunt her back.

He doesn’t seem to have realized that God Luminas is Demon Lord Valentine. In the worst-case scenario, I will just have to sacrifice myself. Hinata makes such resolves.

“In other words, we can only quietly observe.”

“Hmm, indeed. We should stay put and act natural to the public. It would only make the situation worse if we try to find excuses. We will have to tell the nations the truth that “Storm Dragon” Veldora has been revived.”

“What do you plan to do with Demon Lord Rimuru then?”

Hinata begins to ponder while Luminas and Louis also begin to strategize.

“...About that. Rimuru will probably respond to the so-called political consultation, so we should try have the Western Nations cover things up by giving a vague response. Would you agree to that, Hinata?”

It may sound like a question, but Luminas has already made up her mind.

If that’s the case, Hinata has no objection.

“All right.”

“You sound rather reluctant.”

“—A bit, because I still wish I killed him when I have the chance.”

“You are right to put it that way. But, that Rimuru is not that dumb as to take such a thing to heart and stand against me.”

What she implies is that it won’t matter even if Luminas’s true identity is exposed.

But Hinata thinks that this is not an appropriate response.

“—I shall take care of the matter.”

She hides her truthful response and bids farewell to Luminas.



—A month or so later.

Hinata has been working overtime forgoing sleeps.

Not only has she been building a defensive line with the Holy Knights to defend against Veldora, she has also been dispatching members of the Imperial Guards all around the world to collect intelligence. Nowadays, the eastern merchants who once worked as her informants are no longer reliable. Hinata believes that only intelligence collected by her own subordinates have credibility.

The time forwards to the present day. They are about to attend the monthly conference between the two wings serving the Pope.

The participants include the Holy Knight Order that Hinata personally oversees and the Regiment of the Pope's Imperial Guards³⁴—the Imperial Knights that serve the Pope's Ministry.

They are the pride of Holy Empire of Lubelius, two orders of Knights led by Hinata Sakaguchi.

The meeting is being hosted by Hinata.

She is worthy of her status as the strongest knight being both the Head of Knights among the Pope's Imperial Guards and being the commander of the Holy Knight Order.

The table they sit is of U-shape where Hinata takes the head seat. On her right are the six representatives of the Holy Knight Order.

Vice-Commander of the order, Renard Jester.

This Holy Knight with a gentle expression is known as the Noble of Light.

Next to him was Arnaud Bauman of Air.

This man is rumored to be the strongest knight behind to Hinata; known for his outstanding skill as a captain in commanding troops and is the spiritual assault captain of the Holy Knight Order.

Following Arnaud were four other captains: Bacchus of Earth, a large brooding man gifted at smashing his magic-infused Holy Mace into his foes; Ritase of Water, a beautiful healer and spirit wielder who employed the holy water spirit Undine on the battlefield; Garde of Fire, a tall knight and conjurer who wielded his flaming Red Spear, and a serious man who always looked out for his compatriots; and Fritz of Wind, a magical fighter as talented in wind magic as with his twin swords. He was a tactical trickster, a rarity among the high-minded Holy Knights he served alongside. Fritz never wore his uniform up to the prescribed code of perfection, but no one admired and respected Hinata as much as he.

³⁴Will be abbreviated as “Pope's Imperial Guards” in future iterations.

They each lead twenty Holy Knights and form the Five Captains of the Holy Knight Order with Arnaud as their leader. There are only hundred or so members within the Holy Knight Order, and these captains are the strongest among them with unquestionable strength.

In comparison, the regiment on Hinata's left favors individual talents. They are the Pope's Imperial Guards.

There are, in total, thirty-three members, each with different attire and equipment. The reason they only few as thirty-three people is due to the fact that each have strong combat capabilities .

Any of them alone possess enough strength to stand against an entire army. The Pope has even praised them to be "Fortresses"³⁵ in battle. But it is only natural considering they all possess combat abilities above Rank A. Not only that, several of them united can even stand against a Calamity-Rank threat, making them on par with heroes of this world.

Among them, a few are worthy of mention:

"Vault of Heaven" Sare.

—He takes the appearance of an innocent young boy, yet in reality, is older than everyone at the scene. He has been the head knight in the Imperial Guards since before Hinata's enrollment.

"Boulder" Grigori.

—Sare's right hand man who possesses the ability to harden his body, also known as "Immovable" ³⁶. His torso is his weapon, whose toughness exceeds that of most metals. He is the type to withstand continuous attacks.

"Turbulent Sea" Glenda.

—A newcomer who arrived even later than Hinata and only made her name in the past few years. She is a wild beauty with eye-catching bottom-curl red hair. She once dirtied her hands in mercenary business and her combat tactics have always been veiled in secrecy. The only person who has actually experienced her true abilities is the ex-Knight Lamar, who she defeated.

The three people known as the "Three Martial Sages" are seated on the opposite side of the six Holy Knights.

All nine people seated here are capable of abilities beyond mortals. The world recognizes them as the opposing forces against "Demon Lords" — "Saints."

With Hinata, they make up for the Ten Great Saints.

Saints are a high rank species that human can evolve into through many years of rigorous training. People who reach this level are called "Sage." Their lifespan is greatly lengthened and have the ability to transform into a semi-spiritual lifeform. They would be rid of the shackles of the human flesh. And that's why people who reached the level of Sage are able to utilize enormous power. Their immense physical prowess and precision in magical usage has been strengthened far beyond what an average man could foresee, making them powerful beings, able to rival a Demon Lord Seed. They are the guardians of mankind and are slowly evolving into the envoys of God.

³⁵The source states "Grant them the title of "Fortress"" , but it is more likely to be a metaphor for their strength,

³⁶万物不動 - The source translates more accurately to "cannot be moved by anything."

With that being said however, they are all nonetheless judged by standards of strength set by humans...

They await Hinata's arrival silently.

Several Holy Knights awaits orders behind their respective captains.

The other members of the regiments have no seat and simply remain standing, waiting for the joint conference to start.

Soon, the heavy gate opens—

“Sorry to keep you all waiting. Let's begin the conference.”

As Hinata arrives, the united conference unfolds.

Right behind Hinata, Pope Louis sits behind the royal veil to observe the progress of the united conference.

As soon as the conference begins, Sare immediately lashes out at her:

“Oi oi oi, aren't you rad coming in late. I'd let you slide for not stopping the revival of Veldora, but now you allowed a new Demon Lord to be born. It must be a joke to have cheap-shot like this to represent us, is it not?!”

Hinata may be the Head of Knights, but for many, the knights' obedience doesn't reflect their true opinions.

Sare is the number one among the anti-Hinata crowd since he lost his prestigious status because of her.

For the past month, members of the regiment have been spread all over the land under orders from Hinata. They brought back a lot of information and confirmed the connections between the series of major events that took place.

The birth of Demon Lord Rimuru; The revival of “Storm Dragon” Veldora, and the Walpurgis Banquet, including the recent unrest within the Kingdom of Farmus.

And Sare is implying that all of this happened due to the fact that Hinata antagonized Rimuru.

“That's quite rude of you, Sare-dono.”

“Oi, brat. If you have a problem with our commander, how about you go a few rounds with me first?”

Renard retorts coldly with a smile and is backed up by Arnaud.

Someone wants to rebuke this—It's Grigori sitting next to Sare.

“The noble sir knight wants to fight us? Considering your high status, stop mocking opponents who only lose to you on purpose. Don't get so full of yourself.”³⁷

“What did you say?”

“I see you have a death wish.”

The united conference suddenly is a step away from becoming a battlefield. But Hinata calms all of them down.

“How very uninteresting, there is no time for in-fights now. Sare, if you wish to take my

³⁷This sentence is somewhat confusing. But I think it's an insult that implies Arnaud can only defeat people who intentionally loses to him due to his high status.

place, I can pass you my seat anytime. But before I hand it to you, I'll have to test your strength."

Hinata's words silence the conference room.

It is for the fact that her tone can no longer be described as annoyed, but instead expressing killing intent much more intense than annoyance.

Whoever continues to argue will be executed without question, and that is the absolute judgement from Hinata. The knights are not stupid enough to not realize the message behind her words.

Hinata is usually very calm, and so, in moments like this when she displays her emotions, even Sare know that provoking her now would be dangerous.

"Tsk! Don't you forget about your own words."

Sare glares at Hinata annoyed.

He was once defeated by Hinata.

Normally he wouldn't lose. To Sare at least, there was no way Hinata was better than him.

Yet the result of their fight was a huge flop.

Having experienced his last defeat, Sare won't dare to make a move now. He doesn't have a chance in winning against her, as long as the secret to her power remains unseen by him. It would be a battle he has no chance to win—which is why Sare obeys Hinata's orders without complaint for now.

After Sare settles down, the united conference can finally commence.

"I have something to report."

As she finishes, "Saint of Water" Ritase stands up and begins her report. She was the one assigned to investigate the Jura Great Forest.

"Jura Great Forest has been peaceful. It has not been affected by the revival of Veldora which is confirmed by the merchants going in and out of the town."

The Tempest Federation is, in fact, often visited by merchants from the Kingdom of Blumund.

The locally produced healing potions are very popular, and apart from that, people also want to purchase their silk products; not to mention their rare monster materials and equipment. That's why the merchants often queue up in the city to purchase the high-quality goods.

"How can that be? Why would they do business with a Demon Lord?"

"And Veldora, it is recorded that he's a warmonger who spreads chaos wherever he goes, yet right now there seems to be no sign that he's up to such business..."

Some begin to raise doubts, only to be hushed as Hinata waves her hand dismissively.

"Finish the report first."

She tells Ritase to continue the report.

"Very well. I shall continue my report. I've learned that the government of the Kingdom of Blumund has declared diplomatic relations with the Tempest Federation from the merchants. They've also been given safe passage for the civilians to travel to Tempest with ease. In addition, the roads to the city has been dazzlingly clean, with not even a trace of horse manure. There weren't any sightings of monsters on the road either, so it would seem the said guarantee of

personal safety wasn't just for show."

"Have you explored the location?"

"Yes. In order to confirm things myself, I disguised myself as a merchant to visit the city. There were designated security personnel to maintain order in the streets. The level of development the monster town possesses has exceeded our expectations. And although it had a slightly concentrated magicule content, it wasn't enough to affect human body. It would seem they really do intend to be friendly to humans, just as Demon Lord Rimuru claims."

"—Is that so? What about Veldora?"

"Y-yes, ma'am. About that..."

"What is it?"

"It is forbidden to enter "The Sealed Cave." I wasn't aware any other location for that the evil dragon may prefer to be... So, I wasn't able to find him."

"Hmm."

Hinata hums thoughtfully and acknowledges the end of Ritase's report with a nod after she announced, "That concludes my report."

"There wasn't any sign of Veldora. Perhaps the rumor of his revival is fake news—"

As "Saint of Wind" Fritz opens his mouth to say something, he is stopped by Hinata's cold eyes. It shuts him up immediately.

Ignoring the now panicked and apologetic Fritz, Hinata opens up:

"The divine order is absolute. Anyway, we have now had information on Demon Lord Rimuru's current movements. Next report please."

As she finishes, Hinata wants everyone to report the results of their own investigation as well. Before the conference, she had planned out the necessary information she wishes to learn in this conference.

"—It would seem to be the case that the government of the Kingdom of Ingracia has been relatively settled. When comparing to its usual competitor, the Kingdom of Farmus, who has since fallen from grace, the power of the Kingdom of Ingracia is expected to grow."

The reports proceed in order.

As the knights of the Pope's Imperial Guards, they can freely enter and exit any of the Western Nations.

They may even give orders to the Templar Knight Orders stationed in different nations. In terms of ranking, the captions of the Templar Order are still below them.

In fear of disrupting the chain of command, their home nation (Lubelius) cannot give orders to them without permission from higher authorities. But in case of emergency, the Pope's Imperial Guards can assume direct command the Templar Knight Order.

Given that's the case, their missions did not encounter any obstacles and were successful in gathering intelligence from the neighboring nations.

This is where the Imperial Guards differ from the Holy Knight Order. The Holy Knight Order is also free to visit the nations given its affiliation with the Western Holy Church. But they cannot give orders to the Templar Knight Order. There are also cases of members of the Templar

Order joining the Holy Knight Order. One can only explain this as the structural difference between their organizations.

This is why Hinata has decided to use the advantages of each organization when assigning orders for the convenience of gaining more information efficiently.

It is now the last person's turn to report, which is Sare.

"All right, after hearing everyone's report, I have a rough idea of what boss is trying to find. Isn't my part the one you want to know the most?"

"That's right. Of course, I was handed with the most important mission to you. Now do your report."

"I see. Regarding the current situation of the Kingdom of Farmus, King Edmalis of Farmus has stepped down and it seems that the crown has been transferred peacefully. But, the new king, Edward, seems to be recruiting some powerful mercenaries. With him leading, the nobles seem to be doing similar things on their own as well. I think it is likely the precursor of a civil war—"

The news of the birth of Demon Lord Rimuru has spread throughout of the Western Nations. But even if that was the case, the Kingdom of Blumund, who has been communicating with Tempest Federation seems to continue grow more prosperous.

In comparison, the situation in the Kingdom of Farmus seems to be getting chaotic and abnormal.

The nobles are like a plate of scattered sand, and many are acting to preserve their own power. Some are even attempting to reach out to the Western Holy Church and the elders within the Western Council. A civil war seems imminent.

The people of Farmus also seem to have been affected greatly. The price of goods has risen while the commodity flow stagnates (supply doesn't meet demand). Some have been conscripted into the army in order to fill the void of the twenty-thousand soldiers they lost. These newcomers have no combat experience, yet they've been pushed to a desperate spot to have been conscripted.

In other words, these are all signs of civil unrest.

The neighboring small nations have all reacted differently, but they have one thing in common: that is to keep vigilant against the Kingdom of Farmus. Sensing the change in situation, these nations have been tightening security in order to prevent themselves from being affected.

Sooner or later there will be a war—This thought must be on everyone's mind.

"—But this information alone won't be enough to determine Demon Lord Rimuru's involvement."

"I suppose that's true. Anything else?"

"I've screened out the individuals to come into contact with the new King Edward. There have been important figures from the Council, high-ranked officers from the Freedom Association, as well as eastern merchants. He has even attempted to reach out to my subordinates."

"What is his goal? Accumulating military strength?"

“Impressive; you are right with that guess, Miss Head Knight³⁸. ”

“If that’s the case, we can conclude that the new king Edward isn’t considering paying the war reparations. No Demon Lord would tolerate such behavior, and I doubt Rimuru is dumb enough to not realize this.”

“Oh—Then does this mean that boss thinks all of these are also part of Demon Lord Rimuru’s plan?”

“I suppose.”

Hinata nods.

What a timing indeed. All of the intelligence leads to the same conclusion... There’s no other way around it, someone is manipulating things behind the scenes.

Some of her doubts are confirmed as she listens to the report.

Who is behind all this?

There can only be one answer.

Since Demon Lord Clayman who was secretly active among the Western Nations have died, it leaves only one person to be behind such a scheme.

The newly-risen Demon Lord—Rimuru.

How troublesome. Whether it is his personality (that I can’t overlook) or his wisdom in planning out such comprehensive plan. He did mention he was originally Japanese; I suppose that’s indeed true...

Hinata comments on Rimuru calmly.

Now that she recalls all these, all her problems have all been due to her trust in the words of the eastern merchants. Their many years of connection with her has earned them her trust, and she has taken all of their information in, which has been proven to be a fatal mistake. Hinata begins to reflect.

The worst thing is, that most of their information was accurate. The only thing they modified was the portion regarding Rimuru that led to her misunderstanding. These small yet unverified lies have led Hinata astray. Had she believed what Rimuru said then, there may even be changes to how things would play out.

But there is no use saying such thing now.

Hinata then suddenly finds a part of Sare’s report to be concerning.

“Speaking of which, Sare, didn’t Edward have contact with the eastern merchants? Do you know what they discussed?”

“Why are you suddenly interested in the merchants? Aren’t we done with this? We know it was the Demon Lord who’s been behind the scenes? Now it’s the time to discuss our future plans and how to react to the situation.”

“That part of discussion is, of course, necessary, but I am also curious about the merchants. So, quit beating around the bush and answer me.”

“Tsk. Weren’t those people only in it for the money?”

³⁸The JP directly translate to “Head Knight-sama,” maybe too weeb even for my taste.

“No. They lure the unsuspecting into their scheme to profit themselves. Even I was also deceived and manipulated by them before. You all have to be careful in the future as well. So then, what have you learnt?”

“Ho, I suppose they are really something to have manipulated a schemer like you. But, about that... There wasn’t something extremely important they discussed. Ah, hold on. Glenda, weren’t commercial cities included within your area of investigation? Those places are where the merchants from east and west get in contact; have you got wind of anything interesting?”

Although Sare has a bone to pick with Hinata, he is still very responsible for his work. Then again, Sare has to acknowledge Hinata’s strength.

She was able to train knights with poor skills into members of the Holy Knight Order. She had no mercy for monsters while also having her heart devoted to protecting the people.

Somewhere in his heart, Sare does approve of her. That’s why he did the investigation, just as she ordered and shared the information he collected. He intends to take Hinata down from her seat, but he doesn’t plan to pull the order back by any means.

Sare believes in strength, and for better or worse, his personality reflects how he acts. Hinata is well aware of that as well.

Then, Glenda—

“Well, according to my knowledge, there hasn’t been anything suspicious there.”

She lies in a thuggish tone.

Glenda has led the life of a mercenary in the underworld and she’s seen everything. Her instincts tell her that there is money to make out of the crisis brewing from these events. It is part of her principles to put belief and business as two separate matters.

The public may think that she is a faithful follower of the Luminism, but that’s not the case at all. Her real goal is the power wielded by the collective members of the believers of Luminas all over the world.

That can be money, or information, or military force. There may be hundreds of variations, but every one of which is essential to Glenda.

Her status now allows her to freely access all of these, so she can’t lose her position. And it is for the same reason that Glenda didn’t tell Hinata the truth.

In fact, Glenda did indeed visit the commercial cities Sare mentioned and got in contact with the eastern merchants.

In addition, she even attended a secret meeting with some prominent figures who can be considered elders within the Council.

Her reward was money.

And the contract was to spread false information.

But right now, there’s still no time for her to do that as she must wait for the correct opportunity.

That’s why Glenda is thinking to herself “It would be bad if Hinata suspects me.”

Hinata is cruel and cold-blooded. She wouldn’t spare mercy to her enemies. Glenda can’t get careless while trying to find a way to trick her.

On the other hand, she's quite nice to her comrades.

It would be a stretch to say comrades, it is more fitting to refer to the followers of Luminas. She probably treats people who believe in the same God as her more like family than comrades.

Glenda has seen through Hinata's personality.

It is for the fact that she is generous when treating her own companions that she allows Sare to constantly confront her.

And it is why that she hasn't discovered Glenda's betrayal.

Because she treats her own men too good, Hinata will one day fall from grace due to her own personality—Glenda thinks to herself.

Given this to be the case—

"Since Miss Head Knight cares so much about it, I can go for a more detailed investigation."

"Is that so? Then I'll be relying on you. Please be careful and do not fall for those merchants' words. Understood?"

"Leave it to me. I have my ways. So, I shall get more in-depth information."

Glenda takes on the mission without hesitation in front of Hinata.

She is not self-aware at all, and her casual words have already revealed much to the Hinata...

She sighs internally after having observed Glenda's every move.

Seriously, I got looked down on. Or could it be that she thinks I'm kind to my companions? If that's the case, she will be sorely disappointed. Hinata thinks to herself.

Hinata doesn't see any value in companionship at all.

Glenda misjudged that point.

Hinata is only cautious because she considers them as useful pawns to Luminas. And she does so to prevent any damage to Luminas's property.

The Holy Knight Order who has been trained by Hinata to serve as her left and right hands are all faithful followers of Hinata.

You may even call them Hinata's exclusive Knight Order with their absolute loyalty towards her.

In contrast, the members of the Imperial Guards often act on their own. But since they also believe in Luminas, Hinata is thus generous enough to keep an eye closed on their behavior.

Sare is perhaps the best example. His conflict and constant provoking of her are all just acts for everyone else. Sare and Hinata are both aware of that. He may complain, but when it is all business as usual when it comes to work—in some sense, Sare is very easily manipulated.

Besides, Sare is not aware of Luminas.

Not only Sare, everyone except Hinata is unaware of Luminas's existence.

—How pathetic. They are just as ignorant of the truth like I was before...

Hinata suddenly thinks.

Glenda is very ambitious.

With her level of beauty and strength combined, she is very confident in herself. She must believe that she can take me down, Hinata thinks to herself.

Perhaps she is even planning to win the affection of Louis. It is only natural for her to go

after Louis to win his heart not knowing his identity as a vampire.

Whatever. She can do what she wants, but—

As soon as she betrays the Church, it would be a different matter.

Hinata won't comment on anything the regiment does under one condition—That they do not act to disadvantage her and Luminas.

However, now that Hinata is suspecting the existence of traitors, Glenda's acts are becoming problematic. But she may have just been manipulated by others, so Hinata doesn't plan to eliminate her immediately.

Anyhow, she can only keep an extra eye on her.

—Speaking of which, they seem less disciplined these days. I need be stricter during drills to show them their place.

Hinata feels rather troubled thinking so. But there are more important topics to discuss.

She changes up her mood and says:

“All right, everyone has finished their report. I assume everyone has been updated on the situation.”

“Yes. The impact of the revival of “Storm Dragon” Veldora has been much less significant than we predicted. The only known casualties are the Farmus army who engaged in the war. But I think that it was probably a fake rumor released by Demon Lord Rimuru. The actual casualty rate should be zero.”

“If that’s the case, we will have to question the survivor, Archbishop Reyhiem. We know that Veldora has been revived. So, what happened on that battlefield seems to be more concerning.”

As Hinata’s adjutant³⁹ Renard says so, Sare follows him up with agreement.

“That’s why we should call him in. He should be arriving anytime now—”

Hinata ordered Nicholas to summon Reyhiem. Not only did Reyhiem actually face defeat in battle, he also must have seen Rimuru himself. And so, he is summoned to share his story and thoughts.

In addition—

The dates of Veldora’s revival and the defeat of Farmus army seem to only be several days apart from each other. Although all the neighboring nations have been spreading the rumor that Veldora has decimated Farmus army, but in reality, the timeline doesn’t come close to align. It is for this reason that the factual testimony from survivor Reyhiem is required.

Reyhiem is scheduled to arrive early this morning, yet he is late.

“I’m looking forward to it. There is no way to tell what kind of story we are going to hear. How exciting.”

“Perhaps it will be matters regarding Veldora’s revival, he might have some insight into it.”

“There has also been rumor that “Demon Lord Rimuru negotiated with Veldora and successfully calmed him down,” but it is difficult to verify its authenticity. Veldora has been behaving

³⁹Or second-hand to Hinata

himself since his revival. If that's true, the credibility of such rumor would also be higher."

"Saint of Air" Arnaud analyzes calmly.

Everyone nods in agreement.

Everyone has come to some level of understanding that Rimuru and "Storm Dragon" Veldora are connected in some way.

Then there shouldn't be any need to hide it. Hinata concludes.

She is referring to what Luminas has mentioned—the fact that Rimuru and Veldora are allies.

"—Indeed, that is true. I have to inform you all beforehand, God Luminas has given the divine order that Demon lord Rimuru is capable of suppressing the "Storm Dragon." For that reason, God said "You shall not take on Demon Lord Rimuru no matter what." I hope everyone will keep that in mind."

"I-If that's the case..."

"I'll be straight with you all then. We are staying low on this incident. We must not confront the Demon Lord directly."

The crowds see Hinata rise up and firmly declare so.

It is to show that they've officially proclaimed to not interfere with Demon Lord Rimuru.

And so, everyone is shocked in response.

"Is it really okay?! Are you telling us to do nothing while Demon Lord Rimuru continues his plotting in the Kingdom of Farmus?"

"Demon Lords are indeed difficult to take on, but aren't those words just for the public? We, the Ten Great Saints, will not lose to a Demon Lord!"

There is truth to Sare's words.

Humans are not completely helpless when confronting S-Rank threat like Demon Lords.

They've long prepared the military force to face the Demon Lords.

People such as the Ten Great Saints, people who've reached the level of "Sage."

Arnaud, Renard and Grigori. The three would stand a chance against a Special Rank A monster.

Among the Ten Saints, Sare is undoubtedly the strongest next to Hinata. He wouldn't do too bad if he fights against a Demon Lord.

A duel between a Saint and Demon Lord like the legends tell is unlikely to occur. But if it really comes to that, we can have a good fight with our enemies then, Hinata thought.

They have a rather good chance to win against opponents such as Demon Lord Clayman who's been tempting to make a move in the Western Nations.

However, such judgement can only be made towards the (unawakened) "Demon Lord Seed."

Sare and the rest won't be able to handle a True Demon Lord.

This is the most common of knowledge to Hinata, as she knows the truth about Demon Lord Luminas.

And even Rimuru has also—

It is rumored that large nations such as Farmus have summoned many otherworlders and trained them for battle. Although such acts are largely criticized and prohibited by the public from a humanitarian standpoint, the enemies they fight are still monsters who pose threats to the whole of mankind. It renders such moral judgement un compelling in the long run.

The Farmus army consists of Head of Court Mages, majin Razen who can repeatedly reincarnate and the now dead Knight Commander Folgen. They were still defeated by Demon Lord Rimuru despite such military might.

In addition to Luminas's account of Rimuru's instant kill of Demon Lord Clayman, it should be clear that the "Ten Great Saints" who only possess the title (of Saint), would not stand a chance against him unless they are truly able to achieve higher evolution to become a real "Saint."

—Like Hinata.

If the opponent right now is Demon Lord Rimuru, any of the nine Great Saints other than Hinata would not stand a chance. If that's the case, they should then prevent unnecessary casualties.

Besides—

"But...by the way... This time, there's also the "Storm Dragon" on top of there being a Demon Lord. The situation may grow more chaotic if we make a move without planning."

Renard's calm analysis is straight to the point—The Tempest Federation has the aid of Veldora.

There is little chance to win even if they throw in all of the military reserves of Lubelius.

"We should just do it! We can't allow our territories to just be taken over by the Demon Lord!"

The conference room quiets down due to Grigori's shout.

His words represent everyone's thoughts at the scene. Their eyes fall onto Hinata.

Yet with an uncaring expression, Hinata simply allows them to gaze.

"The divine order of God cannot be defied. It is not within our power to defy."

"How can it be?! Are we to leave the Kingdom of Farmus to its own demise?!"

"That's not the case, Ritase. There may, at most, be an outbreak of civil war in that kingdom. What we ought to protect are not the royalty or nobles, but the people. We should focus more on preventing the civil war from affecting the citizens of Farmus as well as other states."

"What do you mean?"

"That kingdom may change its leadership, but if we are to intervene, it would be interfering in their internal affairs. Haven't they always been refuting our requests for them to stop summoning otherworlders with the excuse of "interference with internal affairs"? This will probably play out the same way."

Hinata answers coldly with a smile.

"Then according to you, are we not approving the actions of Demon Lord Rimuru?"

Grigori questions Hinata.

"That's right. Since Demon Lord Rimuru stated that he doesn't wish to antagonize humans, there is no need to continue our hostile approach. Not only did Archbishop Rayhiem's attempt to

eliminate Rimuru end in failure, but so did mine as well. There is a high chance of them listing us as their enemies if we continue this way, so we can only allow their actions in the Kingdom of Farmus.”

“But that’s the misstep of Western Holy Church—Or rather, you. We here in Lubelius didn’t mess things up!”

Grigori shouts out.

But Hinata is not moved by it.

Her smile is replaced by a tone of indifference as she answers Grigori:

“You are right. That’s why none of you are to make a move. In the worst-case scenario, I would push firmly the stance of Western Holy Church—That is my own final verdict.”

She answers quite calmly.

“What!”

“Hinata-sama!”

Hinata gives her order to the Imperial Guards ignoring the astounded Holy Knights. Even Sare seems to panic realizing her resolve.

“Rest assured. In my view, he does not wish to start a war with us.”

Hinata said so in hope of comforting the rest, but no one seems to accept this.

“It can’t be, how could boss trust the enemy so much?”

“It would be strange for me to say such things before, when not only did I not believe him, I tried to kill him off. But now, I think he is trustworthy. He said to me in person that he was a otherworlder just like me. Although I ignored his words completely then, it seems that he truly is trying to avoid conflict with us.”

“Is he really a otherworlder ? Wouldn’t that make him the same type of reincarnated majin as Demon Lord Leon who turned from human to a monster?”

“No, according to himself, he seems to have died in his original world to be *reincarnated as a slime*⁴⁰ in this world.”

“Are you kidding me?”

“Sare, shouldn’t you know that I hate jokes?”

“Tsk, that would be unprecedented if true. There are indeed cases of reincarnation, but those would only retain the memories of their past life. How can someone cross to another world and get reincarnated at the same time...”

“That would indeed be a first.”

Hearing Sare’s comment, Renard also gives the same view after recalling.

“But what odds are we talking here, to have been reincarnated as a slime? Right, what would you do if it happens to you?”

Arnaud asks Ritase next to him. He can only see that a shred of annoyance is added to her already distressed face.

“I don’t even want to think about it. I wouldn’t be able to talk, so human contact would

⁴⁰Roll credits

be challenging. And considering the limited vocabulary a slime would have, I wouldn't even properly communicate the message of "I am harmless (not a bad slime)" to others I encounter. After all, most slimes cannot talk at all."

Ritase speaks up on her most sincere thoughts.

You cannot talk and do not have any limbs. Communication is only made harder when you do not know the spoken language or written words used by others.

Upon considering these, everyone begins to feel somewhat sympathetic towards Rimuru.

"I suppose."

"That's true..."

The members of Holy Knight and Imperial Guards agrees with her one by one.

"I originally thought that they were all lies from a monster, but they may turn out to be real. To this day, I feel a little sorry to him."

Hinata is no exception, moreover—

If Rimuru had indeed tried his best to express sincerity, he would likely hold a grudge after Hinata completely ignored all of it, she thinks to herself.

"Our opponent is a monster after all, so it cannot be helped."

"And the doctrines also directly prohibit it..."

Sare and Renard whispers.

Had they been in the same shoes as Hinata, they would likely have done the same thing.

How can they listen to a monster when the doctrines are unquestionable?

If Hinata really listened, it would probably lead to huge backlash that renders her a public enemy of Lubelius.

"Moreover, I was secretly informed that Rimuru was an enemy of my dear mentor..."

"How is that the case?"

"Didn't I mention it? I was also manipulated—by the eastern merchants. At the time, they came with the news that a monster had disguised himself as human in an attempt to invade other countries. They said that he built a kingdom in order to deceive the neighboring nations. They also mentioned that the ruler of that kingdom, this monster named Rimuru, was the fiend that murdered my teacher. That's why I went to execute him without hesitation."

"And to cause him to escape later? I really can't tell whether it is a good or bad thing..."

Sare shakes his head helplessly after hearing Hinata's explanation.

Sare is right however, since Rimuru has become a huge concern today, which Hinata also agrees. Yet there would likely be a conflict no matter how it went down.

"He was highly skillful during his escape. Now that he has become Demon Lord, he must have undergone evolution, so opposing him is not the wise move to take."

No one objects Hinata's view.

There is no use to refer to the doctrines now that the divine order of God has been issued. If that's the case, frankly they should just accept that reality from now on and try and make peace with the opposing party.

"Then, what is Hinata-sama planning to do?"

Renard asks.

In response, Hinata replies calmly: “We stay put.”

If the other side were human enemies, she would be willing to gamble her life in a battle. Yet since Demon Lord Rimuru has expressed hope to communicate with other nations, Hinata has decided to approve his actions. Because she doesn’t wish to defy the holy will of Luminas.

That is however, unless Rimuru’s actions become malicious...

“What should we do if Demon Lord Rimuru considers Hinata-sama as an enemy?”

“Right. It’s true that boss tried to kill him. Now this Rimuru has become many times stronger after evolving into a Demon Lord, it wouldn’t be strange for him to seek revenge against you.”

Hearing this, Hinata shuns their many concerns.

“Didn’t I just tell you all? Just consider all of these my own judgement. I am actually planning to visit and talk to him in person while our relation is still undetermined. If necessary, I wouldn’t mind kneeling to apologize,” Hinata answered nonchalantly.

Now that Hinata has said words that everyone can’t just simply overlook.

“That’s just reckless!”

“It is too dangerous!”

“Demon Lord Rimuru may be scheming to eliminate Hinata-sama, you could be killed if you walk into his trap!”

“Even if Hinata-sama isn’t being plotted against, if that monster’s underlings decide to attack in groups...”

“Everyone, calm down. I am not planning to take off just yet. The most important thing now is to correctly interpret what Demon Lord Rimuru wants—”

Hinata is only telling everyone to stay calm because she believes there won’t be any issue.

There have been reports pointing out that Rimuru is very kind and friendly to others.

She recalls how she felt during her encounter with Rimuru and doesn’t find much reason to suspect this observation.

I would be able to be forgiven if I go out of my way to show my sincerity and talk with him—Although it is a one-sided view, Hinata truly believes so.

Yet her wish would not come true.

Human greed intertwined with evil intents have tainted the situation— Manipulated it far beyond Hinata’s expectation.

Things are beginning to take a turn for the worst.

*

A knock echoes on the conference room.

It must be Reyhiem and Nicolaus, Hinata thought to herself. Everyone has been expecting them. “Please come in” she says. Upon issuing this concise permission, the knights guarding outside obeys and open the door.

The person entering is someone being expected by Hinata.

It is Hinata’s trusted subordinate, Nicolaus Speltus.

He enters the room followed by Archbishop Reyhiem who has a nervous expression.

Until now, everything has been proceeding as expected.

But, Hinata frowns as she sees the people entering next.

These are completely unexpected visitors: The Seven Luminous Clerics.

“Long time no see, Hinata.”

“How have you been?”

“What is it, why do you look so surprised?”

Hinata is shocked to the point of speechlessness seeing this unfolding before her.

“Why are you here...?”

She can’t help but ask.

Nicholas, who is almost always calm in conduct looks panicked as well, alongside Reyhiem, who seems terrified.

“Boss, who are these people?”

Sare asks. He gets an immediate response. Instead of from Hinata, it is Nicholas who led them here.

“S-Sare, how rude or you! These are the masters of the Seven Luminaries.”

Sare suddenly realizes as Nicholas words reach his ear.

“Seven Luminaries? The ones from the legend?”

“Yes, these are the sages.”

Even Hinata cuts in to introduce them. Hearing this, everyone on site immediately rises up to salute—

—They are the great sages known as “Seven Luminous Clerics.”

Each one of them have surpassed the average “Sage.” They are legendary figures who have even trained Chosen Heroes in the past. They have completely masked their presence from the public eye and become legends that only live in fairy tales or folk lore. Even the Holy Knights are unaware of their actual existence.

There are an extremely small group of people, including Hinata and Nicolaus who have actually laid eyes on them... Only a few high-ranking officials within the Western Holy Church have had the honor to see these people.

The “Trials of Seven Luminaries” that Hinata once went through was created by them. It was a trial used to select Heroes and Chosen Hero. From knowing that they are responsible for the trial alone, you can tell the magnitude of their authority.

But Hinata really dislikes them.

In reality, the so-called “Seven Luminaries” are the highest consultants of Western Holy Church and are responsible for overseeing different organizations and training new knights. All

of these assignments are given by Luminas. Yet before Hinata came into her position, the Holy Knight Order was an organization with only their name but nothing to back it up.

In Hinata's view, the Seven Luminary Clerics have already been derelict in their duty.

Now that I think about it, I should have robbed them of their power completely.

Hinata has such a thought crossing her mind.

Her ability—Unique Skill ‘Usurper’ has two main functions.

They are respectively, “Usurp” that can rob power from her opponent and “Duplication” which allows her to copy and learn skills.

At the start of her trial, Hinata thought these people to be the great figures from legend. That's why in order to learn from them, Hinata used “Duplication” to improve herself.

In some way, Hinata can be considered as a student of the “Seven Luminary Clerics.”

But it caused much displeasure for the Seven Luminaries.

They were annoyed by Hinata because she was stronger than them. And so, they decided to bother and challenge her for countless days and nights.

These cunning foxes hid behind the shield of Western Holy Church and ran the show for too long. Yet these people are extremely unproductive. If Hinata knew this when she initially partook the trial, she would have labelled the Seven Luminaries as old crooks without hesitation and deprive them of their power permanently.

Nowadays, Hinata has used the skills she learnt from the seven sages to pass on and train Arnaud and the rest of the captains the same skills.

Perhaps it is for this reason that Luminas-sama wanted me to undergo the “Trials of Seven Luminaries” —

As she thinks so, Hinata praises Luminas for her keen eye for talent.

In Hinata's view, the Seven Luminaries have already abandoned their duty of fostering new generations of fighters. Luminas must have some other plan for them to have let them keep their position of power despite their dereliction of duty for so long.

And it is for that reason Hinata acts as if she is obedient to them—

After saluting, the crowds wait quietly as the sages take their seats.

“Well then, what do we owe the honor to have your presence today—?”

Hinata asks as everyone's representative.

“Hehehe, don't be so nervous.” ⁴¹

“Indeed. Didn't Archbishop Reyhiem here bring back information regarding Demon Lord Rimuru?”

“We are interested in it too.”

The voices of the Seven Luminaries are channeled directly to their heads through “Telepathy,” to give their answer.

“Now then—“, Hinata says while thinking calmly.

Only three of the Seven Luminaries are present here.

⁴¹In the original text, the Celestial Sages' dialogue used a different quotation sign to indicate they communicate directly through telepathy.

Hinata personally thinks these three are the most corrupted of the seven. Especially one of them—The fire-wielding “Sage of Fire” Azu, who can hardly even reach Shizue Izawa in terms of power. There was nothing worth learning from him. Hinata didn’t even need to use “Usurper” to pass his trial.

Despite being such a cheap-shot, he seems to have also misunderstood Hinata, believing that she was simply unable to take his power from him. That’s why he is rather annoying to Hinata for his constant disdain for her.

The other two are “Sage of Moon” Dana and “Sage of Metal” Vena. They most likely came to back Azu up.

This is bad. Luminas has ordered me to take care of this matter properly...

A shred of unease passes through Hinata’s mind at that thought.

Considering the situation as it is now, Rimuru’s impression of Hinata is already pretty bad. Now that these three have come to cause trouble, it may ruin the prospect of making peace. But while their goal here is still not clear; it is most urgent however listen to Rayhiem’s account.

After being urged by the three, Reyhiem begins his explanation.

Hinata puts away her feelings to listen to what Reyhiem has to say.

“It was most foolish of me. We accidentally ran into a terrifying foe. It was truly horrifying. He is undoubtedly a real Demon Lord. It is us who allowed a new Demon Lord to be born!”

Reyhiem shouts as his eyes begin to turn bloodshot during his emotional recollection of what he experienced. He begins to retell the course of events that birthed the terrifying new Demon Lord.

Reyhiem even spills all the bad deeds done by his own army despite no one ordering so. He flashes out everything he knows in a forceful drive of will. He must have been trying to rid himself of the pain and by doing so, is pleading forgiveness from God to atone for his sins.

Even the Holy Knights are shaken by the details of his account of the birth of Demon Lord Rimuru.

The sheer combat ability of the enemy was shocking.

Even their Holy Barrier would not be able to stand up against those light beam attacks, let alone the anti-magic barrier (or anti-monster) or the more commonly applied, defensive barriers that defend against wide-area magic attacks.

They’ve never heard of such magic before.

They themselves are probably unable to stand against an attack that could penetrate their protective barriers.

But Hinata remains calm.

She deduces from Rayhiem’s report that it is likely an attack beam converted from gathered sunlight.

And soon her deduction is proven true—

“Hmm. That sounds a lot like Gran-sama’s sunlight magic.”

“Is it the kind of magic that bends light? If that’s the case, can’t it be sealed by an anti-magic barrier?”

“Besides, its power is not that strong.”

The Seven Luminaries begin to express their “brilliant” opinions.

“Sage of Sun” Gran is the head of the Seven Luminaries and controls the element of “Light.”

One of his skills can gather and concentrate sunlight.

Although the magic that the Seven Luminaries are talking about should be different from this, Hinata thinks it sounds rather similar, so her guess is likely not far from the truth.

Idiots. There's no way he used magic to directly bend sunlight. He must have utilized some other means to reflect the sunlight before converging them into beams. Perhaps he has borrowed the power of wind and water spirits? But if he wanted to actually do so, he would need quite the calculative power...

Even if that is the case, Hinata is still not afraid.

If she knew the origin of his strength, countering it would then be a piece of cake. She would be able to stop the enemy's attack by summoning a protective barrier that dissipates heat and sprays dust particles into the air to disperse the light source. This attack is full of flaws if only utilizing sunlight. To Hinata, such attack isn't even worth mentioning.

It seems like that he is using the scientific knowledge from the other world. In this way, he must think that it would be hard for the uninformed people in this world to deal with it. For him to have exploited the weakness of magic defenses... I see that he's not only cautious, but quite intelligent...

Thoughts are going through Hinata's head.

Rimuru indeed possesses incredible calculative power and he is only made more of a threat given his ability to wield multiple types of magic at the same time. However, since Hinata has seen him in person, she doesn't feel the need to fear like the rest.

But, Hinata's conclusion seems to have been made too early.

Reyhiem isn't finished yet.

There's more story to tell...or rather, what follows next is the climax.

“Please hold on everyone. That mysterious attack was indeed powerful. Folgen-sama was killed almost instantly. Even Razen-sama couldn't do a thing about it. Near ten-thousand knights probably all died due to that one attack. But—”

Reyhiem pauses for a second.

There were people who either passed out or cried due to their severe injuries. Even those without injury were scared to insanity and hiding on the battlefield. These soldiers just incited a massive commotion and all over the battlefield, you could hear the sounds of despair.

He gulps loudly, as cold sweats drip profusely down his face when he says, shivering—

“—It only got more terrifying from there. The battlefield became silent the very next moment.”

All of these sounds disappeared—Reyhiem says.

“What do you mean?”

“Exactly what I said, Hinata-sama. The survivors of the twenty-thousand army were killed instantly. The sole survivors are the three of us: me, Razen-sama and the Farmus King Edmalis.

I completely lost my mind after witnessing the scene and was scared unconscious—”

Reyheim finishes up...

There is silence in the sacred cathedral.

A single monster was able to massacre the entire twenty-thousand army—The crowds are speechless before this fact presented before them. The silence is accompanied by a nervous air as everyone begins to recall a certain legend.

There was once a group of individuals who could single-handedly destroy nations. They became Demon Lords, and so, legends—

Hinata also begins to recall.

She recalls what Luminas said to her.

It is rumored that the early concept of the Western Holy Church began to gain prominence around a thousand years ago. According to the history of the nation (Lubelius), there are records of it tracing back to around twelve hundred years ago.

It has been two thousand years since the old kingdom was destroyed by Veldora and the people immigrated to this location.

Veldora's stubbornness and immortal flesh were extraordinary and fighting him seriously would only further the destruction.

Since the vampires could only obtain high-quality spirits from the blood of humans, if Veldora's reckless actions lead to humans' extinction, it would also sabotage the food source of the vampires. It may be a different case for more ancient vampires such as Luminas, but it is a life or death situation for lower vampires. That's why Luminas had no choice but to come up with a system to coexist with them and thus devoted herself to the protection of mankind. She was raised to Godhood for her rescue and leadership of the humans in the past.

Everything about this nation was caused by a rampaging Veldora.

It was an existence far more persistent and difficult to deal with than any kind of natural phenomenon.

That's why he was called "Catastrophe."

Right now, they are called Special Rank S, i.e. not suitable for humans to handle. However... He was not the only one that has caused mass-destruction.

Right now, the only individuals labeled as Special Rank S are the four "True Dragons." But that is merely a surface record for the public... According to historic texts, there are also two Demon Lords who have also caused great destruction.

They are the "Lord of Darkness" Guy Crimson and "Destroyer" Milim Nava.

All of the Demon Lords are listed as S Rank, but among themselves, there is also a difference of strong and weak ones. These two for instance, are Special Rank S whose ranking for some reason, cannot be disclosed to the public.

Luminas said, a "Demon Lord Seed" can be awakened.

By raining mass destruction and absorb large amount of human "Soul," the "Demon Lord Seed" will awake and undergo an incredibly powerful evolution. The Demon Lords truly worthy of their titles are the awakened, "True Demon Lord." At the same time, there are different stages

to their evolution, and some Demon Lords may even stand against a “True Dragon.”

As for Guy and Milim, Luminas seems to believe both have exceeded the power scale of a “True Dragon.”

Even Luminas, who is also a “True Demon Lord,” is no match for the two.

“If the opponent is Milim, I should be able to pull a trick on her. It would probably be a fun fight, but it’s one that I’ll definitely lose.”

This is what Luminas had to say about her.

So, what if the opponent is Guy?

“Ha! Although I hate to admit it, but I am no match for him. He is extremely powerful.”

To Hinata, Luminas is already strong beyond belief, yet she easily claims that Guy is stronger.

Guy must be ridiculously strong for someone as confident as Luminas to assert that she won’t be able to defeat him. Apart from that, Milim also had her legendary battle with Guy, and so she must also be a monster beyond Hinata’s imagination.

“Special Rank S” is the term used to describe these monsters.

In theory, it may be possible to stand against them by gathering the strength of “Humanity,” but that is but optimistic speculation. The reason is being that the whole of humanity would also include the Chosen Hero. Now that there is no active Chosen one however, the reality is that humanity won’t stand a chance against them.

Moreover—

The new Demon Lords — “Octagram” cannot be simply dismissed.

Demon Lord Rimuru is no exception.

From Luminas’s understanding, Rimuru seems to have also awakened.

Rayhiem’s testimony just now is enough to prove that.

Following Hinata’s footsteps, the rest are beginning to recall as well.

—They are reminded of the fearsome awakened Demon Lords.

This information has not been disclosed to public to prevent unnecessary concerns over the existence of creature who threaten mankind.

The original “True Dragon” (Veldanava) has lost its power and there hasn’t been any sign of its resurrection. One of the remaining three was sealed until it was unfortunately revived recently. And it has also allied with Demon Lord Rimuru who has become the focus of discussion right now.

And speaking about this Demon Lord Rimuru, he was able to decimate twenty-thousand men army by himself. This kind of behavior is quite similar to what the other two Demon Lords have done. It wasn’t enough to amount to mass-destruction, but it is highly likely he has absorbed a massive amount of human “Soul.”

The solemn silence persists as no one wants to admit the fact that a new True Demon Lord has been born to this world.

The difference between “Demon Lord Seed” and “True Demon Lord” is night and day. Everyone at the scene is aware of this.

No one is saying a thing, and the one to break the silence is—

“Is it now? Then we will have to assume Demon Lord Rimuru has “Awakened” ...”

Hinata states calmly.

Her words became a sharp blade that pierced the silence. And so, the people who can no longer bear the silence found some motivation to speak as well.

“I suppose we should. So, what are we going to do? If we leave him like this, won’t he become a threat we can no long deal with in the future?”

“Calm down. Demon Lord Rimuru was once human as well. If he wishes for coexistence, then we don’t need to force ourselves to oppose him.”

“Indeed. We will have to see how they act first.”

“But it is also a fact that he murdered twenty thousand knights without hesitation... He is indeed dangerous. Can we really trust Demon Lord Rimuru...?”

Renard was the last one to express his opinion, and the one whose opinion resonates with everyone’s heart.

In the end, all wars originate from suspicion and distrustful guesswork. If it is the case, when it comes to humans, it will be just as difficult for the Demon Lord to just take their word for it.

It may be easy to do so if the knights can march on him at any time, yet Rimuru’s strength is growing rapidly. To the Guardians of Mankind, the Holy Knights and Sword of Pope, the Imperial Guards, it makes a lot of sense to challenge him before he grows to the point of being undefeatable.

However, Hinata is still not moved by it.

“Everyone, please stop. The divine order cannot be defied.”

Hinata declares with determination.

She won’t change her mind no matter what she hears.

Hinata is the head of knights within the Pope’s Imperial Guards and the Commander of the Holy Knight Order. She must be a role model and rule the Holy Knights with determination in order to lead the Holy Empire of Lubelius.

Unless it is to obey Luminas’s will, Hinata will not change her mind.

That’s why Hinata is able to assert this without hesitation.

As such, the united conference soon comes to an end. Everyone is supposedly going back to intelligence gathering as planned—supposedly...

Yet malicious intents linger in the air.



“Oh oh, Reyhiem. Is that all the “Message” you have?”

Before, the Seven Luminaries were only observing on the side. Yet now they've actively intervened, trying to stop Hinata from ending the united conference.

Reyhiem takes out a crystal ball after being urged by these words.

He hands it carefully to Hinata.

"R-right, and this. Demon Lord Rimuru has some words for Hinata-sama—"

"He has words for me?"

Feeling suspicious, Hinata takes in the object.

If Rimuru has something to say, she has to listen to it.

The crystal ball handed by Reyhiem as ordered by the Seven Luminaries is an expensive magic item that allows anyone to record video footage with the device. It is one of the many communication methods that work as better evidence compared to written letters, and so it is often used in communication between nations as well.

Putting aside the origin of such expensive item, Hinata immediately replays said message recorded by Rimuru himself. Since all of the prominent figures of the nation are all gathered here, they may as well get to learn about the Demon Lord Rimuru himself too.

However, things are not that simple...

The crystal ball projects the image of a beautiful young girl.

No, not a young girl, it's Demon Lord Rimuru himself.

His face is quite similar to Hinata's teacher Shizue Izawa, extremely grim and without any emotion. Although this is only a projection, his imposing aura is very evident.

How surprising, he seems to have changed completely in just a few months—

Hinata stares at him with eyes wide.

Soon, her eyes meet with the ones of the Demon Lord in the projection.

Could this be a coincidence...

Unknowingly, Hinata begins to find herself nervous.

This Rimuru came from the same place as her and appears to be very friendly.

Due to how strong this first impression was, I may have overestimated him too much, Hinata remarked to herself.

The very next moment, almost as if he's is trying to prove her thoughts, he says—

"I shall be your opponent. Come, fight me in a duel."

That is all.

It is a simple enough message and impossible to misunderstand.

Rimuru has been angered. After taking out the Demon Lord Clayman who was in his way, has it finally time for Hinata?

These thoughts are on everyone's mind.

"W-what should we do, Hinata-sama?"

Nicolaus asks Hinata, panicked— something highly unusual compared to his normal conduct.

Yet, Hinata isn't making any response—

“Hinata-sama, please give me the order! I shall lead the troops to crush this ambition of the Demon Lord!”

Arnaud, who's suddenly been filled with zeal, jumps out to volunteer himself.

The crowd then restarts the discussion.

Sare looks at Arnaud, quite shocked while commenting jokingly:

“Arnaud, you may be good with a sword, but there seems to be some issues with your head.”

“—What did you say?!?”

“Nothing really, but didn't boss just tell us to stay out of this? If we are to make a move, the other Demon Lords won't just sit back and watch. Besides, he may have awakened, so we can't be reckless. The best option now is to be cautious and accept his proposal.”

“That's right, Arnaud. And there's still Veldora, who we have no chance to win against. In fact, we will suffer great losses even if we win. If they wish for a duel, we should just leave the matter to Hinata-sama.”

Ritase jumps in to support Sare.

If they and their troops are engaged in an intense battle with their enemies, there will definitely result in heavy losses. And whether they can emerge victorious is also in question.

Since this is the case, it is not a bad idea to send out Hinata, the strongest knight of Holy Empire of Lubelius to fight alone.

Sare and Ritase both believe Hinata will be victorious, and for that reason they remain optimistic and support her.

Hinata is also reflecting on the whole issue.

Naturally, Arnaud's proposal to launch an assault is not an option.

It will drag the entire nation down with it, and in time, just as Ritase said, it will lead to a total war.

With further consideration of their geographical position, it will even endanger the Western Nations, turning this into a world war. If that's the case, Lubelius with much more subjects to protect will be disadvantageous, nor is it what Luminas has wished for.

Right now, the biggest threat is, no doubt, Veldora. On just minimizing casualties alone, the invitation to duel with Demon Lord Rimuru is more than Hinata could wish for. Yet she still has doubts.

Then, what should I do...

Hinata begins to ponder.

Considering now, it was lucky that she didn't assault the monster kingdom when the situation had yet to clear up.

It is all thanks to Luminas's wise eyes.

There is no use sending any number of troops when the opponent has awakened to be “True Demon Lord.” Even with elite soldiers enlisted in the army, they won't be of much use if they don't reach a certain level of strength. The miserable state of the Farmus army to be left with only three survivors is sufficient enough to prove this point.

—No, that's still inaccurate.

Rimuru couldn't have been awakened during his battle against the Farmus army. He needed the "Souls" of the defeated Farmus army in order to achieve evolution.

He was able to take out the twenty-thousand men army when unawakened.

What an absolute monster...

Thinking back to her battle with Rimuru, he didn't seem that capable back then. But there is also the possible explanation that he intentionally made a concession because the opponent was Hinata.

Would such a person be planning to kill her even to this day?

Even if he does hate Hinata to the bone, it is still quite unnatural for someone seeking revenge to invite her to a duel.

And even though his motives may be to remove the obstacles posed by Hinata and the Western Holy Church, Rimuru shouldn't strike first. If he is dumb enough to not know this, how is it possible for him to come up with the scheme against the Kingdom of Farmus?

With that being said, there may also be another reason.

It's quite strange, no matter how I think about it. Has the situation changed? Or perhaps, evolving to Demon Lord has deprived him of humanity—?

A human's mind can be easily corrupted by such immense power.

For instance, Shizue put in much effort trying to suppress the power of Ifrit, whose enormous power can easily destroy a person.

Moreover, the fact that Rimuru has awakened...

—No, there shouldn't be such thing. It wouldn't make sense for him to say that he is on the human's side if that's the case...

Luminas mentioned that Rimuru announced his desire to protect mankind. Had he lost his humanity, his talk of building a utopian city would be nothing but claptrap.

There is still not enough information, Hinata thinks to herself. She believes there's still truth hidden behind all this, yet her "Mathematician" cannot work out the right answer.

Moreover, the message recorded in this crystal ball also seems weird.

It could have recorded a large amount of content, yet the actual message only consists of a short line of words. No matter how she puts it, she feels that there's some other intent hidden behind the message.

Apart from that—

Just now, "Sage of Fire" Azu seemed to know that Rimuru had a message for me; why is that the case?

Reyheim only mentioned the origin and development of the whole ordeal, yet he didn't once mention a message from Rimuru. Yet Azu asked "Is that all the "Message" you have?." Hinata finds that part to be abnormal.

Doubts begin to be raised in Hinata's heart. Yet her expression didn't change at all as she decides to suppress her suspicions. She needs to think about the matter and not ignore any small signs. It is unfortunate however, considering the lack of information. Hinata is simply doing

her calculations as always, trying to find an answer, yet she can't find the correct solution.

And so Hinata decides to no longer hesitate and choose the best available solution.

"It can't be helped then. Since they have demanded me by name, I suppose I'll have to explain things in person."

Hinata sighs while giving her final conclusion.

If that's what Rimuru wishes, she can accept the invitation to his duel. But she wants to find out first whether there is still room for negotiation or not. She will get to the answer as soon as they meet.

It would be much more meaningful than sitting and being troubled here.

Regardless, since things have developed to this point, it is up to me to conclude things—

Hinata makes up her mind.

"This is too dangerous! If we already know that Demon Lord Rimuru bears no good intent, there will be no need for Hinata-sama to go in person!"

Nicolaus speaks up in a nervous tone, yet Hinata isn't changing her decision.

"Can we really find an answer without knowing what is on our opponent's mind? I still have to apologize to him anyway. Regardless of the situation, I will have to see him one way or another. Shouldn't I, at least, go and try to negotiate with him?"

Hinata replies, trying to end the discussion on that note.

However, some decide to interject her.

It's the three masters of the Seven Luminaries.

"Hehehe, what a wonderful decision!"

"May the blessings of Luminas be upon you."

"Demon Lord Rimuru is indeed a threat."

"It won't matter if you can't establish common ground."

"If it's Hinata, you can definitely defeat him."

"But Hinata, don't you forget."

"Indeed, there's still that evil dragon."

"Even you wouldn't be able to take down that evil dragon!"

"Don't overestimate your strength, Hinata."

"Any form of attack wouldn't harm that evil dragon."

"But Hinata, rest assured."

"We grant you this."

"We grant you the Holy Dragon Slaying Sword (Dragon Buster)!"⁴²

The three begin to talk to Hinata among themselves.

I can't stand this; how unsubtle can you be? I said I just wanted to talk, yet you've concluded that I'm going to fight Rimuru. Your goal must be for me to take out Veldora. Or perhaps, some other intent—

The Seven Luminaries are ex-humans⁴³ recognized by Luminas. So, it's somewhat under-

⁴²Bootleg Dragon Slayer

⁴³Their evolution and other factors have made them somewhat "inhuman."

standable for them to attempt to eliminate Veldora who is hated by Luminas... But Hinata has found out that they have other reasons than that.

The “Seven Luminary Clerics” are afraid.

They are afraid of new talents that may lower their prestigious status by Luminas.

That must be why they’ve been so unenthusiastic about training a new generation of fighters and why they’re trying to eliminate people in their way.

Fools. I shall inform Luminas-sama that you are all a bunch of good-for-nothing parasites—

But even so, Hinata remains unfazed in her expression.

The judgement call will be left for Luminas to decide, so Hinata will not make a move so easily.

That’s why Hinata replies unfazed.

“I shall obey thy will; much obliged for the sword.”

Hinata finishes her words as she takes the Dragon Buster from “Sage of Metal” Vena’s hand.

Seeing her acceptance, the three nodded with satisfaction—

“We hope to receive news of your triumphant feat.”

“If you run into any emergency situation, that sword shall protect you.”

“But if you fail, you shall take all the responsibility.”

Leaving these words, the Seven Luminaries turn on their heels and leave.

“Hinata-sama...”

The Holy Knights try to say something but are gestured to stop by Hinata.

“Now then, you should all go back to your missions. The united conference is now dismissed.”

She declares so while signaling her eyes to Pope Louis behind the royal veil.

The “Three Martial Sages” remain silent, seemingly pondering something.

The Holy Knights respect Hinata’s will and follow her order.

As such, this conference filled with twists and turns has finally come to an end.



Hinata awoke from a light sleep.

She fell asleep without knowing after immersing herself in memories.

She smells the fragrance of coffee as soon as she woke up. The sight that comes to her is that of Nicolaus preparing breakfast in the other room to take care of Hinata.



“Ah, have you woken?”⁴⁴

He is Cardinal Nicolaus Speltus.

Come to think of it, this man is an oddball.

Not only is he a trusted subordinate of the Pope and the highest executive of the Holy Empire of Lubelius, he is also the actual holder of power within the Western Holy Church⁴⁵. Yet a man like him pledged his loyalty only to Hinata and her alone like an obedient puppy.

“Come, breakfast is ready. Why don’t you have a bite?”

Hinata suddenly wants to laugh.

No one would have imagined that Nicolaus Speltus would ever prepare breakfast for anyone.

Anyone who has seen his normal self would have all commented that Nicolaus is a devil with the mask of a clergyman.

“All right, I gratefully accept (いただく). Thanks a lot.”

Hinata didn’t think too much on her answer and is met with a delighted nod from Nicolaus.

The two begin to eat breakfast. She has been longing for some delicious meal.

Moreover, she’s even been missing out on proper sleep due to the piling amount of work lately.

But, for a while all of these are going to come to an end—

“...Are you really going?”

“Yeah. I have to take responsibility.”

“But it was me who summoned Reyhiem—”

“And I’ve accepted it. You don’t have to worry over this issue.”

“Can’t you...reconsider the idea...”

“Annoying. Besides, you don’t have to worry. It is unlikely to lead to war.”

And moreover, if a fight really breaks out, she still has a chance to win.

Hinata still an ace up her sleeve. Not that garbage Dragon Buster, but something much greater—

In addition—Luminas gave her the order of “Do what you see necessary.” So Hinata has no intention of getting herself killed. If it really comes to that, and Demon Lord Rimuru really is “Awakened,” Hinata still has confidence in defeating him as of this stage.

So, there is nothing to worry about.

She isn’t fully confident in winning, but Hinata is good at fighting opponents stronger than her. Not only that, since she has more than one trump card. But she should avoid discussing about such depressing topic on a wonderful morning like this.

“There shouldn’t be a problem this time either. So, don’t worry, Nicolaus.”

That’s why Hinata says so to him with a smile, her tone is soft and gentle and a rare smile without any reservation.

—And soon, Hinata will be on the move.

⁴⁴Nicolaus is using a respectful pronoun for Hinata during this entire conversation.

⁴⁵i.e. he does all the work for the Pope

The Secret Meeting

Interlude

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Interlude

The Secret Meeting

Adjacent to the territory of the Kingdom of Ingracia and the Kingdom of Farmus sits a small kingdom facing towards the North Sea. This kingdom is known as Siltrosso.

A secret meeting is being held here—one that will shake the foundations of history.

“And, what happened in the end?”

“Everything is proceeding as planned. Our scheme has yet to be exposed.”

“Hehehe, and people say that devilish woman was smart. It turns out she’s quite average.”

“However, we must not get careless. Even considering her strength alone, she’s still the strongest person in the West.”

“Hmm. But I’d urge everyone here to keep in mind as a lesson that we were able to make a fool of her just by pulling a few tricks on that brawn-head General.”

Since the freezing wind from the sea keeps this nation bitterly cold all year long, there is a large fireplace to keep the room warm.

The five elders have gathered here.

Their garb and accessories are all extremely luxurious.

Some of them are even wearing the silk finery made of the Tempest Federation that is rarely seen in the market.

All of them are equipped with magic defense items as accessories to completely shield themselves against magic.

That alone speaks of the wealth possessed by the elders.

And of course, this room is completely espionage-proof.

It is also strong enough to withstand Nuclear Strike Magic.

In addition to all that, the room is guarded by extremely strong Rank A knights.

Alongside the elder sits a woman with her legs crossed. She is Glenda, the wild beauty with eye-catching curly red hair.

“Turbulent Sea” Glenda—member of the “Three Martial Sages” and one of the Ten Saints.

Her real employers are the five elders, the so-called Five Great Elders, the leaders of the Western Nations.

One of them wears a pure white, loose robe. His eyes are sharp and resemble that of an eagle.

His disheveled hair gives off an immense imposing pressure; however...a doll-like cute girl is also sitting on his lap.

She has smooth blonde hair and pink lips. It's a gentle-looking young girl around ten-years-old.

A formidable old man and a cute young girl; it's only natural to deduce their relationship of grandfather and granddaughter. Yet something appears rather out of place in this scene. However, no one questions this. It is simply deemed as natural as it is to the likings of the old man.

Since after all, this elder sitting in the center is the head of the Five Great Elders, leader of the Rosso Family—Granbell Rosso.

The Rosso Family.

The family that built its strong roots in the Western Nations and owns all authority.

They also happen to be the royal family of the Kingdom of Siltrosso.

The members of their family had a hand in every powerful nation, including the likes of Farmus and Ingracia.

It was also their family's contributions that led to the creation of the Western States Council.

To the outside world, it appears that the Council elects its members from every nation. But they are, in fact, mostly members of the Rosso family. And their increased presence grants them enough prestige to surpass powerful nations.

Yuuki Kagurazaka's funds to found the Freedom Association also came from the Rosso.

If anything, these elders could be considered the rulers of the Western Nations.

And their leader is Granbell.

No one dares to object his actions.

Granbell pats the girl's head as he speaks majestically:

"That would be good. But Damrada-dono, your lies seem to have been exposed."

He points out with a smile.

He is referring to the news Glenda has brought back that Hinata has found out that she was manipulated.

The man who responds is called Damrada.

He is fully clad in black with the edge of his hat covering his face. His clothes seem to possess a classy texture.

The type of clothes he is wearing are uncommon in the West; they give off an exotic feeling. But that is hardly odd, considering Damrada and his men are not from the Western Nations in the first place.

"Hehehe, don't worry. Hinata Sakaguchi may no longer trust us, but we've gained more than we lost. That is your trust, Granbell-sama."

"Surely you jest. The goal of "The East" is to cause chaos in the West, so you can get better weapons sales. Are you not planning to have the empire attack after we exhaust ourselves from in-fighting? Your talk of trust is laughable."

“Impressive, impressive. I’ve been exposed, as expected from Granbell-sama.”

“Are you not going to deny it?”

“That won’t help anyway.”

“Huh, you do talk the talk. Regardless, let’s get to the more important matters.”

“Sure.”

“Am I right to say that it is our shared goal to eliminate Hinata?”

“Of course. The biggest obstacle that keeps the empire from marching onto the West is no doubt the “Storm Dragon” Veldora. Our sources have pointed out that the Demon Lord Rimuru has allied with that evil dragon. We can’t be sure of the authenticity of these rumors, but the situation confirms that the evil dragon can be negotiated with. If that’s the case, we’ll try to communicate with it. The next obstacle that poses quite the threat would be the Western Holy Church. As long as that organization exists, the Western Nations will be united. If that’s the case, no matter how powerful the empire is, it would be difficult to take all of the Western Nations down...”

“Oh? Are you suggesting that we don’t deserve your concern?”

“My, where’d that come from? The Five Great Elders are all *practical* people. When the Empire takes hold of the Western continent, I hope you will continue providing us with your assistance. Let’s collaborate and manipulate the world economy in the dark.”

“Collaboration? Do you want us to pave way for the empire? Quit joking around.”

“Hehehe, but the Empire is quite strong! It may be hard to attack the West, but there is still a chance we will succeed. Do you wanna make yourself an enemy of us when that happens?”

“How dare a mere arms dealer be so rude to Granbell-sama!?”

Surprisingly, it was Glenda, not Granbell, who reacted furiously.

She takes out her otherworld weapon from her pocket—a pistol and points it at the eastern merchant Damrada.



But Damrada remains calm. His calmness isn't because he is ignorant of the danger of the pistol. It is precisely because he knows its power that he is able to remain calm.

"Hehehe, a pistol, then? Bless my eyes. These things can even be found in the West now too."

Damrada speaks without surprise or fear.

"Oh, so you know about it? But why are you so relaxed then?"

"Of course I'm relaxed. You really think that otherworlders are only in the West? We arms dealers should naturally know all sorts of weapons. Besides, the one you are holding is nothing but a common piece that has been successfully mass-produced."

Damrada answers uncaringly.

The Five Elders couldn't help but express shock at this revelation.

"What did you just say? You are already mass-producing this?"

"As expected of merchants from "The East." That's impressive."

"If that's the case, the empire's army would be strong beyond any measure. It may not be effective against monsters, but it is an invincible weapon against humans..."

The Elders all express their surprise.

Granbell also begins to consider Damrada's words.

This man called Damrada never lies.

To be more specific, he often creates misunderstanding when he displays the opposite reactions to the magnitude of things he discusses. This man cannot be underestimated.

To put it in another way, as soon as you scrutinize his words, you can find the devious messages hidden within.

This time Damrada is warning them not to stand against the empire and that there are still plenty of benefits in collaborating.

"'Practical' was a good compliment. You are right, it is in our interest to play along and assist you."

The rather imposing words of Granbell calms the Five Elders.

"Is it really okay, Granbell-sama?"

"Stand down, Glenda. We've shared a common goal from the start anyway. It is not time yet for us to stand against them."

One does not defy Granbell's decision. Glenda stands down obediently.

In view of the pros and cons, Damrada's words do make sense.

Damrada's men are arms dealers, they do not want conflict with the Rosso who wish to control politics through economy. The two parties may oppose each other in terms of interest if the situation changes, but that's an issue for another day.

"Hehehe, that's some wisdom I'd expect from Granbell-sama. Although we'll inevitably become enemies one day, right now, we're comrades."

"Indeed. We don't wish to disturb the balance of relationship between Farmus and Ingracia. As long as some forces are present, the two sides can be on equal footing. We have no idea why Demon Lord Rimuru took down Farmus, but it would be problematic if the land is taken by the

Demon Lord.”

“That’s right, I totally understand. We’re in the same boat. It’s so damn annoying how the trade route from Dwargon to Farmus has now been taken. And our previously ideal trade partner, Demon Lord Clayman-sama was also taken out. Demon Lord Rimuru is a thorn in both our sides. Please let us help. With that being said—”

“Right, that seems to be the case. Hinata has followed through with Demon Lord Rimuru’s wish and has gone to the Monster Kingdom herself. Now we only need to provoke the Demon Lord to let him take revenge on Hinata.”

“That’s a well-thought-out plan. But speaking of which, why do you want to eliminate Hinata Sakaguchi anyway? In my opinion, it’s better if you just manipulate that saint...”

Damrada looks towards Granbell as he finishes, likely trying to guess his thoughts.

Yet Granbell did not flinch and laughs it off with a question.

“Huh, the reason is simple. It’s all because that woman is too strong. Her title as the strongest knight of the west is not just for show. Even when you compare her to heroes such as the majin Razen, head of Freedom Association Yuuki or Shinning Yuusha Masayuki, that woman is still somewhat stronger. Aren’t you trying to use us because you thought the same way? Am I wrong, Damrada-sama?”

“Hehehehe, ara, Your Grace is indeed fearsome. You must mean to take out the pawn that cannot be dealt with or controlled. Makes sense.”

Granbell and Damrada exchange looks and nod at each other. The two have similar personalities. That’s why they can understand each other just by doing that.

Then the two begin to discuss their duties as if nothing happened.

Damrada agrees to take care of the demon that’s been conspiring within the Kingdom of Farmus.

On the other hand, Granbell orders Glenda to mobilize the Templar Knight Order from the neighboring nations around the Kingdom of Farmus and assist the new King Edward to push Edmalis, who’s been supported by the Demon Lord Rimuru, to a desperate spot.

They will then leak the rumor that Hinata has marched on a crusade to eliminate Demon Lord Rimuru to curtail Rimuru’s actions.

Rimuru will be unable to send reinforcements to Farmus if they’re on guard against the Holy Knight Commander Hinata. And once the Demon General that’s been leading the scene has been taken care of, the remaining party of Hero Youm will be easy to deal with.

Then the troublesome Hinata herself will probably be taken care of by Demon Lord Rimuru.

“But, what if Hinata Sakaguchi actually succeeds in slaying Demon Lord Rimuru? What’ll we do then?”

“That would be nice too... But be reassured, that Demon Lord called Rimuru is not like the others. We must take out this threat while we still have the chance. But right now, he has allied with Veldora, so it won’t be easy. I’ll try to negotiate with them later.”

“Hehehe, I’m counting on you then.”

“Right. I’m in fact, counting on you with this one; don’t fail in taking on that demon.”

“Certainly not. You’d think the Western Holy Church has experts against demons, but “The East” has a far more effective special department for that.”

“That’s good.”

“Then, we’ll head out first, do excuse us—”

Damrada bows after Granbell nods, and then he leaves the room.

Now only the Rosso Family and their guards remain.

After confirming it’s all their own in the room, Glenda smacks her mouth with disdain.

“What the hell was that? That treacherous profiteer! How enraging that he dared to look down on us!”

Glenda goes on a tantrum.

Granbell glances coldly in the direction of the door and calmly comforts Glenda.

“Eh, don’t say that, Glenda. Those people may behave like that, but they are actually sparing their highest degree of courtesy to us.”

“But, Granbell-sama...”

“Glenda, you have no idea what their true identity is. Surely Hinata has noticed as well: these are the grim reapers among the arm-dealing black marketeers. She didn’t feel the need to look into because they still had some use to her before, but as soon as she learned their true identity, there was no way she would have let them walk free.”

“What do you mean by “their true identity” ?”

“Well of course, they are from the secret organization “Cerberus.” And this Damrada is one of its leaders—Damrada the Gold.”

The other elders nod in agreement.

In order to deal with them, all five elders have gathered. That in itself is an indication of the type of people they are confronting.

Now Glenda finally realizes.

“Oh, I’ve heard of them too. I’ve heard about the big underworld organization “Cerberus” that controls “The East.” It’s indeed truly troublesome dealing with those people. I’d love to see just how effective their methods are in the near future.”

Glenda continues with quite the wild smile.

Granbell agrees with her view.

An evil smile emerges on his face as he lets the young girl sit on her lap as he caresses her blonde hair.

“Hehehe, things may not go so smoothly. After all, the demon that they are dealing with is no mere Greater Demon General.”

He laughs delightfully.

According to investigations, that Demon was so overpowered as to look down on majin Razen. It would be a good chance to test out the power of Damrada’s men, but the situation will also need a reassessment if they are defeated.

“If anything goes south, you still have me.”

“Hmm. It shouldn’t be a problem if you move out. Just in case, you’d better bring the other

two of the “Three Martial Sages” along.”

“I suppose. I’ll do just as Granbell-sama suggests.”

“It would also be beneficial to weaken Demon Lord Rimuru’s forces. If we can’t take out a demon as dangerous as this, it would remain a great concern.”

“Even if we don’t manage to kill him, it would still fortify the chances of victory for the allied army.”

The Five Elders are on the same page as Granbell.

Glenda also agrees.

“However, that demon won’t be able to do anything big. If he is to display his power in front of everyone, he will get a poor reputation amongst the other nations. The more dangerous he seems the more people will be calling for his demise. Glenda, do you understand your duty? You will use “Cerberus” to shut down that demon’s movement.”

Hypothetically, it would be all right if Damrada’s party eliminates the demon.

But it won’t matter if they fail. As soon as the allied army surrounds it, the demon won’t be able to do a thing.

With the strength of “Three Martial Sages” Glenda and ex- “Three Martial Sages” Lama, the two alone should be able to take care of the demon with ease. However, it would be their victory even if they only stop the demon’s movements.

Hero Youm’s party won’t be able to stand against the Farmus united army led by the new king.

Just to be extra cautious, they will have the other two “Three Martial Sages” Sare and Grigori to accompany and lead the conquest against the demon.

Now they’ve deployed an indestructible array.

“Understood, leave it to me. I, Glenda Adley shall take the job.”

Glenda cracks up a smile.

Glenda Adley—A woman who owns a surname despite not being a noble.

In other words—

In the Kingdom of Siltrosso—Glenda Adley was a secret otherworlder summoned by the Rosso family.

In her original world, she was a mercenary that received military training from a foreign legion of a certain nation. After traveling around the world, her combat skill has become phenomenal.

She possesses the Unique Skill ‘Sniper’ and is able to skillfully utilize all types of firearms. She is also good at close-quarters combat, has superb assassination techniques and is skilled with hidden blades like a tantou (short sword)⁴⁶.

Her beautiful leopard of a soul is bound to loyalty for Granbell upon her summoning.

Glenda ponders.

Hinata has only fought in this world for ten years. She is like a baby compared to Glenda,

⁴⁶Referring to the traditional Japanese short sword Tantō

who, since childhood, has been growing in the dangerous warzones of another world.

A sixteen something young girl was able to reach the top by acquiring power through their summoning. This world is a heaven for someone such as Glenda who has gone through real hell—It is only natural for her to think this way⁴⁷.

But in order for such idea to be true—everyone needs to be equal in this world.

Yet this is simply not the reality and that's why people pray to God.

The doctrines of Luminas sect is none the wiser. Yet even Glenda, a member of “Three Martial Sages” couldn’t help but overlook it...

“Then, in order to put Sare and Grigori into motion, you should send out “Blood Shadow” first to do some preparations. You will have to coordinate with them as well.”

“Blood Shadow” is the shadow force of Rosso family.

They are a group of mad warriors who can do any mission due to their exemplary combat abilities of their members. They all work under Glenda, and among them are many summoned otherworlders. This military organization is bound by a contract (spell) to serve the Rosso family.

Hearing this, Glenda nods.

“Then I shall do that if you wish them to move out. Everything for the Rosso. And for me to regain freedom.”

“Hmm, very well. Proceed.”

With Granbell’s order, Glenda leaves the room with fighting will burning in her eyes.

The fire in the fireplace burns with crimson red.

With a sound of “pya-ji,” the firewood explodes and allows the flames to burn even brighter.

“Is this all right, Mariabell?”

“Excellent, it’s amazing, grandpa! Both parties would be stuck under such circumstances. Demon Lord Rimuru will be busy fighting against the Saint Hinata. During which, the Western Nations can interfere to settle the civil war within Farmus—all in the name of the new King Edward. That way, Edward won’t be able to raise his head in front of grandpa again.”

“That’s right, Mariabell. We won’t allow anyone to intrude on the domain of the Rosso!”

If that Demon Lord didn’t secretly intervene in the civil war in Farmus , they could have provided help to both sides to further worsen the war for their own gain. But if they did that, it may have made the Kingdom of Ingracia too strong to be controlled.

The Rosso doesn’t want any country to become more powerful than it should be.

That’s why, in order to reach the ideal state of balance, Granbell Rosso secretly controls the scene.

“The world belongs to the Rosso!”

“ “ “The world belongs to the Rosso!” ” ”

The cute blonde girl Mariabell declares, followed by the others.

This is the center of the world.

⁴⁷The passage here is not very clear, here’s what I think it means: Glenda loves the fact that whoever gets summoned to this world gets to acquire special skills that can help them to gain status, which was impossible from her past life of war and struggle. That’s why she thinks now she has a chance to make it to the top.

Because the Rosso Family plans to dominate it.

This ambition, masked with the facade of the Western States Council, continues to grow...

**Chapter
4**

**The Second
Confrontation**

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Chapter 4

The Second Confrontation

The road to Dwargon is completed alongside the official opening of the road to the Kingdom of Blumund. Yet we are still getting busier by the day. We still have to construct the new road that leads to Sorcerer's Dynasty Sarion and also plan out the new city construction project for Milim's group. There was still tons of work to be done.

On top of all these, we are also planning a massive celebration while quietly executing on our grand scheme to take over the Kingdom of Farmus. I thought that there would probably be a lot of nuisances to come after becoming a Demon Lord, yet my workload has reached my limit before any problems even occur.

In the midst of these busy days, we received some disastrous news.

Souka has returned to bring the news that Hinata Sakaguchi is heading to our kingdom. As she reported this to me half-out of breath, I immediately started to get a headache.

I cancelled my original schedule of inspecting the blacksmith workshop and returned to my office. There, Souka gave me a more detailed explanation. Hinata seems to be heading here alone without any subordinate.

“She is all by herself?”

“Yes. Nansou is currently conducting surveillance at the outskirt of the barrier set up in Lubelius. He said that he didn't see anyone else leaving the Holy Capital. And the only person departing from the Kingdom of Ingracia was that Hinata who Rimuru-sama told us to keep an eye out for.”

Souka says so while looking straight at me.

It seems that our espionage operations are operating to almost perfection under Souei's guidance. Since Souka has made such assertion, the report is likely to be true as well.

Just as I am about to conclude—

“Please hold on for a second! There are some new observations!”

Touka shouts as she suddenly emerges from Souka's shadow.

“What happened?”

“Yes, Souka-sama! There are four Holy Knights following Hinata's trail!”

“Only four?”

“Indeed. But their abilities are not to be underestimated. They likely used some kind magic and so we lost track of them right away...”

Touka reported to me with Souka looking rather frustrated.

Uh—What in the world is going on here?

Did they go after Hinata after learning she’s launching a secret assault? But it sounds too improbable.

Or did they go in groups knowing they’re being watched—if that’s the case, they should have acted more cautiously.

I’m completely baffled, as expected from Hinata.

She seems to have us completely caught off guard here.

Is she attempting to remove hindrances like us by assaulting us with their strongest forces?

She probably has predicted that less skilled individuals would only get in the way.

In other words...

“Is Hinata intending to go to war with us?”

I don’t really intend to fight Hinata, but on the other hand, it completely depends on her actions. Nowadays I won’t be beaten by her quite as easily, but still, I cannot let down my guard against her.

And I was hoping she would want to have a talk with me after receiving my message...

“I’m not sure. But she is carrying a suspicious looking sword on her back. It doesn’t seem like they’ve come to negotiate.”

Hmm—She’s armed too.

But this still seems pretty reasonable in this world, considering she is visiting a Demon Lord’s—in other words, my territory, there is no way she would come bare handed. In this case, it seems too early to conclude that Hinata is trying to wage war against us.

“With this information alone seems pretty hard to determine...”

“But those Holy Knights were all armed to the teeth—”

“Oh, is that so? Are you sure about it?”

“Yes! It’s a hundred percent true!”

A hundred percent true?

Touka replied quite energetically. According to her, the Holy Knights meeting up with Hinata seem to be armed to the teeth.

It seems way too much like they are planning on waging war instead of negotiating.

I don’t want to start a war—Regretfully, I think to myself .

Such action of trying to eliminate us monsters like some kind of evil has completely removed any possibility of peaceful coexistence.

What is she searching for?

If we don’t try to understand each other, we can only eliminate each other...

If that’s the case, it will lead to a massive war that jeopardizes the life and death of both her and our species.

If Hinata refuses to negotiate with us, it would mean they are trying to impose their ideologies onto us. Ignoring our circumstances and are unwilling to hear our explanations.

I don't think such actions constitute the true meaning of justice.

Is Hinata really oblivious to such a basic thing?

Even though during our first encounter, she attacked without hearing me out first, yet she still doesn't appear to be that stupid...

So, could the reason actually be due to the doctrines of Luminism?

Perhaps she feels like there is no need to listen to the opponents' views since they are monsters.

Doctrines, to some extent, are beneficial and important, but by blindly following their doctrines, it truly does no good for anyone.

There has been too much bloodshed in the name of religion, it should be common sense to us Japanese people of this generation⁴⁸.

Isn't it important to see things and hear things for yourself before making judgement? Isn't it foolish to do the equivalent of giving up thinking by not doing either?

At the end of the day, whether or not the accumulated knowledge can be used is up to the individual.

After obtaining information, how should it be evaluated and acted upon; whatever outcome results is the responsibility of decision maker to bear. If Hinata chooses to stand against us, then we will have to send out our troops to fend off the enemies.

Yet the stream of bad news has yet to end.

Shaking my head, I try to readjust my mindset.

"It can't be helped. Let's get together all the executives here and discuss a solution—"

Having learnt that Hinata may launch an assault here, I can't just sit idly by and watch. Even though there are only five people, their strength cannot be underestimated.

Anecdotally, it's always the carefully chosen heroes and their companions who manage to defeat a Demon Lord. This is the abiding principle.

Becoming a Demon Lord is not my original intent, but I'm not that kind to let them kill me without putting up a fight.

I will take on Hinata, and we'll have to decide who is going to handle the rest of the Holy Knights, respectively. Bearing such thoughts, I plan to hold a meeting in order to discuss a plan, but then...

"Rimuru-sama, I have something to report..."

Diablo spoke to me seemingly with discomfort written all over his face.

"What's wrong? Is there a problem?"

The "Is there" part is redundant, there are definitely problems.

Because, unlike his usual self, Diablo's actions are lacking in his usual confidence.

"Yes, there's an issue."

⁴⁸Google Aum Shinrikyo if you are interested to learn about one of the most infamous Japanese cult in late 1990s. (which is likely what Satoru is referring to)

“What is it?”

“Reyhiem is dead, cause of death unknown. But I suspect that he was murdered.”

At the time of when Diablo last saw him, he seems to be in a fine and healthy condition, which leaves only two possibilities to explain his death, either there was some accident, or he was murdered.

“Rimuru-sama even worried once about him getting silenced, it is indeed my miscalculation that lead to this happening...”

The tone of Diablo’s voice is filled with apology when he said so.

Speaking of, I do recall having mentioned it. Originally, it was just some cursory thought, yet it really did come true...

The event took place within Holy Empire of Lubelius where communication is blocked by barriers, thus making the details of the incident unobtainable. But based on all the events that took place, Diablo thinks the likelihood of murder is very high.

After hearing this information, it turns out that the situation seems to be far more severe than I expected.

“The neighboring kingdoms to Farmus have begun to spread the rumor that “the Archbishop’s death was caused by the demon’s conspiracy.” This news has been broadcasted publicly through magic communication, causing the Templar Knight Orders stationed in many countries to mobilize. After several days of preparing, they seem to be on their way to rendezvous with the new king Edward...”

Diablo explains with a troubled expression.

Things have been developing unexpectedly, which means that Diablo’s plan of taking over the Kingdom of Farmus must also have been disrupted.

Hinata just moved out, and now this happens.

The two must be—

«Answer. It can be deduced that the two incidents are connected.»

Hmm, I can totally recognize such simple pattern as well.

Do you think I’m some sort of useless fellow who can’t even see such an obvious thing?

No no no, that’s surely not the case.

Hahaha, even “Wisdom King”-san can be a troublesome fellow.⁴⁹

But in any case, all these things are really giving me a migraine.

The Western Holy Church haven’t declared us as the “Nemesis of God” yet, but if this is to continue, it eventually will happen.

Once they officially announce it, it will undoubtedly lead to all-out war.

This is our fault—For thinking that they would give up so easily.

I simply wanted to focus our priorities on national development, but that seems to be impossible now.

And with melancholic thoughts, I order Souka to summon all the executives.

⁴⁹Here Rimuru is actually taking a jab at Raphael for seemingly mocking him.

*

As such, we begin the emergency meeting.

Everyone except Geld has arrived.

“Rimuru-sama, is it all right to leave Geld out?”

“It’s all right. That he’s busy working on large projects right now. This time, the conflict is between me and Hinata, so even if we break out into a fight, there is no need for the main troops to mobilize.”

This isn’t a war where we defend for the sake of our nation’s survival, it’s not right to dispatch a huge army against a small group of people.

Besides, in this world, there is no use sending in a huge army, it is useless in the face of an overwhelming difference of strength. The Holy Knights heading here are all powerful individuals exceeding Rank A. Without my lieutenants, this battle cannot be won.

Regardless, recalling all of Geld’s subordinates now won’t be easy either. I could use my teleportation magic but having them gather at a specified location at once will take too much time.

There are also the captives that need to be guarded, so I can’t just suddenly give such reckless order.

Everyone expresses their agreement . In order to share the information with everyone, I ask Souei to explain the situation.

“Yes, allow me to explain. First of all, the intruders approaching Tempest Federation is a group of five including the commander of the Holy Knight Order. All of them seem to be the figures of leadership within the Holy Knight Order and each possess great power to the point where they can even give my crew the slip—”

The crowds gasp in shock.

Souka and her companions are at least above Rank A, so it is quite apparent that their opponents must have been extraordinarily powerful to be able to throw them off their trail. Perhaps they could have kept up by flying, but that would likely have exposed their cover. It’s still commendable that they chose the correct option of restraining.

Moreover, a comprehensive security network has been established around the town, so Souei has already gotten a hold of Hinata’s party’s movements.

Control of information is the basis of strategizing.

It is very important to obtain intelligence beforehand so we can use it when forging our battle plan, so we won’t panic when it’s needed.

Speaking of which, Souei’s skill in intelligence gathering is really something else. He uses techniques such as hiring an information dealer or engaging in infiltration using his “Clone” etc.

I taught Souei the techniques of being a ninja, yet he has developed his unique style now.

Even though he was surprised when I appointed him as “Covert Agent”⁵⁰, it seems he is naturally gifted for the job.

Moreover, having learnt all sorts of practical methods from Fuze, he has become a true expert in espionage operation.

If everyone is able as far as he has with just my questionable understanding of various matters, no one will struggle... Or so I convinced myself.

Souka’s party was trained by Souei, and they in turn are training their own subordinates. Furthermore, they’re even utilizing the locals to gather intelligence. Nowadays, even without my directives, they would collect information that they deemed important by themselves.

Even now Souei is calmly explaining the situation.

He has grown to be quite reliable.

“Templar Knights in countries neighboring Farmus seem to be gathering around Farmus’ borders. Moving in small groups, they are able to travel at great speed. Their numbers are estimated at over thirty thousand. It seems they don’t intend on interfering in the Farmus civil war, as their objective is “to destroy the Demon” ...However, at this rate, Youm-dono is unlikely to receive aid from the influential nobles or from other countries.”

Annoyance emerges on Diablo’s face upon hearing this.

He seems to be aware of this information as well, so he doesn’t seem surprised. However, the demon in question is no doubt Diablo, so he is likely concerned about where such information leaked from.

Still, thirty-thousand people is...

With each of the neighboring countries dispatching several hundred or several thousand troops, once gathered together, it becomes a massive force to be reckoned with. One which simply cannot be ignored.

Their logistics team could also transfer supplies in from the countryside infinitely, so a war of attrition would probably be disadvantageous for Youm’s party.

It is indeed a troublesome development.

“—However, the kings of the various countries do not seem to be in line with the Church and are not dispatching their own troops. After all, the church seems to have several internal factions that complicates the chain of command. If we had a better understanding of their internal workings, we’d be able to make a conclusion...”

Souei says while slightly shaking his head, seemingly ashamed of the imperfection in his report.

Uh—This is one complicated organization.

Even Yuuki couldn’t clearly explain its detailed structure, and most would just assume that the Templar Knight Orders are under the command of the Holy Knight Order.

“Had I known about this, I should have gotten clarifications from Reyhiem first...”

Diablo is troubled as well.

⁵⁰As I was translating, the term I thought used is “密探” but it appears Souei’s title has been “隠密,” it’s an a role in shogun government that acts similar to ninja in information collection.

He mostly acts on his own deductions and won't ask for opinions from people who he deems lowly and unworthy. And this time that attitude has backfired.

"That's right! It's all your fault, Diablo. I think it would be best that as your *senpai*, I take over from here!!"

Shion immediately interjects after sensing the opportunity. She seems to be quite jealous of her junior Diablo who was given such an important task.

Normally Diablo would rebuke her, yet he seems to have concluded it to be his own miscalculation and stayed quiet.

Oh well, shall I try questioning Shion in his stead?

"—Say, Shion. Suppose I re-assigned the task of conquering Farmus to you, just what would you do?"

Just maybe—Yes, it may be just a one in a million chance, but perhaps Shion might actually demonstrate some outstanding ability to strategize—

"Yes sir! I'll command my troops to slaughter all those greasy nobles—"

—My ass.

"You idiot! No way! Not in a million years!"

If she destroyed the current power structure, then the civil war will definitely devolve into anarchy, with multiple factions vying for power.

In the absence of a ruler, the people would go after the throne one after another. By preserving the kingdom's ruling system and only replacing the leader, you can minimize damage as you slowly promote new policies. It is for this reason that such delicate work is best handled by Diablo who is both flexible and intelligent.

Shion is a no-go.

"I see, so it won't work after all..."

At least she's self-aware enough to withdraw from the conversation quietly with her mouth shut after dejecting a "Yes."

"Don't mention it if you know it won't work." I thought to myself. But I suppose it's probably more like she never intended to take Diablo's task away from him.

Or perhaps, I should say, this is Shion's way of giving Diablo an out after his misstep, it is her own way of caring for him.

In any case, I will leave Diablo to continue his work on the mission.

"Diablo, everyone will experience failure. Even I didn't actually expect Reyhiem to be killed off. Besides, it's not really that big a deal that your true nature has been exposed is it?"

"Eh! But, Rimuru-sama...? The involvement of a demon is already causing unrest, for me to continue the mission will only..."

Diablo looks at me in surprise.

It seems he was upset, thinking that I would reassign the mission to someone else.

"You know, after you fail, how you make amendments is what really matters. Anyone can take the easy route by resigning after taking on the responsibility! Besides, Youm's relationship with me has long been known to the public. Diablo, you may be a Demon, but you are my

subordinate too. I don't care one bit about what they are in an uproar about, rather, shouldn't we be discussing about who is the culprit behind Rayhiem's murder is? As long as we can prove that you didn't murder him, everything will be all right, so there is no need to complicate things."

I am a Demon Lord after all.

Isn't it quite normal to have one or two demons as subordinate?

"Indeed. Shion is thinking the same thing, she knows she can't take your place."

"No, Shuna-sama. If it is me, I shall burn the Kingdom of Farmus to ashes right away—"

With a single glance, Shuna shuts Shion up mid-sentence. It was such a sharp stare that even Shion wouldn't dare to defy.

"—Which she has no intention of doing. Though it was rather tactless, that was just Shion's her way of encouraging you. You are one of us serving Rimuru-sama after all, so you shouldn't get dejected over such a minor mistake."

Shuna's words are both gentle and strict at the same time.

Yet Shion still decides to rebut this. It seems that she has a point that she has to respond with.

"Shuna-sama, you are giving me too much credit. As the first secretary, I was merely giving this newbie a demonstration of my authority as *senpai*."

She spoke with a smug look, but I can tell there's also a bit of fluster mixed in.

I see, it was indeed Shion trying to be encouraging. Although it is hard to tell, it does seem like something Shion would do. And Shuna indeed saw through that.

Normally Shion is always spouting muscle-brained stupidity, but occasionally she can be rather considerate.

"Well, it is what it is. Whether or not we send reinforcements will depend on our strategy moving forward. In the worst case, we can recall Geld, and I will go with him to the frontline."

Benimaru is also very attentive.

He doesn't mind the lack of numbers of his troops since he believes the tactics being employed are more important.

He proclaims with an aura of absolute confidence as if it will not be a problem at all to take on the Templar Knight Order altogether.

How reliable.

"—Then, it's okay for me to continue leading the operation...?"

"Of course. It's going to take everything I have to deal with Hinata, so your job is to take control of the Kingdom of Farmus. Besides, I was the one who authorized you to send out Reyhiem, so I'm partly to be blamed too. That's why you should spearhead this plan to conclusion. Or perhaps, are you saying it's too much for you? Then—"

"No, that's absurd! This is the duty granted by Rimuru-sama after all, please allow me to fully carry it out till the end."

"Can you handle it?"

"Kufufufufu, of course!"

"Good. Now go make up for your mistake with a grand victory!"

Diablo, now with his usual confidence and composure, replies with a nod.

It seems everything is settled.

Seeing that Diablo has been reinvigorated, Shuna replies with a smile:

“Rimuru-sama, I have a proposal.”

“Oh, how rare, speak your mind then.”

Shuna seldom raises any proposal, so without hesitation, I ask her to speak up.

“It’s about Adalmann whom I defeated before. Shouldn’t we inquire from him? It may have been hundreds of years ago, but he has, after all, spent much time in the Western Holy Church.”

Speaking of which, this Adalmann is...

«Answer. He is the one guarding Clayman’s castle—»

Oh oh! He was the undead monster who became Shuna’s companion.

I recall that he became a Wight⁵¹ after losing his life.

I met him once before where he went on a tangent about his gratitude towards god. I suspected that he’s the type with a severe case of delusional disorder.

Indeed, since Adalmann was once a member of the Western Holy Church, he may indeed know something about the organization. There are probably many differences comparing between then and now, but we don’t stand to lose anything by just talking to him.

“That’s a good idea. Let’s have a chat with him.”

As such, we should call him over immediately.

Currently Adalmann is assisting Gabil with conducting research in the sealed cave as well as standing in for guard duty. To summon him, Gabil used “Telepathy Net” to contact and informed him to come here immediately.

Adalmann immediately showed up, seemingly with the use of teleportation magic directly transporting him from inside the cave to town. Even though he has devolved into a wight, he is still proficient with magic he mastered in his past life, some of which seem to be very high-level spells as well. In other words, his magicule reserves may have dropped to around Rank B, but his overall power still cannot be underestimated. With his intelligence and powerful magic based techniques combined, we may have to find a better job to offer him.

But he still just looks like a skeleton from the outside...

Moreover, Adalmann’s subordinates cannot be exposed to sunlight, nor can they talk. It may be ok to try and communicate with them, but it would be difficult for them to work in the town.

⁵¹Wight is a type of undead creature depicted in western fantasy novels. (& DnD)



We'll think about that later.

Anyways, right now we need to chat with him.

“—My most sincere gratitude to your grace for having granted me an audience—”

“Too lengthy!”

While I was planning out Adalmann's future, he had been expressing his appreciation of me the entire time.

He doesn't seem to stop even when ignoring all of his complements. So I have to raise my voice to shut him up.

It seems we have yet another intense fellow joining us.

“You are a promising fellow!”

The rest of the executives seem somewhat alerted at how satisfied Shion looks when she nods to Adalmann as well as how Diablo is looking at him with a gentle smile.

“Let's stop that for now, Adalmann. I know you are elated about the fortunate opportunity to have an audience with Rimuru-sama. But we are running short on time, so let's get to the point.”

Had Shuna, who's also quite baffled, not stopped him, Adalmann would probably have continued with more of my praises.

His strong will has all been applied to his faith, no wonder he's so earnest. I feel strangely impressed within all this weirdness.

Next, according to Adalmann's explanation—

It turns out this Adalmann used to be in the highest echelons of the Western Holy Church, holding the position of Cardinal. At the time, the Western Holy Church was in a weaker state and wasn't as prominent within the Holy Empire of Lubelius as it is now. But we still learnt some detailed information on the organization.

First, we learnt about the Holy Empire of Lubelius as a nation. They are a theocracy that holds the God Luminas as their deity.

The pope acts as the spokesman of god, whose real identity is unknown. Perhaps the position is passed down over years, but there doesn't seem to be any rumors of such.

There is an organization named the Pope's Ministry that runs the country. This organization serves as the highest executive body within the Holy Empire of Lubelius. Adalmann recalls during his time, the Western Holy Church is but a lowly sub-group under the Pope's Ministry.

“The Western Holy Church was formed to promote Luminism. It is an organization that is specifically used to promote the religion. However—”

This alone was not able to ensure the personal safety of the missionaries. That's why the Pope's Ministry made demands to the nations under their protection and formed the Templar Knight Order. The nations welcomed the idea of a Ministry funded knight order, and so they agreed to assist.

It is a guarantee of the safety for citizens among these nations since now, the believers are protected from the threat of monsters. And since the funding comes from other people, anyone would normally agree to such terms. After establishing the foundations, disputes began

to emerge between Lubelius and other nations. And it was then that the Pope's Imperial Guards entered the scene.

"In name, it's a military division, yet the members of the regiment only consist of a couple of people. They are all extraordinarily powerful individuals who have the authority to directly command the Templar Knight Order. These people only pledge their loyalty to their god and the pope, and so even the Archon, who possesses the highest executive authority within the Pope's Ministry has to be very respectful when dealing with them."

The archon seems to be the one in charge of political affairs. If the Imperial Guards wields such enormous authority to the point that power holders like the archon can't even order them around, then it is apparent that they are a force to be reckoned with.

"About that, my friend Albert also received the honor of being allowed to join the Imperial Guards, yet he declined to become my adjutant in the Western Holy Church instead. Later the pope granted him the title of Knight Paladin."

Adalmann smiled proudly as his skeletal jaws clattered.

I see, so that was the Undead Knight who even gave Hakuro a tough time—Now he has become a skeleton swordsman, it is no wonder that he has become so strong as he has received a monster's body on top of his masterful swordsmanship.

"—But the situation now seems to have taken a complete one eighty."

Oh, Adalmann isn't finished yet.

The changes do seem drastic according to his explanation.

The biggest difference lies in the fact that the Church has become much more powerful. Its authority has increased with the addition of the Holy Knight Order.

Moreover, the role of archon in the ministry is now given to a selected cardinal from the Western Holy Church, resulting in their greatly increased authority. The reason for which must have been the "Seven Luminary Clerics."

When Adalmann was around, the "Seven Luminary Clerics" were powerful figures rivaling the Pope, who also act as the archons. The Seven Luminaries initiated the changes of selecting the archon from the cardinals after receiving orders to revive the Western Holy Church. But the Seven Luminaries don't seem to be a group that can be easily dealt with. It seems that they are the ones who had set up the traps that eliminated Adalmann's party.

He seems to dislike the Seven Luminaries a lot.

The Holy Knight Order wasn't anything impressive while under the supervision of Seven Luminaries. They've only become an organization worthy of the name strongest knight order after undergoing Hinata's training. It is for that reason, the Holy Empire of Lubelius came to have the two pillars of the Pope's Imperial Guards and the Holy Knight Order.

"That was quite detailed, Adalmann. I see that you have a very good source of information despite staying with Clayman's this whole time..."

"Demon Lord Clayman sees an enemy in the Western Holy Church. He has been cautious of their forces and been diligently collecting information. I was a lieutenant under him after all, though he does not ask for my opinions, he would still give me information."

I asked out of doubt yet Adalmann answered while giggling.

So that's why, I get it now. It is quite unexpected, but Clayman's manipulative and calculative side actually helped us.

"Rimuru-sama, my God, please be extra cautious. Now that the Holy Empire of Lubelius has the Ten Great Saints, they are all individuals at the level of Sage. Even Demon Lord Clayman has treated those people with caution, please do not be careless."

As such, Adalmann's explanation concludes.

We were not informed of the details, but the Imperial Guards have members who are called the "Three Martial Sages," they are all masterfully skilled fighters who reached the level of "Sage." Apart from them, there are in total ten people including the six Holy Knights and their commander Hinata. They are known as the "Ten Great Saints."

Rumor has it that a "Saint" can rival the likes of "Demon Lord Seed." It is then no wonder why Clayman wouldn't dare act carelessly in the presence of these ten people.

It is likely that other than Hinata who is heading straight to our nation, the other four are also members of the "Ten Great Saints." That's why sending out normal troops would only cause unnecessary casualty meaning it's more appropriate to directly have myself and my lieutenants to deal with them. Moreover, judging from the movements of the Templar Knight Order, the Imperial Guards are likely on the move as well. This can be explained if we consider the "Three Martial Sages" to be acting independently.

"My God, I, Adalmann, was once a Cardinal. Allow me to go persuade this Hinata! I shall convert her into believing in Rimuru-sama as well..."

"Ah, stop right there. I don't want something like that, so you can go now."

The topic has gone down a weird path, so I began to hurry Adalmann out. This guy seems to be even worse than Hinata in holding onto beliefs without listening to how other people think. With these two as stubborn as they are, it definitely wouldn't be productive to have them talk to each other.

Then...

"I see, what a wonderful idea."

"Kufufufufu, I didn't even think of something like this!"

My secretary Shion and butler Diablo is quickly moved by his proposal.

"What nonsense are you two spouting! Things will only get worse if you try to convince her with idiotic arguments!"

These two are really tacit in a way.

Can I even describe them as being on good terms or not...

It almost seems that Diablo's frustrated look from before was merely an illusion.

I decide to bring the topic back on track after cutting short the idiot duo.

*

We are starting over again now that Adalmann has left.

Since we have gathered sufficient information, we can now begin our planning in earnest.

I'd really like some sacrificial pawns to probe our opponents' abilities, but that'd be too convenient n... Eh, Veldora has been glancing at me for a while now, but there is no way I can allow that. He'll no doubt overdo things by accident.

"Veldora, you—"

"Hmph! It is finally my turn to shine. I've got it covered!"

"No. I would like Veldora to be our last line of defense."

"What?"

"Doesn't that sound really cool, Veldora- THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE. I don't think I can trust anyone but you to fulfill this role—"

"Of course. Great minds think alike!"

Veldora nods delightfully.

Okiedokie, now we can prevent him from going berserk.

There is also no way we'd lose if we send Veldora out to battle, but it feels rather overkill. After all, how can I send out Veldora without warning when there's still a chance of negotiating with Hinata. But it would be different to have him as our backup instead.

After Veldora settled down, Benimaru begins to talk:

"First of all, we will have to decide on the reinforcements to send to Youm-san."

Hmm, Benimaru is acting more and more like a commander now.

He's gained much experience from his previous battles; he no longer displays his arrogance unlike Shion.

He is now able to examine and evaluate the difference in strength cautiously and intelligently.

You can trust me as Generalissimo!—I recall him saying that to me in the past, but now, he's become far more capable for the role than me.

But I would definitely be getting headaches if it were my responsibility. That's why, I hope Benimaru would continue to keep up the effort.

Benimaru begins selecting the forces to be sent out, with a suitably commanding voice.

Captain Gobta will command the one hundred soldiers of the Goblin Riders.

Additionally, Benimaru's direct subordinates, the four thousand strong Green Corps, and their 100 commanders, the Kurenai. The remaining two hundred members of the Kurenai would be tasked with defending town.

Lastly, Gabil will lead the one hundred soldiers of Hiryuu.

In total, four thousand three hundred soldiers will be dispatched as reinforcements for Youm.

“—As such. The defensive reserves of this town would decrease, but since there are the Beastman warriors and Veldora-sama, it shouldn’t be an issue. Any objections?”

“Eh, are you really sending me?!”

“Is there a problem?”

“Ah, no. Never mind...”

Gobta was going to say something before he was silenced by Benimaru’s strict glance.

What an idiot.

“Hakurou would be the commanding officer of the reinforcement troops. But rest assured, if anything happens, I will be at your aid immediately by using “Spatial Movement.” But it is very likely that we will be engaging in combat with the commander of Holy Knight Order Hinata Sakaguchi. By that time, our communication may be cut, so everyone should listen to Hakurou’s directions and do not overdo things on your own.”

“Please leave it to me.”

“Okay...”

“This time I’m definitely gonna show off a bit!”

Hakurou and Gabil seem very motivated. Gobta is the only one that seems a little uneasy, but he’s good at going with the flow, so he should be able to manage just fine...

“I’m still a little concerned. Ranga, are you awake?”

I summon out Ranga who is sleeping in my shadow.

He’s my bodyguard, but of late all he’s done is sleep in my shadow. For some odd reason, his magicules have increased dramatically, and I worry he’s lacking in exercise lately.

“My master, am I to be sent to battle?”

“Indeed. It’ll be good for you to work out every now and then. Go with Gobta and protect him!”

“Yes sir. My body feels much lighter. I look forward to exercising after waking up.”

What’s that?

Things are going to go horribly wrong if I let him out! —I suddenly get this dangerous feeling.

Never mind, since it’s not me who will suffer the consequences. Things are probably going to go horribly wrong for the enemies.

“It’s very reassuring now that Ranga-san is with me!”

And so Gobta is truly motivated this time. What a practical guy.

“Ranga, don’t overdo things and accidentally kill your opponents...”

“No problem! Shion-dono has taught me the art of holding back!”

“I-I see...”

I’m even more concerned now.

I thought he has just been sleeping in my shadow this whole time, but as it turns out he’s been up to no good when I wasn’t paying attention. The fact that he mentioned he has learnt something from Shion makes me feel uneasy. But there shouldn’t be a problem as long as we have healing potions.

At that moment, Ranga howls delightfully and lied down next to Gobta.
I can only pray for the safety of their opponents.
I couldn't help but cheer for the enemies who I've never met. "Good luck!" But I'll keep it a secret.

Benimaru doesn't seem to have any objections with my decision. Though, *you are spoiling Gobta too much*—seems to be what the smile in Benimaru's eyes entailed.

As such, I approved Benimaru's plan and the troops to be dispatched have been decided.
Now then, the problem now is those that will be reinforcing the new King's (Edward) forces.
"Then Diablo, how do you plan to deal with your attack plan?"
"Indeed. I've expected there to be reinforcement troops, but thirty thousand is a truly surprising number. According to the original plan, I only estimated the new king's total force to consist around ten thousand soldiers—"

Diablo continues to explain—
First, he instructed Edmalis to ask around and find out the reason the new king is gathering soldiers. Since he has assumed that the new king is only doing so as a precaution since he wanted to push the responsibility of the reparations onto Edmalis.

This way, the new king can argue that he has no need to fulfill the treaty signed by Edmalis. This method, although futile when dealing with the Council, lands on a grey area for dealing with us. He is going to execute Edmalis and claim the treaty to be invalid. And in doing so, when we are provoked to send out our troops, he will (then be justified in) gather the Western Nations to stand against us.

In order to prevent such things from happening, Youm's party has to go and rescue Edmalis, who has been trapped in this difficult position.

Right now, Edmalis is under Youm's protection and they are hiding in Nedler's territory. Everything seems to be going according to plan up to this point. Youm is using Nedler's territory as his base and has gathered a force of around five thousand men. In addition, I will be sending four thousand three hundred men all at once with teleportation magic. Not only are they almost equal in number, the sudden appearance of this huge army would also strike confusion into the enemies—We intended to crush the enemies using psychological warfare.

Now that the new king has gathered reinforcement, this tactic is no longer viable.
We waited quietly for our opponent to reorganize and now the situation has turned into forty thousand versus ten-thousand—Our opponents' forces have grown to be four times as ours. It seems we will need to hurry things up.

"—That's why the new king Edward has established his camp in Edmalis' domain in order to wait for the reinforcement."

Diablo's explanation concludes there.
The plan was supposed to be for us to defeat Edward in this fight and for Edmalis to announce his decision to continue abstaining the throne so the Hero Youm will be crowned.

"Right now, Edward has gathered around twenty-thousand soldiers. In three weeks' time, he will have gathered forty thousand. If that's the case, the lackluster defenses of Nedler's territory

wouldn't stand a chance—”

Souei added on.

The situation would only get worse if we continued to wait.

If we send out our troops, it will become a real bloodbath. They've already lost twenty-thousand people before, and now with a battle like this, the Kingdom of Farmus would likely take a fatal blow.

Then, what should we do...

“—This is horrendous. Perhaps we should just give up this time. If I just forgo rest the of the reparations, then there would be no more war, right? They won't be able to continue the fight if they lose their justification.”

“No way! They will look down on Rimuru-sama if we do that.”

“It is indeed unsettling to be looked down on, but we have already profited from this whole ordeal. Shouldn't we aim to resolve the issue with Hinata first before rehashing our plans?”

In fact, we've already obtained parts of the astronomical reparations.

If we stopped right now it would still benefit us as the risks of continuing combat would be too high.

A Demon Lord is supposed to be the boogeyman after all⁵²—what Shion said does make sense...

“Kufufufufu, how can we abandon the operation now. Rimuru-sama, didn't you tell me to handle it?”

“Yes. But if possible, I'd like to avoid the deaths of innocents...”

“That will not be a problem. If that is what my lord wishes, your servant shall obey accordingly. It is but a simple matter for me to deliver on your wishes, Rimuru-sama.”

The interruption of the take-over plan is due to circumstances after all, but Diablo doesn't seem to be deterred.

“What do you plan on doing?”

“I'll find the culprit—The person who wanted to pin all of these on me.”

Diablo replied calmly.

Ah, he is furious.

““Demon Extermination”? If you intend to exterminate me, I shall play alone to the end. Some of the thirty-thousand men arriving soon are likely to be connected to the culprit. Why don't I try questioning them *nicely*.?”

Diablo says so with a big smile.

Oh no, that doesn't sound nice at all.

Moreover, Diablo seems to be planning to take on the thirty-thousand Templar Knights by himself.

Maybe I should tell him to hold back—

“I see, then there shouldn't be an issue if it's you. But, don't go killing any innocent people

⁵²In other words, if you can't scare the public, the title of Demon Lord is useless. That's why what Shion said makes sense.

understand?"

"Of course. I would never defy the divine will of Rimuru-sama."

Benimaru and Diablo got onto the same page before I could even make up my mind.

Not only that—

"That's good. Oh right, Hakuro, will you be able to suppress the new king's army without killing a person?"

"It should be doable. Although it would be much easier to kill them out right, but it won't give our soldiers a chance to train themselves."

"Right. Gabil, go prepare a large quantity of healing potions first."

"Understood! Leave it to me."

Eh? Eh eh!

Things are progressing, leaving me behind.

"Rimuru-sama, it seems that the plan to take over the Kingdom of Farmus is flawless."

"I-I see. So it seems... Good luck everyone!"

Shion started with a smile while I couldn't help but to just nod in agreement and give my approval.

" " "Yes sir!" " "

The motivated replies of everyone resonated in my ears.

Just like that they cleared away my hesitation. It is settled then.



Although there are still many areas of suspicion, our discussion moves onto a different issue.

That is who will be confronting on Hinata's party.

"Next, regarding the five individuals approaching our nation—"

Benimaru turns to me while speaking.

Yes, I shall lead the meeting this time!

As I plan to speak with confidence—Yet at that moment, Souei suddenly got up.

"Rimuru-sama, emergency report. The Holy Knight Order seems to be on the move—"

He explains nervously.

Everyone is panicking, or, maybe just me.

"What did Hinata's party do?"

"No, Nansou who was surveilling the Kingdom of Ingracia just reported that a hundred some soldiers just departed..."

"What did you say!"

"They are around half a day away from Hinata's party and will likely catch up to them at this speed. Their direction of traveling is the same, so we can deduce that they are heading towards

our nation.”

Hinata seems to be moving at normal speed without rushing. The four knights chasing after her seem to have traveled at full speed with magic applied even. But as soon as they rendezvoused with Hinata, they slowed to normal speed as well. The two parties seemed to have argued over something, but they ended up moving together anyways. The five are making their approach to our town as one group. As of now, they are making their way from the Kingdom of Ingracia to the Kingdom of Blumund, however, they are moving rather slowly, meaning that the hundred knights behind them will eventually catch up.

Yet the troops behind Hinata’s party seem to be avoiding open roads, and it would appear they are abandoning their rides to take old forest paths.

“Sound like they are not planning on meeting up with Hinata.”

“Their goal is unknown to us. We predict that Hinata would not be arriving in at least two weeks’ time, and the troops behind her will be arriving around the same time as her.”

Souei didn’t forget to have someone to shadow them in midst of all this confusion.

I can only wait for follow-up reports on that.

Just as we’ve overcome one problem another emerged. No, I should say that one problem is followed by another.

How annoying, truly.

All in all, the situation has changed.

Sighing won’t do us any good.

My executives begin to discuss again.

I listened to how they plan on dealing with the situation.

There are five individuals who are at the level of Sage including Hinata. There’s also the hundred or so Holy Knights trailing them. This regiment of around a hundred knights are far more dangerous than the Farmus army of twenty thousand. Or rather, Hinata, in particular, is extremely dangerous.

This is the unchanging rule of this world.

The quantity of military force cannot rival the quality of individual strength. No matter how many thugs and lackeys you gather, you cannot win against the overlords of this world.

I don’t intend to engage them alone this time, such act would undoubtedly be suicidal.

So, what should I do?

“Let’s just stop thinking and kill them all!”

I’ll leave the speaker of this statement unspecified, but really, whoever is the most airheaded is also the strongest.

Without considering practicality and going straight to the result.

It is because of this level of recklessness that her Unique Skill was awakened.

“If only Geld is here at time like this...”

“That guy has his own work to worry over. Unless things get really dire, we should just deal with it by ourselves.”

Hakuro and Benimaru’s exchange is very ear catching.

Could you stop being so stubborn and just ask Geld for help?

But there are only one hundred and so opponents. So it is meaningless to dispatch a huge army. And honestly speaking, my lieutenants will have to engage in battle anyway.

I will take care of Hinata while the remaining four would have to be dealt with by the others.

If Hinata is willing to fight me one-on-one then it won't be a problem, but for me to take on all five at once definitely would be a bit too reckless on my part.

«Answer. There is no problem. The only opponent requiring caution is individual "Hinata Sakaguchi."»

Oi...

No no no, that is the biggest problem of them all!

Are you okay? I feel like you are less reliable than the times of when you were still "Great Sage."

«...»

Essentially, the reason for my concern is that I don't wish for any casualty to occur. We are guaranteed victory if we attack the Holy Knights with sheer numbers to tire them out. However, it will be at the cost of heavy casualties.

It took everyone so much effort to survive till this day, it would just be dreadful to have a pile of casualties at this point in time.

However, our opponent is Hinata.

That woman is extremely dangerous.

During our last encounter, I focused entirely on escaping since taking her on seriously would surely lead to my demise. Besides, she wasn't even using her true strength at the time.

Right now, the only person who can deal with Hinata is me. I don't think I would lose if we are to duel each other one-on-one, but it's a different story if all the Sage level Holy Knights attack at the same time.

I would probably get myself killed if I pretend to be a guru and became too overconfident about my skill. Moreover, the other hundred or so Holy Knights are also a problem as well. I have no idea how to deal with them...

If Hinata came to negotiate, there's no need for her to bring so many troops. There is no way these suspicious events occurring would not cause others to be on alert.

"All right—I've come up with an idea! How about you let me try my dragon breath sometimes? I can make it look just like an accident by pretending no one was there!"

"Could you shut up for a moment? Last line of defense means you only get to fight at the last moment!"

Veldora's suggestion sounds like a child's prank, and so I reject the idea immediately.

If Hinata indeed came to negotiate with me, it would ruin any opportunity for us to talk. Moreover, there is no way of knowing what sort of damage his dragon breath would cause, how horrifying.

It would be fortunate for us just to not give Veldora any chance to fight. But if we intend to strike first and eliminate them, it would be a viable proposal. But it will still depend on what

our opponents would do. Yet it is also not ok to just ignore them. Since there are more than one Holy Knights, there's a risk of them casting "Holy Purification Barrier" around us.

I can't simply ignore them, and killing them would also be a problem.

The Holy Knights—They are equivalent to the guardian of mankind. They are knights blessed with the protection of the spirits.

In this world, the damages caused monsters cannot be overstated and not everyone has the spare money to hire adventurers, which is why everyone lives in fear on a daily basis. The knights who protect these villages and towns on the fringes are those trained by Hinata herself. There are many who were saved from the monster attacks by them.

These survivors rely spiritually on Luminism, and physically on these members of the Holy Knight Order whose strength are also top-notch. Many of them are powerful individuals who exceeded Rank A. We will suffer serious losses if we directly confront these knights.

But that's not the main issue.

There will be consequence in the future if we were to straight up kill these knights who carry the prayer, hope and expectation of the weak. That is the main issue. We may still have room for negotiations if the doctrines of "Monsters are the common enemy of mankind" isn't a thing...

But I'm not giving up hope despite the difficulty of achieving it this time.

To them, we are evil creatures who cannot be reasoned with.

But these thoughts are not hard to understand.

After all, some of them are survivors from villages that were wiped out by monsters, or orphans whose parents were murdered by monsters. Being deceived would lead to their deaths and it wouldn't simply mean their death, but also the death of those who rely on them for protection.

Moreover, it is also a fact that there are still maniac monsters out there causing mayhem. The incidents of monsters causing harm near our nation has indeed decreased.

But there are still monsters being born in other locations and causing destruction.

If we are to kill all the Holy Knights here, who will be protecting those fringe districts? Upon thinking over it, I feel there's a need to avoid killing them so casually.

Perhaps we could have avoided this misunderstanding if I could have reached Hinata back then. It is regrettable that she wasn't willing to listen to me because I am a monster.

Since Hinata is a stubborn blackhead too.

She even went so far as to dispatch combatants after seeing my message.

«Suspicion detected. Certain events do not seem like a natural outcome regarding the matter. It can be deduced that the Likelihood of this not being Hinata Sakaguchi's intent is extremely high.»

Eh?

Could this mean that, we still have chance at negotiating?

There should be many ways for us to defeat them if they are truly considering us to be enemies. But right now, we are concerned about what's the right thing to do is since it is unclear how our opponents are perceiving us.

All in all, these are all excuses that I've been pondering over... But it is main reason for that is I don't wish to kill Hinata myself.

Shizue-san was also worrying about Hinata's later development. Since I've inherited her will, I don't wish to fight Hinata to the death without even talking to her.

How troubling, but I'm only so troubled because Hinata is too stubborn.

What am I worrying about, sheesh.

Regardless, if we can't negotiate, then a clash would become inevitable...

It will be disadvantageous for us if it comes to that.

Our opponents are experts in monster extermination. So we can't just bash our way through.

There is one thing that's for sure though, I hope to minimize casualties on both sides. It doesn't matter what our opponent wants, we will just have to prepare for the worst.

If the negotiation fails, I will have to fight Hinata once and for all.

I also mentioned this in my message, so there shouldn't be an issue with that part. Our opponents may be planning to have a grand confrontation with everyone they have, but this is our territory. If we are to set up a trap beforehand, we may be able to buy some time during my confrontation with Hinata.

Even though it is troublesome, it still has to be that way.

"Right, I've made up my mind! Let's set our goals on something further, we should do our best to prevent casualties in our fight with the Holy Knights."

If the negotiations fail—That's how I explained it to everyone.

Since the outline has been settled, everyone resumes discussion once more.

It would be meaningless to reduce casualties of our opponents at the cost of our own.

With that being the condition, everyone begins discussing our best approach.

The most effective way would be for me to reduce their morale by defeating Hinata. That's why I suggest for everyone to focus on buying time for me.

"In conclusion, we just need to cut them all down, right??"

"..."

"Just kidding."

Shion clears her throat after saying that.

Are you all right Shion? You impose a level of unease on everyone that is rivalled only by Veldora.

"All in all, we can't kill any Holy Knight, nor are we allowed to sustain any casualty on our side. That's how we should maintain the state of the battle. Rimuru-sama would take that time to take out the enemy leader, that is our battle plan, right?"

"Hmm, you're right. I'm so glad you understand."

She actually understood.

I was almost going to ask, "Do you have holes in your head?" which would have been embarrassing.

If Shion can understand, then everyone else should also be fine with it as well.

"If that's the case, I have an idea!"

Just as I was feeling reassured, Shion suddenly turns to me with a confident expression.

Unease, an unspeakable unease starts to drown my heart.

“...Let’s hear it.”

“Yes sir! My Yomigaeri also has around a hundred members. They wouldn’t be outdone by their opponents, so allow us to take on those knights!”

Shion says with a proud expression on her face⁵³.

“You idiot! The Yomigaeri only have strength of Rank C, the opponents would definitely think little of your skills!”

I really want to ask Shion where she is getting such confidence. Even if their number matches up, the difference in strength is night and day...

“—No, there’s definitely a problem with Shion’s plan, but the general idea still holds merit.”

To my surprise, Benimaru interjected to defend Shion.

Here is how Benimaru sees it.

The Yomigaeri have the Extra Skill ‘Perfect Memory’ and “Automatic Regeneration,” so average attack can’t easily kill them. And considering how weak they seem; their enemies would not immediately unleash upon them attacks that are strong enough to damage souls.

“The Holy Knights may get careless at the fact of how weak their opponents are. If we can use that... It may be surprisingly effective in buying time.”

He then gave this explanation seemingly pondering.

With Benimaru’s explanation, it does make some sense.

If the Holy Knights are not directly attacking the soul, the Yomigaeri are at an advantage. They may have a better chance of settling things safely compared to other troops.

“Benimaru is most correct! Moreover, Rimuru-sama, they have all undergone my special training. “Pain Nullification” is a prerequisite, and besides that they have even acquired “Poison Resistance,” “Paralysis Resistance,” “Sleep Resistance.” Everyone was successful in acquiring these skills! Just recently even Hakuroou praised them as having invincible endurance.”

With Benimaru’s support, Shion actively made her proposal.

Hakuroou is nodding in agreement too, so her words don’t seem to be made up.

“By the way, how did they acquire those resistance?”

“Oh, that’s—”

Although I don’t think they were lies, it is best for me to double check by asking. And the result of the answer is quite surprising.

She requested Kurobee to craft weapons that can induce abnormal status. They naturally learnt these skills after training with these weapons. She didn’t spare any sympathy since her subordinates are not easily killed. And since it’s difficult to arrive at a definitive result by attacking each other till they’re completely immobile, that’s why the winner of their unique simulated battle is whoever remains standing in the end...

“Rimuru-sama, if we find that the Yomigaeri are in danger, I’ll send my Kurenai to assist

⁵³Doya kao (ドヤ顔) - google this to see examples

then. Will there be an issue, Gobua?"

The tall Ogre beauty who was guarding the door came in upon summoned by Benimaru. Kneeling, she bows first to Benimaru, then to me.

It is said that this beauty named Gobua is the captain of Kurenai.

She's definitely one of the goblins I named, though now she looks nothing like a goblin. Dressed in a dark red military uniform, she is truly an elite.

At Benimaru's prompting, she gallantly looks at me as she replies:

"Yes sir! I will not lose to Shion-sama. My subordinates and I have trained harshly for this. Please allow us to demonstrate our prowess on the battlefield."

She has a pair of sharp eyes and a powerful stance.

Her power is also above Rank A.

Her power rivals that of Souka, perhaps even above her. It seems that Benimaru has also trained some subordinates not to be underestimated.

"They may not be as strong as the Holy Knights, but my subordinates are nonetheless skillful. By having two of them to take on one enemy each, we may even be able to buy some time for the Yomigaeri to escape."

"Nonsense! My subordinates and I alone are enough to take down those Holy Knights!"

Next, it's quarrel time between Benimaru and Shion.

Both of them are very motivated.

I think it would be all right to leave things to her care.

"Good, then I'll leave things to Shion. You are Gobua, right? I'll be relying on you for cover!"

"Y-yes sir! Leave it to me, Rimuru-sama!"

Gobua replies blushing, seemingly excited.

It's great to see how motivated she looks. But honestly, I hope they won't have a chance to fight.

"Shion, unless our negotiation fails, do not engage with the enemies no matter what!"

"No problem! But if the enemies tries to pull any dangerous stunt—"

Indeed, that would be a different case.

I almost forgot; my original intent is to stop them from building the "Holy Purification Barrier."

"If that happens, you're free to do whatever's necessary. Just be ready to act as soon as I give the confirmation via 'Telepathy Net.'"

"Understood."

Shion nods in satisfaction.

Benimaru then orders Gobua to go back to guarding the gate.

All right, now the only question remaining is—Who's going to take on the "Sage" level knights.

*

We've decided to have Shion's Yomigaeri deal with the Holy Knight Order. Benimaru's Kurenai would be on standby just in case of emergency. These three hundred soldiers would engage the one hundred Holy Knights.

I'll have to have faith in them, and now it's time to decide who will be taking on the other four traveling alongside Hinata.

That is under the precondition that we even have enough candidates to take on "Sages"—
There's me, Veldora, Ranga, Benimaru, Shion, Souei, Geld, Gabil and Diablo.

Hakurou might not have sufficient magicule reserves to match them, but he can still put up a fight with his sword skill.

Shuna... Is hard to say. It may be different if it's a magic battle, but the enemies are knights who are skilled at melee combat, so it will be challenging for her. The sages of the "Ten Great Saints" seem to have power to rival the likes of "Demon Lord Seed." They would have power to at least rival the Orc Disaster. It would be quite the heavy burden to place on Shuna.

—Based on the previous assessment, there are in total ten people including Hakurou.

I will be Hinata's opponent.

Veldora is a no go. I would like him to defend the town, besides it will be dangerous if he starts rampaging. And to be honest, it is necessary for us to tighten our defenses considering that the enemy force may have others operating without us knowing.

Geld has been reserved only to be summoned in an emergency situation. So, we should avoid calling him back.

I hope Diablo, Ranga, Hakurou and Gabil will focus on resolving the issue at the Kingdom of Farmus.

The rest would be—

"The only ones free to be deployed are Benimaru, Shion and Souei... Just these three, huh?"

There don't seem to be enough people to set up a one-to-one combat scenario.

All right, what should I do now...

"That's without saying, I'll also be joining the fray."

It is for this reason that Benimaru has handed the commanding position of Youm's reinforcement to Hakurou, so we will have to include him.

"I'll stay as well. I can leave intelligence gathering work to my "Clones." Besides, right now, Souka and the rest are quite useful in this regard as well."

Souei should be fine too.

He is very capable, so keeping up with information collection would unlikely pose a problem.

"I want in too! As Rimuru-sama's secretary, I should be serving at his side—"

Shion jumps in to stake her claim just as someone suddenly interjects with a voice within my body.

«Report. If the secondary party also contains members of the “Sage” class, it is possible that the goal of buying time will not be achievable. The group to engage them should be arranged properly as well just in case.»

Oh no, so there is that to be concerned about as well.

Thank you for your pertinent opinion!

Once again Wisdom King-*sensei* is indeed reliable.

I have to confirm with Souei first anyhow.

“Hold on, Shion. I have something to ask Souei. Are there any “Saint” level knights among the Holy Knights operating separately from Hinata?”

As I ask, Souei momentarily closes his eyes.

He then answers somewhat upset: “My apologies, every member is indeed above Rank A, but there isn’t any individual emitting any particularly stronger aura—”

As soon as a monster releases its aura, it becomes very obvious to tell.

Yet more skillful individuals can hide their auras cleverly.

For instance, Hinata only gives off the aura of an average person. I wasn’t able to see through her disguise and was thus surprised by her tremendous strength.

Right now, there is no way I can tell unless they engage in battle.

“But shouldn’t we still act with caution, I hope Shion would oversee her troops. Apart from Yomigaeri, how about we allow Shion to command the Kurenai as well. Is that okay with you, Benimaru?”

“If it is how Rimuru judges it, I am fine with it. As for the four knights coming alongside Hinata, it will be fine for Souei and I to each take on two at once.”

How confident.

Souei seems to also agree with his calm and non-caring look.

“A moment please, Rimuru-sama. Occasionally, even I, Rigurd, wish to go on a rampage!”

Rigurd proposes as he shows off his muscle.

“If that’s the case, there is still me.”

Shuna smiles as she says.

But you’re not suited to melee combat, are you?

I think it’s too dangerous to send you.

“And me as well, how could I let Gobta take all the spotlight!”

Rigur is also all pumped up.

Rigurd and Rigur are indeed now stronger than the point of surpassing A-rank, yet they are still a long way off from “Demon Lord Seed.” It would be too reckless.

“Ah ah, hold on. It would be too dangerous to send you guys out.”

“But, are there any more suitable candidates?”

“We alone are sufficient.”

“Benimaru-sama, I know you are both very strong, but should you look down so much on

your opponents? It would be better to have me and Rigur—”

And so, the discussion grows more and more intense.

It may lessen my worry to grant them their wish, but I still want to resolve the issue cautiously. In order to reduce the risk to zero, it will probably be better for me to have Geld come back when the day comes—

I ignored the unresolved quarrel in the meeting and started to ponder, but I was interrupted by the noise outside the gate.

“I’ve told you that there is an important meeting going on—”

“Hush, we want to join as well!”

“It’s fine, Suphia, but don’t be so rude to others. Young lady, we only wish to express our gratitude by offering our assistance.”

The voices just now came from Gobua as well as the Beastketeers Suphia and Alvis.

The two entered the room as the gate opened.

“Hey, sorry to interrupt. Just now I saw that skeleton dude come by, so what is happening here? Please allow us to contribute as well, Rimuru-sama.”

“Demon Lord Rimuru, we apologize for our sudden visit. Suphia may be quite rude in tone, but she truly wishes to help. I hope you would grant us two the opportunity to repay you.”

Suphia and Alvis says while approaching me—more accurately kneeling down next to me.

Gobua intended to stop them but was halted when Benimaru raised one of his hands. Then he left his seat and came to stand in front of me as well. Without me noticing, Diablo is also standing between them to prevent the two Beastketeers from getting closer to me. Benimaru should already trust them, yet he still isn’t permitting them to approach me.

As for Diablo, he has no trust in the two at all. He seems prepared to eliminate Suphia and Alvis as soon as I give the order.

The two contrast each other, yet they are on the same pace.

Suphia and Alvis seem to also be aware of how rude their requests seem, so they are not complaining about their treatment.

“Benimaru, Diablo, stand down.”

“Yes sir.”

“Understood, Rimuru-sama.”

Taking advantage of the time when the two are returning to their seat, I pull out seats for Suphia and Alvis. I again started the meeting once everyone has calmed down once more.

“Just now you mentioned about assisting us...”

“Yes, Rimuru-sama. Aren’t the “Ten Great Saints” approaching this nation? You seem to be short on people that can hold them back, so we wish you would allow us to assist in this task.”

“Yes! I am only of much use in battle. It is times like this that I may repay my gratitude. Please give us the order!”

I begin to examine the two’s proposal.

The two are powerful enough, but, if my order led to their harm, it would be embarrassing to face Demon Lord—ex-Demon Lord Karion.

“But you shouldn’t be acting on your own without Karion’s permission.”

“That’s okay! Karion-sama is very generous in that regard.”

“Besides, Karion-sama is also troubled by how to repay Rimuru-sama. We will get scolded for not intervening at a time like this.”

Hmm—Honestly, their proposal came at the right time. With these two present, I can also be reassured with our fighting force.

“I agree. These people are trustworthy.”

Benimaru doesn’t seem to object.

“Will you be helping to take out people who interfere with Rimuru-sama when I’m not present?”

“Yes, please leave it to me.”

Shion and Suphia seem to be on good terms as the two reach common ground quite quickly.

It seems there is no objection.

“Can I rely on you guys?”

“Leave it to us!”

“Thank you for your understanding!”

I still can’t get over how motivated Rigurd seems, but I do hope for him to stay back in the town and lead everyone.

After all, I’m worried about sending him out to battle too.

And as such, we’ve gained the powerful assistants in the form of Suphia and Alvis, now then our plan to take on Hinata’s party is settled. The outline of this plan that isn’t even worthy of being called a battle plan.

All of my executives are now brainstorming to check for any oversights of this operation.

I on the other hand, close my eyes to predict Hinata’s movement once more.

The calculation of Wisdom King Raphael-san has also predicted that this plan would minimize casualties, so I don’t think it warrants anymore concern. But there is something I am still worried about. It would make a better battle plan if I abandon the operation to take over Farmus or by calling Geld back. But I didn’t do either and adopted the current plan out of my own selfish thoughts.

That’s why I need to ensure it is a perfect plan that guarantees our victory. It will be no problem if Hinata is willing to negotiate. If not, we will duel each other until one of us falls.

This plan may seem to be waterproof with our arrangement, yet it has one fatal flaw.

If I am defeated by Hinata, all of these discussions would be worthless.

However, Wisdom King Raphael-san thinks I will be the winner.

With that being said, if I am defeated this time, our operation would be completely blown.

Would the calculation of “Wisdom King Raphael” be truly reliable?

I always have the feeling that it is too confident...

Rather, it has too much faith in me.

Raphael-san, are you overestimating me too much? —I always have such uneasy feeling. However, I will have to force myself to charge onward.

Just like I did until this point, and how I will in the future as well.

Even if do not have one hundred percent confidence in myself, my companions still believe me.

If that's the case, I will no longer hesitate and keep on moving.

"I'll say this one more time. If the battle plan is hard to maintain once we actually start fighting, then you should eliminate your opponent immediately. The lives of our companions are the most important. Know that you are done for if you get killed. So, I hope everyone will be able to make it through this ordeal safely as well!"

" " "Yes sir!" " "

It would be counterproductive if we get any of our companions killed trying to avoid harming the Holy Knights.

I have to get this point across.

Seeing that everyone has responded, I nod with satisfaction.

Next.

We wait for Hinata's next move—



Hinata has successfully arrived at Tempest Federation.

The journey has been just average traveling after teleporting from Lubelius to Ingracia through the "Teleportation Gate." Since there is no replacement for her horse, she had to stop to rest frequently.

She packed only the bare minimum in terms of luggage as she is used to military marching.

She only brought her horse, and a sleeping bag that also contains convenient tools such as emergency rations or pots.

It is winter at this time of year.

Although the snow isn't heavy enough to block the road, it is still not a good time to travel.

Soon after Hinata set off for the journey and ran into four of her subordinates.

She heard the sound of running horses behind her and turned to see some familiar faces.

They are the four captains, Arnaud, Bacchus, Ritase and Fritz.

Vice-commander Renard needs to stand on guard while Hinata is out. Meanwhile, it will also be problematic to deploy all of the captains to chase after her, and so the five decided over a lottery draw and Garde was determined to be the one who stays with Renard on guard.

Leaving behind the two who seemed to be frustrated by their duty. Arnaud and the rest set out to catch up with Hinata.

"—You guys, what is the meaning of this?"

"That should be our line, Hinata-sama. Are you trying to take all the glory for yourself?"

“What kind of dumb talk is that? I’m heading to negotiate, there is no glory to be claimed anywhere.”

“Here we go again. You are not particularly persuasive when dressed up as if you are heading for a final battle.”

“That’s right. We wouldn’t want to gain anything at the expense of Hinata-sama’s life. Our true honor would be in you leading us.”

“That’s right. The Demon Lord’s message never mentioned that you have to go alone after all.”

Her subordinates bombard her with arguments.

Hinata, surprised, replies while a sigh:

“Are you all aware of the situation here? My opponent is a Demon Lord. It was I who provoked him in the first place, so this is my problem. It is neither your responsibility nor is it any business of yours. Return home immediately.”

But, even with Hinata’s order, Arnaud and the rest would still not obey. Hinata eventually gave up and said “Whatever you wish then” to allow them to accompany her.

Now Hinata’s party has increased to five people.

Though the roads are somewhat well maintained, they are still rugged, as such, their journey continues slowly.

In this time of the year, most inns are fully booked, so there isn’t any place for them to rest. As a result, they are forced to camp out in the wilderness.

Although they didn’t run into any monsters, the piercing cold of winter coupled with sad meals consisting solely of emergency rations made this journey a taxing one on both the mind and the body. By the tenth day of their journey, they finally reached the Kingdom of Blumund, far more exhausted than they had expected to be.

At this point, Hinata’s party decided that they had to seek out an inn for some desperately needed rest and recuperation.



“By the way, this town seems has really grown hasn’t it?”

They each reserved a room for themselves before they met up in the restaurant.

Arnaud broke the silence immediately saying so.

“Indeed.”

Hinata agrees as well.

Ritase did report about this, yet it has become obvious how drastic the difference is when seen with your own eyes.

As they were getting dressed and settling down in the inn, they started to observe the de-

meanor of the streets. The whole market is full of energy despite it being winter.

There are even items unfamiliar to them on the market. The rural atmosphere Blumund gave off in their past missions have long disappeared.

“Have you all seen this? There are even more varieties of clothes. They look like brands I’ve only seen in the Kingdom of Ingracia, there are even some passers-by wearing those luxurious clothes!”

“Speaking of that, it’s the same case for weaponries. All of the gear here seems to be crafted with monster materials, making them of very fine quality.”

Arnaud and Bacchus both found such sights to be astounding.

Indeed, although these gears are not comparable with the ones used by the Holy Knights, the commodities of this town have exceeded both the quantity and quality of those in other small nations. There are also plenty of trading posts around.

Normally they would shut down during the winter days, making the scene here particularly strange.

They are operating because there are customers.

In other words, there are still many merchants and adventurers passing through this rural town despite the winter days.

“It must have been the effect of the Tempest Federation...?”

Fritz asks while observing Hinata’s expression.

It must have been because this kingdom is trading with the Tempest Federation that such a town was able to develop. He couldn’t think of another reason besides that.

But it would mean that their actions are completely ignoring the doctrines of Luminism.

“They took a gamble to trade with a Demon Lord in pursuit of development—”

Ritase also mumbles with confusion in her eyes.

But to be honest, Hinata also agrees with her view.

Normally it would be impossible.

But he is different.

If it was Rimuru, her fellow countryman, he might have made such things a reality.

The evidence is—the menu hanging on the restaurant wall.

“Can I take your order?”

As soon as the waitress of the inn asked, Hinata replies without hesitation.

“I want ramen.”

“So, you would like to order ramen! It has been really popular lately. We have three different flavors of ramen, miso (fermented bean), soy sauce and pork bone⁵⁴. Each of them also have the two choices of heavy and light broths, how would you like your ramen made?”

There are in total six variations.

It would seem that Hinata wasn’t overthinking, the ramen here is exactly what it should be.

“I want thick-broth pork bone ramen with dumplings and rice.”

⁵⁴These are common broth flavours for ramen, will be referring to them as their english names except for Miso (since it’s quite common).

“All right! You are quite the expert for a first-timer. What would the other guests like to order?”

The rest all look at Hinata impressively after she made her order without any hesitation.

“Ah, I will...have the same thing.”

“M-me too...”

“Hmm.”

“Same here.”

Arnaud and the rest have no idea what any of these are, so they’d rather follow along and order like Hinata.

“Hinata-sama, what is this thing called ramen?”

“Surely you would know what that is, right?”

“Yes. But, about that... You guys may not be used to eating it.”

“ “ “Ehhh!” ” ”

Hinata’s words made the crowds feel unease.

“Oh, don’t worry. I’m just trying to say you probably are not used to it, so the method of eating may be quite hard.”

Hinata is only concerned that Arnaud and the rest would not be used to using chopsticks. Yet they began to worry about whether the cuisines are terrible or not.

And soon the dishes are served.

Hinata felt a sense of nostalgia, while for the rest, it is their first time seeing authentic ramen.

Hinata pulls her hair up to prevent it from falling into the broth and splits up the disposable chopsticks⁵⁵.

They are even using disposable chopsticks.

What level of extravagance are they up to—Hinata thought to herself.

How did they manage to promote disposable chopsticks to the restaurants of a neighboring country in such a short time? Hinata couldn’t help but wonder. Yet the bowl of warm ramen is right in front of her.

“Thanks for the meal.”

She puts her palms together while whispering. Then she slowly lifts some hot broth up using the soup spoon and drinks it.

It’s the thick pork bone broth. She has no idea how it was cooked to recreate the thickness of the taste.

It is then that the noodle she intended to put in her mouth touched her lips, making Hinata gasp with a sound of “Tsk.”

Arnaud and the rest immediately react after seeing this.

“Is it poisoned?”

“Are you okay, Hinata-sama?”

They all rise up to express their care.

⁵⁵Wooden chopsticks that can be splitted in pair to use. Usually only serve one meal before disposed.

“Hush. Shut up and eat your food.”

She scolded her subordinates before putting the noodle on the soup spoon and slowly blowing her breath on it.

Hinata doesn’t want to scald her tongue.

Such action is somewhat cute considering how it contrasts her cruel appearance. Although she herself didn’t notice since she’s been focused on tasting the noodle.

The noodle is both tasty and chewy. The delicacy of the thick pork-bone broth has all been imbued onto the noodle.

It is a most exquisite and delicious cuisine.

A sensation that Hinata thought she would never experience again is beautifully recreated.

She falls silent and only concentrates on eating her ramen.

Arnaud and the rest, rather terrified, observes Hinata dining.

Then they begin to try out ramen by imitating her.

“...Agh! Hot!”

“It’s delicious! What is this really?”

“The broth tastes great too!”

“Eh, is this some trickery?! How could food like this exist...”

The four clumsily used the chopsticks to start to challenge this food named ramen fearfully, yet have given unexpected reactions.

To them, whose main diets mainly consisted of stale bread, salted soups or raw vegetable salads, this unknown dish called ramen has brought them an astronomical amount of shock.

The most appropriate words to describe this sensation would be—Taste revolution.

Then again feeling confused, they turn to the rice Hinata ordered. It also accompanies ramen quite well. The more you chew on it, the better it tastes, slowly filling them up.

There are also dumplings.

As soon as they take a bite out of the dumplings the fragrance of the ingredients immediately assails their nostrils.

The rich variety of ingredients in the dumpling transforms eating into a concert of taste, which forms a perfect duet with the rice.

“Amazing! This is so tasty!”

Arnaud praises.

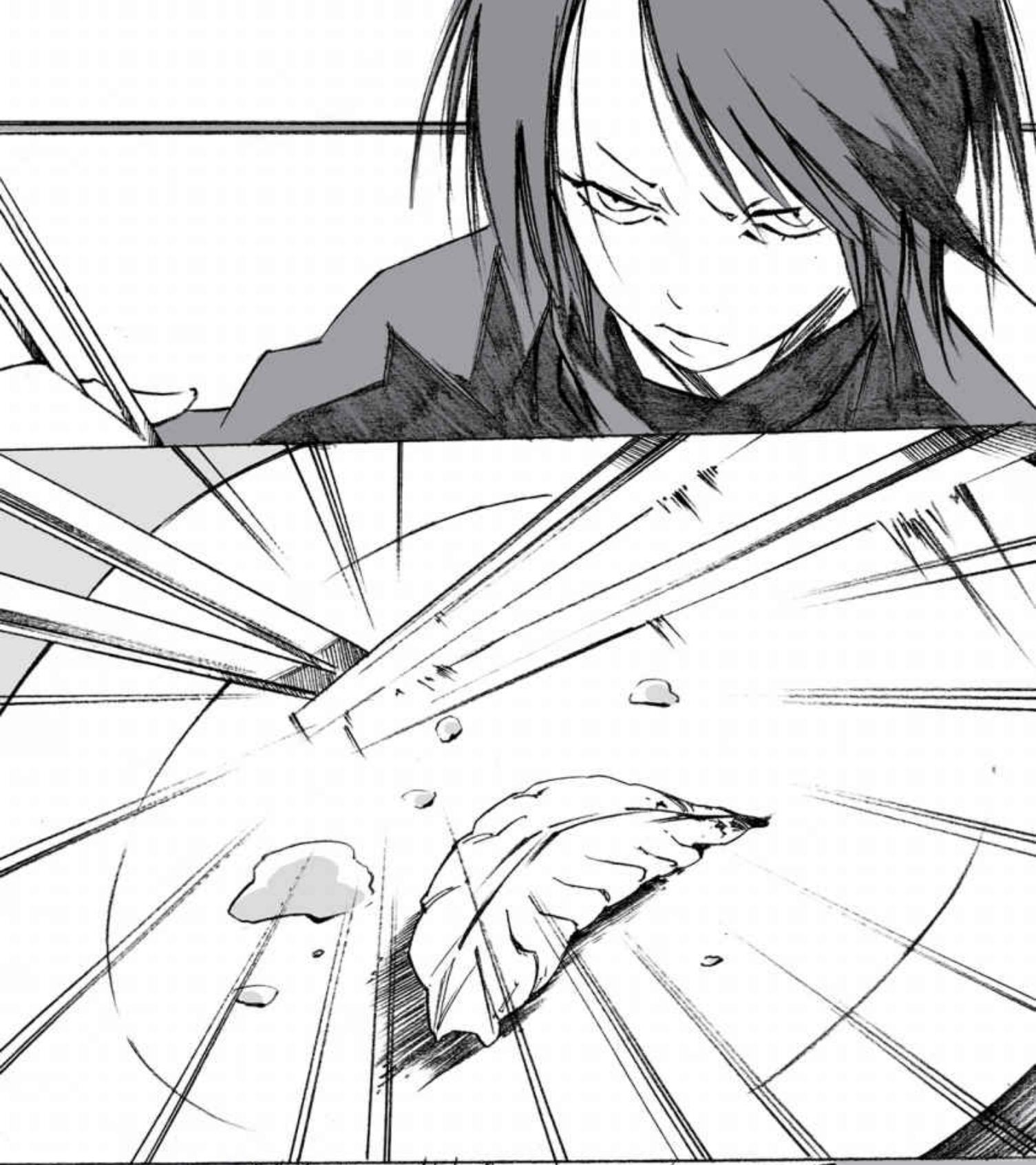
It is no wonder the food tastes so good considering the party has been eating field rations until yesterday.

Eventually, there is only one more dumpling remaining on the plate.

Fritz’s chopsticks began to drift toward it...only to be deflected away by Hinata’s with a *clack!* sound.

“Fritz. *That* is mine, I left it there to eat it last. It is mine...and I **will not forgive** you if you take my love.”

Fritz feels a chill up his spine as a paralyzing aura of murderous intent envelops him.



“S-sorry, it’s so delicious, I just unconsciously reached for it...”

“Just order another plate if you didn’t have enough.”

Hinata, baffled, replies and only to be shocked at the sights of the four all putting down another order at the same time.

Yet their wishes cannot be granted.

“Ah, we are sorry, dear customer. That was our last serving.”

The waitress replied with the cruel truth.

Ignoring the couple bystanders who were forced to learn this hard truth, she approached Hinata’s table and continued:

“In fact, this is a new item that only started being sold last week. This is actually a secret, but this dish was created to satisfy the cravings of the Demon Lord-sama. Myourmiles-sama, who owns this establishment, has personal contact with that Demon Lord-sama and has secured exclusive trading for this. So far, it hasn’t sold well because it is both difficult to eat and expensive... But it’s becoming famous for making anyone who eats it even once addicted to it!”

The waitress informs them on the supposed secret. Yet given how loud she spoke, everyone in the restaurant would have heard the conversation.

Hinata suddenly realizes that this whole conversation was probably planned from the start in order to promote this dish.

By doing so, the number of recurring customers will increase along with the total number of customers. In this way, they can mass-produce dumplings to make it a lasting item on the menu.

Now everyone in the restaurant is looking rather intrigued at Hinata’s party. They are all observing the food Hinata is eating just like how Arnaud and the rest initially reacted. Perhaps they are planning to order those food items for themselves next time.

Hearing the waitress’ words, Hinata finishes drinking up the soup.

“Thank you for the service. It was delicious.”

She then pays the tab and rises up from her seat.

She does so while seeing her subordinates downing the soup in a panic.

“Oh, don’t get all flustered. I’m only going back to my room. And by the way, you will get fat if you drink all of the soup as well.”

Someone suddenly pauses upon hearing that. It’s Ritase.

“Ehh, but... Hinata-sama also...”

“My body’s disposition is just so that I don’t get fat easily.”

You have my warning—Hinata leaves after saying that.

Ritase glares back at her jealously, but Hinata, who wishes to sleep now after a full meal doesn’t even want to look back.



The next morning, the party embarks on their journey once again.

They are all in excellent condition after getting sufficient rest.

Now that they've restored their energy, the harsh roads leading to the Jura Great Forest would not pose an issue.

"Let's go."

At Hinata's order, everyone resumes their journey. Yet their spirit (to confront hardship) soon disappeared.

"What on earth is this."

"This is so comfortable to the point of becoming stale."

"That's not true, the point is this road! It is paved so beautifully that it can rival the roads in the capital of Ingracia! No matter how you look at it, it doesn't make sense!!"

There is no wonder why they are so surprised.

The roads have been covered with stone pavements, there aren't even any puddles. The road is designed with a slight curvature where drainage side ditches are installed below.

The journey has been very pleasant since the road is not blocked by snow.

"Speaking of which, there isn't any monster aura at all. Though we're in a forest, there's few signs of monsters at all..."

Said Ritase recalling the investigation of the area she did and her findings.

Just as she mentioned, the barrier around these roads are indeed a wonder to behold.

There is magic device installed every ten kilometers or so which is used to connect a magic barrier that prevents nearby monster from intruding.

The safety of traveling has thus been elevated, leading more merchants to travel in and out. The reason for the prosperity of the Kingdom of Blumund must have been due to the gathering of all these merchants.

"I wonder, given how much work does it take to pave all these roads, and what would the monster kingdom look like."

No one can give an answer to Arnaud's question.

Everyone held a similar view to his, all eager to find out the answer.

"I had heard from merchants that one could even go there on horse. To think it was true..."

"Indeed. I thought horses would only be a nuisance when going into the forest. It turns out to be an unnecessary concern."

Hinata couldn't help but feel astounded after seeing it for herself even though she was already informed of the mega projects commissioned by Demon Lord Rimuru. After all, the Jura Great Forest that has once been hard to access for outsiders has now become such a convenient travel destination as if it was just a simple hike. There is no wonder that she feels astonished.

The party continues their journey by horse.

Soon they spotted some hobgoblins riding wolves approaching in front of them.

“Have we been revealed!”

“Hold on, it doesn’t seem to be the case.”

Seeing that her subordinates being alarmed, Hinata calmly corrects them.

It turns out she is right.

These hobgoblins seem to be chatting very casually. You can even hear laughter coming from them. They also seem to have spotted Hinata’s party due to a good field of view. The hobgoblins raise one of their hands and approached in a friendly manner.

“Howdy, I’ve never seen you before. You don’t look like merchants, are you all adventurers?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“I see, I see, in that case, good luck on your job. By the way, I’m sure you guys will be fine on your own, but you should keep some things in mind.”

This hobgoblin switches his tone as he continued.

He then starts by explaining the rules of the road.

Littering is not allowed.

Brawling on the road is not permitted.

If you need to set up camp, there are watering holes available for use every ten kilometers apart.

There are also outposts⁵⁶ every twenty kilometers apart, it will be safer to camp there.

If you have the budget, there are inns every forty kilometers apart.

If you see anyone in trouble, you need to contact the nearest outpost.

And on and on.

“By the way, please do not touch the glowing stone tablets set every ten kilometers. The punishment for damaging those things is severe.”

Those glowing tablets are magic devices used to maintain the barrier. They glitter when mixed alongside the stone-paved road and can act as waypoint at night.

Are you really monsters? The level of detail in the briefing would truly make that hard to believe.

“All right, we understand. Thank you for your caring inform.”

“Don’t mention it. People like us are patrolling the area precisely to help anyone in trouble.”

These Hobgoblins are the members of the security force in charge of patrolling. They promptly left after saying those words.

Hinata’s party stayed on the spot to see them off with bewildered looks.

“Eh, Hinata-sama...”

“Wait, settle down. I need to think for a bit, so could you please stop talking for a while?”

Hinata silenced the rest and started pondering.

⁵⁶The term used here is more like police station, but outpost is fine as well

Afterward, having quietly traveled onwards for an hour, a watering hole came into view. It was exactly where the hobgoblin said it would be, down to the kilometer marker.

In order to showcase the current location, there are sign posts set every kilometer to display the traveling distance starting from zero at the west gate to the capital city Rimuru. It becomes very clear how many more kilometers you would need to travel in order to reach a water source, outpost, or inn.

Hinata knows she can ensure the party's safety by relying on these signs after seeing how the road (Highway) is constructed. She can immediately tell from the signs where to retreat when she needs to back up.

It just goes to show that Rimuru genuinely cares for the travelers' and has already done much in ensuring their personal safety.

By the way, the units of measurement in this world is different from his original world. Yet Rimuru has ignored that in order to mark the road in ways easily understood by himself.

Kilometer is set by pegging the average travel distance with the estimate of an hour's walking to cover five kilometers. Thus, the reason why the inns are prepared one every forty kilometers due to the assumption that travelers can move eight hours a day on foot. Since horse carriages move at around the same speed as those on foot, they would also be able to rest at inns if they slow down a little. The whole trip was thoroughly planned out and thought through with very clear intent.

It has become quite the obvious fact that Rimuru hopes to coexist with humans. There really isn't anything left to doubt. The journey since departing the Kingdom of Blumund has all been very comfortable.

The drinking area contains a directly drinkable water source that seems to be free for the public's consumption.

Hinata almost fainted after seeing this.

Free water—Applying such Japanese ideal in a dangerous place like this, it is a bold and crazy enough move that even Hinata wants to make fun of (roast).

There are also cooking spots for campers and even squares for the convenience of setting up tents. Some locations have sets of long benches made of log wood with roofs to provide cover during rainfall.

All of these resemble a campsite.

The divine realm of Jura Great Forest once inaccessible to humans, is now a harmonious venue easily accessible to everyone.

There are many different monsters residing in the Jura Great Forest. It is a dangerous place where adventurers below Rank B may easily lose their lives if they are not careful. It is not supposed to be a place for human residence, but a paradise for the monsters.

I can't believe he has developed this forbidden land so it's accessible by everyone... Hinata didn't even once consider the idea. It is not a matter of whether she can achieve it or not, but something which is beyond her imagination.

Not only for her, but it must have been the same for her fellow countryman Yuuki Kagu-

razaka.

When they are striving hard to protect mankind by distancing them from the threat of monsters, yet someone just suddenly comes along and—*What kind of joke is this*. It's normal for Hinata to think this way.

—*But, at least now I understand what he meant by his words.*

Hinata's thoughts wander to the past.

It was at a cafe in Ingracia that Hinata likes a lot. There she was doing the regular intelligence exchange with Yuuki. It was then that she heard the rumors about Rimuru.

Rimuru seemed to be serious about developing the monster kingdom. Not only that, he wished to find the best way to create friendly relations with the Western Nations. An example of his method is the recently introduced Brandy Cake. This dessert is only made possible thanks to the alcohol that Rimuru made easily commissionable.

“Anyhow, that person is really different. Should I call him having his cards hidden or not. He seems to have a much grander vision in the long term than us. That's why including acts such as making delicacy like this, he has been doing all of them very seriously.”

Yuuki said to her with a wry smile as Hinata was enjoying the delightful taste of the cake slowly eating it bit by bit.

He then advised her that making an enemy of Rimuru would not be a wise move. It was implying that the Freedom Association would be on Rimuru's side. Back then Hinata didn't take his words seriously nor did she imply it, but up to this point—

—*Indeed, if he doesn't have energy to spare in spades, there is no way he could have had the energy to plan such things.*

Hinata thought to herself as she observes the merchants using the water source with thanksgiving.

Two hours passed after they left the drinking area.

They encountered their first inn. It is said that there are seven inns in total on this road, this one being the seventh.

Hinata and the rest decided to rest there for the night.

The party gathered at the restaurant.

“All right, everyone. Let's hear what you all think.”

Hinata begins her inquiry.

Arnaud spoke up first while also representing everyone.

“I want to give my genuine opinion here, is it okay?”

“That's the type of view I'm looking for. Speak then.”

Hurried by Arnaud answers:

“Just from seeing these roads alone, I think that Demon Lord Rimuru is a wise ruler. These roads guarded on patrols makes this path feel safe so it's no wonder why so many have gathered here. The trade routes through the Kingdom of Farmus will no doubt start to fall out of favor (when competing with these).”

Next is Bacchus, he answers solemnly:

“Hmm, the monsters are not the only things to be afraid of. There are also bandits who would attack caravans, incidents when people get injured or sick or when the carriage breaks down to immobilized travelers etcetera. Such issues would never cease to occur. But with more people flowing in, there would probably be less concern for such things.”

“The fact alone that you are in an environment where you can expect help during these hardships is already very reassuring.”

“It’s the same logic when it comes to monetary expenses, there is no longer a need to hire a large mercenary band. That’s all...”

As Bacchus finishes, Ritase and Fritz both nods in agreement.

Most of these have been complements of Rimuru.

“He spent more time managing the country than most trashy vassal lords. Rather than Demon Lord, it’d be more suitable to call him a wise king.”

“Indeed, there’s a lot that can be learnt from him. Our nation of Lubelius should also make use of these designs.”

“Thank goodness that we have yet to label him as the “Nemesis of God.””

“Next, we can only hope that Demon Lord Rimuru is willing to accept Hinata-sama’s apology...”

Hinata nods to them, showing her agreement.

“I can only try to apologize with sincerity. But if my apology alone is not sufficient and that Demon Lord Rimuru still wishes to duel me, I will have no choice but to accept—”

However, Hinata is still rather confused.

Why would Rimuru wish to duel her at this point in time? Even if he cannot forgive her for what she has done, there is no need to start a fight solely on that basis.

Perhaps he hoped to demonstrate to her his power after awakening as a Demon Lord—Or something along those lines. But Hinata doesn’t think Rimuru is someone with such vulgar thoughts.

With skepticism in their hearts, Hinata’s party continues to journey on without much challenge.

They found residence in another inn on the seventh night of their journey again. The level of luxury there has come to rival the top-grade inns in the Kingdom of Ingracia.

There is even a bathhouse to wash away the tiredness of traveling.

Yet the inn’s staff always contains a number of Blumund citizens. The monster staff seem to be learning techniques related to monetary transactions and they are often seen being instructed around the human staff. It is a reflection of the ideal coexisting relationship between humans and monsters.

It is a sight that it alone could cause Hinata to re-evaluate the doctrine of Luminism.

They will be arriving at the capital city Rimuru tomorrow. Surely, she will be reuniting with Rimuru there once more.

I hope we can avoid conflict and have a good talk together.

Although it is but a one-sided thought, it is her sincere wish.

However—

Being tangled in a web of malice, her wish will not come true.



Hinata will be arriving tonight as planned.

In a span around two weeks, she has only used normal means of traveling to come here without using magic to shorten the trip.

Souei's subordinates quickly returned with this information.

"Impressive, it is most important to get hold of information early. I'll be relying you folks in the future as well."

"No, such feeble matter is not worthy of your praise. We will be striving to improve our skills."

Souei calmly accepts my praise.

He is truly worthy of the name "Shadow"⁵⁷.

Handsome people (Bishounen) simply can't be faulted in doing anything for being so darn cool.

But speaking of that, Souei also made the horrifying proposal: "How about we eliminate Hinata now by poisoning?"

What sort of stupid idea is that! I said and immediately rejected it.

Hinata doesn't seem to be coming for a fight, meaning there is still room for negotiation.

However, I cannot get careless.

She's been checking in at every inn she ran into and didn't rush through any part of her journey. Everything she done thus far seems too conscientious.

"Could it be that she is trying to divert our attention?"

Benimaru asks.

Has she made herself the open bait while having the other troops launch an assault?

That is indeed a possibility.

She is Hinata after all. From the cruel appearance she gives off, she seems to be the type who would do anything in pursuit of victory.

"What are the movements of the rest of her troops?"

"Yes sir, they are still on the old path in order to hide their movements. Had we not noticed them from the start, we may have never discovered them."

This other troop seems to be planning some kind of military operation.

Thinking along that line, Hinata is likely acting as a bait indeed.

⁵⁷Referring to the kanji of Souei's name, 蒼影. The second kanji means "Shadow."

Regardless, I can't get careless. Shion has already deployed her troops, if they are to strike, the situation will probably go downhill very quickly.

"There's nothing strange about using Hinata as bait considering her strength. Even Benimaru at this stage will have a hard time confronting her, so only I can be her opponent. I guess she probably thinks that we still don't stand a chance, even when engaging her together."

"Huh, how arrogant. To bear such ignorant thoughts after having already encountered Rimuru-sama once, the only thing you can only call them is foolish."

Souei with a slight smile and emitting a dangerous aura.

It's ok, the only one who knows how strong Hinata is, would be me prior to my evolution.

Looking back, I can clearly see that Hinata wasn't going all out at the time.

"If a fight really breaks out, it will be really bad if their other group spreads out. The situation will deteriorate even faster if they manage to erect the "Holy Purification Barrier."

"Indeed. Then we will contact Shion to have her eliminate the enemies as soon as possible—

"

Souei agrees with Benimaru's views, but he pauses midway through his sentence. Then—

"Rimuru-sama, they seem to be on the move and spreading out around the town. Shion has gone to intercept them and have engaged in battle."

—That's the worst possible news. I had hoped I would not have to hear that reported to me. Has it come to this? Hinata has chosen to fight after all.

It can't be helped then. If you wish to antagonize us, we will have to proceed as planned.



Hinata's party left the inn to prepare for their continued journey.

Everyone shares a tense expression as they are about to reach the capital Rimuru at night.

"We are finally arriving. I don't know whether we can see him today, but everyone calms their minds. Please refrain from engaging in battle even if we end up fighting."

"But..."

"This is an order. There is no need to continue being hostile towards Demon Lord Rimuru. Wait until we finish our duel, and then we will engage in a friendly negotiation—"

As Hinata tries to remind everyone of the plan, she was quickly cut short.

Someone is trying to reach her urgently through magic.

"—finally reached you—nata-sama, can...hear me? "Three Martial Sages"...engaged in battle—"

The transmission is intermittent and barely managed to even link up.

The person making the call is one of Hinata's trusted subordinates, Nicolaus Speltus.

His tone sounds urgent, yet the constant interruption and pauses make his message hard to

interpret, almost as if the transmission is being disturbed.

“What is it? What’s going on?”

The transmission is cut before Hinata is able to send her messages through.

“Beware of the Seven Luminaries —”

With this one final warning from his side, signals from Nicolaus soon ends.

Hinata is shocked at the realization that there must have been an issue.

Has he tried several times in informing me of something and was only successful in the last transmission? If that’s the case, the actual incident must have occurred earlier. The “Three Martial Sages” has engaged in battle... Could it be that they were partaking in the civil war in Farmus—!

Hinata’s face turned pale as she quickly attempted to contacts Pope Louis through “Magic Communication.”

“What is it? Your mana is disoriented, are you in a rush?”

Louis responds with his normal casual tone.

Aside from feeling reassured about that, Hinata answers:

“Yes, I’m running out of time. So, I’ll be straight with you. Did you send out the “Three Martial Sages” ?”

“What? I’ve not given such an order. Do you mean that they have been on the move?”

“Yes. Since you have no interest in human society, with Luminas-sama’s orders and my reminder telling them to stand down, they shouldn’t be moving about on their own. There must have been some change in the situation.”

Louis and Luminas are only interested in managing the Night Garden, leaving Hinata to hold all the actual authority (in human world).

Although the “Three Martial Sages” oppose her at times, they do not dare to defy Hinata’s orders. So, they shouldn’t be acting on their own once they received the instruction not to. It would then mean, something has gone wrong. Perhaps someone has bewitched the “Three Martial Sages.”

Is it the Seven Luminaries —

Her ominous prediction has turned into reality, Hinata makes up her mind on the spot to return to Lubelius.

Using teleportation magic is much more efficient. Although she planned to preserve her stamina before the battle with Rimuru, but now’s not time for such thing.

Hinata concludes, yet it’s already too late.

“That’s probably the case. Then I’ll be—”

With a sound of crack, Hinata felt a blunt pain crossing her mind as she discovers that her communication with Louis has been forcefully severed.

A form of force field has enveloped the surrounding to prevent usage of magic.

At the same time, an enormous amount of fighting aura bursts out to shake up even the air.

“How the—? This aura, is it Renard?”

Arnaud, who has been observing Hinata this whole time suddenly exclaims in astonishment.

Hinata couldn't care less about it. As the commander of the Holy Knight Order, she immediately restored her spirit.

"Let's move!"

Something is happening.

And it's definitely not something good, things have taken a turn for the worst just as she was going to get in contact with Rimuru.

Feeling anxious, Hinata rides forth to the battlefield at full speed.



After noticing that Hinata has established contact with someone, we decided to intercept her before anything else. And soon Hinata began to ride at full speed to the battlefield. It seems that I am successful in crashing her conspiracy before they were able to succeed.

But now we can confirm.

"It seems that this has indeed been Hinata's scheme all along."

"That's about right. I can only praise her as an expert, seeing how quickly she changed her plan after the original scheme was exposed."

Benimaru nods in agreement to my view.

"Then we shall proceed as planned. I shall duel Hinata until one of us is the last man standing."

"Understood! We will not allow anyone to interfere."

"All right, please hold back the enemies. Move out!"

" " "Yes sir!" " "

I nod to reassure Benimaru and transform into my human form.

The team consists of myself, Benimaru, Souei, Alvis, and Suphia.

"I wish your triumph in your conquest!"

Shuna says to send us off, and so we move out as planned. I steel myself before activating "Spatial Domination" to reach Shion's whereabouts before Hinata. Although Shion has guaranteed victory, it must have been quite difficult to fend off the Holy Knight Order with Yomigaeri alone.

—Or so I thought.

I can't understand the sight before my eyes.

My brain is not processing fast enough.

How in the world did this happen!

I'm speechless at the sight before me.

So, what is in fact happening here—

Shion is fucking dead again.

Shion has taken charge and is commanding the Yomigaeri.

This is good, since it's going according to our battle plan. Yet it is the state of their battle that is causing my shock.

It has gone so well that it has far exceeded my expectation.

"H-how is it possible! Why are our attacks useless against them!"

"But they are not undead, what is going on?"

The Holy Knights exclaim.

In place of a verbal response, the members of Yomigaeri scratch the Holy Knight with the small knives in their hands.

They used their body as bait to sneak in their attack on the stronger Holy Knights. It is an impressive move, possible only by using their undead characters.

But that is probably as far as they can go. What follows should be the overwhelming one-sided victory of the Holy Knights who will finally get serious... Yet I couldn't have been more wrong.

The Holy Knights were in shambles in less than three minutes.

As I have predicted, the Holy Knights who are no longer careless began to chase down members of Yomigaeri one-sidedly. Yet situation is quickly changed. Due to the difference of their strength, I thought that they couldn't possibly win through being unkillable. That's why I designed the plan for them to hold back the enemies.

But as it turns out, the Yomigaeri completely recover from even severe injuries while the Holy Knights begin to fall to the ground one by one.

The fallen Holy Knights are quickly restrained of their actions by Kurenai.

"Ehehe, Holy Knight-san. My knife here is applied with strong hypnotic, a lot of them! Even a single scratch would guarantee our victory!"

The eyes of the petit child-like soldier meet with those of the Holy Knight as she explains to him. Shouldn't you refrain from explaining this type of things to the enemies? But it can't be helped since she's still a child.

«Announcement. Individual "Gobwe" is older than individual "Gobta." »

Are you kidding me!

I see, the biology of monsters is truly difficult to understand. Gobta didn't have much change in his appearance despite his evolution. Perhaps he will turn out to have some drastic changes in the future.

Regardless, let's put that aside first.

Right now, the hilarious sight of a little girl lecturing a Holy Knight is unfolding before my eyes. It would seem the Yomigaeri are in fact, not struggling in battle, but mastering it.

Unless the knights were cautious enough to have prepared antidotes or possess "Poison Resistance," they will always be defeated by such assault. Even though it may only be used once, it's still a very effective method.

However, we can't just stop here.

The other knights arriving wouldn't dare to be careless and charge in with their full force.

Such trickery will no longer be easily pulled when confronted with such an overwhelming difference in strength. It has already become useless after being witnessed by others.

Our soldiers only managed to land a scratch when they struck while their opponents were tricked into believing that they've struck a fatal blow. However, I would give them the highest commemoration for having retired half of the enemies with just a scratch. They truly did a great job.

Next according to the plan, we are supposed to engage in a protracted battle— Yet my idea is completely turned around again.

Shion suddenly points with her chin.

In front of her are Gobjay and Gobua; The two look confused and turn their eyes to Shion.

“Are we supposed to join as well?”

“Eh! Are you not going? We few alone would not be enough to beat all those strong looking guys...”

“No, that’s why, we don’t have to win the fight, all we need to do is to win some time—”

“Eh eh? But I remember the order she received was to win no matter what?”

Gobua knew the content of the meeting.

Even though she was only guarding the gate, the voices of our meeting must have crossed through. Gobjay seems to be hearing about this for the first time as he looks at Gobua with his eyes wide open in shock—Are the two at cross purposes?

“Eh, aren’t we told to be on hold after the meeting...?”

Perhaps fearing that Gobjay would go on and on about the meeting, Gobua asks Shion.

That’s true. I thought it was strange too, but thankfully I didn’t seem to be wrong.

Yet Shion suddenly raised her volume to scold:

“Are you two idiots? Can’t you see that victory is close at hand? You can only exceed your limits by challenging and triumphing against the strong. You should be grateful for this opportunity I’ve granted you.”

That’s a weird expression from Shion...

The victory is close at hand despite the fact that the enemies are stronger than us. That sounds quite contradictory.

Yet Gobua is moved by her words. Her eyes switch to a different light with a maniacal smile across her face.

“You are most correct; this is indeed the case. Such great opportunity shall be taken by us Kurenai !”

And so, she quickly accepts Shion’s proposal.

Gobjay on the other hand...

“A-about that... Aren’t we defying orders that way?”

He asks Shion while shivering.

“Why are you still here? Or perhaps, do you wish to choose your preferred path between doing as I said and becoming my new test subject (to eat my food)?”

How awful, poor Gobjay is forced to comply under Shion’s intimidation.

But it is not up to him at this point, and so Gobjay rushes panicky into battle.

...No, you did nothing wrong.

But, how strange. For some reason, it almost seems as though the fault is on Gobjay.

Gobua is very aggressive in battle and easily instigated as expected from being Benimaru's subordinate. While Gobjay may look dumb, he always does his job very seriously.

He should just keep the things he wishes to ask to himself. Spilling them out will always land him in hot water. But he hasn't discovered that he has brought this upon himself. I suppose that's a form of joy in itself, so I don't intend to interrupt.

"...Is this okay, Benimaru?"

"It's not really okay, but I'll consider it training in dealing with unexpected things. Especially since Shion has a keen instinct. She would only give such an order when she knows there is a chance to win."

I couldn't help but ask while Benimaru answers me with a shrug.

Indeed. It is out of fear of losing that I ordered them to buy time as much as possible. But there wouldn't be any need to hold back if they can paralyze the enemies without getting hurt at all.

Since I'm now on the same page with them, I focus myself on the battlefield.

Next comes an authentic exchange of offense and defense.

The Yomigaeri members pair up to confront the remaining fifty Holy Knights directly with a member of Kurenai supporting each pair. If they are to fight with all they have, the Kurenai would be defeated by the Holy Knights. But, the difference in their strength is not so desperately different.

While the Holy Knights may have achieved Rank A, they are only at baseline for the Rank. In contrast, the strengths of Kurenai are approaching Rank A. They can probably make it with some assistance.

Moreover, the members of Kurenai are taking turns. The members who are taking care of the injured are exchanging shifts with the tired members. And since we have healing potions, this cycle of switching would continue infinitely.

"By the way, their combat abilities are really impressive. I didn't expect such individuals to exist in this country."

These words came from Alvis.

She is commenting not on the Kurenai, but the Yomigaeri.

They all possess powerful undead bodies on top of having good combat endurance.

"Indeed, they are hard to deal with. It seems decapitation alone won't be able to stop them, that would make them hard to take on even for me."

Sephia shares the same sentiment.

They both seem to think the Yomigaeri are difficult to deal with.

Even I was surprised.

The Holy Knights are not taking turns in fighting. Our victory is not a dream if things continue like this.

“It’s just that it isn’t according to the original plan...”

I tacitly agree.

And looking at Shion—

She is observing the battlefield with a satisfied look while licking her lips with her tongue.

The watery tip of her pink tongue exposed momentarily gives off a seductive luster.

Shion turns around to look at our location. She seems to have spotted us as she gives off a smiley face. She was just looking at Gobjay with a devilish expression, which is farfetched for anyone to imagine she could put up a smile on her face right now.

“Rimuru-sama, everything is going according to plan!”

“No way! We never planned these stunts in our meeting!”

“Thanks for your praise!”

“I wasn’t praising you...”

“Then, it’s about time for me to go!”

Shion finishes her sentence before thrusting her feet against the ground to launch herself out like a bullet.

“Eh, where are you going...?”

She ran off without answering my question...



She is sprinting at full speed.

Hinata is sprinting at full speed across the narrow lanes of the forest, with her perception enhanced by the spiritual force hosted within her.

At an empty space with few vegetation, she spots five Greater majins. They seem to know that Hinata is approaching, yet they are fixing their eyes afar. Hinata also turns herself to the direction of their eyes. The things Hinata sees are the sights of her proud knights being beaten to a pulp.

She really wants to smack her mouth out loud, but Hinata endures. She is not angry at the fact that they are being defeated, but that her opponents have chosen to completely antagonize her men.

Since the battle has already started, there is no more chance for negotiation. It would be irrelevant to Rimuru now even if Hinata tells him that they have reason for doing so.

Rimuru isn’t averting his eyes from the battlefield. And Hinata naturally remains stationary at her location as well. She is analyzing the strength of her opponents while planning ahead.

There are in total four powerful Greater majins. In addition, a woman in suit that is giving off an abnormal aura.

The two women at the front seem to be Beastmen. The relationship between Demon Lord

Rimuru and ex-Demon Lord Karion was mentioned in the report before. Deducing from this, the two should be from the famous Order of Beast King's Warrior, the Three Beastketeer. They give off a style of the strong and power that average majins could only dream to reach.

However, the two persons standing next to them are not by any chance inferior than the Beastketeers. Moreover—

One of them is a handsome red-haired man with a pair of dark horns. The other majin stood in contrast to him is a blue-haired youth with a single white horn grown on his forehead.

“The Three Beastketeers! And Orges—No, are those Kijins?”

Arnaud caught up to Hinata and lowered his volume to ask her.

Hinata continues quietly observing the majins without giving a response.

“—No. They are Youki (Fair Oni).”

“Are you saying they are Youki?”

“I've heard of them. Those are monsters possessing mighty strength to rival that of the Earth Deity. Some heretics seem to even worship Youki as god...”

“In fact, they seem to be an evolved version of Kijin. It's rumored that only few were able to reach that realm. But they are right here before our eyes. We should assess their threat as Special Rank A.”

This is the domain of Demon Lord.

Hinata and her men are unwelcome guests Arnaud is and the rest are well aware of that as well, and they are all experiencing nerve-wrecking stress.

Back to Hinata.

Threat level of Special Rank A—*We may in fact be underestimating their strength by that ranking.*

Especially that red-haired majin, he seems to possess strength to surpass “Demon Lord Seed.” It's best to send out three captains including Arnaud in order to stand against him. Yet right now there are four majins in total with only four captains on her side. It couldn't have been a coincidence, and so she interprets this as Rimuru having intentionally paired up the fighters.

And last but not the least—Demon Lord Rimuru.

The overwhelming presence of him is nothing like the feeling he gave to her in the past.

“I shall be your opponent. Come and duel me.”

Hinata recalls the line.

Yes, that is the case. You hope to duel me alone and not be intervened, was that what you meant?

Then she will take this as the worst possible scenario and hope that her own life can be sacrificed for Demon Lord Rimuru to spare her subordinates.

No, that's not right.

She is going to triumph, and then ask Rimuru to accept her apology.

Hinata makes up her mind.

At this moment, the female majin in a suit begins to move out. While giving off a powerful oppressive aura, she targets Renard far away by launching herself out with a jump. As she

launches out, Rimuru's eyes slowly fall on Hinata.

It is at this moment, Rimuru and Hinata's eyes meet—



Seriously.

I really want to say this, since everything is within my prediction.

There is no issue at all.

So, I turn my head to the back.

Hinata is standing right there.

She has a calm look with her breathing smooth as well. Both of us are observing the battlefield.

Our eyes soon meet.

We stood there staring at each other with silence for a while.

Then I speak up first:

“You’ve really done it now, Hinata. It goes without saying that this is my territory. It is obvious that you all bear ill intent towards us. I’m not so generous as to allow you to strike first.”

It doesn’t really matter who struck first. Once they open the “Holy Purification Barrier,” we will definitely be defeated, that’s why Shion had to take the pre-emptively attack. It’d be barking up the wrong tree to be condemned for striking first, so I warned her beforehand.

“Yes, that’s to be expected of course. I don’t know why Renard defied my order either.”

Hinata answers without hesitation or shame.

How obvious.

“How dare you. You’ve obviously planned to pin Rayhiem’s death on us, haven’t you? Now the whole deal has fired up the new Farmus King’s faction.”

“Killing Reyhiem...?”

“Yes. The same Archbishop Reyhiem that you summoned. Just to be clear, the only thing I did to Reyhiem was to give you a message through him.”

A confused expression flashed through Hinata’s face, but from then on her became expressionless almost instantly again as if she could put on a perfect poker-face at will. She gazes at me coldly, seemingly trying to assess my strength.

Her face is indeed beautiful, though it comes embedded with a ruthless outlook.

“Is that so? I see.”

Hinata mutters to herself.

“You did receive my message, right?”

“Yes. I did.”

“And is this your answer then?”

“Yeah, I suppose...it’s not quite exactly how I intended, but you wouldn’t believe me even if I were to tell you, would you?”

Just what exactly is she getting at?

“It is possible for me to believe, but it comes with one condition, you must halt your regiment and send them back home.”

I finish my sentence while pointing towards the enemies that Shion is engaging.

Hinata follows to the direction of my hand, but then shakes her head slightly.

“It’s too late. Before I could stop them, their fight would have already come to a conclusion.”

That’s indeed true.

Is he called Renard? It seems that the strongest knight is fighting against Shion at the moment.

There is another one there. Although he is not as strong as Renard, he is still a force to be reckoned with.

Both of them are probably part of the “Ten Great Saints.” Shion is displaying her fighting prowess having them both as her opponent.

I can’t stand it, but since the situation has developed to this point, I can only leave them to find out who’s stronger. It makes me somewhat upset to admit that Hinata is right, but now the demand I gave seems pretty hard to achieve.

Then, a young knight suddenly interrupts:

“What nonsense! If we were to withdraw our forces in this situation, what would happen to Hinata-sama? *You* are the one who called Hinata here, who’s to guarantee that you won’t harm her!”

He shouts angrily after hearing my words.

The way you put it sounds to me like that you never intended to negotiate peace with us from the very beginning...

“Shut your mouth. The only ones allowed to speak here are Rimuru-sama and Hinata Sakaguchi. We never called for you to come. Be a bit self-aware and behave yourself.”

“What did you say?”⁵⁸

Benimaru came forth to stop the young knight, yet he doesn’t seem to be complying.

The next second, two flashes of slashes suddenly cross in front of Benimaru.

Benimaru easily blocked the hit as this knight called Arnaud struck out.

“Your attack didn’t bear any killing intent. That was the right call. Had you intended to kill me just now, you’d already be dead.”

“That’s because I don’t wish to interfere Hinata-sama’s negotiation. I didn’t expect such reaction from you considering that was supposed to intimidate you only. But then again, it really doesn’t feel good to be misjudged.”

⁵⁸I’ve lost count how many times Arnaud has said “What did you say” in this volume. But it’s a lot

“You are the one who is misunderstanding.”

“Hehe, how about we sort things out on the side.”

“Very well.”

A gentle smile emerges on his face that contrasts with the veins popping on his forehead.

This Arnaud guy is easily provoked.

As such, Benimaru and Arnaud soon go on away.

This Arnaud is the strongest among the four apart from Hinata. That's why Benimaru acted out. He would probably be going as planned to only hold Arnaud back by sparing his life.

Hinata only observes the scene in shock without intervening. She can tell that Arnaud is weaker than Benimaru, yet she didn't stop him.

“Well then, aren't you guys bored as well? So as not to get in the way of Rimuru-sama, why don't you all have some fun with us.”

“Yeah. I want to find out how strong the “Ten Great Saints” are as well.”

Alvis and Suphia make their moves.

Perhaps this is what they have always intended.

If I recall correctly, Suphia is quite the battle manic.

“Then, I'll take you on.”

“It can't be helped; I'll keep you company then.”

They respond, and soon the two pairs of people depart.

The sole female⁵⁹ knight and Souei are the only one remaining at the scene.

“Shall we?”

“I suppose.”

Did those two read the mood? They also left the scene.

Everything has been departing from our original plan.

I mean, you guys didn't at all need to go away. Apart from Benimaru's pair, it's as if the other three have all go on dates.

You guys don't need to force yourselves to fight you know...

But speaking of which, my opponent is female as well.

And the most beautiful one.

But I don't feel any joy at all...

—Jokes aside, there indeed won't be any interference now.

At the end of the day, these are probably all destined to happen.

And so, I confront Hinata once more.

⁵⁹紅一点 (koitten) - lone female, i.e.: rose among the thorns

**Chapter
5**

**Saints and
Monsters Collide**

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Chapter 5

Saints and Monsters Collide

And so, the battle begins in a flash.

The Holy Knight Order commenced into action behind Hinata, their commander being the adjutant of Hinata, Renard.

Renard did not start as a Holy Knight. Instead, he was a genius in the art of arcane magic—A Holy Magister.

The Holy Magister is a special job assigned only to individuals who have mastered “Spirit Magic,” “Elemental Magic” and “Holy Magic.” To master the laws of this world, that is what qualifies a Holy Magister.

Yet Renard became a swordsman who fought in battlefields wielding the holy sword. He has concealed his identity as a Holy Magister while at the same time, his reputation as a member of the Holy Knight Order grew day by day. Later, after some time, he had already become the vice-commander of the Holy Knight Order.

All these accomplishments were the result of his skills. He has mastered a magnificent set of sword skills. If you were to describe Arnaud’s skill as the sword of steel, then Renard would be representing the swiftness⁶⁰ of swordsmanship. The two are on par with each other in terms of strength with Arnaud slightly excelling with the sword. It is Arnaud’s hard-earned skill from his countless struggles on the battlefield.

When confronting strong and enduring monsters, a swordsmanship of tenacity and strength is more important than one that is fancy. That’s why Arnaud is worthy of the title of the strongest Holy Knight.

However, a swordceror⁶¹ who possesses both the skills of a mage and a swordsman—that is the way Renard fights. His swordsmanship may be inferior to Arnaud, yet he will not lose to anyone when fighting in the style of a proper swordceror. No, not only not falling behind to anyone, Renard would even claim that his power is far greater than anyone else’s.

However, to the Holy Knights, the power of “Elemental Magic” is not within the assessment

⁶⁰The “柔” of swordsmanship, meaning the soft side or swift side of how a swordsman fight.

⁶¹Swordceror, or Magic Swordsman is a job commonly seen in JRPG and fiction.

of their strength. Some Holy Knights can instill elemental magic with the elven spirit of the same element that reside inside them so they may cast powerful magic without time consumed in chanting the spells.

“Elemental Magic” requires chanting, so its casting speed is longer than “Spirit Magic.” Although its power may be greater than “Spirit Magic,” “Speed” is the essence of melee combat.

It is something even Renard would not be able to overcome, and so he needed to master his sword techniques.

A knight’s true strength stems from his mastery of sword art. By instilling the sword traveling and incredible speed⁶² with holy-element, you can generate the power to slash through any object in this world. That is what Renard believes.

A very vivid memory was left with him when Renard was still an apprentice.

The small nation he studied abroad at was trampled by Demon Lord Valentine. Someone rushed to that nation—Hinata who just became a Holy Knight at the time.

She was strong, truly strong.

When surrounded by a horde of monsters, it only took a swing of her thin sword to wipe them all out. Even monsters that were several times larger than an average human were decimated in one shot by her sword.

Hinata’s visit saved the locals who had fallen to despair.

From that day onward, Renard was attracted by the charm of swordsmanship.

While researching Spirit Magic on one hand, he could not forget the sights of Hinata’s sword, and so he practiced repeatedly using a wooden sword while imitating her. He soon mastered the art of arcane magic⁶³ and returned to his academy in the Kingdom of Ingracia. There he studied Elemental Magic and waited patiently for the chance of moving to the Holy Empire of Lubelius.

It was not easy for foreigners to immigrate to Holy Empire of Lubelius, but if it was a believer of Luminas with outstanding achievement, he may be granted permission. However, it would come at the price of severing ties with his family. Renard chose to migrate without any hesitation. His mastery of both Elemental and Spirit Magic got him the permission to immigrate.

Later he studied Holy Magic in Lubelius and was able to earn a place as an apprentice Knight in the Order.

There Renard formed a pact with the spirit of “Light.”

He was the Holy Knight of light, just as reflected from his pure and noble soul. It didn’t take Renard too long after becoming a Holy Knight to become an adjutant of the person he looks up to—Hinata.

This is the result of his active initiatives in partaking challenging tasks and achieving impressive feats from them.

Many contenders of his have considered Hinata as a target (a role model to reach). These

⁶²The source states “Sword with the speed of god.”

⁶³This is likely referring to the combined of “Elemental Magic” and “Spirit Magic” (There are only four main categories of magic in the world of slime)

for instance included his colleagues Arnaud and Fritz, or more famously, the cruel and wise Nicolaus Speltus who was on par with Hinata.

And that is leaving out the countless unbeknownst followers of hers.

Renard was very proud to have become the adjutant of Hinata, until however...

“Renard, there is something that you must know.”

After the occurrence of the heinous crime that was the murder of Archbishop Reyhem, the great “Seven Luminous Clerics” summoned Renard. There, he learnt about the horrifying truth.

“The thing is, Hinata has been colluding with Demon Lord Valentine—”

“When we eliminated Valentine, he begged us for his life and revealed this information.”

Renard’s head went blank upon hearing this news.

His idol Hinata has been colluding with Demon Lord Valentine. In other words, she had been orchestrating a lie to deceive Renard this whole time.

If that is true, it would be a betrayal to someone as upright as Renard, it cannot be forgiven.

He believes there is no way these great heroes (Seven Luminaries) would ever lie. But even if that’s the case, he doesn’t think that Hinata has been deceiving the knights either.

But if I recall... There haven’t been any changes to Demon Lord Valentine’s activities for some time. Hinata-sama should have successfully eliminated Demon Lord Valentine, yet she hasn’t shown any sign to take any actions—

Given the strength of Hinata, she must be able to take on Demon Lord Valentine on her own—That must be the case, Renard deeply believed so. He got the same impression from the combat report of the “Three Martial Sages” that Hinata would most definitely win if she moves out to take on Demon Lord Valentine.

Did she have something else on her mind...

Renard felt confused.

Yet it was then that Renard’s doubt was reinforced when the Seven Luminaries continued:

“Of course, she must have lied to prevent Valentine from dying. But, that’s not where things end.”

“Although quite astonishing, she appears to be attempting to collude with Demon Lord Rimuru this time.”

“Shouldn’t it normally be impossible for Archbishop Reyhem to be murdered on this holy land?”

As they bombarded Renard with information, he was completely baffled.

“B-but Hinata-sama is a follower of Luminas, more faithful than anyone else. How could she betray her god and us...”

As he responds, the Seven Luminaries continued to add on their arguments.

“That’s the point, Renard. We are confused at the situation as well.”

“But the reality may be the contrary. Since Hinata may have cleverly tricked both us and our God Luminas.”

“There is however, one way to find out about it...”

The words of Seven Luminaries were tempting, and so Renard completely fell for it.

“A-and the way you mean is?”

The Seven Luminaries paused for a moment.

Then they open up solemnly:

“You won’t have a chance to regret after hearing it.”

“This is information that cannot be disclosed to the public—”

“Until Hinata is proved to be innocent.”

Even being told so, Renard made his choice without hesitation.

He has completely been deceived by the wordplay of Seven Luminaries.

Renard was lured to give the answer that the Seven Luminaries wished to hear.

“That is not a problem at all. I will prove the innocence of Hinata-sama!”

“Hmm, that’s the way to go...”

“Are you willing to lend a hand, Renard?”

“But this task will be dangerous.”

Renard had made up his mind and waited patiently for the instructions of the Seven Luminaries.

The Seven Luminaries looked down on Renard satisfactorily and proclaimed:

“Eliminate that Demon Lord Rimuru!”

“That way, you will get your answer.”

“If Hinata was truly colluding with the Demon Lord, she will definitely try to obstruct you with all her might.”

Upon hearing this, Renard couldn’t help but feel rattled.

“B-but There’s also that evil dragon Veldora...”

The Seven Luminaries had expected Renard to have this reaction.

“Afraid not.”

“Please calm down and consider this.”

“Has the evil dragon truly been revived? Don’t you think all of those testimonies have been lies?”

Renard suddenly realized after it was pointed out to him.

The only people who verified the issue of the revival of evil dragon are the Pope and Hinata herself.

“Then, do you propose that Veldora has not been revived?”

“Very likely.”

“Reyhiem also didn’t seem to have seen Veldora.”

“Perhaps his excellency the Pope was just abetted by Hinata.”

After hearing such assertions, Renard begins to doubt his beliefs, as proposed by the Seven Luminaries.

“I heard that Hinata has met with Demon Lord Rimuru before.”

“We believe that she was indoctrinated then.”

“If she is really being controlled by Demon Lord Rimuru...”

After hearing this, Renard’s stance also begins to tilt.

I am the only one who can save Hinata—Naturally Renard began to think that way.

“You are right, that must be the case! There is no way that Hinata-sama will betray us. If we think in the direction of someone manipulating Hinata-sama, would it be able to clear your suspicions of Hinata-sama?”

The Seven Luminaries nodded heavily after hearing Renard’s words.

“Indeed. If we can find out the person behind this, her suspicions would be cleared—”

“But it will be a dangerous mission!”

The Seven Luminaries said so seemingly to test Renard’s resolve, and Renard responded without any hesitation:

“Then please leave this mission for me to handle!”

Renard volunteered himself.

With the sole determination to rescue Hinata.

If everyone is truly being deceived by Hinata... Renard would kill Hinata with his own hands. And so, he made his resolve.

“Very well, it will be handed to you.”

“We indeed feel your determination.”

“We will be relying on you, Renard.”

And so, Renard defied Hinata’s order to commence in battle.

*

Renard isn’t doubting any more as soon as he entered the Jura Great Forest.

He can tell that Veldora’s revival is a lie given how low the concentration of magicule is there. Considering this, the possibility of Hinata having betrayed Luminism is very high, to which Renard is having a hard time to accept. He journeys on to his destination as he ponders on the issue.

Soon the troops would spread out since they are considering setting up a wide-range of “Holy Purification Barrier,” yet his subordinates were ambushed by the enemies hiding around the area.

“Could it be that Hinata-sama has sold us out...”

Renard’s companion, Garde of “Fire” opens up to say this.

Could it be that somehow, she has obtained the information of the movement of Renard’s party and informed Demon Lord Rimuru of it?

—If Hinata was colluding with the Demon Lord, she will definitely try to obstruct you with all she has—

The words of “Seven Celestial” began to ring in Renard’s head. But there is no time for him to consider it now. He immediately orders his men to engage in battle. The situation quickly

turns into a chaotic battle.

The enemies are surprisingly strong. Moreover, things did not end there.

Things are not going well in this way, Renard was thinking so—when a nightmarish devil descends from the sky.

A giant crater is carved onto the ground with smoke engulfing its surroundings.

“This one’s not that simple.”

Garde nervously tightens the grip on his spear.

Renard nods in agreement and gives off the instructions calmly.

There are four other knights at the scene apart from Renard and Garde, while the rest are all busy fighting the engaging monsters.

The squad reacted quickly.

Light begins to surround them to form an armor to protect their body.

“Spirit Armament”—It is the ultimate defensive gear that gives a Holy Knight the enhancement to overcome their limits.

Not only will it reduce the weight you feel, it would make you feel as if your body is as thin as a feather. With modifications, this holy armor allows the residing spirits of knights to be better reflected. With the armor equipped, the Holy Knights would gain more control over the power of their spirit.

Moreover, the weapons they wield are infused with the power to break evil forces that would paralyze all forms of resistance to deliver proper damage to an opponent.

Its weakness lies in the fact that its large consumption of mana makes it hard to sustain for long. But now, thanks to this armor, these Holy Knights have become the fiercest opponents for these monsters. The four spreads out with the targeted individual being in the center.

They are applying a simplified version of the Holy Purification Barrier as ordered.

Their opponent has an incredibly powerful presence. This majin in front of Renard possesses an unprecedented amount of magicules. It is even higher than a Rank A monster.

It isn’t Demon Lord Rimuru, but it must be his top lieutenant.

This would be the skirmish battle before taking on Demon Lord Rimuru.

They must quickly defeat this majin in order to eliminate the primary target—Renard has made up his mind to not hold back at all and to fight with everything he has from the very start.

“Take aim of the target and activate the Holy Purification Barrier!”

They will lose their lives if they demonstrate even the slightest bit of carelessness.

He doesn’t think that it is necessary to test out their opponent’s strength and directly issued the order.

The Holy Knights spread around quickly to establish the Holy Barrier.

It was casted perfectly.

There is no way that this enemy would be able to break through the barrier from within. However, this is still not enough. After all, a simplified version of the barrier also only has a simplified endurance.

It has less range and weaker effects on weakening the monster. It may be able to block the

enemy's movement, yet whether it can block every attack from within is still a mystery. They are afraid that the enemy would cast a powerful magic using its remaining magicule from inside the pyramid-shaped barrier extending around five meters long that they've activated. If that is the case, the barrier is likely going to be shattered.

Moreover, such an attack may also affect the surrounding. Since normally a barrier would cover a much larger area, this is a situation that should be accounted for with caution. However, it is definitely capable of severing the passage of magicules. It is one of the trump cards of the Holy Knights that an average Greater majin would have no chance of breaking.

Renard couldn't dare to get careless as he orders everyone to activate another defensive barrier. If the purification barrier is unable to kill their foe, they will have come up with a viable defensive plan during their available time.

They still can attack the interior from outside the barrier, but first they will need to confirm their safety before doing so. If it is a rare monster that possesses an attribute of damage-reflection, attacking without caution would only cause larger casualties among themselves. It is a misstep he cannot afford to take.

As Renard's party prepares at hand, the dust caused by the explosion also begin to settle.

A monster appears at the center.

It is a purple-haired tall female with slim and fit body.

Her long, tied hair runs behind her back.

She has a beautiful face with a mighty stern. But she has an additional black horn on her forehead.

The strange and exotic clothing (suit) compels one to take a few more glances before coming to any conclusion.

The woman speaks up as her purple eyes gaze at Renard.

"My name is Shion. I am Rimuru-sama's No.1 secretary. Now listen up you humans, Rimuru-sama has spoken. You either "Surrender" or "Die," pick an option. You gentlemen should be smart enough to understand what that means. So do quickly, disarm yourself and surrender to us!"

How arrogant this monster called Shion is as she proclaimed.

It is unknown why she emphasized very proudly on the word "No.1" as she gave her speech casually.

Renard begins to observe his opponent in order to find out how strong this monster called Shion really is. She is clearly different from an average monster.

Her large pool of magicule leads Renard to categorize her at the higher end of Rank A, but it does not end there.

"Impressive. She is at Special Rank A, possibly even a candidate for Demon Lord."

Judging from the horn on her forehead, the enemy is an advanced species of the Kijin race.

Kijin, or even stronger—Renard concludes that Shion's is a "Youki" (Fair Oni), a being that is comparable in power to a "Demon Lord Seed."

A named "Youki" —That is definitely beyond Calamity rank. If she becomes a Demon

Lord, her threat level would increase to Disaster rank.

There has been an extraordinarily powerful individual that possessed the psychic power (Or Godly Power)⁶⁴ to alter heaven and earth. Rather than monster, those are more akin to the Earth Deity.

It seems that Renard has made the right choice to have remained on the highest alert with the rest.

“Huh! Unfortunately, you’ve guessed it wrong. Well, close enough. I am an *Akki*⁶⁵. And I’m just guessing, but I’m probably not as kind as you think I am!”

Shion rebukes Renard calmly.

That said, surely no one at the scene would have ever considered calling Shion “kind.” Regardless of where she got the idea, it was the warning that Shion gave them.

“An *Akki*? There isn’t much difference… Anyway, whatever you are is irrelevant to us. Even if you were an Earth deity, you are nothing more than an evil monster, as far as we’re concerned. We only believe in the one true God, Luminas.”

The Holy Empire of Lubelius only recognizes the existence of one god—“The One True God” Luminas. To them, this is an absolute truth.

They wouldn’t acknowledge her even if she is indeed an Earth Deity guarding some part of the land.

They may ignore it as long as it doesn’t start proclaiming itself to be a God, but if it did, it will be eliminated.

Moreover, their opponent right now is just a monster.

No matter how powerful she is, they will not spare any mercy for the minions of a Demon Lord. That is why Renard proclaimed his own beliefs.

Yet Shion responded with the utterly unacceptable to Renard.

“I’m not interested in your God. Just give an answer to my question already!”

Surrender or die, which path do you choose? That’s what Shion is asking.

Her words infuriated Renard.

“Silence, evil monster! I will erase your filthy existence from this world!”

Renard now furiously shouts with his lungs full, then he orders the Holy Knights to cast the Holy Magic “Holy Cannon” at the same time.

The “Holy Cannon” is one of the few offensive spells in the art of Holy Magic. It breaks down the body of a monster through disintegrating its magicule. If it is casted at humans, it at most would knock them down unconscious due to the shockwave, yet in the case of monsters, they would be completely decimated.

It is a useless skill against opponent with the holy-element, but a deadly deterrence against monsters. Unlike the four natural elements of “Earth,” “Water,” “Fire” and “Wind,” both “Holy”

⁶⁴The source states “神通力,” which is apparently another term for “靈能力,” the word for psychic power used in most fictions. But later in this word

⁶⁵Fuse gave the same katakana notation for both “Youki” (妖鬼) and “Akki” (惡鬼) are “oni,” which is why this was translated wrongly to oni originally.

and “Dark” elements cannot be “Nullified.” Except the angel race and the monsters who possess the holy-element, any other monster would not stand a chance against the Holy Cannon.

As they received Renard’s order, the Holy Knights launched the attack simultaneously. The missiles from the Holy Cannon thrust from all four sides towards Shion.

However—

Confronted with such attacks, Shion stood still without a care. She then deflected all of the energy missiles with the odachi in her hand.

“Was that your answer? You understand that if you don’t surrender, I will kill you right?”

As if grumbling “why won’t you guys just do as I say?,” Shion presses her question to him again. Even Renard is astounded at this.

However, he is not going to succumb to such a threat.

Even if his enemy is monster at the level of an Earth Deity, she was already trapped by the Holy Purification Barrier.

Renard’s party waited for the enemy to weaken by maintaining the barrier in order to deliver her with a fatal blow.

He ponders while praising the skillful swordsmanship Shion demonstrated. Reasonably speaking, his opponent would have been weakened to some extent, yet the speed of her swing can rival even that of Renard’s. This surprises him a lot. Moreover, that odachi was capable of deflecting energy of the holy-element, which is beyond abnormal. Since the Holy Cannon has the character of disintegrating magicules, normal magic swords would be destroyed after deflecting a few rounds.

Yet there is no sign of that odachi being damaged.

Suddenly, one of the Holy Knight began to moan in pain.

It is the Holy Knight on one side of the pyramid-shaped barrier who has been hit by the Holy Cannon deflected by Shion.

How is this possible! Why is such thing possible!

Renard is astounded.

If blocking the holy-element alone is not enough, she even absorbed the energy with her odachi and quickly deflected the missile to turn it into a way to attack...

It is completely impossible by common sense.

Yet such psychic power was displayed by Shion so easily in the blink of an eye. Renard quickly orders everyone to stop attacking.

The injured knight did not lose consciousness, he’s at most surprised at the sudden attack. Now it’s the time to calm down and find out a different way of attacking. Yet still, this has really been astounding.

The fact that she was able to attack from the inside of the Holy Purification Barrier to the outside is beyond surprising. Even the Holy Knights are astounded at the sight.

Renard suppresses his emotion of shock to reconsider his strategy.

Right now, Shion is furious due to her act being less effective as she intended.

She didn’t cause much damage despite hitting the opponent. She discovered that the skill

they used was effective against monsters, but ineffective against humans. She has paid the price for looking down on her opponents to have been locked in the barrier, a critical miscalculation.

However, she knew from the start that things will end up this way. She has considered beforehand that the situation she is currently in is what she had hoped for. This barrier—It's an extension of the Holy Purification Barrier Rimuru warned her of. It is similar in nature to reduce the magicule concentration from within the barrier. At this rate, it wouldn't take long before Shion's skill will be affected.

Just now she secretly tried to find out that “Spatial Movement” has also been blocked. With that being said, this is also within her range of expectations.

“Oi... OI, you guys, just surrender already before I run out of patience.”

Shion suppresses her anger desperately and shouts at her opponents with a forced smile.

Although a third party may think Shion isn't even batting an eyelid at the Holy Knights, in reality she couldn't be more serious. (it's Shion after all)

But it is obvious that Renard and the Holy Knights wouldn't listen to her.

“You fool! You are helpless now that you've been trapped by the barrier, stop acting all smug over there!”

This time, it's Garde who shouted out furiously.

It only angers Shion more.

Now that her fury is reaching her limit, she is at the brink of an outburst. Shion already has very low tolerance for things, and now she is at the limit of her endurance.

There will be a huge outburst sooner or later.

“Listen now, I really am under Rimuru-sama's orders that if possible, I shouldn't try to kill you all. If you surrender now, not only will I not beat all your teeth out, but I'll even treat you to my handmade cooking! How about that, isn't it a great proposal? This is my last warning to you. What will you do?”

Even under such circumstance, Shion endures and continues to negotiate.

Although she comes off as being so arrogant, that no one would ever accept such a request.

Moreover, with every second passing, the monster captured inside the Holy Purification Barrier will grow weaker.

The reason behind it is simple, the barrier would purify all magicule inside it.

With the magicule concentration reduced, it would mean that any magic casted using mana or monster power, as well as law-manipulating skills such as psychic power and magic manipulation would all become unavailable. That is with the exception of special (unique/ultimate) skills.

The Holy Knights believed that they would emerge victorious and so there is no need to listen to Shion. Yet they have to recognize one point, that the Holy Purification Barrier is no defensive barrier. Even though it may completely block passage of magicule, pure physical objects or energy can still pass through. For instance, if an explosion takes place inside the “Barrier,” the wind pressure and shreds of explosion would be carried on the outside.

Renard and the rest are all well aware of this, and so their nerves are still tightened. Their

maximum alert is of course warranted too. But being on high alert is still not enough to wipe away the unease in his heart, yet still Renard decides to answer Shion.

“We Holy Knights do not negotiate with monsters. Whatever more you say is futile.”

He says so.

Shion couldn’t bear it any longer after hearing this.

“Very well, I understand! Then I will make you submit out of fear!”

As Shion shouts, she smashes her odachi on the ground.

The shockwave explodes the ground to send countless fragments of small stones flying in the air. Shion grabs onto one of them and throws it head-on towards the knight facing her.

“—Uh!”

In an instant.

A loud sound is produced as a mini explosion occurs in front of the Holy Knight that Shion faces. The piece of stone thrown at him collided with the shield over the knight’s hand and got shredded to pieces.

What incredible POWER! ゴゴゴゴゴゴ

She possesses such power even after being weakened. She must be capable of causing much more damage had the Holy Purification Barrier not been there.

“Don’t get careless! Infuse more power into your spirit armor!”

“Understood, everyone, it’s time to get serious! Consider your opponent a Demon Lord!”

Renard and Garde encourage their squamates.

The knight who had his shield smashed, quickly reconstructs the shield of light.

Shion stomps her feet in frustration seeing how Renard’s party reacted. She probably thought that her attack just now would be able to take down at least one opponent. Yet she’s furious now that she’s suffered the Waterloo. Her behavior is in complete contrast to her appearance of a beautiful and intelligent woman. With that being said, Shion seems to have realized this is going nowhere. She again suppresses her anger trying her best to remain calm and opens up to Renard again.

“I have a proposal.”

“We don’t negotiate with monsters. I’ve already told you so.”

“You should try to listen first. Just as I mentioned, it was my order to not kill you. But with that being said, I also need to demonstrate to you just how much of a difference there is between our strengths.”

“...”

“Just hear me out. I mentioned earlier that I had to control my power when throwing those stones, it is not easy. Had I been more serious I would probably have killed one or two of you—”

“Y-you’re bluffing!”

“Don’t listen to her! This is her deluded brag!”

A couple of Holy Knight couldn’t help but respond to Shion’s words.

Shion chuckles in secret after seeing how they reacted.

“Hmm hmm. You guys seem to be willing to listen. That is great. So, my proposal is—”

“Don’t be fooled by her! The madness of this woman cannot be—”

Shion’s words are interrupted by Garde.

At that instant, he suddenly feels a burning sensation on his right ear. Garde still feels the delayed shockwave slashing through the air with bombarding sound, destroying his eardrum.

The reason why he didn’t get a concussion is probably due to his daily training...

“W-what happened?”

As Renard turns back to check on Garde, he witnesses the sights of the large tree behind him falling apart due to its root being cut in half.

“—Uh!”

Renard is speechless.

Garde, as blood pours out of his ear, also realizes what just happened.

It was the stone that Shion threw out.

That was just how she demonstrated her strength.

The fist-sized stone Shion threw flitted at supersonic speed next to Garde’s head and directly hit the large tree behind his head, smashing it into pieces in the process.

Of course, Shion didn’t miss her shot.

She aimed and threw precisely to make sure it passes just by Garde’s ear.

And so, she follows up with the line—

“What’s the use of ears if you won’t even listen to what others have to say? Now behave yourself and listen to me well.”

The other knights immediately became more obedient.

“You *monster*...”

Garde mumbles as well, though he does not dare to make a move without caution.

So is Renard, realizing that he will have to listen to what Shion has to say. Judging from the power of that throw, it will instantly kill one of his teammates if collided head-on. Even “Spirit Armament” would not be able to resist the shockwave of that impact.

Since it has been proven that Shion has such power when she’s serious, they can only deduce that her words just now were anything but lies. It was a projectile thrown so fast that even one of the “Ten Great Saints,” Garde of “Fire” couldn’t react to, any ordinary Holy Knight would not be able to evade it.

In other words, the right answer here is to listen to her words nicely.

But as long as they can buy time, their opponent would also be weakened during the process.

“Fine, we’ll hear you out for the sake of it.”

This is why Renard can only reply with this.

Hearing so, Shion nods satisfactorily.

A maniacal smile emerges on her face as she gives them the shocker.

“Listen now, I want you all to attack me with everything you have. I’ll take everything head-on. If I endure till the end, I win, and you will all surrender to me obediently. What do you say?”

Shion says so confidently, leaving Renard eyeing her baffled. In that moment, a small doubt

raises in his heart.

Could this mean that she doesn't intend to kill us?

Shion has acted and spoken in such way as to lead to this conclusion from the very start.

But, her reason for doing so...

Unfortunately, there is no time for Renard to figure it out the details.

Garde whose eardrum was just destroyed accepted Shion's offer out of spite.

"Fine, I'll accept your proposal. You there, align your spirit powers with mine. Renard, I'll leave the suppressing work to you! This woman is dangerous, way too dangerous to be allowed to live!"

Renard is brought back to reality after being mentioned.

"W-wait! We should talk about—"

"Cut the crap! Everyone, get in formation!"

At the urges of Garde, the teammates start to concentrate their power.

The Holy power begins to flow and gather on top of the Holy Purification Barrier. This is all being converted to mana that gives Garde a boost in magic. If Renard allowed them to do so without suppressing, the four squad mates' mana pool would go out of control.

Indeed, now it's time for battle, not hesitation. Since this is what she volunteered to, then don't blame us if we do so.

Their opponent asked them to attack with everything they have, and so Garde would gamble on his pride as a Holy Knight to spare no mercy.

Six to one is way too despicable—He bears no such naive thoughts. Since his enemy is monster, their victory would be justice.

"Understood, Garde. Leave the suppression to me."

"Roger that! Take this, "Inferno Flame"⁶⁶—!"

Garde wields an extreme power of flame that illustrates his fire like passionate personality.

It is the ultimate spirit magic that can be casted when the King of Fire Spirit lends its power to the caster. It is an immense amount of power that Garde alone cannot control, and this power is being bombarded on Shion.

The heat energy produced by it even exceeds that of the Nuclear Strike Magic "Heat Cannon."

It is a pure flow of destructive power using the spirit energy particles that magicle is made up of.

Yet Shion—

"Hehehe, very impactful! It is not the attack I expected, but it doesn't matter. This will be the fastest way to stir fear among you all!"

Shion raises her odachi with a delightful smile.

In the blink of an eye, the approaching heat wave of the "Inferno Flame" is slashed in half.

It is Shion's Unique Skill 'Cook' at work.

⁶⁶Or by Kanji "Spirit overlord of extreme inferno flame"

It may seem that she isn't thinking a lot, but in reality, she has been combining a variety of skills.

First, she applies Extra Skill 'Multilayer Barrier's' for defense and utilizes "Heavenly Gaze" and "Magic Perception" to detect her enemies' weakness.

She then activates "Cook" and "Optimal Action" so she can sense the flow of the heat wave naturally. By doing so, she can avoid being directly hit by the attack.

With that being said, the heat wave still scorched Shion's skin, making her appear horribly burned. However, it poses no problem to Shion who has Ultraspeed Regeneration. Her skin quickly regenerates to its previous state.

It would appear to be reckless, but in fact, all of these are reasonable actions.

"All right, we've had our promise. Surrender to me now and undo the barrier."

Shion says so very righteously, leaving everyone speechless. The Holy Knights can only peek at Renard and Garde.

After witnessing those supernatural sights, their minds have been paralyzed. At that moment, the dignity of the Holy Knights was decimated.

Yet there is only one man, Garde, who will not accept this.

"Quit joking around, you monster. You can't do anything within that barrier! You can keep acting smug like you are now, but we'll fight the long battle with you then!"

"W-wait a second, Garde!"

Renard is shocked.

Even though Garde may be bad at holding his temper, he is a straightforward man. Yet right now he is being stubborn and refusing to admit defeat.

It may seem to be the appropriate response from the eyes of the Holy Knights, but to Renard, this is not like Garde.

With that being said, it is no time to ponder over such thing.

"Huh, are you still not admitting defeat even to this point? I will have no choice but to kill you..."

Shion gives off an increasingly more dangerous outlook as her monster aura begins to flow around her body.

Renard shivers at the sight.

H-how powerful...! We will all be killed if such monster gets serious. Even if we have Holy Purification Barrier, it would be bad if we piss her off—

"This is bad, stop provoking her! We can retreat for now—"

"You fool! The Holy Knights cannot be defeated! Have you forgotten even about that?"

Renard intended to calm Garde down, yet he begins to shake as Garde shouted him back.

It is hard to imagine that Garde would ever say such thing under normal circumstance. Or rather, he almost seems to have developed a new personality—

"You, you—"

Renard didn't have to raise any decisive doubts towards Garde before *the incident* happens.

"HUUUUU!"

Someone shouts.

A clear bell-ring sound is made.

It is the sound of Shion's odachi breaking through the "Barrier."

The Holy Purification Barrier—The source of confidence of the Holy Knights have now been completely shattered by Shion.

"H-how could this be..."

"But that is the Holy Barrier!"

"Is this a dream? This must be a dream!"

"Holy Purification Barrier can sever magicule, so how could it be destroyed by monster—!!"

The Holy Knights shout with fear in their hearts.

However, they received their answers from Shion, who seems relaxed and justified with her actions.

"—That's true indeed. But this is not a "Special Barrier" with high density, a "Special Barrier" that manipulates the world's law. Law manipulation is, however, my specialty. After all, I, am very good at cooking!"

Renard is completely baffled with what she said.

But he understands what Shion has done. She has brought about this result by using her Unique Skill 'Cook' to tamper with the Holy Purification Barrier.

Overwriting phenomenon and laws. This skill is capable of overwriting objects with the ideal "Outcome" desired by the user—the so called "Affirmative Outcome."

This is the true power of Shion's Skill 'Cook.' The reason why Shion's cooking became tasty is all due to the effect of this skill. Sadly, such extraordinary power has been used in very pitiful things.

What would be the result of applying it in combat?

The answer is the desperate situation that Renard's party is facing right now.

The skill is able to overwrite and impose one hundred percent of the ideal outcome she wishes, and so no matter how strong a defense is, it won't stand a chance against her.

The only way to fight it would be to possess a stronger will to overwrite the result she wishes. In other words, unless you possess similar ability to overwrite laws, you have no way of dealing with it.

Since Renard is a genius, he was able to correctly analyze the mystery of her skill.

How terrifying.

As Shion just declared, Renard's heart is now filled with fear. But as captain, he cannot give up hope until the very last moment. They are doomed if they engage in combat, so he needs to surrender for now to have a chance in survival.

"This is bullshit...How could this be... Such monster, how..."

Ignoring Garde, who is mumbling and almost daydreaming, Renard makes the decision.

"—I surrender. I hope you may treat my subordinates with leniency..."

He proclaims with a shivering voice as if he has woken from a dream.

Shion finally gives off a satisfying smile hearing Renard's declaration of surrender.

It is then that Renard is able to look at Shion in the eyes.

He sees her genuine smile that's both consistent externally and internally.

He calmly recalls while pondering on her words.

This monster called Shion really doesn't seem to intend to kill them. If not Shion's will, then it is the order of Demon Lord Rimuru.

With that being said, something also seems out of the loop with the rumor that Demon Lord Rimuru has ordered a Demon to murder Archbishop Reyhiem.

Now that he thinks about it carefully, Hinata only went to meet with Demon Lord Rimuru in order to build a friendly relationship from the very start. In contrast, there shouldn't be any reason why the Demon Lord would want to obstruct that. That is if he doesn't intend to incite conflicts and rain chaos. But from the reaction of this monster, Shion, even Renard has realized that Demon Lord Rimuru wouldn't do such a thing.

That would mean—

Have I been manipulated...

When he heard that his enemy Demon Lord Valentine who harmed his friends in the past was colluding with Hinata, he lost the ability to make a calm judgement. While he was emotional, he was taken advantage of and was deceived...

By whom?

It is obvious now, the "Seven Luminary Clerics."

Upon thinking so, Renard's face immediately turns pale. He is shocked to realize that his dispatchment of troops have hindered Hinata's plan.

As he turns to look, Hinata is confronting Demon Lord Rimuru alone.

They don't seem to be talking. It is the calmness before battle.

I-it's all over. Hinata-sama, I'm sorry! It's all my fault that the negotiation—

Renard has finally realized everything, yet now he can only observe their confrontation from the side.

Things have developed to the point beyond Renard's control.

—And soon, the flame of battle is ignited.

Renard nervously locks his eyes in front as Hinata and Rimuru cross swords—



Hinata Sakaguchi was truly lucky to have met Shizue Izawa.

For a short but genuine period of time, Hinata had indeed opened her heart to Shizue and her alone.

The duration of which was one month.

In that short span of time, Hinata learnt all of Shizue's techniques and bid her farewell. That is because she was afraid of being rejected. In the end, she was afraid to lose the warmth she had regained once more.

Hinata knew she was clumsy.

She killed her father for her mother. Yet it only made her mother go insane. Her mother was still in love with her husband even to that point.

The reason why her mother was a fanatic about religion must have been because she needed prayers to support herself.

In this world, misfortune will never disappear.

It is the most natural course of things.

She hoped that there would be no more misfortune in this world, yet such thing would never come true.

That was the reality Hinata didn't want to accept.

A world where everyone can live with joy—she sighs at the misfortune in real life while bearing such dream.

—The reason why her mother prays is to repent for the sins of her daughter.

If that is true, does mother hate me very much?

Hinata was deeply frightened even at the thought of it being the case.

She thought of herself as very lucky for coming to this (new) world.

Her mother would be able to escape the sea of pain now that she had traveled to this world, so was her conclusion.

Hinata has also decided to not be as indignant as before.

She would become just as perfect (emotionless/rational) as a machine so that she no longer would have to worry about anything.

Hinata lived on with such a fantasy. And it was for this reason, she wasn't able to accept Shizue.

If she had accepted to stay and somehow grew to be disliked by Shizue too—Hinata would have wanted to kill her.

It is due to her self-awareness of this, that she parted ways with Shizue.

Perhaps I was the one who's mad after all—Hinata thought to herself.

This is what this world is about, full of despair and fragile people susceptible to death. Hinata was granted with power for her to survive.

She learnt a shocking lesson when she visited a kingdom during her journey.

There, many were dead due to the rampage of Calamity Rank monsters. Yet there were some people fighting to protect the children. Those adults acted as the meat shield for the children with no intention of escaping.

Hinata had always thought that everyone only care about themselves in order to survive. Their actions moved Hinata.

Those people who devoted themselves to battle called themselves Holy Knights. They had little care for their own lives and were willing to sacrifice themselves to save the lives of others.

They regularly patrolled the surroundings of that town as the symbols of justice.

Hinata resonated with their way of living and was determined to become a Holy Knight. To use her skills to the fullest and devote herself to battle, so she will no longer need to worry about anything else. And so, Hinata found her opportunity to atone.

A decade of time has passed since—

Hinata has now become the Guardian Angel of mankind.



She fought against monsters day and night during those days.

After some time, she began to feel bored of dealing with the same situations again and again.

Ever since Hinata installed some policies after becoming the commander of the Holy Knight Order, the damage sustained by the nations had been reduced by a drastic amount. For instance, the prediction of the birthplace of the monsters or which areas would be harmed. This way, she was able to decide on how to initiate collaborative efforts and when to patrol in certain areas. This system had been optimized to achieve a significant effect in reducing casualties.

That was why everyone in the Holy Knights placed great trust in Hinata. It is simply too ironic that she was in fact colluding with Demon Lord Valentine behind everyone's back. She mocks herself internally. But even so, it was still the best way to maintain a peaceful and just nation.

That's why Hinata has never felt any doubt or regret. Under their God Luminas, everything is equal—This is the only system that will grant people the taste of happiness.

Moving forward to the present.

She is in a bad spot, to the point of being laughable. But thanks to that, Hinata is finally willing to go all out.

The situation at hand is not suitable for her to negotiate. She will not even have a chance to defend herself if she loses this battle.

It must have been karma for not listening to Rimuru the last time they faced each other, that she fails to request her opponent to listen to her this time for the bad circumstance.

The situation is the complete opposite of last time—

Hinata mocks herself while thinking so.

The table has been turned. It even makes her reminisce of the “boring” days she used to complain so much about.

This world is indeed ruthless when you hit the wall...

But apart from lamenting, Hinata has also made up her mind.

Troubling thoughts and worries are all meaningless at this point of time.

Victory is the only way of withdrawing herself from this situation. Regardless of whether

she believes herself to be right or wrong.

All these thoughts were cast aside, for Hinata has focused her heart on winning—

She begins to observe Rimuru. Now only Rimuru and herself remain there as Arnaud and the rest have gone somewhere else with their own opponents.

Hinata starts to quietly analyze Rimuru using her Unique Skill ‘Mathematician.’

However, he is completely different from before. Rimuru’s power after becoming a Demon Lord has become hard to measure.

His potential growth is truly huge. I’ll get chills down my spine at even the thought of him becoming enemies with humans.

Rimuru’s power is immeasurable by Hinata’s “Mathematician,” meaning that he should either have a similar power cap as her, or greater. Upon thinking so, Hinata activates her Unique Skill ‘Usurper.’ This skill gives her the absolute advantage against an opponent who is stronger than her.

That is the property of Hinata’s trump card— “Usurper.”

It is a power that can rob the enemy of their skills and talents whenever they are understood by the user. Regardless of whether Hinata can use these skills or not, from only its effect of robbing her enemies of their skills alone shows that it is itself a fierce and brutal skill.

If the opponent is weaker than Hinata, the result of the analysis will show it as “Unavailable Target.” In that case, Hinata will not be able to rob the enemy of their skill, however, she will also have a much better chance to win. Even if the opponent is stronger than Hinata, the results of her analysis will either be “Failure” or “Success.”

It is the evidence whenever such results are shown that whether she is confronting a powerful foe or not. With that being said, “Success” analysis will reveal the opponent’s skills and talents and “Failure” will not cause her defeat either. She can try analyzing as many times as she wishes.

That’s why no matter how strong her enemy is, the result will always be “Success” with enough repetitions. She only needs to cautiously buy time and calmly wait for the correct moment. In this way, Hinata is guaranteed to win.

During her last duel with Rimuru, the result of her analysis stated “Target Unavailable.” This was why Hinata did not take any precaution against Rimuru and looked down on him during their fight.

She was a bit surprised when he summoned the Flame Giant Ifrit, but she still didn’t take it very seriously. That’s because Hinata has achieved expert mastery of her skill to reach the level of “Forced Usurp.” It is a cheat-like skill that can even apply to lower-level opponent...

It was commendable that Rimuru made her use this skill, but that was as far as her view went for Rimuru. Just like that, Hinata’s “Usurper” also serves as the measurement tool to evaluate the difference in power between her and her opponent.

Back to the present day.

Even with this power, she still cannot assess Rimuru.

The result of her analysis turned out to be “Interfered.”

This is the second time it happened. He is the second person to cause this result after

Hinata's confrontation with Demon Lord Luminas Valentine.

In other words, you are already as powerful as Luminas-sama...

Hinata gasps at how much he has grown during such a short period of time.

If that's the case, there is no use to try any cheap tricks.

Hinata throws away the giant sword in her hand—Dragon Buster. She knows that she can't win by relying on that.

Then she unsheathes the Moonlight Rapier (Moonlight) —A legendary weapon of hers gifted by Luminas.

She puts on the “Gears of Holy Spirit” —

These are the original pieces that the “Spirit Armament” worn by the Holy Knights was copied from. It is rumored to be once worn by a Chosen Hero, and a secret weapon of the Western Holy Church to battle against monsters. It is a gear specialized against monsters and dragons, only usable by those favored by the Holy Spirit.

A beam of bright light descends to surround Hinata and gradually forms the shape of a glowing armor. From that point onwards, Hinata has broken free of all forms of limits in her body to transcend “Sage” and truly reaching the realm of “Saint.”

Next, it will be the pure collision of force.

She is willing to gamble everything she has to partake in this challenge.

Her ordinary daily life without anything refreshing—has now come to an end.

Fighting a battle with little chance to win is for the foolish. Yet Hinata's heart right now is filled with joy.

She gives off a chuckle.

Rimuru asked me whether I received his message or not. It means that he is inviting me to a one-to-one duel.

I must win, and so, I will earn the chance to make up for my mistake—

She is filled with determination and fighting spirit.

Hinata points her sword at Rimuru.



Hinata is pointing her sword at me.

Is she choosing to duel me even after receiving my message?

I seem to have misunderstood when she threw away her weapon that she would have wanted to talk. She has taken out a more intimidating weapon and her eyes are now absolutely serious.

It can't be helped. I'll defeat her first before trying to talk.

My new confrontation against Hinata has made me realize something.

This woman has no flaw in her stance.

The power of that sword is among the top of all of the weapons I've encountered so far. In order to stand a chance against it, I also pull out my *uchigatana*⁶⁷ to prepare for battle.

Had I known about this, I would have had Kurobee craft me a special blade for this occasion. This sword I am currently wielding has been submerged in the magicules inside my "Stomach," and as a result its blade is now dyed with a fitting color of black.

Still it's now too late to get a new weapon, so rather than panicking, I put my faith in Kurobee's skills (to forge my sword).

Confronting Hinata's weapon with this substitute weapon makes me feel uneasy. I should protect my *uchigatana* with my *Youki* (Demonic Aura) and try to avoid direct clashes of swords with her. That's why I activated the "Magic Fighting Spirit"⁶⁸ from my "Covenant King Uriel" and covered the blade with "Black Thunder Flame."

Now that I am properly prepared, I wait for Hinata to make her move.

And so, the battle of hyper-speed swordfight begins.

I gave all I had as soon as it started.

Hinata's attack speed is incredible, to the point that I can barely react even with "Thought Acceleration," enhancing my senses to a million of times of my original. Another way to put this would be to say that it is reminiscent of fighting Milim, surely now you can tell how fast it is.

However, I am not losing either. I block and return every hit. Now we've crossed swords directly several times, yet none of us could land a hit on the other.

I'm not bragging but I haven't even got a scratch.

And that's what's happening, both of us are attacking and are waiting for the opponent to show an opening, yet such an opportunity is still yet to arrive for either of us. By the way, I'm able to go toe to toe with her only due to my awakening as a Demon Lord and with the help of "Wisdom King Raphael," and that alone simply reflects what a *monster* Hinata is.

But honestly, I believe I'm only a few inches away from taking her down.

Hinata is indeed strong, but I am now a "True Demon Lord," so I should be able to suppress her with my body function alone. Yet the result is that we are on par in strength.

Hinata seems to have completely seen through my sword technique, and so she begins to attack without hesitation. Her attacks are swift while still blocking every counterattack I deliver. On top of that, she has even sacrificed her fierce continuous attacks to instead deliver a surprise attack.

If it was me from the past, I would not have stood a chance. This simply means that Hinata didn't display her true ability at all during our last confrontation.

Should I consider myself lucky?

It seems that I have to give my fullest in this fight if I wish to defeat her.

⁶⁷Traditional Japanese sword (打刀)

⁶⁸The more accurate name of this skill is actually: Qi (aura) fighting with magic



You've got to be kidding me, Hinata thinks to herself.

She wanted to force Rimuru to admit defeat by bombarding him with her sword techniques. Yet Rimuru was able to catch up with her at ease. These are the techniques Hinata spent ten years to master, yet her opponent—completely countered them in an instant.

There is a limit to the human body. Only by using magic, abilities, skills, and talents⁶⁹ can humans obtain the strength to stand against monsters. In contrast however, Rimuru doesn't even need to breathe.

No stamina consumption means there is no need to restore mana, nor will his muscle tire out.

Hehe, I only get to realize how cruel reality is when standing on the battlefield against him...

Hinata thinks to herself, sighing at her disadvantage.

She knew very well of the fact that her opponent is a monster. Since this world follows the principle of “survival of the fittest,” the important thing for her to do now is to gather all the factors that may ensure her victory.

Hinata utilized her “Mathematician” to enhance the speed of her senses a thousand times more than usual. Her perception of the surrounding area has also exceeded the human limit. Her brain is functioning at its maximum capacity, causing the micro vessels in her body to have burst a few times. She took care of the wounds by using an automatic regenerative spell to hide these injuries from her opponent’s detection.

Under this state, Hinata feels as though the world has become stationary. Yet it is still not enough. Hinata activates “Prediction Simulation” of “Mathematician” to predict the path of Rimuru’s attack. Hinata has to strike without holding anything back.

However, her opponent Rimuru still seems to be holding back.

Hinata wiped her bleeding nose so that her opponent didn’t notice before adjusting her disordered breathing. Holding like this for too long alone would already mark Hinata’s defeat.

Even though she has reached the level of “Saint,” Hinata is still bounded by the limits of a human body. She has to overcome a higher wall in order to become a semi-spiritual-lifeform.

Her trusted “Usurper” is rendered useless due to the “Interference.” It has absolute advantage over the strong—but now, it is no longer useful. Then, she will have to defeat Rimuru with only the skills she has trained during all those years...

The sword gifted by Luminas possesses immense power. If it is installed with Hinata’s mana and enchanted with her fighting aura, it can cause lethal wounds that can’t be treated by

⁶⁹Despite how similar these words may sound, they apparently are different attributes of an individual in Slime’s world. Not necessarily the most strictly obeyed categorization though.

any average regenerative ability. Even against enemies possessing “Ultra-Speed Regeneration,” this sword can cut them in half.

That's why all I need to do is to cut off one of his arms. Hinata thinks to herself.

She won't kill Rimuru. The duel will be over if Rimuru is willing to admit Hinata as the victor.

Yet Hinata has not been able to execute this plan.

Through his extraordinary control of dimension and body functions, Rimuru has seen through the pattern of Hinata's attack.

What an incredible growth. But these all have to do with body functions. You can't follow up with my level of skill.

His evolution is indeed astounding, yet in terms of techniques, he is just about the same as what she has experienced before. Even for a skill such as Hinata's “Usurper” that can rob the opponent's skills, it can only make the user's body memorize the movements of the skill. In order to master the principles of these skills, the amount of repetitive training required would be so much as to cause one to faint.

It seems to be the same case for Rimuru.

Hinata sees a chance to win. For there is a difference in their experience on the battlefield. Rimuru is clearly lacking in that regard.

Hinata decides to change her tactics as she realizes this in order to give her opponent the false sense of her attacks being random in speed.

In other words, a feint.

She decides to toy Rimuru in the palm of her hands with the skill she accumulated through her rich experience—



The speed of Hinata's sword suddenly increases.

That flexible sword technique—even with the speed of my senses boosted to millions of times faster, I still have a feeling of uneasiness when Hinata suddenly changes the path of her sword.

“Are you kidding me!” I think to myself as I desperately try to catch up to her.

This is Hinata Sakaguchi.

Although I know this already, but her title of the Guardian of Mankind is truly not for show. As we continue our intense battle, I am also observing Hinata.

There is a subtle grin on her face as she looks at me with the confidence to win. I can't catch Hinata's movement with my eyes alone.

Her eyes are fixated on me almost as if they are a sensor working to perceive every subtle

movement of the surrounding. She must have been attacking based on such perception. While maintaining her natural stance, the center of gravity in her body is not shifting outside of her base, making her capable of reacting to every offense of her opponent. She isn't applying any force on her movement and is always in a relaxed state without the need to show any preparational act while she launches a variety of attacks.

I have no idea how Hinata is predicting my attacks, perhaps my pattern has been completely seen through by her.

Regardless, I can only desperately evade Hinata's attack by maneuvering around, purely relying on my body functions. It becomes quite clear that my movements are less agile due to that reason.

I will definitely face defeat if I continue to be tricked by her in this way.

My body functions are supposed to be stronger than hers, yet the strange thing is that my attack pattern has completely been seen through by her. Hinata's skills are way beyond me. But even if that was the case, the Hinata in front of me is not getting any careless for that reason.

In contrast to our last encounter, not only the feeling she gives off is very different, but everything about her seems to be different. Her sword skills were enchanted with her fighting aura, so being hit by it would likely result in critical injury.

«Answer. The wounds will not be lethal, however, magicle reserves is likely to reduce dramatically.»

As I suspected.

Thankfully it won't cause a lethal wound, but I would definitely sustain damage if I fail to block her attack. It would be dangerous for me to get hit by her multiple times in a row.

According to the analysis of Raphael-sama, that sword also possesses a special ability. Not only does it have the special wavelength to overwrite the natural laws, but it can even break through my "Multilayer Barrier s."

For real?! I couldn't help but ask this in my mind, but it must be the case since it's stated by Wisdom King Raphael-sensei.

«...»

Eh? What's going on?

«Notice. Next wave of attack is arriving—»

That was close, it seems that it is no time for me to ponder.

Hinata's sword is sharp and fierce beyond belief.

She is able to control her rapier at will, turning spurring to slashes fluently at ease. Moreover, Hinata's swordsmanship is very sound. She is not relying on any fancy techniques or magic but is relying on her mastery of sword alone.

In fact, only Hakuro would qualify to be able to confront me with a sword other than Hinata. But unfortunately, Hakuro probably won't be able to win. Their basic strengths are too different.

Considering all these, Hinata is almost a battle genius.

Any average attack can't possibly defeat her. For instance, "Clone" will be completely

useless against an opponent like Hinata. Only the main body is capable of using the Ultimate Skills. In other words, the “Clone” that serves as the projection of yourself would at most be able to utilize Unique Skills. It will likely be instantly destroyed by Hinata.

Even if I copy Souei’s “Clones” to equip them with essential skills, they would not be able to react to every one of these changes without being harmed. If that’s the case, they would not be able to stand against Hinata.

I should stay away from using any trick to avoid revealing any openings to her. Although it would turn this into a protracted battle, it is better to wait until Hinata exhausts her stamina. After all, I don’t really get tired.

Even though this is how I plan, Hinata’s attack speed suddenly increased once more.

In fact, that’s not accurate.

I couldn’t even see its movement clearly.

I always evade based on the path of the sword I see, yet she launches her pursuing attacks almost as if she has seen through the mode of my movements. It would mean, eh, it doesn’t seem to be the case...

«Answer. She is luring you to a predetermined location in order to attack.»

I see, so that’s why—

No matter where I escape to, Hinata would be waiting there with her attacks prepared.

In other words, is Hinata manipulating my movements?

Rip, I hear the sound of my clothes being slashed open by her.

Since just now, the amount of scratches on me started to increase.

It is not enough to amount to critical injuries, but it feels like I will be killed by her if this continues.

This is bad. Really bad!

Sensei, Raphael-sensei—!!

Right now, I can only seek for sensei’s wisdom.

Is there any good way out?

No, think of a solution fast!

—My wish seems to have been delivered as Wisdom King Raphael starts to respond.

«Report. Skill ‘Predict Future Attack’ has been learnt. Apply skill? YES/NO »

...

As expected of Master Raphael. It is really not for show.

This is the response I’d expect from Raphael-san.

I wasn’t able to react in time when it first spoke of the matter, but now I know that I have acquired some incredible skill—

«Answer. Not acquired, learnt.»

Ah, okie.

Either is fine, I complain in heart.

So, Raphael explains as follows:

It speaks of its observation of Hinata’s movements and that it has discovered that my oppo-

nent was able to handle my attack because she relied on a skill that predicted my attacks. And so, during my confrontation with Hinata, it has helped me to learn this skill through analyzing Hinata's attacks.

—Eh, is this really possible?

«Answer. True.»

It seems to be viable.

Well, since I've learnt the skill, such an explanation should not have been a bluff.

I need to apply it right away.

Suddenly a few trails of light appear before my eyes. It is a sort of sensation, or rather they are physically emerging in my mind?

One of the light trails suddenly starts to glow.

I swing my sword to hit that light, and interestingly, I was able to successfully block Hinata's sword.

It seems that these light trails indicate all the possible paths of attacks that the enemy can go for under the circumstance with the attacks following the direction of the trails. I tried it for several more times and discovered that sometimes the light trails would not glow.

This indicates that it is unable to predict the incoming attack path, meaning that it will be a complex attack from the enemy. In simpler terms, low level attacks such as a feint can all be predicted.

But since Hinata has mastered the art of sword, she was also able to strike out unpredictable attacks. The terrifying property of this skill is not its ability to predict, but that whatever it predicts is destined to happen.

It is not a prediction of an attack that is most likely to occur, instead, once successfully predicted, the attack will definitely land on the predicted path.

In other words—Hinata can no longer defeat me.

Her feints are no longer feints, or rather, it is a trick that would bring her own demise upon her.

I'm going to win—!

With swift movements and without any delay or hesitation, I try to evade Hinata's sword through the passage instructed by "Predict Future Attack"—



It was a hunch.

That it would be a fatal misstep to continue her current pattern of attack—An unknown sixth sense is tempting in Hinata's mind.

Hinata has always enjoyed doing things in orderly fashion. She doesn't act without a basis

or rationale, yet right now she has chosen to put faith in her instinct.

And so, she was saved. It was fortunate that Hinata forcefully changed her path of attack as soon as she launched a feint. More precisely, she was able to successfully attack by charging her body into Rimuru directly.

Rimuru also showed a surprised expression, but then raises his sword uncaringly at Hinata again.

Hinata also points her rapier at Rimuru.

However, something is not right.

The feeling that Rimuru is giving her is completely different now.

Hinata tries to launch a feint. It was an attack that can be easily blocked, yet Rimuru ignores it and slash directly at Hinata. The way he acted without hesitation raises doubts for Hinata that he has seen through her pattern.

—*Coincidence? No, it can't be... That was more accurate than my "Prediction Simulation"*

Indeed, it's almost predicting the future.

All in all, Hinata's thoughts seem to have been seen through by him.

That's an incredible speed of growth. Although my sword skill is above him, he however has superior abilities to make up for his flaws. Now any average attack would not be of use. If that's the case—

Hinata is very calmly comparing herself to Rimuru.

Right now, her chance of victory is surprisingly low.

Stalling for any longer would prove to be beneficial for her enemy—It was precisely because of this reason that she tried to resolve the fight sooner, yet this is how things have turned out to be.

She must abandon naive thoughts such as holding herself back to prevent taking lives in order to defeat such an opponent. Hinata has come to realize this.

Then, there is only one way left—

She must sacrifice her ultimate move that she is not supposed to use, in order to achieve victory.

She starts things over by distancing herself from Rimuru.

As time progresses, the people fighting in the surroundings are also in stalemate.

Suddenly, time seems to have been frozen as everyone drops their work at hand and soon begin to observe the battle between Hinata and Rimuru.

Neither of them can strike at their opponent.

For both of their predictions are extremely accurate that their opponent's next move would be predicted before they even try to execute it. The only thing in motion is time as every second passes.

Under such circumstance, Hinata speaks up.

“—Rimuru, I have a proposal.”

“What is it?”

“Let us decide the outcome of our battle with my next strike. I’ll use my ultimate ability to attack with my full power. If you can endure that, I’ll accept your victory. And if not—”

“Will it mean my defeat?”

“Yes, that is right.” —Hinata nods her head while saying so.

“But, just to make it clear to you. This skill is extremely dangerous. Will you still accept my proposal if that’s the case?”

If it’s Rimuru, he will probably accept.

Besides, now that Hinata has just warned him beforehand, Rimuru shouldn’t get killed by the skill then.

Now Hinata can be rest assured to give everything she has.

If she kills Rimuru, the Greater majins following Rimuru would probably turn into devilish monstrosities who will become nemesis to mankind.

Hinata, depleted with strength would be likely killed by them, and so will her subordinates, who are weaker than them, will be slaughtered. She doesn’t want such a situation to become real, so she has to keep Rimuru alive.

This skill is supposed to be her instant kill technique against opponents who aren’t prepared upon realizing its activation.

It is the Ultimate Skill (figuratively) of the holy sword—Melt Slash⁷⁰.

It is an original skill created by Hinata that combines both magic and swordsmanship.

Its power is tremendous. That is why normally there is no way that she can alter her strength output to avoid killing her opponents, and that’s why Hinata has avoided using it before.

—Moreover, if I showed this to you, you might be able to learn it with ease. I don’t like that either—

This ultimate technique is only intended to be used against individuals that Hinata wishes to kill.

Yet it is quite concerning for Hinata to use it on Rimuru, who seems to be able to learn whatever skill he sees. But since there is no other way around, Hinata is forced to comply.

—It is for this reason that I’ll have to settle the fight with this!

In order to have Rimuru admit his defeat, Hinata has to show him that he stands no chance against her.



“But, just to make it clear to you. This skill is extremely dangerous. Will you still accept my proposal if that’s the case?”

⁷⁰Or by Kanji “Slash to Decimate Magic spiritrons.

Hinata says so.

She seems to be quite confident with the skill she is about to unleash.

But I don't get it.

Why is she informing me beforehand?

«Answer. Hinata Sakaguchi seems to have no intention of killing you. Speculated reason of her warning being that the next wave of attack will be extremely dangerous. »

I see.

So, Raphael said that she doesn't intend to kill me.

Eh? How strange?

Didn't Hinata come here to kill me?

In fact, I've been feeling odd about this from the very start.

—But it is too late to say all these.

I'll think about it later.

I can ask her in detail after winning this duel.

“Very well. I accept your challenge.”

“Hehe, I knew you would say so.”

Hinata replies with a smile after hearing my words.

Her eyes look so innocent that they seem to portray a much younger age than in reality. No, her appearance alone seems to have been stuck in the high school period.

The Hinata right now seems far more natural than the seasoned soldier that I encountered before.

That smile is not a mean or cruel mockery.

This may be the real Hinata.

“But, with this we will be even! If you lose, you should just be straightforward and swear not to ever lay your hand on this nation again!”

As soon as I spoke my words out loud, Hinata begins to twist her head out of confusion. But she immediately tosses away her doubts and nods in agreement:

“...? I see, I'll promise you that. I only came to duel with you since it was your wish. I would like to discuss that with you in the future as well.”

I should feel happy that Hinata has accepted my proposal, but hold on a second, something about her reply sounded odd.

Eh?

“Did you just say that you only came to duel me because I wanted to do so...?”

“That's right. I've indeed received your message.”

Hinata confirms my doubts.

The message I left was supposed to start with some cut-and-dried words to resolve the issues with Shizue-san and the children, then I expressed hope to negotiate with her.

In the end I summarized myself as follows—

“—I hope the two of us can talk, but if you are still not satisfied, I'll fight the fight with you. To avoid bothering others, let's have a one-to-one duel. Though if possible, I'd prefer we

resolve things through peaceful negotiation. Please consider this. I await your reply. That's all, Goodbye."

I thought I'd clearly communicated my feelings; I certainly didn't wish to duel her.

Hinata seems like the really stubborn type, which is why I said those things about the duel in case she wouldn't have it any other way.

"Then, here I come."

"Hold on—!"

Oops, while I was lost in my recollection, Hinata has begun her attack.

There still seems to be some form of misunderstanding. But I don't think Hinata would listen with how everything has developed now.

Or rather, she is now in such deep focus that all sound would be filtered out like ambient noises.

On well.

All I have to do is to survive the attack to win. Easy peasy.

Let's talk about the results of the battle between people surrounding us. Benimaru and the rest seem to have won.⁷¹

Some have been rendered unconscious, some are just sitting on the ground seemingly immobile due to exhaustion.

The only ones who are still fine are Benimaru and Souei.

It seems that the Beastketeers didn't activate "Beastilization" during battle, but their level of exhaustion is no less than the Holy Knights.'

And Souei... What's he been up to?

The female knight who was his opponent looks fine, but for some reason, she is gazing at him with blushed cheeks. (°_°)

She is acting all shy and petite, making me wonder what exactly happened there?

She totally looks like a girl in love who's fallen for Souei.

I mean, aren't you fighting a battle here?

I'll have to ask him about the details later.

Next is Shion.

She seems to have achieved complete victory and has brought the Holy Knights here. Although there seems to be some injuries, no one has died. The same is the case for the Holy Knights, who should be fine by applying some healing potions later. I should praise her for the good work. (and not losing her temper)

The issue remaining here is my duel with Hinata, and the next wave of attack will determine the result.

"Benimaru."

"Yes sir."

"In the unlikely event that I'm beaten, I'll leave the rest to you."

⁷¹More on their fights in side stories

“Hehe, surely you jest. Everyone here believes that Rimuru-sama would emerge victorious.”

Benimaru replies heartily which I could only shrug in response.

I suppose he’s right. Unlike the computer I left in the other world, I can’t just abandon my comrades in this world to their own devices.

I’m not that irresponsible.

“I see. Then just wait there for my triumphant return!”

“Yes sir! May you achieve great victory—”

I nod in response and turn my eyes to Hinata—



It seems that everything has ended—Hinata thinks to herself while observing the surrounding.

The sights of her exhausted subordinates enter her eyes, who are surprisingly well treated with much politeness. It must have been the strict order from Rimuru to prohibit the monsters from abusing the captives.

Right, if only had I believed in your moral compass from the start...

It is too late to think about this, but Hinata still believes so.

But it is still not too late.

She will build a new relationship by achieving victory here.

Hinata infuses her exalted mood into her prayer as she chants with a clear voice.

There is no need for this, but she wishes to show it to Rimuru. Since he may copy it in secret, she will show him the full version.

She casts “Disintegration.” This power begins to gather on the empty left hand of Hinata, giving off a bright shine.

The sparkling particles intertwine to create a fantasy-like scenery.

Then Hinata imbues that light onto the body of her Moonlight Rapier.

—Her left hand slowly caresses the body of her sword.

The preparation is done.

She has infused her strongest magic with her sword art.

This is the technique that shall slash through all things in the world.

“Come now, have you made your resolve?”

“Bring it on!”

“Then take this—Melt Slash!”

Hinata finishes her words and turns into a beam of light, quickly approaching Rimuru.



What a bright light.

Not only her sword, but Hinata's entire body is glowing.

She is approaching me at superhuman speed with sparkling particles enchanted on herself.
That is a speed beyond my imagination.



That sword possesses the properties of eliminating evil, meaning it is effective against any monster.

«Warning. Defense impossible, Evasion impossible—!»

This is the first time I have heard such alarming report sounds from Wisdom King Raphael.

Even though my senses have been accelerated to millions of times faster, this light approaching me is still not slowing down.

Its speed is abnormally fast.

I have to act according to its distance and angle.

Hinata is aiming at my lower body, probably thinking that I won't die as long as my head is intact.

Speaking of which, this skill is still way too dangerous even if Hinata doesn't intend to kill me. There is no way to evade this, against this skill my "Multilayer Barrier s" are like thin veils of paper. Those lights are unleashing energy to destroy the spiritrons of any matters—The Beam of Evil Dispel. My body would probably burn to ashes as soon as I get in contact with it.

«Report. Attack can be counteracted by sacrificing Ultimate Skill 'Gluttonous King Beelzebuth,' suggest adapting said strategy.»

Even at this point, Wisdom King Raphael-sama is still reliable.

But honestly, it will be a huge loss to sacrifice "Gluttonous King Beelzebuth," but right now I can only follow this instruction. Since it is the solution suggested by Raphael that has the highest rate of success, I should not have any hesitation.

Ironically, it seems to be easier to lock onto her attack despite such high speed. Since it is so fast, there is no way for her to change her trajectory.

Wisdom King Raphael-sama has locked onto Hinata's location using "Predict Future Attack" and activated "Gluttonous King Beelzebuth."

The battle plan is to have "Gluttonous King Beelzebuth" consume everything as soon as Hinata's sword comes in contact with me.

Straightforward and simple, I have no need to hesitate.

Next—

Hinata's attack collides with "Gluttonous King Beelzebuth."

.....

.....

...

As it turns out, I am alive.

I thought I was going to die, yet I didn't.

"Fufufu, fwHAHAHAHAHA!"

I collapse to the ground as Hinata's laughter travels to my ear. The magicle in the surrounding area has been completely cleansed, my "Universal Perception" seems to be malfunctioning as well.

Having not used my eardrums to hear sounds for quite some time, rather than being nostalgic, it ends up being pretty disorienting.

My body cannot move.

The moment I cancelled out Hinata's skill, I consumed a massive amount of magicule. Converting to damage, I've lost more than seventy percent of it in a go.

Never mind, as long as I'm alive... I couldn't have imagined that she had hidden such a terrifying attack. Had she used this without issuing a warning... Cold sweat drops began to flow down my back.

"You are good. Did you take my attack intentionally?"

Eh? What is Hinata talking about?

Who would be dumb enough as to intentionally take on such a dangerous attack?

«...»

Eh, hmm, could it be...

Feeling concerned that something about Raphael-sensei felt strange. I tried to inquire about it, yet Raphael kept silent. Something's definitely up.

"Since you've made it through my attack in one piece, as promised, I accept my defeat. I won't be able to continue this fight anyway—"

Hinata says so while disarming herself.

In a tone that seems to indicate the depletion of her strength.

Her powerful sword also disappeared after being consumed by my "Gluttonous King Beelzebuth." Right now, Hinata probably does not possess any combat ability anymore. With that being said, Hinata still straightens her back energetically and awaits my answer.

"Right. It is my victory—"

I announce the result to Hinata.

Although this does not resolve our problem.

As I plan to make my declaration of victory to Hinata, I catch on to a certain glowing object at the corner of my eye. Hinata also seems to have noticed as she turns her eyes to it as well.

In front of my eyes is a giant sword.

«Warning. Target object has been measured to experience emitted telepathic interference and its magicule is out of control—object will explode imminently.»

The object it is referring to is that giant sword. Someone is interfering with it, could it be that this giant sword is a means to harm us?

"Damn it! Have you really gone this far, Seven Luminaries —!"

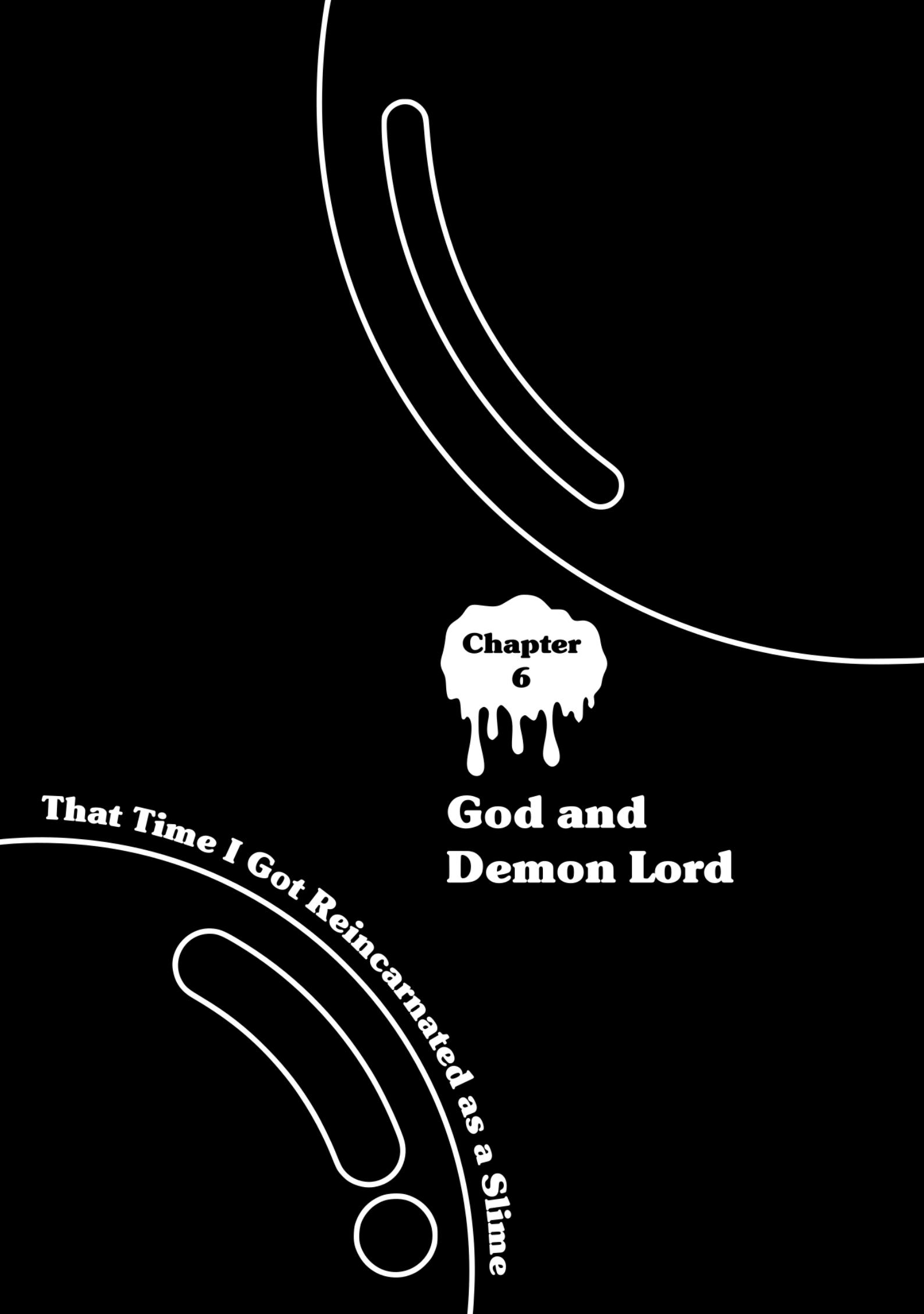
Hinata shouts out and rushes in front to protect the immobilized me.

And next instant, the shockwave and bright light of explosion arrive simultaneously.

At the blink of an eye—Hinata's body slowly collapses.

ROUGH SKETCHES





**Chapter
6**

God and Demon Lord

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Chapter 6

God and Demon Lord

This is the kingdom of darkness. In this nation, there is a crypt hidden deep underground unknown to anyone.

There, a beautiful black-haired girl without clothes sealed inside a frozen coffin is in front of someone's eyes. The person before the girl carries herself without etiquette as she lies directly on the coffin.

Reveling in the moment, an enchanting smile hangs on her face. There is a faint blush on her pure and smooth white skin. This young lady sighs with overwhelmed emotion.

Ah, how beautiful. Ah...

Privately, it is a personal hobby for her to enjoy watching and caressing the girl in the frozen coffin.

This petite silver-haired young lady.

She has a pair of heterochromatic eyes—One blue, one red, each glow with seductive shine.

They are eye-catching even when contrasting to her incredibly beautiful face, making the young lady's beauty even more outstanding.

However, her most eye-catching features are none other than—

The two white fangs slightly emerging from the young lady's cute lips. When she opens up her petite lips, the crimson blood-like tongue would appear alongside her white fangs.

She is the ruler of dark nights, “Queen of Nightmares” —Demon Lord Luminas Valentine.

Every time she touches this frozen coffin, a burn-like scar appears on Luminas's beautiful body.

For this is a holy ark. It is a container for pure energy of the Holy Spirit, and so Luminas would naturally sustain injuries. As a Vampiric Demon Lord, this coffin is undoubtedly poisonous to her.

And yet, Luminas doesn't mind it at all.

These injuries are the utmost joy to her.

Even with the immense power Luminas possesses as a Demon Lord, she would not be able to destroy this coffin.

Since Luminas dreams of one day liberating the young girl slumbering within, she has come to tease with her at the frozen coffin again...

It was then that her trusted subordinate brings the news.

“My most sincere apologies for interrupting you, but there is something I need to report.”

The one reporting is Louis.

He was granted the position of “Pope” in Holy Empire of Lubelius under Luminas’s rule.

Luminas suppresses her displeasure—Since Louis seldom comes looking for her, so it must have been something extremely urgent.

“I see it is Louis who’s caused all the fuss. What is it?”

Louis explains briefly to Luminas’s question.

“Hinata wished to resolve things with Rimuru, which I permitted. However, the situation seems to have complicated.”

“—What do you mean?”

“As I mentioned—”

Louis begins to recount the findings of his investigation.

“Is that so...How troublesome.”

Luminas says so with a gloomy tone as she withdraws from the frozen coffin.

She summons her servant after leaving the crypt.

“Gunther!”

“Yes, I am here—”

An elderly butler emerges from the dark. He is the ancient vampire servant of Luminas who attended the Walpurgis Banquet with her.

Alongside Louis with similar status, he is one of the “Three Counts” ⁷² under Luminas’s reign.

There is Louis who is in charge of the Pope’s Ministry. While Gunther governs the Night Garden. As well as the now deceased Roy who disguised himself as the enemy to act as the Demon Lord’s double.

Among their other duties, the three work as Luminas’s bodyguard in shifts.

Given that Luminas is staying in the crypt of Night Garden, it is Gunther who is guarding by her side. He dresses Luminas. You can tell the formality of their dress code given that they are not using magic to dress instantly.

As he is helping Luminas, Gunther heatedly scolds Louis.

“How bold of you to interrupt Luminas-sama with such trivial matters—”

“My sincerest apologies. However, if let unattended, Luminas-sama would bear the misfortune of losing her beloved pet.”

“It is precisely that which makes it trivial. However, we should indeed be cautious to have her fight against that Demon Lord Rimuru...”

“I came to inform my lord to prevent that. If Hinata is killed, Luminas-sama would—”

⁷²There is no specification of their ranking. So count it is because vampire.

At the end of her patience, Luminas comes between the two to stop the quarrel.

“Louis, cut your words short, and you too Gunther. Won’t it be fine if I move out myself? In case there’s any trouble.”

The “Three Counts” all dislike when they interfere each other’s field of duty, and this character of them is also one of the reasons why Luminas gets headaches in life.

Aware of this, Louis decides to make a concession for Gunther.

“Yes, I am most ashamed of my behavior.”

“My most sincere apologies—”

The two both bow in apology after being scolded by Luminas.

She groaned in exasperation, and gives her orders to the two.

“With Roy being gone, we will have to reassign duties. But there is no time for that now. You two should both come with me for now.”

Luminas commands with majesty and begins to move out.

“Understood.”

“I shall pledge my service.”

The two majin obey happily as she leads them away.

Luminas suddenly pauses in her tracks. She turns back to the holy cabinet containing her slumbering beloved.

Just you wait—

Luminas whispers the name of her dear young girl.

With her words said, she caresses the crypt gate with pity and seals it down tightly. Being sealed by Luminas’s powerful magical barrier, the crypt sinks into the pitch-black void...



A leader of the secret organization “Cerberus”—Damrada the Gold has arrived in the Kingdom of Farmus following his secret meeting with the five elders.

He is traveling to the Nedler territory located at the border.

He is on good terms with Earl Nedler McMunn thanks to the frequent gifts he sent. These efforts gained the trust of the covetous Earl. And Damrada was able to sneak his men into the city through bribing alone.

Now that he has learned where Edmalis is hiding in the city, it won’t be long before this land becomes the ground zero of chaos.

It’s also been confirmed that the new king Edward has led an army of twenty-thousand men to form camp near the domain of Edmalis. The Hero Youm is sheltering King Edmalis—They will have the new king Edward spread this as a public announcement of a collusion between the two. He will also emphasize on the claim that Edmalis has signed the treaty of ceasefire

without authorization. And now that the new king has gained control, Edward will not carry out the accord.

However, he will have to demonstrate his “good faith”—through claiming to the public that Edmalis and Youm have embezzled the reparations.

To the people living in cities, a hero who can only fight wars is of no use for them. Since they live much safer lives than those by the border, they do not understand the necessity of a defensive force. Some are even bitter over their taxes being wasted on these heroes who do nothing. Considering the amount spent on the citizens’ personal safety, their lack of such common sense is truly laughable.

Now, with the news out that the Hero Youm and old king Edmalis have seized the reparations, the upper echelons of the Kingdom of Farmus are infuriated. There are increasingly more people volunteering themselves to aid the new king in their capture. Everyone now believes that Edward is the justified one, and so he has exploited this public opinion to lead the army.

If this continues, Youm and Edmalis would be defamed and executed. It’s obvious that the two would not stand for this.

The threat of war is looming over this place.

And it’s all according to Damrada’s plan.

This land originally only had Youm’s five thousand soldiers, yet three days ago, more reinforcements started arriving.

Hmm, of course Demon Lord Rimuru would not allow Youm to meet his demise like this. Naive, how terribly naive. In that case, Hinata the Saint’s odds are looking good. Then, it may be time for me to withdraw...

To Damrada however, this is also within his expectations.

It was only his personal wish to take care of Hinata. Since the lies he told to Hinata may have been revealed, he wants to get rid of her before she becomes a problem. She won’t let Damrada walk free. And if he is to continue to act among the Western Nations, he has to keep that in mind.

With that being said, the issue concerning Hinata will have to depend on the Five Elders. This opponent is perhaps too dangerous for Damrada to take on directly.

Never mind. As long as our plan doesn’t fail...

The head⁷³ of “Cerberus” only ordered him to stir war in this land. In other words, his mission has been completed. It is best for him to withdraw before Hinata returns.

But his work is not done yet—Though Damrada doesn’t care whether the new king or the hero triumph, he will need to carry out the promise made with the Five Elders.

That is to eliminate the demon...

The plan has already changed as things have developed.

According to the investigation of the meetings by Earl Nedler, it seems that the demon also wants to resolve the war in short period of time.

⁷³The term used here is “総帥” which means “General” or “Commander in chief”

What should he do now—Damrada begins to ponder.

The new king's goal, the demon's motive.

The two are in direct opposition.

The new king does not wish to antagonize Demon Lord Rimuru. Their difference in military strength is night and day. He will not be able to win even with his whole country on the march.

Yet Demon Lord Rimuru is reinforcing the Hero Youm, meaning he doesn't mind a war. The new king's claim of upholding justice became meaningless the moment that the Demon Lord decided to help the old king.

The situation has changed.

Moreover, something else has been on Damrada's mind.

While investigating for the demon elimination task, he discovered that the majin Razen has not been serving the old king, but is under the order of this demon that Damrada is to kill.

It means...could it be that the majin Razen was not defeated by Demon Lord Rimuru, but by the demon under Rimuru's command? Then it can't possibly be the incarnation of any contemporary or modern breed of archdemon. It must be some far more ancient demon...

Damrada's face stiffened upon thinking so.

There isn't enough information. Even the information received from his boss doesn't have anything about this type of demon.

He should consider it as modern breed that has lived at least hundreds of years... Damrada concludes.

Among archdemons, their power varies depending on the years and age they were born. The breeds that were born in recent years may be fine to deal with, but the modern breeds that have lived for two or three hundred years would make a fierce foe to rival the power of a Calamity Rank threat. Moreover, if it is the medieval breed of demon that has lived for nearly a thousand years, its power would be similar to that of a Demon Lord's lieutenant. Even if it is evolved from Lesser Demon, its power is still not to be underestimated.

Once such a demon is born, it will pose very a challenging threat to mankind.

By the way, the most powerful breed of demon that would even acknowledge a human contract is the medieval breed. Summoning any demon higher than that would only bring destruction. A successful summoner would be out of luck and can only wait to be deprived of their souls by the demon.

According to the latest research of the Eastern Empire, it has become common sense to set a limit during summoning. However, the only people who are capable of summoning archdemons the few "Hero" class masters...

"With that being said, if it is majin Razen..."

Damrada couldn't help but mutter.

Indeed, the name of majin Razen is quite well-known even in the Empire side. His power should not lose to any medieval breed demon. If a demon who is able to defeat the powerful Razen does exist—

Besides, the Five Elders seem to be plotting something as well. Damrada is interested in

their plan, but his instincts tell him that getting any more involved would be dangerous.

I'd better get away before I get caught up in anything—

He plans as such.

“Damrada-sama, what is going on?”

Damrada's subordinate notices him talking to himself and asks.

Damrada slants his eye at the subordinate and grins.

“Hehehehe, how dangerous. I can't continue this charade. I've already messaged them to stay put, now we will really have to be cautious.”

“...?”

“Let's withdraw. Leave two men behind to observe the situation and clear everyone else out of the country.”

“Understood, sir. But what about you?”

“I'm gonna pay my respect to the new king and then check out the Monster Kingdom.”

“But weren't we going to act cautiously?”

“Hmm? Hehehe, of course we will. But I'm not doing anything shady, rather, to use my disguise identity as a merchant to request an audience with the Demon Lord Rimuru-sama. I'd love to have the privilege of becoming a new business partner of his, and intend to gain his favor by any means necessary.”

“I see, I understand now. Then, what should we do with the six contractors from the Contact Association (Contractor) hired from the empire?”

“It is because of them that I am paying a visit to the new king. They are my greeting gift to him.”

“I see, so are we pushing the rest of the duties all to Edward?”

“What a bad way to put it. I'm simply doing the new king a favor while carrying out the deal I made with the Five Elders.”

The so-called Contract Association is an organization similar to the Freedom Association in the Western Nations. They commission professionals, some of whom are demon slayers that make their living hunting demons. They are specialists in battling demons who only earned their license for being the toughest among monster fighters.

Damrada has spent a fortune hiring them from his home country to have them demonstrate their strength on this land. But he has revised the original plan after sensing danger.

“But, is there really a need to be so alerted? We won't make back our investment this way...”

“Hell if I know. Maybe I'm just overthinking it, but I trust my instincts. I'm not stupid enough to lose my life over a maybe.”

“I apologize if I've offended you just now. I shall go prepare for our departure.”

“All right, I will go pack another gift for the new king.”

With nothing else to be said, his subordinate exits the room.

Now that they've properly prepared, it is time for Damrada to leave Nedler's territory.

It is the right call.

At this crucial point of time, Damrada has escaped this dangerous land that's been locked on by the raging eyes of one very angry demon.



New king Edward can't hold in his excitement.

With the unstopping aid arriving from nobles around the kingdom, his military power is gradually increasing.

He didn't expect the Hero Youm's decision to support his elder brother Edmalis, and when Demon Lord Rimuru reinforced Youm with troops, he prepared himself for the plan to fail.

Yet even so, God has not abandoned Edward.

The situation changed when Archbishop Reyhiem was murdered. He didn't expect that Saint Hinata would move to confront Demon Lord Rimuru. It's rumored that she is marching alongside the Holy Knight Order.

Moreover, the heroes of Holy Empire of Lubelius have volunteered to assist Edward. They are the Pope's Imperial Guards—Including the legendary “Three Martial Sages” who are surpassed only by Hinata. These people have mobilized the Templar Knight Order to join in his battle.

Although they have yet to proclaim their enemy as the “Nemesis of God,” it seems that it is only a matter of time before it becomes official. The group’s main goal is to hunt down the demon that murdered Archbishop Reyhiem, however, that is merely an excuse—Edward deduces that their true intention is to form a grand alliance, the so called United Army of Western Nations in order to battle against Demon Lord Rimuru.

For this reason, Edward has given them permission to conduct whatever they wish in the Kingdom of Farmus, even military operations. He personally does not wish to fight against Demon Lord Rimuru, but it hardly matters at this point of time.

Hinata can't possibly lose to the Demon Lord, and with such a mighty army, even the Demon Lord's army will be defeated—This is Edward's conclusion. The problem is Veldora... If it really is that carefree and temperamental evil dragon, the Western Holy Church should be moving all its force to seal it again.

The only thing left is justification, but that question is resolved as well. Some powerful “Eastern” Merchant has visited Edward and provided him a letter from Earl Nedler.

The letter states a request for Edward to “rescue” him.

Now that all the problems have been resolved, Edward is confident of his victory.

With the reinforcement arriving at the border of the kingdom and the justification of rescuing Nedler, he should move now.

He made the decision without hesitation.

He is not actually going to war, but the deployment of the army in the streets and around the city will pose quite the menacing effect.

It is Edward's misfortune that no one was there to advise him.

He gives the order to march.



The plan has been drastically altered, Glenda thinks to herself.

But this is quite common on the battlefield. It is important to quickly adapt and turn the situation for the better.

Thinking in that direction, things are in fact not too bad.

Every Kingdom is very concerned about the development of this incident, and many reporters have gathered.

The situation is prepared according to the plan. Although they never expected that Rimuru would split his army while dealing with Hinata, it only helped Glenda as he diverted his military force. He has made the wrong move, Glenda concludes.

In essence, there shouldn't be any issue.

Damrada seems to have escaped, but he has left a team specialized for demon slaying to King Edward as a token of friendship. She is looking forward to the performances of these fierce warriors above Rank A.

Good, I'll just use them as disposable pawns then.

Glenda awaits her order casually like that.

Her confidence in defeating the demon has kept Glenda optimistic.

However, said confidence will not last long...



Kufufufufu.

Diablo, the demon—laughs evilly.

His wide-spread wings are like those of a bat, demonstrating a wicked sight.

He is searching the battlefield from the sky to find the person who framed him. Diablo would not permit such embarrassment of himself in front of his beloved master Rimuru. He has never experienced the taste of fear since his birth, yet the thought of losing his job sends a shiver down his spine.

If Rimuru-sama says “You can go back now” again—He shivers at the thought. Imagining it alone is already painful, more painful than having his body torn apart.

Those people who caused him such fear will know his true colors.

Diablo’s laughter intensifies upon thinking so.

And soon Diablo discovers Edward, the new king, at the back of the formation.

There are also several individuals who stand out from the rest. But to Diablo, they are no more than street trash.

However, they seem to be worthy of standing before Diablo—*Then they must be the “Ten Great Saints” or something.*

Had it not been for Rimuru’s hope that his force would “avoid harming the innocent,” this would be much easier... Diablo is not alone in thinking this—even Hakurou who is supposed to monitor him, agrees.

Of course, Diablo wouldn’t harm the soldiers who don’t intend to resist, but it’s different for those who attack him. Moreover, he has no mercy for fools who launch an attack without considering their comrades.

Suppressing his eager mood to “greet” them, Diablo informs Hakurou through “Telepathy Net.”

“Hakurou-san, there is someone quite unusual heading towards your direction. He should help Ranga-san to kill some time.”

“Oh, understood. Will it be a problem if we don’t kill him?”

“Not at all. That man must be related to the rumor from Lubelius. I wish to take him alive as a bargaining chip.”

“I understand. I shall relay the message to Ranga-san.”

“Also... That guy is leading five thousand soldiers. By the standard of Freedom Association, the group contains members who exceed Rank A.”

“Hmm. Perfect timing. I am going to send Gobta and Gabil there.”

“Great, that’s a wonderful idea. The chances of their defeat are minimal—”

“Mmm, rest assured. With me overseeing everything, you can do as you wish.”

“I’m most reassured by your words. Then, excuse me for a while.”

“Don’t overplay your hand.”

Diablo informs Hakurou of the information he has gathered from investigation.

He can’t hold himself back anymore and decides to abandon his concerns. He launches himself towards his prey.

New king Edward freezes as Diablo appears in front of him.

Sare—who he was tasting black tea with—is no exception, the sudden occurrence catching him off guard.

“Greetings everyone, I don’t believe we’ve been acquainted. Though, King Edward, I should say it’s been a while. My name is Diablo.”

Diablo descended from the sky, not forgetting to greet the two by bowing afterward.

“Everyone spread out! Raise your guard and protect King Edward!”

The knight commander commands out loud, not allowing Diablo finish his greeting.

On the order, the Imperial Knights quickly carry Edward to the back. A wall of men is formed to protect them.

The knights of the Pope's Imperial Guards put up their guard and entered formation as soon as they saw Diablo. They push themselves forward before Edward and the rest.

Diablo remains silent and relaxed while waiting for these panicked bunch to finish their preparation. Now that he's knows his target, the rest is simple. That's why there is no need for him to rush.

The campsite is set up with military tents.

Diablo now stands before the luxurious-looking tent reserved for the king as Sare and his subordinates quickly surround him. Yet Diablo still seems to have a delighted expression as no one notices the fury burning in his eyes.

The reporters are all scared out of their wits, wanting to know what is going on. Diablo's smile to them doesn't weaken.

"I have no intention of harming you so long as you be a doll and stay put."

With that, Diablo puts his fingers together with a crisp *snap*.

Upon making the sound, the reporters are all surrounded by "Barrier." This is Diablo's attempt to prevent them from being affected. The intention behind his words are "Don't call me ruthless if you dare step out of that barrier." But the reporters are happier not realizing so.

The preparation is done, and Edward has come back to his senses.

"Why if it isn't Demon Lord Rimuru's honorable envoy? To what do we owe the pleasure?"

Despite somewhat lacking in majesty, Edward asks Diablo in such tone while putting on the facade of haughtiness.

Diablo soon answers.

"Kufufufufu, just one simple matter. I came with a warning."

"Warning? What sort of warning?"

"Retreat your army now and make peace with Youm-san. By doing so, you shall all be exempted from the torment of fear you can't possibly imagine."

With formality in mind, he starts off the conversation negotiating for peace.

However, this is not Diablo's real intention. It will be more troublesome if they are willing to make peace.

"Hahaha, what a strange way to phrase things. When it comes down to it, this began when my brother embezzled your reparations. I've only marched my army here to demonstrate our sincerity to your nation and retrieve that money. You have no right to meddle with this!"

"I see. Do you then suggest that everything will be going according to our peace treaty?"

"Of course. However, it doesn't seem to be necessary now, since I've been deceived as well!"

"How is that the case?"

"Oh, quit your lies! You and my brother—No, you've colluded with Edmalis and those liars in hopes of extorting twice the reparations from our kingdom. I've already seen through

your despicable goal.”

“...”

“Do you have nothing to say? That Rimuru guy is not much of a Demon Lord. Aren’t you trying to plant the seed of war only to extort money from it?”

“...”

“How unfortunate however, you murdered Archbishop Reyhiem-sama in order to silence him, but all of his words have been recorded here loud and clear!”

Diablo’s silence encouraged Edward’s put forth more arrogant speech.

He then raises the crystal ball in his hand high for the reporters to see clearly. The film displays what seems to be Reyhiem under interrogation. He shouts in the film: “I’ve not betrayed you! Please forgive me, forgive me!”

Anyone would believe that it is the footage before his death.

“Which proves?”

Edward laughs and answers with disdain at Diablo’s question:

“Don’t you understand? Glenda-san brought this to us. Did you not infiltrate Lubelius and murder Reyhiem-sama? You thought you could get your way by threatening him, but his faith in God has triumphed the fear you imposed! You must have killed him fearing that he will expose this to the public!”

Edward puts on an imposing expression as he looks at Diablo.

Yet Diablo’s face is still covered with smile.

“How wonderful. You claim that a mere “human” could overcome their fear of me? What an amusing joke.”

“Quit playing dumb! We have enough evidence, so don’t think you can talk your way—”

“Enough. Shut your mouth.”

Edward wanted to show off his authority to the reporters before he was interrupted by Diablo’s calm voice.

The smile on Diablo’s face suddenly disappears.

In its place, it is replaced with a hollow and terrifying expression.



“This charade ends now. I intended to enjoy a mind game with you, yet you don’t even possess a worthy intellect.”

Edward becomes frozen in place at Diablo’s assertion.

“I was going to find out the truth and prove my innocence. But it seems to be unnecessary. Since you humans only believe what you wish to believe, there should be an easier way to prove it—”

“W-what do you mean...?”

Fear emerges in Edward’s heart as the aura emitted by Diablo changes. He finally comes to a terrifying question—Did I do something wrong?

Then, Diablo declares:

“Don’t you wish to prove it? It would be my defeat if any one of you can overcome this fear. But, just a heads-up for you, I’m yet to see anyone achieve that to this day. So, you’d better find your resolve when standing against me.”

His gentle words contrast with the raging fire that is burning inside the red pupils of his golden eyes.

Diablo could have endured it were Edward’s comments directed at him alone, but he dragged Rimuru into this claiming that he is some sort of evil being.

With those words, Edward’s life was forfeit.

Edward, terrified, begins to shout:

“All of you, move out and kill this guy! Kill this dangerous demon—”

The demon slayers among Edward’s bodyguards have been waiting for this order.

They drop out one by one and launch their attacks on Diablo.

“Overcoming fear? I’m laughing my ass off here! Don’t get so arrogant just because you are the highest ranked demon species of archdemon⁷⁴, demons with your ranking are no rarity in our hometown.”

“Your demon race can’t maintain their form without their flesh! It is no different for archdemons!”

“We’ve been studying the techniques to fight Demons all our lives, don’t underestimate humans!”

The demon slayers shout out one by one as they collaborate in forming their killing formation.

But in contrary to their words, they are not being careless at all. Since Diablo has just stated his name.

A “Named” archdemon is far more dangerous.

“What is it now, are you incapable of even giving a response?”

“You’re all talk in the end after all.”

The demon slayers tied Diablo up tightly with chains made of special holy-element alloys.

Due to the ease of this attack, they lowered their guard against Diablo.

⁷⁴FYI, this is likely only referring to the highest rank of demon that can be summoned and commanded.

Unlike in the Western Nations, demons have caused many problems in the Eastern Empire. It is rumored that this is due to the existence of a base set up by a powerful demon there. But because of this, they were able to develop special tactics against demons. Even the archdemons—considered a mythical existence in the west—will not survive. The people of the east have categorized the power of demons into different ranks in order to study methods to subdue them.

The leader of the demon slayers has recognized Diablo as a medieval breed. But with the additional consideration of it being “Named,” he has changed his judgement to recognize this demon as a threat to rival the ancient breed.

These are demons who bear the rank of Noble, possessing immense power and a wealth of knowledge. This type of threat has been known to even lead a number of vassals, so it cannot be underestimated.

With that being said however, the leader still believes there is a chance for the demon slayers to win. He has in fact had the experience of fighting several archdemons in the past. This confidence made him to arrive at this conclusion without a doubt.

“Are you ready now?”

The leader is shocked by Diablo’s rhetorical question.

“W-what?”

“Nothing, please give me a signal to fight when you are properly prepared.”

The leader couldn’t understand what Diablo meant for a while seeing he still seemed to be very energetic.

“...Oh? Does it mean that you won’t interfere no matter what we do?”

The leader hides his panic and provokes Diablo with words.

“Why would I do that? It’s rare to see people working so hard, so I won’t interfere. After all, I can inspire the greatest amount of fear this way.”

“Hehehehe, don’t look down on us, demon. You will know how arrogant you are when we turn you into ashes!”

Diablo answered jokingly, sending chills up the demon slayers’ spine.

Most demons are indeed overconfident and despise humans. Hence, Diablo’s speech alone is nothing remarkable. Yet this is coming from someone whose entire body has been tied up. Even these veterans in demon slaying feel unease in the face of such overwhelming confidence.

With that being said, they are professionals. They have been rigorously trained to act without hesitation and quickly complete their jobs.

“—Then, repent for your arrogance in the next world! Eliminate him, Sextuple Thunder Strike (Thunderbolt)—!”

King Edward, reporters from different nations, Sare, and the Imperial Knights from Lubelius are all watching.

A blinding bolt of lightning strikes to incinerate Diablo.

“How about that! How does it feel being struck by a natural thunderbolt instead of a magical

one⁷⁵?"

"Aren't you Demons protected by "Multiple" Defensive Barriers? Too bad! The empire has researched the spell to break right through them!"

"In order for Demons to affect the physical world, you require a body! With your flesh destroyed, you're at the end of the road!"

The demon slayers say so with great confidence.

Attacks launched using magicules are easily blocked by the "Barriers" that directly interfere with them. For this reason, they decided to develop weapons that don't make use of magicules. This Thunderbolt is one of the new weapons designed to be used against demons.

Hearing their words, the fear in Edward's heart evaporated.

"Wonderful! As expected of warriors from the "East." I'll have to reward that merchant."

Edward says so delightfully, smirking at Diablo with a twisted expression.

The lightning is incinerating Diablo.

Incinerating... But is it really burning him?

Even enveloped in that lightning, a smile still hangs on Diablo's lips.

The only two people who notice something amiss are Sare and Glenda.

The leader of the demon slayers also begins to realize something is wrong.

—How strange. Too strange! Why are his clothes not burning along with him?

Feeling doubts, he soon discovers something—His opponent is wearing an evil grin.

"Y-you—!"

"Kufufufufu, how weak. You are all too weak. You wish to challenge me with such pathetic power? How disappointing is it that you've wasted all of that effort."

As he says this, Diablo slightly raises his arm.

With his arm lifted, the chains bound around Diablo are deflected.

"UHH!"

"WUHH!"

Diablo displays an incredibly immense force that breaks the special alloy chains around him.

"M-monster!"

The leader unintentionally spat in astonishment.

Diablo cracks a smile, continuing nonchalantly.

"Well, next stop, we have some other tests to do."

"H-hold on! Isn't this too abnormal! How could the Thunderbolt be ineffective?"

The leader suddenly demands, either rejecting reality or trying to calm himself.

Hearing this, Diablo gives him the answer gently.

"You wish to know why? It's very simple. I have high resistance against all natural attacks, including lightning. If you're curious, I didn't even need to deploy a defensive barrier for your attack just now, it was like a weak sting to me."

⁷⁵Lightening that deals natural elemental damage instead of elemental magic damage (which uses mana/magicule).

Are you satisfied now? He adds.

The leader begins to quiver.

But his reaction is considerably better than the others.

Seemingly realizing the meaning of Diablo's words—

“WA-WOAH—! Get away from me, stop, stay away!”

“KYAAA—! Help, HELP ME!”

The rest of the teammates have all wet themselves and began to yowl incomprehensibly.

These are the reactions of the fierce, first-class demon slayers who have seen it all on the battlefield.

But it's not over yet.

Apart from the reporters who are being protected, the observers at the scene felt a shiver run down their spines. As for Edward, he fainted and has foam drooling out of his mouth.

It is the same for his bodyguards.

What happened?

The leader finally understands.

This... Intense sense of dread—It's the oppressive aura of this demon before him. All Diablo did was release the demonic aura he had been suppressing.

Yet this aura is already strong enough to kill humans.

“Ara? Only three of you passed my test? That's fine, you have my applause. Even though I'm being generous, you still all managed to endure my “Demon Lord Haki (Imposing Aura).” I shall allow you to face me in a fight.”

Fear is almost suffocating the leader at this point, upon hearing Diablo's words, he turns his head back.

He can see only two people standing. They are the qualified individuals Diablo mentioned.

A young boy and a wild beauty—Sare and Glenda.

Seeing that the two have remained calm, the leader resolves himself with some confidence retrieved.

It's all right, I can still turn the table around. As the top heroes of the west, it is expected from the “Three Martial Sages.” Even if subordinates fell, we have a chance with these two around...

Having received some back up, the leader is filled with fighting spirit once more and turns to Diablo.

“Hehehehe, impressive, as expected from a demon under the Demon Lord. But you are also quite the poser.”

“Are you implying that I am bluffing?”

“Yes, bluffing indeed. Didn't you just mention “Demon Lord Haki”? That is a skill only available to monsters of the “Demon Lord Seed.” A demon's final stage of evolution is archdemon, there is no way you can become a “Demon Lord Seed”! Your words are nothing but bluffs!”

This is a top secret found from research in the East.

There is a limit to the amount of magicules a demon can store. This amount does not differ greatly between demons, while their strength does. In other words, the strength of ancient demons comes from their experience making them more efficient in utilizing this power.

It has also become something of a proof that shows there is no need for humans to fear demons.

If you know their limits, you can react to whatever a demon does. Knowledge is power—a demon’s bluffs cannot affect someone who can see through them.

“I see. Half of what you say is true. Us demons indeed have a maximum magicule capacity, but we can still evolve under the right conditions.”

“Huh?”

“For example, isn’t Rouge quite famous from where you came?”

“‘Rouge’? What are you talking...”

As the leader spoke, the image of a certain demon’s came to his mind. That demon is too famous, too reputable, he is considered an exception...

“Moreover, it is actually quite easy to meet the criteria of becoming a Demon Lord. You simply have to raise your power to that limit and endure for over two thousand years. That’s it.”

Despite how casual Diablo put it, such transformation is in fact extremely difficult.

The Demons are astral lifeforms and a war-loving species. They would fight each other day and night in the spirit world even without being summoned. Not only will defeat lead to a decrease in their total magicule storage, they may even end up devolving.

To raise your power to maximum and endure for two thousand years—It means that there is no room for defeat after the demon evolves to an archdemon, which is no mean feat.

The leader of the demon slayers has yet to realized this message from Diablo’s words, but he can tell that he is talking about something supernatural.

What concerns him more is the fact that—Diablo directly spoke of the name “Rouge.”

He dared call the name of that prominent demon overlord.

No, there can’t be such a thing—

The relationship between demon ranks is absolute—This theory was proposed by the great magister of the Eastern Empire, Master Gadra.

This strict rank hierarchy is clear when facing a clan’s primordial king, and it applies for all of those with high rank.

For a demon of lower authority to directly address his superior in name is as impossible as the sun rising in the west.

“If you are born in the east, the name “Blanc” is probably more significant. I sensed her “Demon Lord Haki” in the east a while back—”

The leader freezes in astonishment at what Diablo’s words bring to mind.

Several years ago, “Blanc”—That horrifying Primordial White appeared in this world and was nearly incarnated.

The “Lake shore dyed in scarlet incident.”

It could have very well given birth to a second Guy Crimson.

It was that close to destroying the balance between the Demon Lords and plunging the world into chaos.

They gambled on the prestige of the empire to bury the incident.

The leader's face tenses as he comes back to senses.

“Rouge” and “Blanc” —This demon before him addressed them so casually, implying a similar status to them.

H-how could...how could this be... He began to wail silently.

C-can't...can't win against him! This is madness. How is this happening!

And so, he yields. He surrenders immediately.

Demon slaying is but an occupation, he is not going to bet his life on something beyond his pay grade.

He may do it to protect his friends and family, but dying like this in a foreign land... Moreover, the difference between the parties is large enough to make one despair. Knowing that resistance is futile, of course he chose to give up.

“Please have mercy! Spare my pitiful life, I beg you, I beg you!”

With no concern for honor, the leader fell to his knees to plead with Diablo.

Diablo shows a very gentle smile at this sight.

“Ara, what’s wrong? Don’t you want to have some fun after passing my test? Don’t you want to find out? You will know whether I was bluffing or not when you experience it for yourself.”

The leader continues to plead in response. He understands Diablo’s true identity is extremely dangerous and doesn’t doubt any of his words. There is no way on earth that it was a bluff.

“Please forgive me and spare my life! I’m just doing this for the money. I won’t dare to stand against you in the future, I swear! I won’t get in the way of your business. I’d even kill the fainted king over there if you so demand! So please, spare me!”

Without caring about the looks he is getting; the leader continues his unseemly begging. And so, his efforts are rewarded.

“Sure, get lost then. Go to that barrier set up for the reporters. Get everyone in my way in there as well.”

Diablo has lost interest in the leader and announces so.

The leader obeys and complies without hesitation.

He wakes up his subordinates and makes them carry the fainted knights away as he takes the king and escapes into the “Barrier” himself.

Not one of the reporters say a word.

Under such abnormal circumstances, they can only watch nervously...



In the now empty camp, Sare stands in front of Diablo with an uncaring smile.

“Oh, you are pretty impressive. You look nothing like a Calamity-ranked archdemon.”

“...? Are you not going to run away?”

“Run away? That’s funny. I am Sare, member of the Pope’s Imperial Guards under the rule of Lubelius. I am one of the “Three Martial Sages” within the “Ten Great Saints,” enemies of the Demon Lords. So, who are you really?”

“I just announced my name, it is Diablo. It is my “Name” granted by his majesty and my liege Rimuru-sama.”

“...Do you not plan to reveal your true identity?”

Sare is playing it off, but this humiliation is causing his heart to pump furiously.

“Whether you can overcome this fear”—or whatever—Diablo’s words were complete insults to Sare’s ears.

Only his rationality is keeping him calm. Although he wouldn’t lose himself over some trivial anger, he doesn’t like Diablo’s scornful look at him.

The demon slayers from the “East” were laughable. They labeled themselves experts in battling demons. Yet as if begging on their knees is not embarrassing enough, they all ran away in the end. A bunch of cowards.

Sare had played along as Glenda thought they could be useful pawns, but he hadn’t thought the result could be so disappointing...

They are but average people in the end. In comparison, us vanguards of his excellence the pope and even the God Luminas carry far greater responsibility, and so our resolve in battle is nothing like theirs.

Upon thinking so, Sare disparages those demon slayers.

With that being said, he wouldn’t lower his guard against Diablo.

Grigori wanted to fight as well, but this is my prey. And so, I’ll make you regret looking down on me.

The name Diablo is not found in any historical document. With an unknown name, he can’t have the kind of power that will pose a threat. All he did was address “Rouge” and “Blanc” directly. What’s so scary about such a bluff?

It may be different if he is an unnamed “Primordial”—Sare thinks to himself.

He is aware that his opponent is no mere archdemon, but Sare has concluded that there is no threat to himself.

The tragedy of ignorance—His knowledge of demons is not extensive enough.

Sare begins to ponder.

Since his opponent doesn’t intend to reveal his true identity, he will force the demon to show

his true color. After all, Sare alone possesses the strength to battle a Demon Lord.

Even if Demon Lord Valentine unfortunately escaped during Sare's pursuit, he was able to push the Demon Lord one foot into hell. There is no reason to be afraid of a mere archdemon.

That's why Sare cannot stand Diablo's attitude... But he soon begins to wonder if he is hearing things as he listens to Diablo.

“—True identity, is it? Right, I forgot about it since I'm not interested in power ranking. As you said, I am no archdemon as you claimed. I've evolved to Demon Noble. It is not much different, but I still hope you won't mistake it.”

The demon explains in a calm tone.

To Diablo, his “Name” matters far more than his rank, but while he may have no interest in such a thing, it is a huge deal in Sare's eyes.

Sare is panicking.

He can't nor wishes to believe.

What did this demon in front of him just say?

Did he just mention “Demon Noble” ?

“Demon Noble” —A legendary existence, designated as a Disaster-ranked threat undisclosed to the public.

And their power is greater than the average Demon Lord.

It is hard to imagine even Greater Spirits standing against it. Only several Spirit Kings attacking at the same time could deal with one. The only records of their actions in this world are in ancient texts. Though...they have been confirmed to exist.

The proof is the existence of the strongest Demon Lord—

Sare quickly considers what this means.

He didn't take those tales seriously, that archdemons who have become “Demon Lord Seed” would, under the right conditions and surviving after thousands of years, would evolve to “Demon Noble.” If that is the case, it is only natural for such a being to have extraordinary power.

At the very least, it would have magicule storage several times larger than an archdemon's and the experience gained through many years of survival.

—His power would be limitless.

The leader of the demon lord slayers observing the battle from afar fainted on the spot after hearing the phrase “Demon Noble.”

It is an impulse from his heart. Fear arose after imagining himself against Diablo and the ending that would have awaited him. He passed out in sheer gratitude for his good luck in escaping such danger.

However, no one who noticed accused him for his state.

Sare also wishes to flee now.

The more horrifying fact however, it's that someone would be stupid enough to name such rare archdemon so casually.

Demon Lord Rimuru, what the hell were you thinking—!

Sare realizes that every pore on his body is in cold sweat.

This is bad—His instincts are screaming in his head.
The fighting spirit he had held onto has all dissipated.
He knows he can't win this fight.

Normally, as a “Named Monster” with no master is easily controlled by others, he would not announce his name right away.

Considering this demon announced his name without hesitation, Demon Lord Rimuru has indeed given it to him.

—*But, naming an archdemon, is this Rimuru really able to do that right after becoming a Demon Lord?*

It is irrelevant now, but Sare still couldn't help but worry about the matter. He is merely trying to escape reality.

And it is in that moment that Sare hears someone's voice.

“What are you waiting for, Sare! Let's hurry up and take care of this sexy demon!”

Glenda shouts.

“You idiot! Stop it, Glenda!”

Sare tries to stop her, but it's already too late.

Glenda was like the wind as she snuck up to Diablo without making a sound. Then, without faltering, she then plunged a black dagger into the demon.

The dagger heads directly towards Diablo's heart.

“Huh! You are not so impressive after all!”

Glenda laughs as she feels the knife collides.

However—

Unfortunately, Diablo didn't intend to evade in the first place.

“Kufufufufu, what extraordinary bodily functions. But unfortunately, you won't be able to harm me with physical attacks.”

Diablo announces light-heartedly.

In fact, he has also acquired the skill “Physical Attack Nullification.”

“Tsk, how annoying!”

Glenda quickly draws away.

Ignoring Sare's advice, she continues to launch attacks without pause.

She is now aware that Diablo is a strong enemy, and she is no longer underestimating her opponent as before, but fighting this demon as if he is a Demon Lord.

However, it amounts to child's play in Diablo's eyes. The difference in power is simply too great, and all of Glenda's actions have been in vain.

She begins to realize this—or rather has known it from the start.

And so, Glenda's actual goal is—

Being left with no choice now, Sare can only make his resolve.

He doesn't want to leave Glenda to fight all by herself.

First, he releases his spirit power, pushing his body to its limit. Then he launches his expensive special-grade weapon “Evil Slayer (Demon Slayer)” at Diablo.

However, these attacks are no different.

“Dammit, the sword really is useless! Glenda, buy me a little time! I’ll cast “Holy Magic”
—”

Right now, he can only rely on using the strongest magic to defeat his foe—Sare judges, hoping that Glenda would buy him some time.

Yet Glenda is not responding.

A cruel line is tossed at Sare.

“If that was meant for your female companion, she just ran away at full speed.”

Sare couldn’t quite understand the meaning of Diablo’s words.

It can’t be?! He thinks to himself while looking back, yet Glenda is nowhere to be seen. Just as Diablo said, she fled the scene.

“God dammit—!”

Sare bellows in order to rid himself of the frustration, but there’s nothing he can do.

Sare has to clean up Glenda’s mess for having acted out on her own.

Although he is furious, right now he is still confronted with this grinning demon. Considering the circumstances, Sare should be more concerned about his own well-being than Glenda’s desertion.

I’ll fight then, I’ll fight the damn fight! I just have to hold on until Grigori gets back!

Hoping for his trusted ally to return, Sare lights his fighting spirit once more.

Grigori only went to the town to lure out the demon, with his target here, it won’t be long until he returns.

Sare is certain of this, and so he commences his own desperate battle, albeit with almost no hope of victory.



While Sare is knee deep in battle, another member of the “Three Martial Sages,” Grigori has also gotten himself in a desperate spot.

Galloping through the battlefield, he was nearly crushed by a disaster falling from the sky in front of him.

The mercenaries hired by Youm are fighting to defend the town gate. They’re good enough to hold off the vanguard assault.

However, they are not Grigori’s prey. He didn’t consider the civil war in Farmus any of his business. His only goal is to hunt down the demon that is said to have murdered Archbishop Reyhiem. He has received reports that show that this demon is maneuvering in the city, and so Grigori came in person to eliminate it.

There are people from the “East” under King Edward now. If I don’t get out there to fight

now, there won't be any chance for me to fight at all.

So did Grigori plan.

But now, instead of the demon, he is confronted by a terrifying giant wolf. He rushes to dismount.

This giant wolf that appeared in front of Grigori is of course Ranga.

He is wagging his tail joyfully while sprinting in the air.

His body is light as feather. He couldn't feel his feet stomping on the ground and has already unknowingly flown into the sky. This is the skill "Shuttle Fly" only acquired by few bestial monsters, yet he has picked up the skill naturally.

But to Ranga, none of this is important. He has no interest in anything but enjoying this liberating power. He is hopping around the sky with ferocity, displaying the depth of his magicle storage. His dark, furry limbs are covered with sparkling golden lightning. Ranga is not lessening his leaking aura and is electrifying the air around him.

The horn on his forehead shines with a golden light like a crown as he uses it to control lightning.

His imposing presence is exaggerated by his charged dark furs, like a cape sewn with darkness, displaying Ranga's status of the Wolven King.

He was running at supersonic speed in the air and quickly spotted the group as mentioned by Diablo. It didn't take long for him to descend next to Grigori.

Grigori is accompanied by several knights of the Pope's Imperial Guards. The second battalion made up of five thousand soldiers are all Farmus Knights sent as reinforcement by King Edward.

"Uh, Grigori-sama, what should we do?"

The noble general leading the Farmus Knights asks Grigori.

How should I know. Grigori thinks to himself.

The relatively more skillful knights were all eliminated during the last march, and now all that is left are these crooked soldiers with inferior knowledge who can't even qualify as second class. Expecting them to be capable of thinking is already asking too much. This guy is asking for a foreigner, Grigori's opinion without feeling the slightest bit of shame.

"General Caston, you go handle the troops that are about to arrive. Aren't they both ground and airborne?"

Caston understands now that it has been explained by Grigori.

"I see. But what about Grigori-sama...?"

"Me? What do you think? I'll of course be having some fun with that guy over there. Paisen, Carusia, protect General Cas—"

As he was about to give his order, a black whirlwind blows by Grigori.

"—UHH!"

Since Grigori only just noticed, Ranga continued to assault the troops led by General Caston at the same speed.

"Shit, you filthy dog!"

Grigori is furious.

He violently stabs his Halberd⁷⁶ towards Ranga, but it is evaded with ease.

Ranga then begins to go on a rampage, bouncing around like a puppy who has just discovered snow.

As he continues, the casualties pile up—Paisen, Carucia and some of the Imperial Guards have all become Ranga's prey and been trampled to the ground.

In the end, Ranga finally decides to launch himself at Grigori—

Gobta and Gabil are desperately chasing behind Ranga.

“Ranga-san, you are running too fast...”

“Right! We won't have a chance to fight if you continue like this.”

“Brother, stop complaining and catch up to him already.”

Gabil and Souka quarrel back and forth.

They are enjoy arguing with each other like always, but everyone knows that they have good relationship. The only ones who don't see it are themselves.

“Let's get going then!”

“All right, copy that!”

Gobta moves out first using his “Shadow Step.”

With him are the hundred members of the Goblin Rider troop.

Gabil begins to fly alongside the hundred members of the Hiryuu.

Next, Souka leaves to report to Hakurou, who is in charge of commanding the troops.

Gobta is the first to arrive at the battlefield. He witnesses the huge amount of soldier bodies lying in a concentrated area.⁷⁷

The rest of the knights are distancing themselves from Ranga while surrounding him, praying that Grigori would emerge victorious against Ranga.

The fallen soldiers are all skillful veterans. They charged at Ranga in order to cover Grigori, yet were easily defeated in only a couple of hits.

Ranga steps on the defeated knights without killing them and sends them flying away with his front legs. That's why a bunch of knights are all lying in the same spot. As for the knights praying on the side, they all look desperate. At first, there were still people energetically cheering, but right now they have all fallen silent.

That is because...

Grigori is covered in wounds.

Hoping to win at this point is delusional.

Grigori possesses the ideal skill of “Immovable” that gives him an indestructible body. Yet to Ranga, he is just a tougher toy to break. Moreover, Grigori cannot faint, and so he is tormented by pain for a long period of time.

“Hold on! This doesn't look good, Ranga-san! You'll kill him if you continue!”

“Right! We have to treat his wounds now—”

⁷⁶Two handed polearm that combines a spear and axe

⁷⁷they are not dead btw

Gabil and Gobta arrive to stop Ranga.

Having been informed, Ranga pauses his movement. He finally starts to notice the terrible sights around him. His tail starts to hang down out of frustration, he even begins to shrink in size.

“—Uh, hmm. But, could I at least play a bit more with this guy...?”

Still holding onto his broken Halberd, Grigori is exhausted. Ranga pokes at him with his front feet while saying so reluctantly. Feeling too much pity for Grigori, Gobta and Gabil begin to persuade Ranga. They couldn’t leave the matter alone after imagining themselves in the enemies’ shoes.

“No, no no no no, you shouldn’t do it!”

“T-that’s right! If you don’t stop, Rimuru-sama would be pissed!”

Ranga finally complies after the two mentioned Rimuru’s name.

“That’d be bad. I’ll get scolded if I continue—”

Ranga looks at Gabil and Gobta with a sad expression before choosing to give up.



Grigori is released.

Ranga's sticky drool is all over his body and his limbs are also bent at weird angles. It's only to a small degree, but the angles of these bends have exceeded their normal range of motion, making it obvious that Grigori has sustained severe injuries.

It's a miracle that he is still alive after sustaining such critical injuries.

But Grigori managed to survive. No sequelae were caused by the injuries as the healing potions that Gobta and the rest prepared instantly restored him.

However, the same can't be said about his mental health—

Grigori would later be known famously as the "Dog-hating Immovable Fortress," and no one would know the reason behind it...

If you retreat right now, we will not pursue any longer—Hearing these words from Gabil, General Caston complies without hesitation. He even ordered the troops charging the town gate to retreat as well.

"How can we win this! We don't have a chance—!"

With this final line, this battle will go down as a (in)famous incident in history.

And as such, the battle in the Nedler region concluded without even officially starting.



Come on, come back sooner, Grigori! Sare prays desperately.

Right now, Grigori is being transported on Ranga's back.

He should be arriving soon as Sare wished.

—But it may not be as he expects. Sare is lucky that he is oblivious to the fact.

Now that I think about it—Sare thinks to himself.

This demon called Diablo is powerful beyond belief. Even Sare, as one of the very few powerful individuals in the human world, cannot clearly see the limit of Diablo's power.

Sare would no longer question Diablo's words.

He is a monster even stronger than Demon Lord Valentine, so he didn't need to kill Archbishop Reyhiem. As he said himself, no one would possibly dare to defy him after the slightest intimidation.

If that's the case, how did I end up here...?

Right now, Sare is defending himself against Diablo's attack with all he has, but he is reaching his limit both in terms of his stamina and psyche.

"Kufufufufu, you should put in more effort now to show me some interesting skill."

Sare wants to cry hearing how delighted Diablo sounds.

He wants to go home.

Everyone called him a genius.

Due to his elven bloodline, he was granted the gift of longevity. Moreover, he has obtained the Unique Skill ‘Omnipotent One’ ⁷⁸ through intense training.

He can understand the opponent’s techniques with just one look, in addition, this amazing skill also gives him the opportunity to learn from the opponent’s techniques. It is a similar mechanism to Hinata’s Unique Skill ‘Usurper,’ both serve to strengthen the users’ power.

In order to master the learnt techniques, he naturally requires rigorous training to improve body functions. Sare is deeply aware of the principle behind his skill and has mastered many different abilities using it.

He has even learnt combined techniques of magic and skills, which are the hardest to learn. It is a technique that allows him to imbue a magic effect into his own fighting spirit in order to produce powerful sword slashes.

This “Qi Slash” ⁷⁹ is a basic skill from the “Qi Fighting Techniques,” but at the same time, an ultimate art⁸⁰. On its basis, it gives the user the magic attributes to counter the enemies’ weakness. In this way, it makes up for the ultimate instant-kill techniques used to cut down all monsters.

—Sare brags about the skill in his heart.

But it was useless.

Diablo immediately analyzed the structure of Sare’s magic and decomposed it as soon as it was about to activate. If Sare can’t interfere with the truth of the world, he cannot overwrite laws, and no miracle would occur.

Sare has given up using magic and is strictly relying on “Qi Fighting Techniques” and “Qi Sword Art” to fight.

“Dammit...”

He mutters regretfully.

What is angering Sare the most is that he realizes that Diablo has not been fighting him seriously at all.

In terms of magic techniques, the difference between the two is similar to the difference between an adult and infant child. The same can be said about their physical ability, the only thing unlike this however—The abundant training of their techniques, in which Sare is on par with Diablo. Yet just now within a span of few minutes, Diablo demonstrated incredible growth speed. If it is the present Diablo, had he wanted to, he could kill Sare without a sweat.

He’s not doing so, so he indeed...

It means—Diablo indeed doesn’t wish to take Sare’s life.

Then, the culprit of the murder of Archbishop Reyhiem is someone else, as for who—

Right. Boss’s plan was never related to the civil war in Farmus. It only happened after she

⁷⁸The kanji translation of this skill “万能者” sounds very powerful, however the actual katakana explanation given by Fuse says “デキルモノ,” or in hiragana “できるもの,” which means “Things that can be done.” Pretty weird stuff.

⁷⁹Qi - Pronounce “Chi” or “Ki” in Japanese- refers to aura or life energy. A word from Chinese culture.

⁸⁰Not referring to Ultimate Skill

went on the expedition, almost as if it has happened for that timing. In other words, it would be—

Very suspicious, actually, no.

It must be the case—The “Seven Luminary Clerics” are the true culprits.

Sare is convinced of this.

And at that very moment—

“Sare, we’ve come at your aid.”

“Be grateful and let us eliminate this demon together!”

“Continue to suppress the demon until we take care of him with magic.”

The space behind Sare begins to distort as some powerful figures emerge.

Three sages appear—the masters of the Seven Luminaries.

The Seven Luminaries are not doing as they’ve said, instead they are preparing to cast magic that will bring great danger to this entire area.

The culprits are attempting to destroy the evidence.

And the so-called evidence would be the people here who have discovered that Diablo was not responsible for killing Archbishop Reyhiem.

The reporters of the other nations are no fools. Just like how Sare has pieced together the clues, a few also have realized the truth.

It is the reasonable course of things considering it is also part of Diablo’s plan.

In other words, however, the target of “Seven Luminary Clerics” is not Diablo—

“Dammit, all of you, run away now!”

Sare sends his warning to the reporters as a giant fireball appears, devouring everything at the scene.



Hinata’s chest is pierced by a heat ray.

I immediately hold up Hinata.

“Oi, are you all right?”

“Gu, huh.”

Hinata begins to vomit blood.

She painfully presses her hand against her chest while trying to cast magic but couldn’t manage to do it. She can’t even make a sound to use magic. Hinata has lost all her strength, and collapsed onto my body.

My clothes are being dyed red as she continues to bleed. If this continues, Hinata will die without an explanation...

I’ll investigate later about what just happened.

I take out some healing potion from “Stomach” and spray it onto her chest. Normally the body would immediately start to regenerate, yet it isn’t working this time.

«Answer. Subject “Hinata Sakaguchi” seems to possess high resistance against magic. Her body will automatically disintegrate magicules to nullify the effect.»

Magic nullification, is that what you mean?

“M-magic doesn’t work on Hinata-sama. It’s the same for healing magic, any non-holy magic system would all be nullified...”

Hinata’s subordinate—Arnaud hurried over, shaking his head as he said so.

If that’s the case, will “Holy Magic” without magicule constituent work?

Regardless, my healing potion doesn’t seem to work here.

If that’s the case—

“Right, don’t just stand there now, come and cast healing magic on her!”

Let’s apply the most effective method.

Hinata is still alive. She still has a chance to recover with the healing of “Holy Magic.”

After being scolded by me, Arnaud and the rest begin to take action.

However, they are suddenly prevented from doing so.

Glowing circles appear that bind Arnaud and the rest.

Several powerful individuals have arrived by dimension leaping using advanced teleportation magic to tie Arnaud and the rest up.

The two mysterious figures suddenly appear and kneel before me.

Then—

“Demon Lord Rimuru, we’ve not met before. We are the “Seven Luminous Clerics.” We’ve come to take care of Hinata Sakaguchi who has defied our orders—”

They say so without a shred of shame.

Hinata lies on the ground, her consciousness fading.

Arnaud and the rest are tied up.

The mysterious duo suddenly emerged out of nowhere.

Speaking of the “Seven Luminous Clerics,” I recall hearing about them, that they are the people Adalman hates the most.

How very suspicious.

But since I’m interested in investigating the situation, I can’t really say it out loud under the current circumstance.

“I have no idea of your quarrel, but do not interfere me saving Hinata. We’ve made amends, so I won’t let Hinata die.”

When I finished my words, the Seven Luminaries reject my request with dramatic gestures.

“Unfortunately, that cannot be allowed. This person—Hinata, she has ignored the holy will of the god Luminas. That is an unforgivable outrage and she needs to face the divine judgement.”

All self-important, he starts talking as he wishes in others’ domain.

“B-but!”

“Please forgive Hinata-sama! She has her reason—”

The Holy Knights jump in to defend Hinata, but the sages don't seem to be listening to their words.

But then, one of the Holy Knights shouts emotionally.

"S-Stop screwing around! You crooks are the ones that deceived me! You were planning from the start to have Hinata-sama killed—"

This man was Shion's opponent, the captain that led the hundred Knights.

However, the situation continues to escalate in its mystery.

The colleague next to him suddenly draws his sword and stabs the captain.

"—Wha—Garde, w-what are you..."

"How rude of you, Renard, to speak those malicious words about the prestigious masters of the Seven Luminaries, I can't just sit and watch as you do. You must have conspired with that traitor Hinata to deceive us all!"

As Garde shouts out his words, the tied up Holy Knights also feel shaken.

Whose words here are real? They must also be confused.

Does this alone indicate the immense authority held by the Seven Luminaries ?

No, things shouldn't be that simple.

The heat ray that pierced through Hinata seemed to have come from the direction of Garde, which means—

By the way, this is really giving me a headache.

Things have gotten so chaotic and out of control.

I want to save the dying Hinata, yet the Seven Luminaries appeared to stop me, and now this Renard was conspired against and is now having his life taken hostage.

Moreover, these Seven Luminaries mentioned that they came here to deal with Hinata who has defied orders. At the very least, these people don't seem to be antagonizing me.

What should I do next then...

The foremost thing I want to do is to save Hinata.

On one hand, it was one of the requests from Shizue-san, and secondly, I felt that our misunderstanding was so close to being resolved. If I can make peace with Hinata, it would seem that I may be able to build a friendly relationship with the Western Holy Church and even the Holy Empire of Lubelius. Me sitting here and letting Hinata die on her own is not an option.

"I'll listen to your justification later. This is my kingdom, and you shall all obey the "Law" of my nation. That's why you, the one called Arnaud, right? Quickly cast healing magic on Hinata—"

My kingdom doesn't actually have laws, but I want to use this excuse to force them into compliance.

However, the Seven Luminaries refuse to back down.

"That simply cannot be. Us believers of the Luminas Sect have pledged our loyalty to the god Luminas. We will not deviate from our belief. Even if it is a request from the Demon Lord Rimuru, we will not comply either."

They also brought up a bunch of things concerning doctrines in order to hold back the Holy

Knights.

How annoying.

There is no time to waste with them, I'll have to force my will on them—Just as the thought crossed my mind, Diablo sends back a message through “Telepathy Net.”

“Rimuru-sama. I have urgent matters to report—”

“What is it? We are busy here as well so make it quick.”

“Excuse me, but we've found out the real culprits behind the murder of Archbishop Reyhiem. There seems to be a group of people pulling strings from behind the scenes, called the Seven Luminaries.”

“Oh...”

“In addition, there are three of them in front me right now, allowing them to live will only lead to future grievances—”

“Can you gather evidence to prove that they are the culprits?”

“Many foreign reporters here are all witnesses—”

“—I'll permit it. Exterminate them.”

“At this instant!”

Nice timing.

Diablo did a great job at passing the news in time. I have no idea how things worked out so perfectly to this point but handing them over for Diablo to deal with seemed to be the right call.

Now all the mysteries are resolved.

So, the real culprits are the Seven Luminaries. I have no clue what their goal is, but it would seem they've not come for me, but Hinata. Perhaps it won't work in their favor if Hinata is still alive. They decided to use a scheme like this as beating her by pure force is not at all easy.

The guy who just backstabbed the Holy Knight called Renard must have secretly colluded with the Seven Luminaries. He may even be one of its members.

The culprit that shot at Hinata must have been this Garde. He probably did that in an attempt to assassinate Hinata, but doing so in front of me was his biggest mistake.

To commit a crime within the range of my “Universal Perception” is no different from confessing your crime.⁸¹

My message for Hinata appears to have been distorted as well, probably by the same group of people. This was their plan to disrupt Diablo.

In any case, now that I know these people are the culprits, I have no need to show any concern over our relationship with Holy Empire of Lubelius and be generous to them.

You are in my kingdom.

I did consider about keeping them alive, but they've also given me a lot of trouble as well. I'd say there is no need to show mercy, rather than letting them run away, we might as well take care of them now.

I've already given Diablo the green light to what he wants, so here I shall do things my way.

⁸¹But didn't your mana get drained and you couldn't use your skill and all. Fuse detail please explain.

Well then, let's relieve some of the negative emotions⁸² I had to endure today.

"Benimaru, Souei!"

" "Yes sir!" "

"Detain those two. If they dare to resist, I permit you both to fight violence with violence."

"I was just waiting for your order!"

"Leave it to me. I shall obey Rimuru-sama's order."

Benimaru and Souei approaches the Seven Luminaries.

The Seven Luminaries start to look at me with a hateful glare before they could get to them.

I ignore them and continued to give out my next order.

"Shion!"

"Yes!"

"I'll leave that Garde to you."

"!"

"Don't get careless, he may be disguised by one of the "Seven Celestial.""

"I see! I'll just have to rip off their masks and show them hell!"

Shion unsheathes her Odachi with joy written all over her face.

I won't stop her this time. And honestly, I'm looking forward to what she will do.

"Ku, kukuku, oh my, this is bad..."

"Are you sure about this? It will mean waging total war with us!"

The two members of the "Seven Celestial" start spouting nonsense.

Leaving them alive will only plant the seeds for future disaster. If you do something, do it thoroughly.

"You guys overplayed your card. I've seen through the fact that you murdered Archbishop Reyhiem and tried to frame it on us. It was you who came knocking on our door for a fight, so have you made your resolve?"

With my words out, the Holy Knights begin to look at each other with confusion. But some show expressions of realization.

As for Arnaud, he is infuriated to the extent of pointing his sword at the Seven Luminaries.

The Seven Luminaries however are not moved by how the situation has developed.

On top of which, they begin to howl with laughter.

"Kukuku, I can't believe we've been exposed."

"WHAHAHA! But the "Saint" is already dead! Demon Lord Rimuru, aren't you also exhausted by your fight with Hinata?"

"How does it make sense for us to not use such wonderful opportunity!"

"Since you've all learnt the truth, we might as well take care of you alongside the Demon Lord!"

No longer concealing their intents, the Seven Luminaries reveal their true natures.

And so, laughter filled with devious intent start to echo at the scene.

⁸²The phrase here is “怨念” which means resentment or grudge feelings.

Their acts are so low that they make me want to vomit. There is no need to show mercy to these kinds of people.

Benimaru, Souei as well as Shion all move out. They've begun to launch their attacks on their respective prey.

However, the cunningness of the Seven Luminaries may have exceeded my expectation.

"You fools! It's commendable that you've seen through our intent, but we've already prepared for this situation, just in case."

"We planned to kill everyone from the start!"

"Hehehe, then let us begin—"

The two members of the Seven Luminaries declare as they quickly distance themselves by floating to mid-air. Shion was about to attack Garde when he too floated into the air as his true self.

Soon after, a wide magic circle began to be constructed with the three as vertices. Indeed, it does look like an incredibly dangerous attack that cannot have been done without preparation. Its range naturally didn't cover just us, but including the two Beastketeers and the Holy Knights.

It seems that they are going to kill everyone in order to completely erase all evidence.

"Black Flame Prison (Hellflare)—!"

"Web Slash of Monsters."

The black flame fireball that bears hellflare and the "Sticky Steel Web" that can cut through even steel overflow and cover the targets. Yet it is only met with a wave of maniacal laughter.

"Futile, you are wasting your effort. This circle will dispel everything except the holy-element! That's why the attacks from you evil monsters will not work at all."

"Kuhahahah, you fools. Human wisdom has accumulated over the millennium. And you monsters have been arrogant and full of yourselves for your power, we will definitely not lose to you animals!"

I can't withdraw myself in midst of their high-pitched laughter as I am desperately trying to sustain Hinata's life.

I am using my body as her substitute heart, yet she really does reject magicles. I seldom do such a thing with the addition of low compatibility; I'm not doing a good job just like the time I tried to save Myuran.⁸³

However, my worries are lifted when Shion charges head onto them.

"Shut up! That thing won't work against my "Hercules Ex"!"

She seems quite confident with those bizarre words she just shouted, probably without going through her head, Shion swings her sword at the Seven Luminaries at full force. Normally it would seem that she is no different from any blockhead, but it is Shion after all.

"HAHAHAHAH! Idiot, what do you think that sword can—?"

The Seven Luminaries were busy mocking her before they notice crisp sound of the space in front of them cracking.

⁸³Somewhat confusing line considering that rescue went pretty well.

“T-this is bad!”

“Not good, the magic circle may collapse at this rate.”

“We’ve already come so far, so let’s just cast immediately!”

Shion’s almost impossible attack had nothing to do with any attribute, it was purely relied on her brute force, in addition with that something—

«Answer. Concluded that she has utilized Unique Skill ‘Cook’ and “Guaranteed Outcome” to overwrite the phenomenon—»

Shion is truly reckless.

She is the only person I don’t wish to make an enemy of.

«Warning. Although improbable, attacks from individual “Shion” may cause damage to master. »

Are you serious?

I’d better stay on Shion’s good side.

Once again, I’ve come to realize how strong Shion really is. But unfortunately, even this was not enough to stop the attacks of the Seven Luminaries.

«Warning. Incoming attack.»

Construction of the large-scale extermination magic seems to have been finished.

Dammit, what should I do—

«Report. There is no problem. Analyze and Assess of the magic circle has been completed.»

A calm and reliable voice comforts me seeing how worried I am.

Eh, ah, okay.

It sounds like there is no problem, but that magic circle seems to be pretty complex... No, it must have been only a tiny problem for Wisdom King Raphael-san to solve.

It is quite indecent to interrupt when the “Seven Luminary Clerics” are all so confident about themselves, but all of you won’t stand a chance when Raphael-san gets serious.

“ “ “Die! Trinity Break—!” ” ”

The three’s voices overlap as they activate the magic.

But it is meaningless at this point.

“Report. Reactivating Ultimate Skill ‘Gluttonous King Beelzebuth.’”

As Raphael announces, the killing beams that start pouring from the sky are consumed cleanly by my “Gluttonous King Beelzebuth.”

Wow, what an incredible power when optimized.

As the killing beams vanish before their eyes, the Holy Knights all stare with their eyes wide open.

But speaking of which, how strange? Hold on a second?

Didn’t I just sacrifice “Gluttonous King Beelzebuth” in order to deal with Hinata’s attack...

«Answer. It indeed sacrificed Ultimate Skill ‘Gluttonous King Beelzebuth,’ but it won’t pose an issue since a copy of the skill has been made.»

What did you say? A copy?

Eh, why did you say as if it’s a trivial matter. Couldn’t you have just told me so from the

start?

And I thought I couldn't use it again.

It is already past tense for Raphael-san, but I still seem to hold a grudge for it.

«Warning. Reactions from spiritrons have intensified. Main attack incoming.»

Oh yeah, so that was not the main attack.

“ “ “We shall end you now, Demon Lord! Trinity Disintegration!” ” ”

Damn! I don't think “Gluttonous King Beelzebuth” will make through this one.

«Answer. No problem. Activate “Absolute Defense” of Ultimate Skill ‘Covenant King Uriel’ ? YES/NO»

Oh, as expected from Raphael!⁸⁴

Of course I would choose YES, eh?

I suddenly have a strange feeling.

As I was concerned over it, the “Absolute Defense” of “Covenant King Uriel” were activated for the first time. I feel as though my skin is being covered by a thin layer of transparent membrane.

With this layer of membrane—“Absolute Defense” as blockade, “Trinity Disintegration” is completely countered.



Speaking of this, I now recall.

That was the first time I activated it.

Before that I've only relied on “Multi-Barrier” instead of “Absolute Defense.” With my “Thought Acceleration” raised to the maximum overdrive, I raised a question to Wisdom King Raphael.

Oi, why didn't you just activate this before? Against Hinata's attack as well, shouldn't this be able to block it as well?

To my question, Wisdom King Raphael-san gives me a jaw-dropping answer.

I am completely baffled. Because—

«Answer. Even if activated ‘Absolute Defense’ of ‘Covenant King Uriel,’ spiritron may still penetrate. Hence, activating said skill prior is meaningless.»

—Just like that, it makes it sound very justified.

Even the biggest perfectionist would have a limit to things, Wisdom King Raphael-san...

Spiritrons are the special particles that make up magicules, their motion is extremely hard to predict. The spiritrons can move through the barrier of space and time. The principle that

⁸⁴I'm dying to not insert a sasuga, sasuga me.

governs these random phase changes—the law of natural motion in spiritron—if not decoded, even my ‘Absolute Defense’ would be penetrated.

But right now, my ‘Absolute Defense’ has perfectly defended against ‘Trinity Disintegration.’

So how did Raphael-san so perfectly predict the movement of spiritrons?

«Answer. The attack just now—“Melt Slash” was canceled by ‘Gluttonous King Beelzebuth’ and engaged by ‘Predation’ at the same time. The information gathered then was successful in analyzing the random motion of spiritrons. That is why defense mechanism was able to predict the attack of holy-element. In addition, you’ve obtained Holy Sword technique “Melt Slash.”»

Right...

Hmm? Wait, hold on a second...

Eh? It would mean that, you let me intentionally get hit by Hinata’s sword...?

«....»

Oi! How dare you remain silent now!

Its reaction is almost saying “Oh shit!”

In other words, its silence was its acquiescence.

Eh? But...

Hold on? Wisdom King Raphael-san wouldn’t make such dangerous gambit, so could it be...

—That even if I didn’t use “Gluttonous King Beelzebuth” to cancel the attack, I wouldn’t be killed even when hit by “Melt Slash” head on?

«Answer. Of course not. Speculate to consume massive amount of magicule, however, the physical body can be instantly revived through “Endless Regeneration.”»

...

Then what were you nervous about?

Or perhaps, did you *want* to analyze “Melt Slash” by consuming it?

«....»

My my, are you at it again?

This guy is getting smoother in answering questions. Should I say that it has become more human-like or calculative.

I would believe without a doubt if it says that it has already possessed consciousness.

—But then again—

It is one of my wishes. It apparently wanted to learn the attack after surviving it.

Will you always put yourself out to fulfill a wish that may disappear in a blink of an eye?

If that’s the case, then this super-duper invincible skill (Wisdom King Raphael) is simply too amazing. It is truly a waste to give me such power.

«False. I was born only for my master.»

It immediately denies.

Oh, thanks.

I'll be relying on you in the future as well, partner!
—But, try your best not to hide anything from me in the future.
And so, during this stretched out time, I had this conversation with Wisdom King Raphael, which converted to normal speed of time would only have lasted for an instant.



“Impossible, how could it be—!”

“This can't be real, how can something like this even happen!”

“There is no one in the world who can survive a direct hit of “Disintegration” —”

Etc. Etc.

The three sages are in extreme panic.

I suppose they should be.

Even I who took the hit felt that I was a little too over the top.

Their attack not only was the strongest in Holy Magic, it was also stacked with three layers, granting it with absolute destructive power. Yet I blocked it with ease. It is only natural for them to be astounded and refusing to accept reality.

But unfortunately, this indeed is the reality.

The only reason why you've failed is that you've pissed me—actually, that you've stood against Wisdom King Raphael.

“All right, it's our turn now.”

With my words out, Benimaru, Souei and Shion nod along.

“Now that your proud magic circle is gone, can you endure it this time?”

Benimaru says so while toying the black flame in his hand.

The Seven Luminaries turn cowardice as soon as they see this.

They seem to be very anxious after using their trump card.

“Don't even think about running, trash. You better start praying!”

Shion comments on her prey as she gives off a terrifying smile.

Souei remains silent, but he is closely observing every move of the Seven Luminaries.

The Beastketeers Alvis and Suphia also join in, overlooking all of the Holy Knights from the sky to pressurize them. I think there shouldn't be any dangerous individual among them, but keeping an eye out wouldn't cost anything. If there is anyone suspicious in the mix, he will not have a chance to cause any trouble.

“Uh...”

The Seven Luminaries have been cornered. Yet they still don't intend to give up even facing such a circumstance.

“Think about it for a second! We are the guardians of mankind! If you kill us, the believers

of Luminas will not just sit and watch!"

"Indeed! The fury of the God Luminas will consume you!"

"We shall retreat for now. Now that we know you are no evil being, we shall say a few words of praise for you in the Western Nations. Let us just be good neighbors in the future—"

They interchange threatening and conciliating frequently to continue to negotiate arrogantly.

How truly annoying, it's about time to shut them up—And just when I have the thought...

"—Demon Lord Rimuru, sorry for the trouble."

A piercing sound is suddenly made.

A slit is slashed across the space, followed by the appearance of a giant gate.

The gate opens to reveal a beautiful young girl behind.

One with unique silver hair and heterochromatic eyes—It is none other than Demon Lord Valentine herself that came for a visit.

Why are you here? I would seem pretty silly asking this.

"Gu... Ahhh!"

"You... Aren't you—!"⁸⁵

"Why have your grace visited such a place—"

The Seven Luminaries are shocked, moreover, their arrogance disappeared in an instant.

They drop on their knees in fear.

If that is the case.

The God Luminas's true identity is actually Demon Lord Valentine.

Learning this fact, I am speechless out of astonishment.



Diablo is so joyful to the point of shaking as he puts on an evil smile.

"—I'll permit it. Go banish them."

With this one line from Rimuru, he is now permitted to any violent behaviors.

He really wishes to banish these fools as soon as possible, but before that, there is one other thing to do.

"By the way, everyone, are you all all right?"

Diablo asks the reporters delightfully.

The fireball was intercepted by Diablo's "Barrier," and so no reporter was hurt. That also included the demon slayers and Edward along with his Imperial Knights that entered the "Barrier." Everyone is unharmed.

"Elemental Magic" or "Spirit Magic" requires magicule, and so they are unable to break

⁸⁵The second "you" here changed to a more polite pronoun, consider changing from you to "your excellence"

through Diablo's "Barrier."

"Tsk, abominable demon. I can't believe he possesses such power—"

"What a horrifying guy. But if that's the case, let's demonstrate the holy power as well—"

"Here we go, everyone gets ready!"

The Seven Luminaries thought they could easily get rid of everyone, yet the situation at hand is truly out of their expectation.

No matter how strong the demon is, as soon as its flesh used in its incarnation is destroyed, it will lose its influence on the world. Unable to sustain its demonic body, it will be instantly returned to the spiritual world.

Based on this, the members of the Seven Luminaries came up with the ultimate magic.

A gigantic fireball—Nuclear Strike Magic "Flame of destruction (Nuclear Flame)."

This ultimate elemental magic isn't even possible to be wielded by one person, it requires three people's cooperation to execute. It is the evil flame of hell that will incinerate everything. Yet, with Diablo on the defense, it didn't work at all.

The shocked Seven Luminaries decided to pull out their final solution without hesitation. They can only rely on the Holy Power in order to beat someone as dangerous as Diablo—Based on this consideration, they've decided to utilize their supposedly reserved trump card "Trinity Break."

"It is the same ultimate technique used by the other sages in the fight against Rimuru. It will take some time to prepare, but they can be rest assured as the casting process is protected by "Barrier." Moreover, this skill will unleash "Trinity Disintegration" in the end, a Holy Magic spell that can decimate all beings."

Monster or majin, no matter how strong—Even a Demon Lord, should not be able to defend against that spell. The Seven Luminaries casted it with such confidence—

"If that's the case—" Diablo thinks to himself and turns to talk to the other people. He has completely ignored the Seven Luminaries and focused his attention on the press.

"Did you all just witness that attack? They are clearly trying to kill you, aren't they?"

He asks gently.

Even Sare who was just fighting him couldn't deny it.

And naturally none of the reporters made a sound to object.

Everyone is aware of what is going on and nod unanimously.

The guardian of mankind, the great heroes—Some of the reporters know these people, they are the legendary "Seven Luminary Clerics."

The reporters have all realized that there were no lies in Diablo's words and that they were all supposed to be sacrificed. The Seven Luminaries planned to eliminate them along with Diablo in order to then claim to the public that it is all Diablo's doing.

"But, you may all be rest assured. For I will protect you."

In the reporters' eyes, Diablo is giving off a kind and gentle smile like Buddha.

They are confident in Diablo's promise. He was strong enough to take on "Three Martial Sage" Sare with ease, then he definitely can defeat the legendary "Seven Luminary Clerics."

“W-what should we give in return—”

“Money?”

Some people are questioning Diablo’s intent.

Since demons never do things for free, they will always seek payment.

And it should be the same for Diablo. He wouldn’t lend his aid for free except for Rimuru.

“Kufufufufu, how wonderful it is that you are all so reasonable. I only wish for one thing—”

He raises his demand with a smile.

He demanded that reporters would prove his innocence.

Hearing this, the reporters are greatly relieved, believing this is a reasonable price.

It wasn’t at all like this when they initially learnt that Diablo was a vicious demon, yet it turned out to be not be the case. After the high lieutenant Sare of Holy Empire of Lubelius was affected as well, the reporters realized that it was the highest executives, the Seven Luminaries that were behind this whole ordeal. They don’t have a reason to turn down Diablo’s demand, for they themselves were manipulated as well.

“Of course! Please allow me to spread the news of this whole thing to the public more!”

“Right, I’ll document all of it! Including your incredible skills!”

“No problem. And that’s why we’ll be relying on you! Please lend us your aid!”

Near a hundred of reporters all agreed to assisting Diablo.

And it means that they are now under the influence of Unique Skill ‘Tempter.’

They have signed the contract that forbids them from betraying.

“Kufufufufu, very well. I shall agree to rescuing all of you. All except you.”

Diablo points at a certain person while saying so, it is Edward who has just awakened from his coma.

“W-why? What have I do—”

“Silence! You tried to deceive the great Rimuru-sama. And that crime alone cannot simply be repaid with death. Let me be very clear now, you are not worthy of salvation.”

Diablo says so arrogantly.

Edward desperately tries to use his knotted brain to think, yet he can’t come up with a good idea. He knows but one thing, that he is going to die if this continues.

He turns to his knights, yet they all avert their eyes immediately. It can’t be helped really. Their opponents are either the monsters led by a Demon Lord or the legendary heroes, they can’t win against either of them.

“I’m begging you, please, truly please, save me... No, please save me⁸⁶ as well!”

All Edward can do is to beg with a desperate expression. But it is not able to move Diablo’s heart.

“Kufufufufu, then you can bring the regret for your stupidity to the next world.”

Neither the reporters nor anyone else are planning to help Edward.

They can’t possibly do such a thing. No one wants to be the mediator when it was Edward

⁸⁶The second “me” here turned to a more humble way of addressing the pronoun “I.” Whereas the first “me” still used the pronoun “朕” which is how an emperor/king would address himself.

who orchestrated this whole thing in the first place. It is only karma for such thing to backfire on himself.

Noticing that no one has the intention to help, Edward begins to cry out loud.

“I’ll give you everything. Money or power. I-I’ll even give you the throne. I’ll step down to give you everything—”

Hearing this, Diablo begins to ponder a bit.

“Right, the Hero Youm was responsible for looking after Edmalis-dono. I believe that man is qualified enough to lead your nation of the Kingdom of Farmus. What do you think?”

Diablo’s tone becomes slightly gentler as he asks Edward this.

He quickly catches on the meaning. With Edward’s brain running at the fastest speed in his life, he understands everything said to him clearly.

“I-I think so too! He is a man of talent. I shall announce to the public that he has been appointed as my successor—”

Edward’s answer seems to satisfy Diablo a lot.

The reporters also sense his intent.

“Hahahaha. A new Hero King is about to be born???”

“We must spread and promote this news wide around the world—”

They are all very practical as to catch on to what Diablo meant and agree with their words. Diablo nods joyfully.

Now everything is properly arranged. Although the plan has slightly deviated, the result nonetheless seems satisfying.

Now he will only have to take care of the trash—

The moment then arrives.

“Huh, have you made your resolve?”

“For not much longer shall our beam of evil cleansing shall be sent on your way.”

“Enjoy while your numbered life lasts—”

The Seven Luminaries seem to be quite confident with their spell as they sit around observing the situation energetically. Yet they are all about to fall in despair.

“Resolve? Quit joking around, you trash. Hindering my mission and embarrassing me in front of Rimuru-sama—That crime is too severe. I shall repay you with the fear and despair that I have felt in folds—”

Diablo stares at the Seven Luminaries without a smile. His face is of no emotion while the handsome look of his only deepen people’s fear.

“W-what—?”

“What nonsense are you on about?”

“Are you mad? With our spell—”

At that instant, the sound of Diablo’s snap of his fingers interrupts the words of Seven Luminaries.

Then, the whole world is doomed with fear.

“May the world be destroyed slowly so you will have a taste of helpless despair! Activate—

“Despair Time” —”

This is Diablo’s power.

It is one of the abilities under his Unique Skill ‘Tempter’ — “World of Temptation.” It originally would have a direct impact on the targets’ consciousness and affect their psyche. Yet Diablo has made this ability even more powerful.

He is able to materialize the imaginary world where he holds the absolute authority. Once sent to that world, even the life and death of the targets would be in Diablo’s grip. He may even intertwine the things happening in his imaginary world with what happens in the real world through “Reality Exchange” ⁸⁷.

To have the illusion imposed by Diablo materialize to their realities—This is how horrifying and beyond common sense this ability is. The only way to overcome its effect is through training of the spiritual body so one can break through by sheer willpower.

Yet there are very few people who can best Diablo who was a spiritual life form to begin with, the “Seven Luminous Clerics” are no exception.

“W-what is this!”

“Magic, our magic disappeared—!”

“How can this be...”

They shout in astonishment, yet amounting to no change.

They can only allow time to pass as they remain in despair.

In the end, their world begins to collapse.

“Reflect on your stupidity at the depths of hell—”

With this said, Diablo wraps up the final act.

“Collapsing World (End of World)” —As “World of Temptation” collapses, it will suck in those affected by it.

The world comes to an end, devouring the despair of the Seven Luminaries along with it.

—Soon after, the promise made at this place will be successfully carried out.



Demon Lord Valentine—No, Luminas’s presence here alone is shocking enough, yet someone else emerged from the gate. I recall this man seemed to be Demon Lord Valentine (fake), now that I think about it, he must have been Luminas’s body double this whole time.

The three members of the Seven Luminaries become pale as they remain on their knees in front of Luminas. It seems that they’ve become fearful like lambs to be slaughtered and aren’t planning to fight us any longer.

⁸⁷This skill “虚実变换” refers to “exchanging what is real and what is imaginary.”

Then, what would Luminas do?

She said that she was sorry for the trouble, which would mean that they have no intention to fight us...

Just as I thought so, the man who acted as body double opens up:

“Kneel at this instant. I am Pope Louis. And this lord here is our God—Luminas-sama!”

He announces sonorously.

Hearing this, the Holy Knights all quickly kneel down. It is almost as if they've suddenly met a certain famous retired vice-shogun (Mito Komon)⁸⁸, but I should keep such a thought to myself.

Although feeling confused, we still decide to observe quietly on the side.

But...the Demon Lord is the God, what kind of joke is this?

And the Demon Lord's double is the pope? Goodness me, this type of disguise is so out of this world that I'm having trouble digesting.

But considering it carefully, it must be a very efficient way—

«Affirmative. Speculate to be able to create effective circumstance for this species' domination over “Human.” »

Ah, hmm.

Does it mean that I should copy it as well? But don't get me wrong.

If I don't clarify that, Wisdom King Raphael may go out of control (to try imitating). Anyhow, I'll put that thought aside for now.

“—Hinata. Didn't I tell you to not overdo things for yourself? How dare you be so reckless.”

As she speaks, Luminas reach her hand out to Hinata hugged by me.

“Let the heart be alive once more! Resurrection!”

This is the Holy Miracle “Resurrection” —

In front of my eyes, the wound that pierced through Hinata's back to her left chest begin to heal.

It seems to be more effective than my healing potion, but hold on for a second.

How can a Demon Lord cast Holy Miracle?

«Answer. Holy Miracle refers to a type of magic that effectively utilizes spiritrons. Normal means cannot interfere with spiritrons, however, said method has been identified. Remaining task is analysis—»

Although I still don't get it, Wisdom King Raphael-san seems to be eager to try.

I should be reassured with whatever that is handed to Raphael-san, so I'll leave things as they are.

“Uh, uh—Hmm...s-sensei—?”

Oh, Hinata seems to have regained consciousness.

⁸⁸Lieutenant-general or more accurately, Vice-Shogun. Mito Komon (水戸黄門) or Tokugawa Mitsukuni (徳川光圀) was a prominent feudal lord during Edo period of Japanese history who served his cousin Tokugawa Iemitsu, who is likely the most famous Shogun of Feudal Japan. The usage here is just a metaphor as to how respectful the Holy Knights are to Luminas's presence.

Is she mistaking me for Shizue-san?
“Oh, you’re finally awake. What teacher? You were trying to cross the border, right—”
Since it’s quite intriguing, I decide to joke around a bit with her.
Without her usual tough appearance, Hinata looks very innocent.
I recall she came here during her high school years, and it has been around a decade or so?
Meaning her age is around—

Just as I thought so, Hinata’s eyes suddenly become sharp.
She is looking at me with a cruel expression.
“—Oi.”
“Yes milady.”
“Were you thinking about something rude?”
“No, no way.”
“Is that so? I suppose I’ll let it slide. By the way, how much longer do you plan to hug me?”
What hugging, how rude. I made an effort to take care of you only to be met with such rude words.

Although I wish to complain, for some reason, the atmosphere has prevented me from speaking. I should just apologize now nicely. You are getting a favor by suffering a loss, that is the mature way of considering life.

“Sorry! Thanks for the view though!”
I immediately jump away from Hinata after saying so.
Hearing my words, Hinata turn to look at her chest.
There is a hole on her clothes that display her tender white bosoms.
“—Oh?”
Shit, Hinata’s murderous aura is abnormally high.
Did I accidentally trip the landmine?
“Has no one ever called you a blockhead?”
“N-no you, quit staring at me *with those sharp looks*. You are so stubborn and never listen to others’ words!”

I couldn’t help but retort, which turns out to be a big mistake.
A sense of anger suddenly emerges on Hinata’s beautiful face as she smacks her mouth. However, Hinata takes in a deep breath and suppresses this anger to then turn to me with a smile.

This is way scarier...
“...Look. I’m just shortsighted sometimes, that’s all. Do you see now how much of a blockhead you are? With that sort of behavior, I bet you’ve never been popular with girls in the past.”

Hinata’s words stabbed right through my heart and caused fatal damage.
Annoying! She’s reminding of my long-forgotten past.
“T-there is no such thing! I was very caring and reliable in the past!”
“Oh—All right then.”

Hinata looks at me with a sympathetic expression and gives a disdainful chuckle.
Unwillingly, I have lost.
Why do I feel such sense of defeat when I was supposed to be the victor of the fight.
Speaking of which, I haven't even declared my victory...
Leaving me destroyed with the above sayings, Hinata goes on to treat Renard with healing magic.

She's an expert in that field as well.
She probably thought that if anything urgent had happened, there is no way that Luminas would not lend an aiding hand, so she simply ignored everything else. It seems like that Luminas is the type who will ignore people if they are not to her interest.
Renard, good luck. You are an even sadder fellow than me.
Seeing that Luminas has healed Hinata, the Holy Knights seem to have erased their doubts for her as well. After all, there is no reason to question it when some of them seem to know Pope Louis as well.

When Renard regains consciousness, everyone begins to share this joy.
They begin to surrender to Hinata with tears while shouting her name. "Hinata-sama!"
Ah, someone got punched for staring at her chest.
As expected of Hinata, how terrifying.

Does it matter that she is short-sighted? She seems to have "Magic Perception" on for most of the times.

Ah, the chance of exposure for man peeking at the ladies is almost one hundred percent. I have to be careful.

Even though it is too late to say so.
As such, everyone regains their calmness before Luminas opens up with majesty:
"—Then, Seven Luminaries, what excuse do you have for this incident?"

Everyone is curious of how Luminas would tie up the loose ends, and so we remain to watch it unfold.

It is then that Diablo reports back to me.
"—Rimuru-sama, it is done."
"Good. Then, how did things go?"
"Kufufufufu. All according to the original plan—"
This Diablo seems to be in a pretty good mood.
It must mean that all the problems have been resolved.
"All right, report back to me after the whole things settle for a while."
"Understood. I look forward to when that chance arises."
As he finishes, Diablo withdraws from "Telepathy Net" and goes back to his mission.
It probably means that he was also able to get rid of the false accusation and clear his name for the murdering charge.

If that's the case, I won't interfere with how the Seven Luminaries are trialed.
It is true that I got a lot of trouble for this, but I've accepted Luminas's apology just now.

Further interference would only make things more troublesome. We should focus on how to improve our relationship in the future instead.

As I was thinking this, the result of the trial seems to be out.

It is quick and ruthless.

“The punishment is death. As a parting gift, I shall send you on your way myself—”

“H-have mercy!”

“We only did these for Luminas-sama—”

“Please, f-for all the years we’ve pledged our loyalty, we beg you—”

The Seven Luminaries are begging for Luminas’s forgiveness desperately. However, their wish did not come true.

“—I gift thou the blessing of the dead (Death Blessing)!”

Luminas opened her arms as the invisible hands of god gently surround the members of the Seven Luminaries.



It is a hug of compassion and love—or so it appears, but it seems to be a cruel skill that transform its target from life to death. It is sufficient to see how immense just part of Demon Lord Luminas's power is.

The Seven Luminaries that attempted to frame and sabotage us came to their painless demise in an instant.

What a waste of all my mental preparation for possibly going to war with Holy Empire of Lubelius now that things are so casually resolved.

And so, we change our venue to a location more suited for negotiation to discuss the future of our relation.



Since it's not good to negotiate while standing, we decided to switch a venue.

I returned triumphantly alongside Luminas, Louis, Hinata and the rest to the town.

Then, I suddenly recall something as I am welcomed by Veldora.

“Ah, sorry. The final defense didn’t have a chance to show up.”

“What! And I had my hopes high while waiting here...”

Veldora seems to have some complaints, but I can only ask him to accept it.

All in all, things are resolved smoothly—or so I thought. But there is no such good deal in the world.

As soon as he lays his eyes on Luminas, Veldora suddenly drops the shocking statement:

“...! Oh oh, you are that someone! Finally, now I remember! Luminas, aren’t you Demon Lord Luminas! You are the female vampire who was at that castle I trashed. Haha, now I finally remember. Feels good, feels—”

Veldora dared to expose such information. Luminas then suddenly creates a sword to plunge at him in order to shut him up.

But it is already too late.

The truth that the God Luminas is Demon Lord Luminas Valentine has been completely revealed.

The Holy Knights are all silent.

They must all be very confused about what they just heard.

Hinata seems to be aware of the fact and begins to sigh with her palm on the face. Louis on the other hand has decided to stay away from the whole thing.

I can’t stand it.

I have a new understanding of how much of a troublemaker Veldora is.

And then—

Luminas cusses out loud: “This fucking lizard is back at it again to ruin my business—“ She

becomes out of control due to fury and everyone begins desperately trying to calm her down.

But—

That is a story for another day.

Epilogue

New Bonds

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Epilogue

New Bonds

The location is the holy land—"Inner Sanctum."

The head of the "Seven Luminary Clerics," "Master of Sun" Gran, is done with his work for now and has been bitterly waiting for his companions to return.

There seemed to be changes to the plan for eliminating Hinata. The Master of Fire sent out an urgent call for help. There was no room for failure regarding this particular matter. That's why he sent out the Master of Moon and Gold together to fight.

That woman is too smart. She would continue to be an obstacle for my plans if I don't manage to eliminate her today. The Goddess Luminas—No, I'll manipulate that Demon Lord to become the true ruler—

The Master of Sun has hidden his ambitions and served Luminas for thousands of years.

He eliminated dangerous newcomers who were overly talented before they could make a name for themselves.

He has also manipulated his colleagues and subordinates, who are the members of the Seven Luminaries, through cunning words. The Master of Sun continued to play the role as a devoted believer.

It is very easy to motivate them.

Some of them desires Luminas's love. So as long as he invoked jealousy among the other members, they would dance to the tune of the Master of Sun.

This time was no different. They still followed the will of the Master of Sun...

The Master of Fire has disguised himself as the Holy Knight Garde, who was secretly disposed of. He has set off to assassinate Hinata.

Everything has been perfectly planned out.

The Master of Moon has disguised him with illusional magic, so he won't be exposed.

The Dragon Buster that was handed to Hinata has been tampered with and can be destroyed at any point of time. Combining the attack of Demon Lord Rimuru and the destruction of the holy sword, Hinata would most definitely be defeated.

Yet Hinata didn't use the Dragon Buster, and she even prevailed in her duel with the Demon

Lord.

Gran has decided to change the specifics of his plan upon hearing this news.

It would be best if Demon Lord Rimuru takes care of Hinata. But if he fails, the Master of Fire would then make sure Hinata is eliminated.

They would then eliminate all the witnesses in the name of the Seven Luminaries to appease Demon Lord Rimuru.

They would change their plan to win the trust of Rimuru instead in order to get on good terms with him.

But then, more problems kept emerging.

There was also a situation in the Nedler territory within the Kingdom of Farmus. The demon there was both powerful and cunning beyond measure.

He flaunted his power—Such a reckless tactic was successful in raising doubts among the journalists of the surrounding nations that they had gathered.

When Gran heard the report sent back by the Master of Earth, he immediately sent the Master of Water and Master of Wood as backup.

Considering how things had developed, they had to take out all the witnesses and frame the crime on that Demon.⁸⁹

We shall march in the name of God on the Demon who has committed such heinous crimes—With this saying, the actions of the “Seven Luminary Clerics” would be justified.

In other words, they would hold the Demon accountable for his reckless actions instead of holding Demon Lord Rimuru responsible. That’s the direction they planned to head towards.

If there is any difficulty in negotiation, they would use the name of goddess Luminas as justification. Demon Lord Rimuru wants to build his foundation among the Western Nations, so surely it will be troublesome if he’s labeled as the “Nemesis of God.” Then there will be more space for negotiation.

The Master of Sun believed the plan would no doubt be successful with such reasoning.

But if there is any problem, it would be that Demon—Diablo is absurdly powerful...

But with the aid of the Master of Wood, whose power is only next to himself⁹⁰—The Master of Sun has no doubt that they will emerge victorious.

Yet his colleagues still have not returned.

“What have those guys been up to—”

Such a complaint came out of his mouth unconsciously.

There shouldn’t be anyone present to respond to him, and yet he heard someone respond back.

“What is wrong? You seem rather impetuous.”

“You... What are you doing here—?”

The Master of Sun asked while hiding his surprise.

The uninvited guest is Hinata’s trusted subordinate—Cardinal Nicolaus Speltus.

⁸⁹Sierra: Wow Farmus really is garbage

⁹⁰Sierra: Ah, yes. Im certain Wood is almost as good as The Sun. Right? Right?!

“Well, I found something very interesting.”

“You found something?”

“Indeed. Here it is.”

As he finished, Nicolaus took out the crystal ball containing the memos from Rimuru.

“How is that interesting—?”

“I found out that someone has tampered with it.”

Nicolaus added on while interrupting Gran.

It was quite rude, especially when done towards a legendary heroic figure, such as himself.

Yet Nicolaus doesn't seem to care one bit.

Even though he was displeased, Gran looks towards the crystal ball.

The deleted content suddenly reappeared, showing the real message.

“—Ah!”

Nicolaus continues to sense Gran's distress:

“I have no interest in your goals, whether you want to be pets of God Luminas or you wish to manipulate the power of God...”

“What are you saying?! God is a concept that lives in people's heart.”

“There is no need to hide it any longer. I realized a long time ago that God Luminas indeed exists. I simply followed in Hinata-sama's footsteps and concealed that fact. Apart from that, I have no interest on the matter—”

Master of Sun can almost hear Nicolaus adding the line “Including the fact that you wanted to use the name of god—”

He opens his eyes wide at Nicolaus.

Nicolaus on the other hand, looks back at the Master of Sun with his face of wisdom, staring closely at him. His eyes are like a bottomless swamp, filled with schemes but not a sense of emotion.

“You—”

Gran wants to say something, yet Nicolaus wouldn't allow him to finish.

“Go to hell, you old crooks. “Disintegration” !”

“How—!”

How could you—Those are the words he probably wished to utter. The frame of his shocked face is printed as the Master of Sun is devoured by light particles and annihilated.

“Foul pest. Did you expect me to let you walk free after trying to do harm to Hinata-sama?”

Leaving these words, Nicolaus returns to his office as if nothing has happened.

Cardinal Nicolaus Speltus—Hinata's trusted subordinate and her fanatic follower.

To him, religion is but his way of tagging himself alongside Hinata.

Nicolaus is a heretic.

He stands at the top position of the Pope's Ministry, yet he does not believe in god.

He only believes in one person, Hinata.

*

The heat of the fireplace has kept this room warm.

Sitting on a thick and soft chair, Granbell Rosso is meditating.

“Nicolaus... You little shit...”

He mumbles to himself as he opens his eyes.

The bright lights of “Disintegration” is still branded in his brain.

Indeed, the true identity of Granbell Rosso is the head of “Seven Luminary Clerics” — “Master of Sun” Gran.

Granbell possesses the ability to separate his astral body in order to possess others, His heart is filled with anger now that his recently renewed body has been destroyed by Nicolaus.

Moreover, had it been him there in person—He can’t deny that it would have been a really close call.

This furthers Granbell’s anger.

It is time to withdraw now.

When he opened up his eyes, he sensed that Glenda was approaching the mansion as well.

That should indicate something has occurred outside of their plan, in other words, the mission has failed.

Glenda bashes into the room and starts shouting upon seeing Granbell.

“Granbell-sama, I can’t win against that. I can’t handle that insane monster that showed up!”

He can tell that she has given everything she had to escape as she has exhaustion written all over her face. Her words are no doubt truthful.

“What happened to the rest of the “Three Martial Sages” ? If you three all move in together—”

“No way, our enemy isn’t that weak. I have a keen sense to the aura of death on the battlefield. I realized things weren’t good for us, so I escaped after leaving the fighting to Sare. The enemy could rival Demon Lord—No, he was probably even stronger...”

These are Glenda’s testimonies.

You are overreacting—Granbell thinks to himself, yet the rest of his colleagues within the “Seven Luminary Clerics” has yet to reach out to him as well.

Granbell, unease at the thought begins to detect their presence, yet he is not receiving any reaction.

“Could it be...”

This is the reality that cannot be averted even with Granbell’s shocking realization.

A few days later—

As spies across the nations report back to Granbell, he was informed of the defeat of King

Edward.

The reporters from all over the nations were safe and sound. They've spread out and made the headlines to notify every member of the public about the whole thing.

What follows is rumor from the Kingdom of Blumund that the Tempest Federation is planning to host a grand celebration.

Assessing all the information, Granbell finally determines his operation to be a failure.

Including himself, the "Seven Luminary Clerics" have been completely annihilated.

Now he can't keep acting with the false name of the god Luminas.

Later, his beloved Mariabell also made a prediction—

"Dangerous, Dangerous indeed. That town is very dangerous!"

Not knowing what she meant, Granbell asked:

"Do you mean that the angels are attacking?"

"No, that's not the case, grandpa. That Demon Lord is planning to dominate the world through economy."

The manipulation of human world through economy—That is the ardent hope of the Rosso.

It is also the plan that Granbell has been working on.

"How could this be..."

"It's true. And it will become a reality eventually. That's why—We have to defeat him before that."

Mariabell wouldn't lie.

—She hasn't lied to this day.

That's why he needed to refer to her words as part of the assessment as well.

"I see, if you say so, it must really be the case."

After all, Mariabell is from Granbell's direct lineage—

"Indeed. Next time, we will be able to do it next time. I shall gamble on my name, Mariabell the "Greed"!"

—She is also a reincarnated one.

Having possessed extraordinary power and knowledge from the "Otherworld," she is the hope of the Rosso.

With Mariabell, the Rosso will always have the upper edge—with that thought in mind, Granbell's ambition is ignited once more...



After all the fuss that had gone done, I was able to reach a peaceful resolution with Luminas.

I was also able to resolve the misunderstanding between me and Hinata.

In return as apology, they promised me that they would announce to the world under the

name of Western Holy Church that we are harmless monsters.

And the previous conflicts have been due to challenges in communication.

There may be similar problems like this in the future, but I will learn from this incident to overcome any future challenges.

As such, our diplomatic relation with the Holy Empire of Lubelius has also been revised.

We've signed a treaty of non-aggression and have reached common ground to permit each other's actions.

But someone (Veldora) has caused other trouble, which would be accounted for as a separate case.

I am very firm on my position that the problem with that person (Veldora) has nothing to do with our country.

Luminas seemed displeased, but she had to agree after I promised to not intervene with anything related to the treatment of that person.

—But it won't really matter, since with the Ultimate Skill 'Storm King Veldora,' Veldora, to some extent has become immortal. There shouldn't be a problem if anything bad happens to him.

«Answer. There wouldn't be a problem.»

Hmm.

I seem to feel a sense of guilt for selling out my friend, but with that being said, we still need to sacrifice brother Veldora to contain Luminas's wrath.

“UHHH, are you leaving me to die now—?”

Someone seems to be shouting at the top of his lung, but I must be hearing things.

At the end of the day, he had it coming, so I can't really help with that.

It may be saddening, but that's how you mature in leading a life.

Just like that, on the bedrock of a tiny sacrifice, we embrace the time of peace.

I'm not sure what happened in between to have things come to this point, but Youm's seat as king has also been settled.

Now all we have to do is to wait for inauguration, how wonderful it is that things have worked out fine.

With all that being said, our problems have been resolved altogether.

From today onward—

The Western Nations have officially accepted us.

ROUGH SKETCHES



ROUGH SKETCHES



Celebratory Comic Simu-Launch
SPECIAL MANGA

Taiki Kawakami : Art 



←READ FROM RIGHT TO LEFT!

Afterword

Sorry for having kept everyone waiting, now I present *That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime* Volume seven.

This time the content has also increased quite a bit.

“I’ll write it shorter this time!”

“Really? Are you only saying this now, but will eventually prolong the whole thing in the end?”

“No way, I’ve cut a lot of the web version content out this time, it will be shorter!”

“I’ve given up at this point, you don’t have to force yourself to write less.”

I recall such conversation. As a result, I was reassured to expand on the content.

“Ehh, in the end the length was increased a little bit...”

“That line, don’t you always do it? I am mentally prepared already.”

Is this so the relationship of trust that everyone talks about?

Editor I-san has already seen through me.

Eh? Could he have known from the start that I would increase the content?

No, it’s your defeat if you get too serious on such matter.

That’s how that went. Now I’ll comment on the content of this volume.

If it’s readers who made it through this volume should already know that there is a high chance of spoiler in the afterword.

But with that being said, it can’t really be helped if you have read to this part.

There’s probably no one who reading the series at volume seven, so it won’t be any different if I tell everyone to read the actual book first.



To the readers of the web version, you may think this volume is something completely different.

And honestly the content is completely overhauled.

The promise of “same story outline” is gradually become a fantasy.

There have been many changes to the plot development, this would result the old plot very

hard to connect up—that's the reason for all the changes.

I would like to clarify that I was going to turn the outline around and change a lot of things.

But the biggest reason of the change is probably due to the revision of design of a certain character.

I won't mention who that is, this person's personality remains the same, but his motivation and abilities are different.

The character influenced by this character the most would be Hinata-san. Perhaps Hinata-san looks completely different from her counterpart in the web version.

But this should be the original (canonical) Hinata.

Due to the plot heading in completely different direction, this feeling becomes like this.

You only have to compare the stories in the two versions to know, as I see it. But it may even be more fun for the readers who have not read the web version to read the light novel directly. In that aspect I hope everyone would choose the preferred way of reading it!

At the prologue, there are people discussing suspicious stuffs, how could we have not yet seen their appearances in the main storyline?

There's a reason to account for people's doubts regarding this.

It's definitely not because the author has forgotten to write about them, so please look forward to it in the next volume!

But people would probably have a general idea of how the story would develop at this point.

Are this author thinking anything at all? That's not the case. It's almost as if the author doesn't plan to transfer the web version directly to the light novel.

That's indeed the case, so I feel it would be a hard task to even trying to continue the story like the original story. But there are finally some signs of returning the story to the original plot since volume 7...probably.

When I was writing this afterword, I was thinking volume 8 would probably feel more akin to its web version counterpart.

That would also depend on how I feel when I begin writing it—Although the writer always likes to say this. I hope everyone would continue to accompany alongside me as we move forward in this journey.

Then, I'll see you in the next volume!