

Story by Fuse, Illustration by Mitz Vah

伏瀬 イラスト
あつはー

転生したら スライム だった件 20

Regarding
Reincarnated to Slime





GC NOVELS
転生したら
スライム
だった件 20
Regarding
Reincarnated to Slime

Story by Fuse, Illustration by Mitz Vah
伏瀬 イラスト／あつばー

旧ユーラザニア攻防戦

- ミリム・ナーヴァ VS 蟲魔王ゼラヌス
カレラ VS 蟲将筆頭ゼス
フォビオ
エスピリ
ゴブタ
ランガ
フレイ VS 蟲将トルン
ガビル
スフィア
カリオン
ミッドレイ
オベーラ VS 蟲将ビートホップ
VS 蟲将アバルト
VS 蟲将サリル
VS 蟲将ティスホーン
ゲルド VS 蟲将ムジカ



イングラシア討伐戦

- マサユキ[ルドラ]
ヴェルグリンド
VS フェルドウェイ
ヒナタ・サカグチ
VS ライナー
テスタークッサ
VS ヴェガ
ヴェノム
VS アリオス



決着



ダマルガニア頂上戦

- リムル
=テンペスト
クロエ・オベール
ディアブロ
ソウエイ
レオン
VS
ミカエル



決着



ルベリオス防衛戦

ルベリオス／テンペスト
連合軍

- ルミナス・バレンタイン
ギュンター
ルイ・ヴァレンタイン
シオン
ウルティマ
アドルマン
ガドラ



VS

- 縛鎖巨神団
ダグリュール
フェン
副長グラソード
副長バサラ

天魔大戦

戦場概略

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Volume 20

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Special thanks: ...

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1st Edition

Rumbling of Heaven and Earth

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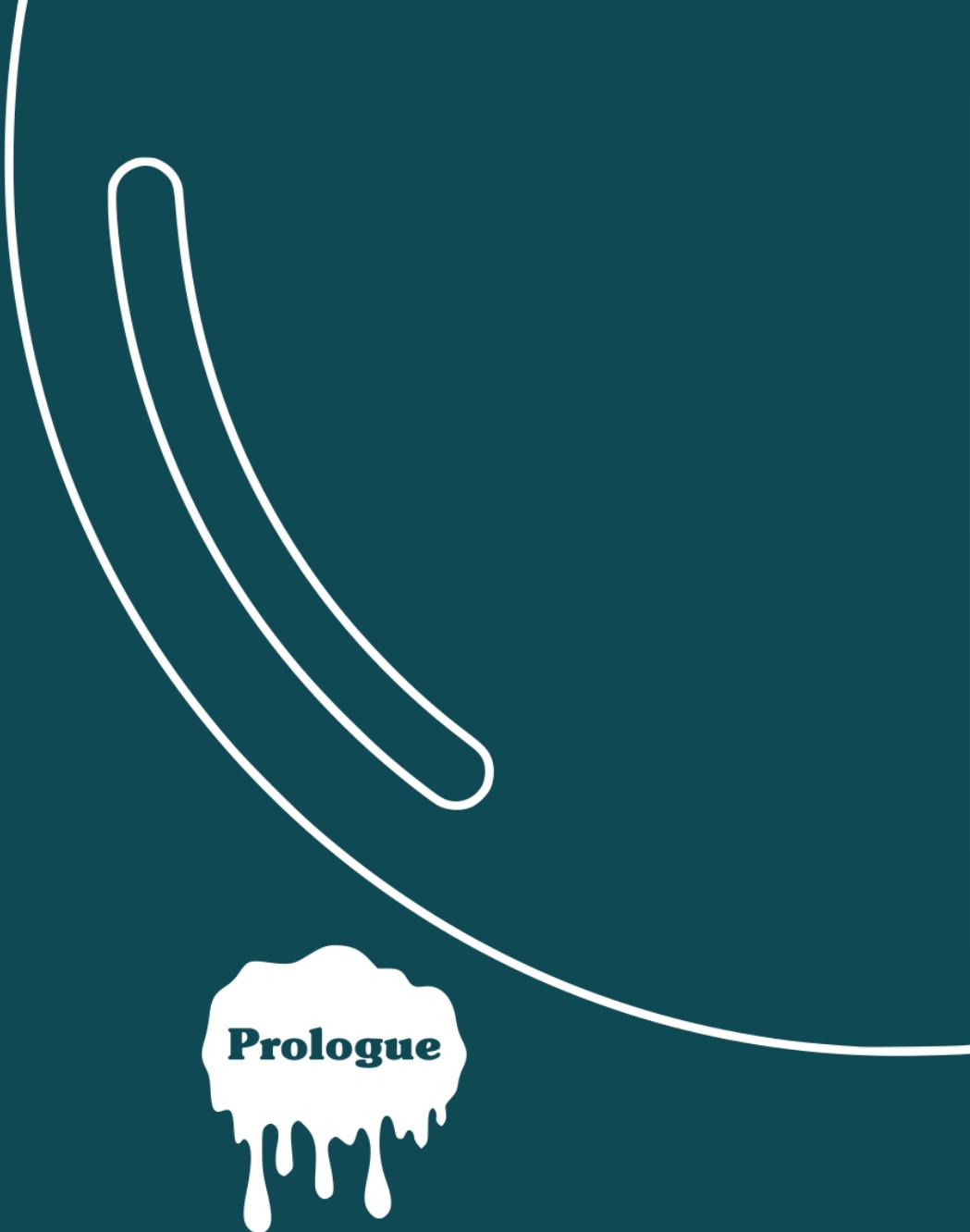
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Prologue



Feldway

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Prologue

Feldway

Immediately upon his defeat by Rudra, Feldway ordered Mai, who had been on standby in case of emergency, to return to their safe base, the Heavenly Star Palace. Without even changing out of his blood-stained robe, Feldway screamed out loud as his face contorted in humiliation.

“Damn Rudra, quit messing around!! What kind of a hero are you when you couldn’t even protect Veldanava-sama!!”

These were the true feelings of Feldway, who was furious from the bottom of his heart. He had known that Rudra was strong, but he never thought he could be defeated while in possession of the ‘Castle Guard.’ That’s right, the breach of the invincible ‘Castle Guard’ had been too unexpected even for Feldway. Even if he had not been of a cautious disposition, this would still be reason enough to choose to withdraw. That’s why this was not something to be ashamed of—Feldway understood this, but he was still unable to control the anger welling up inside him.

Although abhorrent, it’s not as if it was a decisive defeat. By telling himself this, Feldway tried to regain his composure. Specifically, he temporarily ignored his own defeat and turned his attention to the war situation with the others. As a result, he was shocked by an unexpected turn of events.

«Michael-sama, have you finished with Demon Lord Rimuru?»

Demon Lord Rimuru was their biggest concern. So Feldway sent a ‘thought’ to Michael directly, but there was no response.

...? *What's going on?*

Michael and Feldway were one and the same, sharing the same power. No matter how far apart they were, even if they existed in different dimensions, their shared will would never be severed. The only case where this would be possible was if one of them was in a critical situation where the other was unable to respond... Still, unlike Feldway, Michael was a ‘Parallel Existence,’ so as long as a copy of himself remained, he could revive in any situation. Therefore, there should be no reason to panic.

No—while there should be no reason to panic, the lack of response was still unusual.

If the stopped time has been released, the battle should have been won by now...

Demon Lord Rimuru should not even be aware of the Suspended World. In other words, the plan should have been accomplished as soon as Leon was lured to the bait. And yet...

A bad premonition was making Feldway's heart pound. And then, the message was delivered.

«Ah... my wish has been granted. Feldway, my only regret is leaving you behind—»

This was the ‘thought’ that Michael, who was on the verge of disappearing, sent to Feldway with the last of his strength. He could feel Michael’s power inside him. However, Michael’s ‘will¹’ was no longer there. This was confirmation of Michael’s “death.”

“It can’t be...Michael-sama is a ‘Parallel Existence,’ right? Whatever the situation, as long as I am safe, it should be possible to revive him...”

Feldway was so distraught that he was unable to even try to mend the situation. Michael was the first friend he had made. Unlike Zalario and Fenn, Michael was the first friend he had ever allowed himself to be open and honest with. The cautious Feldway had always prioritized Michael’s safety, taking a multitude of precautions until he felt absolutely sure that things were safe. And yet, there was no sign of Michael’s revival.

No, the Ultimate Skill ‘Justice King Michael’ itself had not disappeared, and there was a sign that the Manas had come back. It would respond to questions, but there was no longer an ego. It was merely the power to control ‘Justice King Michael’ in its complete form. It was a fundamentally different existence from Michael, Feldway’s friend who wished to revive Veldanava of his own free will. Feldway had no choice but to admit that his friend (Michael) had completely disappeared.

“Why...how did this happen?” He asked these questions without thinking, but no one could answer them.

Feldway was stunned by this unbelievable event. And then he thought of Michael’s last words. What did he mean when he said that his wish had been granted?

Feldway could not understand it at all, but he felt a little better knowing that Michael did not disappear in pain, and that his life had had meaning. At the same time, however, he could not help feeling jealous. How sly—to be satisfied with yourself and leave me behind—is what he thought.

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...

Feldway was lonely.

As the head of the Seven Primordial Angels, he was the leader of the group, and all the responsibilities fell upon his shoulders. All decisions were left to Feldway’s will, without the possibility of consulting others. When Veldanava left, there was no way to escape the pressure. To everyone’s dismay, Feldway remained at the forefront as a leader.

¹‘will’ as in his “ego”

It was inevitable that Feldway, who made all decisions on his own, would be out of step with his colleagues. Feldway's fault was that he did not care about what his colleagues thought. The accumulation of such a situation led to discord, and without Feldway realizing it, he gradually lost grip of the group. As a result, the group lost their cohesiveness. Whether it was fortunate or unfortunate, Feldway was unaware of this reality...

Fenn was also his friend, but he did not trust him enough to show his weakness. After all, there was no one, not even one person in the whole wide world, who could understand Feldway and heal his heart. Then Michael appeared.

As a comrade with the same goal in mind, and as a friend who could understand the other, Michael fulfilled that empty part of Feldway. It was a joy he had never experienced before. Before long, Michael had become as important to Feldway as Veldanava.

However, reality was cruel. The friend he had finally made disappeared, leaving Feldway behind.

‘What do I...?’ —For the first time in his life, Feldway felt weak.

.....

.....

...

“Hey, General, quit your sulking and tell me what to do next.”

Though it was only for the blink of an eye, it's true that Feldway was stunned. However, it was Vega, who was well known for his lack of discretion, who called out to Feldway without a single care. There was another person there, Mai Furuki, but she remained silent as usual and kept a quiet eye on the situation. Vega was the only one who seemed indifferent. Feldway was offended and looked at Vega.

“Shut up. We just lost contact with Michael-sama. You must understand that this is not the time for you.” He spat out at Vega and tried to silence him. However, Vega did not read the air.

“Hah? After all his bravado, that Michael guy still lost. How pathetic.” And so on and so forth, he continued to speak.

It was enough reason for Feldway to become furious.

“I am telling you to shut up!” Feldway shouted, and then he launched an aggressive and vicious attack on Vega.

“Ggh, this guy is amazing...”

The difference was like heaven and earth. Feldway and Vega were so far apart in strength that there was no way to bridge the gap. However, even after realizing this, Vega did not shut up.

“Hey, hey, are you saying I'm wrong? Michael lost because he was weak. This is a world of survival of the fittest, so there's no justice or crap if you die! Am I right?”

His words may have sounded like an incitement, but this was merely Vega's true feelings and principle of action. In a sense, it was a good argument and a truth. However, even so...

Even so, Feldway could not nod his head in agreement.

“Don't you dare talk about Michael-sama like that!!”

He tried to silence Vega by punching him, as if to counteract those words. But Vega still did not shut up.

“What the hell are you talking about!? Look, you didn’t give a shit when that bastard Cornu died, and you didn’t even care when I ate Oria and Arios, right? Come on, that’s because you thought I was right, isn’t it? Am I wrong?”

He was right. Feldway had not been saddened by Cornu’s death. More than that, he had been displeased with the failure of the mission and was busy thinking of the next best course of action. This was the same attitude he had toward his old colleagues. Oria and Arios, who he considered as nothing more than pawns, were nothing more than insignificant beings. When he learned that Vega had eaten them, all he felt was a mechanical impression that it was not a waste if it had led to Vega’s growth. Therefore, he had not blamed Vega, and in fact, he even thought that it served to strengthen their military force.

“Tch, impudent loudmouth²...”

“Heh, that’s just my nature.”

Feldway was slightly upset that his feelings had been detected. He further intensified his pressure on Vega so that he would not be aware of it.

“What would you know? I pursue a higher purpose, and in order to achieve it, I will sacrifice anything—”

Resisting Feldway, Vega shouted and interrupted his words.

“Shut up, don’t be so naïve!!”

Under the intense pressure that compressed the space, it should have been impossible to resist. Yet even so, Vega furiously insisted.

“Besides, it’s common knowledge that the world is a cruel place.”

Vega had survived under a harsh environment. Therefore, his words carried weight. Feldway involuntarily became silent, allowing Vega to speak.

“My boss, Yuuki, was trying to resist all that absurdity. Well, looking back on it now, I wonder how he could have done it with such a small amount of strength. But even so, I believed in that person. I was ready to take his head if he showed any weakness, but Yuuki had a tricky character—he never let his guard down. And sure enough, he pretended to be manipulated, didn’t he?”

“...So what? That Yuuki is no longer of this world either.”

“Yes, that’s right. Even Yuuki couldn’t do it. In the face of such an insurmountable gap in strength, no matter how idealistic or righteous one may be, it’s all meaningless.”

It was true that he had wanted to make fun of Yuuki when he heard about him being manipulated. However, Vega had sensed a dangerous feeling from Yuuki in his heart. He thought it could have been a habit acquired throughout his life, but it seems that he had instinctively realized that Yuuki was not being manipulated. He was glad that he did not get carried away

²Feldway refers to him with “herazuguchi (減らず口)” which is a noun for many things such as impudent talk, speaking without thinking, continuing to talk even after losing an argument, getting in the last word, and needlessly retorting.

with Yuuki, and when he learned that Yuuki was killed by Jahil, he lamented the impermanence of the world. That is why Vega told Feldway.

“A world where everyone can live happily ever after is just an illusion after all. That’s why there’s no choice but to be honest, right?”

“‘Honest’ you say?”

“That’s right. As long as the immutable truth that the law of survival of the fittest remains unchanged, the only right thing to do is to stand at the top.”

Vega reaffirmed that power was justice. No matter how beautiful an idea was, it was meaningless if it could not be realized. Conversely, as long as the idea could be realized, anything was allowed. In short, all that mattered was that you don’t lose. No matter how vicious an act was, it would be justified as long as you were not defeated. No matter how cowardly you were, you would win as long as you survived to the end. That was Vega’s way of life.

From the perspective of such a Vega, a defeated Michael was worthless. It was difficult to understand how Feldway, who was much stronger than himself, would mourn for a loser.

“You are strong, General. Even Jahil who defeated Yuuki is no match for you. That Velzard woman is also a monster, but I think you’re better than her. Of course, you’re better than that Michael guy.”

“...”

“That’s why, from now on, you’re the boss. No one’s going to have a problem with that.”

Feldway was strong, so it was a natural conclusion. Vega asserted this without hesitation.

“You are a simple man.”

“Don’t be so complimentary, I’m embarrassed.”

‘I didn’t mean it as a compliment’—Feldway sighed. At the same time, however, he realized that his grief over the loss of Michael was fading. Perhaps that was Vega’s way of consoling him. Feldway suddenly thought so.

“Power, huh? Certainly, there is little to lose in that regard.”

Although he had lost Michael, the power had returned to Feldway. There was a little loss, but that was because Michael had summoned the last of his strength to entrust it to Feldway. It was proof that Feldway’s friend cared for him. If so, he could not let it go to waste. It may be wrong to intentionally take away the power of a comrade like Vega did, but the result was still the same. Feldway did not intend to blame Vega, and now, Feldway even felt a sense of kinship with Vega.

“Very well. From now on I will be king in place of Michael-sama. I swear to you that I will defend the throne until Veldanava-sama is restored.”

Now that he had made up his mind, the only thing left to do was to act. Feldway had always been submissive to Michael. Because of that, he had kept his true body hidden in order to keep a low profile, but now there was no longer any reason for him to hold back. In order to fully utilize the power Michael had left him, it was now time to unleash everything and dwell in the main body he had hidden in the other world.

“It’s been a long time since I revealed my true self.”

Feldway, the first servant created by Veldanava, was very much like his creator. In contrast to Veldanava's long, jet-black hair that seemed to hold the radiance of the stars of the world itself, Feldway had long, silvery white hair that represented a shining light. His slitted eyes were cool, shimmering like blue stars. Rather than calling them beautiful, it would be more correct to call them divine. And in those eyes, there was a will of steel filled with determination. It almost seemed like a lie to say that he had once looked like a fake doll. The gender could still be seen as either male or female, but that is because he was too beautiful. As befitting of his 'beauty,' he had a tremendous presence.

All the powers that Michael had gathered belonged to Feldway. Under the control of Manas 'Michael,' there were four Angelic Ultimate Skills excluding the three, 'Knowledge King Raphael,' 'Covenant King Uriel,' and 'Hope King Sariel.' The related powers associated with the Skills were also still alive and well in the form of information. In addition, the factors of Velzard and Velgrynd, two True Dragons, had become flesh and blood. In terms of strength, Feldway was now more substantial than ever before.

"Amazing...really, he's a monster..." Vega swallowed and muttered to himself, his true thoughts leaking out unintentionally.

Feldway was radiating such a powerful energy. He was no longer the same person as before.

"Vega, you have woken me up. I thank you."

"Heh, it's okay."

Vega smiled, a little embarrassed, but he quickly made up for it and added a few more words with his usual sulky expression.

"But don't forget. I'm always aiming for you. I'm no match for you now, so I'll follow you, but if you show any weakness, I'll eat you!"

Undoubtedly, this was Vega's true intention, even if he was trying to hide his embarrassment. Even though he understood this, Feldway nodded his head happily.

"Hm, I'm counting on you."

Feldway smiled with a chilling atmosphere that was completely different from before.

ROUGH SKETCH



That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

**Chapter
1**

**The First
Showdown**

Chapter 1

The First Showdown

In the former Eurazania, at the planned construction site of Demon Lord Milim's new capital. There were those who were fighting to the death. Fighting against the antlion³ Peliod, was Esprit.

In all honesty, it's not in my character to fight so seriously...

The battle was so hopeless that she wanted to complain about it. Peliod, who nullified magic, was the worst match for Esprit. Even the nuclear magic: Nuclear Cannon, which she shot at close range, was reflected as if it were only natural. Peliod was able to reflect all kinds of magic with the prism barrier around her. Moreover, Peliod's prism barrier was not limited to magic, but also applied to a certain amount of emission-type techniques. Peliod was a natural enemy of demons who wielded magic as their weapons. At this rate, Esprit would not even be able to buy time. She was bitter at her own helplessness. And then, an unexpected helper appeared.

“Let me help you.”

Phobio, who had given up the command of his unit to Suphia, joined Esprit with those words. Although he normally should have been supporting Suphia, each of the Winged Beast Knights is a genuine warrior. They moved appropriately even without being ordered to do so, and their units were well organized. The morale of the whole army was improved when the commander and the second-in-command fought in the front rather than stay in the rear. Suphia was usually the one always running off, but this time, Phobio took the lead.

“You know, you can tell this guy is serious trouble, right?”

“Well, yeah. But I’m still a better match than you, right?”

That was a good point. Esprit specialized in magic, but Phobio’s strength lay in hand-to-hand combat. Even against an opponent who cannot use magic, there was a high possibility that Phobio could still find a way out.

“Well, I suppose that’s right. In that case, I’ll fight with this, too.”

³For those who might be curious, antlions are basically lacewings and are insects that look kind of like dragonflies or damselflies. In V19, Peliod was described as a feminine insectar with beautiful, long, slender, iridescent wings.

Esprit decided to use her magic sword to find a chance to win the battle, though she had intended to do so from the beginning. Thus, Esprit with her sword at the ready and Phobio in his half-beast form were now facing the beautiful and bewitching Peliod.

It was two against one. Even so, they were overwhelmingly disadvantaged in terms of combat strength. Esprit stepped in and swung her sword. With such masterful skill, it was hard to believe that she was an amateur until just recently. While it was true that she only started learning it as a hobby, Esprit had an obsessive personality. In her free time, she practiced over and over again, repeating the katas that Agera had shown her. The result was the brilliance of her technique in a very short period of time. But sadly, Peliod went above and beyond.

“Tch, it’s a fake. It’s so elaborate that you can hardly distinguish it from the real thing...”

That’s right, the moment she was sure that she had cut her, Peliod disappeared, scattering into particles of light. For a moment, Esprit thought it was an afterimage, but she soon realized that it wasn’t because the next moment, Peliod split into multiple bodies. Even Esprit’s ‘Ultra Intuition’ couldn’t see them, and none of them were distinguishable from the real thing.

This is impossible, Esprit thought.

She was hoping that she could help Carrera even just a little, but it would be all she could do just to buy a little more time. Phobio had also come in to help, but that was nothing more than a drop in the bucket.

Well, honestly speaking, isn’t this still better than nothing?

This wasn’t something that could be solved just by two people fighting together. Peliod’s strength was exceptional. And sure enough, Esprit and Phobio were attacked from all directions. It was all they could do to defend themselves from the onslaught of attacks, unable to tell which was the main body. Esprit had quite the mercenary personality, so she never wasted time doing useless things. She wanted to reset this battle and give up on the fight. However, dying was not an option.

I guess I could still be revived even if I did die, but that would mean disobeying Rimuru-sama’s orders. Carrera-sama would be furious, and I could never forgive myself either.

Therefore, Esprit could not afford to die. On the other hand, leaving the front line was not possible, so this was a dead end, to put it simply. Because of such contradictory thinking, Esprit’s movements slowed down. Not one to miss an opportunity, Peliod’s poisonous fangs took aim at her target—

“Don’t just stand there!”

Phobio kicked Esprit out of the way. Immediately after that, the place where Esprit had been standing until just before was covered with poisonous scales released by Peliod. It was a poison that could kill even demons, despite its fantastically beautiful glow. Its toxicity, which could corrode the body and destroy the spirit, was so fierce that even Esprit, a demon peer count, would have been unable to withstand it.

“Ow, that hurts—thank you.”

“Ah.”

Phobio lightly responded to Esprit’s honest thanks and resumed his attack on Peliod. He

repeatedly fired a series of seemingly futile claw attacks, scattering the countless clones. It was completely pointless as long as they couldn't tell real ones apart from the fakes. This, however, didn't dissuade Phobio from his brute-force approach.

"Hey, you're weaker than me, so why haven't you given up?" it slipped out of Esprit. Since there had been no point in asking that question, she was not expecting an answer. However, Phobio laughed fearlessly.

"You're pretty rude," he declared. "Well, that's fine. If you survive, you can win. As Geld-san said, it doesn't matter as long as you can survive and win the next time."

That's why now is the time to get some hints for the next step. That's why we have to keep trying, said Phobio.

"Well, I'm weak. As much as I hate to say it, I just have to do what I can."

Esprit was satisfied with Phobio's surprisingly serious answer. And she agreed.

"I'm a competitive person myself, but you're pretty good too. I'll give you that, Black Leopard Fang Phobio."

"Thank you, Esprit-dono."

"You don't need to be so up-tight with me, you know?"

"I've made mistakes because of that before. Also, I don't think we have the time to be talking so leisurely."

Unlike Esprit, Phobio was serious. Even if he couldn't win, he did not turn away from the fight and launched more ferocious attacks on Peliod. With a jet-black wind, he had been slashing at multiple clones with his claws, but they had been ineffective. But now, perhaps feeling annoyed by it, Peliod struck back for the first time.

The scales swirled and drilled their way towards Phobio. Even the smallest of scales could become a deadly weapon when they came together. If Phobio were to be hit directly, his body would surely be turned to ribbons. He understood this better than anyone else. The difference in strength between the two was obvious and facing Peliod like this would normally be suicide. However, he had come to the same conclusion as Esprit that Carrera's defeat would be certain if he did not do his best at this point.

In that case, I have no choice but to do it, even if it is reckless. My life is worth a small price if I can divert attention even a little like this.

Phobio was proud to be a Beastketeer. Although he was tempted to run away, doing so would not only be an act of losing Karion's trust, but also a betrayal to his subordinates who believed in him. He could never allow such a betrayal, and it was that conviction that drove Phobio to do what he did.

Phobio's fighting style was characterized in his ability to use high mobility to taunt his enemies and kill them with sharp claws. Although his defense was not the highest, it was not so much of a problem due to his evasive maneuverability. This time, he was barely surviving due to his speed. The slightest lapse in concentration could result in death, despite the fact that they were already walking on a very dangerous tightrope. Esprit was evaluating such a Phobio.

Hmmm, it was Gobua-san, Benimaru-sama's subordinate, wasn't it? I thought he was just

a weird guy who always talked about his love affairs with his girlfriend, but he really does show up when he has to. Unlike demons who can come back to life even if they die, he's a fragile being who can't come back after his death...

From Esprit's point of view, even Phobio, who had become one of the most powerful individuals among the greater majin, was no more than a fragile being.

Esprit was a greater demon, the elite of the elite, and a follower of Carrera, one of the demon king pillars. Because death was not the end, but rather a resurrection like a continuation in a game, Esprit lacked a true sense of crisis. Depending on the damage she took, she could be put into a sleep of several hundred years, but for the demons who live for eternity, that was only a blink of an eye. That is why Esprit was dazzled by those who lived their limited time to the fullest.

In contrast, what about herself? Whenever she had a problem, her master Carrera took care of it, and then she could push the trouble to her colleague Agera Up until now, Esprit never had the experience of doing something desperately.

Could it be that I am more useless than Phobio-san?

No!

Something deep within Esprit's heart cried out that this was definitely not true. Perhaps it was Esprit's true feelings of hating to lose, something she had almost forgotten. As if proof of this, Esprit, who had almost given up, strongly stood up once again. This was no longer due to any lackluster reason, such as the fear of violating an order if she died. Now she wanted to win, and that desire shone clearly in her eyes. Although—

“Frankly, it's impossible to beat him, isn't it? That's why, Phobio-san...let's trouble her as much as we can!”

Esprit was still a very pragmatic realist, so she didn't entertain any wild thoughts that she might win. She calmly assessed the necessary conditions for a tactical victory.

“Huh, do you have a plan?” Phobio asked with a smile.

He sensed a change in Esprit's mood and realized that their chances of winning had shifted from zero to something more positive.

“You can't win with a head-on attack. That's why, even if it's a bit shady, you think you could make a deal with a devil?”

—is what Esprit asked Even now, scales were grazing Phobio, and his body was covered with an ever-growing number of ultra-fine scars. It was only a matter of time before the poison would reach Phobio's body, which at that point would be the end of his life. Despite the situation, Phobio laughed.

“Another deal...but I don't have time to worry about that now, do I? Alright. So, just what is this deal with the devil?”

Phobio still had the bitter memory of being deceived by Footman and the others through a previous deal. Nevertheless, he had already made up his mind and was prepared to accept this deal. Esprit replied casually.

“It's a common one. Just tell me your wish, and in return, I will ask for your soul.”

Because the demon race fed on human souls whether they were big or small, they were good at such contracts. They were well versed in all kinds of magic to meet the requirements of any kind of wish. However, this was only true for the veteran demons who had survived from ancient times, not for newborn demons. Needless to say, for Esprit, this was a simple little trick that she could do at her leisure.

“I understand. I believe in Esprit-dono, so I’ll take you up on that deal.”

Even though his right arm had been ground into a fine powder dust, Phobio agreed without even a groan of pain. Upon hearing this, Esprit smiled.

“That’s good, if you had hesitated about it even a little, I wouldn’t have been able to make it in time.”

That’s right, Esprit had already been making preparations even before she heard Phobio’s answer.

“And so, of course, my wish is—”

“The power to get through this!”

Esprit nodded her head and activated the demonic contract to grant Phobio’s wish. At that moment, the passage to Phobio’s soul opened as payment, allowing Esprit to enter. Esprit paused for a moment before leaving her physical body to cut off her hesitation. Then, she entered Phobio’s soul in her natural form as a spiritual life form. This was also the Intrinsic Skill ‘possession,’ a characteristic of the demon race. It was sometimes used to take over the body of a person with whom one had made a contract, and the purpose of its use this time was something similar to that.

〈I really didn’t want to use this method. I can’t believe I had to leave the wonderful body that Rimuru-sama gave me on the battlefield like this.〉

〈What the, what the hell’s going on here—?〉

〈Calm down. We’re in the middle of a crisis right now, but we’re prolonging the time more than a million times over with ‘hyper-speed thinking.’〉

Esprit’s calm voice gave Phobio some time to comprehend the situation. It was true that the world seemed to have frozen, as if time itself had stopped.

〈...I see, so this is the world that the people at the summit are seeing.〉

〈As for me, I still have a long way to go. Carrera-sama is said to be about a hundred million times better, so even ritual magic that takes years to perform can be activated in an instant.〉

〈Haha, that’s amazing...〉

Rather than amazing, this was really just on a whole different level. It was a world beyond Phobio’s comprehension. Ignoring Phobio’s astonishment and dismay, Esprit began to explain.

〈There is plenty of time, or rather time to spare, so listen to me. I have separated from my physical body and returned to my original spiritual existence to inhabit you. I would normally take over the host and use their power as my own, but there is a procedure to do that, and to tell you the truth, it wouldn’t make me much stronger.〉

Phobio excelled in physical combat, especially in close combat. His skill level had also been greatly improved by training with Midley. On the other hand, Esprit had only just taken

up swordsmanship as a hobby. Peliod specialized in magic, so she was able to use it against her to some extent, but she would soon be defeated. Therefore, she decided to let Phobio take the lead. However, this did not mean that she would do nothing.

«I inhabited you so that we could concentrate our forces.»

«What do you mean?»

«You should continue to focus on your evasive maneuvers. As it was, you'd have been killed within ten—no, five minutes, but if we combine our powers—»

Esprit inhabited Phobio by means of a demon's contract. She then decided to surrender all of her power to him.

«—If I use that power, you think I can defeat him?»

Phobio's intuition whispered to him that it couldn't be that simple. And he was right.

«She's not an opponent you can beat with just that. She seems to have more of a 'vision' than I do.»

Peliod also had 'compound eyes' that could read all kinds of information. It was because she was clearly aware of the flow of magicules that she was able to reflect any kind of magic. This was obvious when she was able to throw back Carrera's 'Abyss Annihilation' in her first move. This fact proved that Peliod was more skilled in handling magic than Esprit. Naturally, her Thought Acceleration was also better than Esprit.

«So then, what are we going to do?»

«You'll do everything you can to stay alive. Of course, you're not the only one. I'll help you, too.»

While Phobio took the initiative in melee combat, Esprit herself intended to fight with magic. The plan was to mitigate the attacks on Phobio with the assumption that this might not work either.

«I see. So the plan is to increase the survival rate as much as possible.»

«That's right. The tactical victory here is to survive until someone comes along who can defeat her. And if we can get her attention and keep her out of Carrera-sama's way, then we have nothing to complain about.»

Phobio nodded his head in agreement.

«In other words, this is a way to buy time, right?»

«It's the only way. There's a clear difference in ability, so it can't be helped. But don't worry. According to my calculation, we should be able to last for 20 minutes.»

«Haha, that's very encouraging...»

«I don't feel assured at all,» Phobio couldn't help but laugh.

But he pushed forward. As much as it hurt to admit, Phobio was weak. He had decided that the weak had their own way of fighting and that he would do his utmost to achieve that. And so, the battle entered its second round.



Now, Phobio and Esprit were fighting as one, and because their existence values were also added together, it was increasing. However, the existential value was still less than one million, which was not much higher than that of Peliod's. Even so, thanks to the much better performance than before, they were able to compete with her. One of the reasons for this was that Phobio no longer cared about his physical injuries anymore since Esprit had started to shoulder the damage. And he no longer cared about physical exhaustion either.

Phobio had decided to stop worrying about the various problems and had switched to a full-throttle combat style, giving up the long-term battle once and for all. Of course, such an action would shorten the time limit of the active battle. Nevertheless, the reason such a strategy was successful was that Esprit was supplying mana.

Phobio's 'beast form' had three stages. The first was the normal majin form. This was the most balanced form and the least burdensome. The second was the leopard-headed majin form. This form was versatile and specialized in fighting. The third was the fully animalized form. It was the fastest in terms of speed alone. However, it was not suitable for combat against humans, as it could not handle most of the skills Phobio had been trained for.

Phobio was now in the most powerful leopard-headed majin form. This form was not fuel-efficient, and the body would be damaged whenever full strength was exerted. Phobio had been fighting with a cautious approach, always controlling his power and releasing it at a moment's notice. Even if he was damaged, he was able to manage it because beastmen have a high regenerative ability. However, it was not good for a long-term battle because it consumed stamina and mana to maintain such a high regenerative capacity. But now, Phobio was able to put all these concerns aside and concentrate on fighting. His lost hand was regenerated, and he was able to use his full strength. It was all thanks to Esprit.

Esprit protected Phobio by taking his soul into her mental body. This was made possible by Esprit's Unique Skill 'Discerner.' With this skill, Esprit could form a connection beyond time and space with those whom she knew, and she could control the soul more perfectly by using this skill together with the demonic contract. As a result, Esprit would take a lot of damage, but that was about it. She showed off her demonic nature and endured it with all kinds of resistance. However, painful things still hurt.

«Seriously, I hate insect types. For direct attacks on the mind, Pain Nullification is meaningless.»

It was the accumulation of each of these factors that gave insectars their superiority over demons. Because the compatibility was so one-sided, an insectar would always win between two opponents of the same level of skill. Combined with these unfavorable conditions, Esprit's damage was quickly accumulating. Nevertheless, Phobio was still alive and well, and at the

expense of Esprit, the battle remained competitive. Besides, there was one piece of good news.

«I knew it. She was sticking around longer than I thought she would, but now I know why.»

«Hmm?»

«No, you don't have to listen to me.»

Muttering to herself, Esprit explained.

«As expected, she is specialized in magic and seems to have taken damage from Carrera-sama's magic. I thought there was no way she could repel such a huge magic without any risk.»

Carrera's 'Abyss Annihilation' had the power to destroy even a planet depending on how it was used. Because Peliod has faced the attack head on, Esprit thought that there must be some kind of anomaly. She was not strong enough to prove it, but she was finally convinced of it once she inhabited Phobio and made full use of 'Discerner.'

«Then, if we aim at that weak part—can we win?»

«That's impossible. It's only because she's weak that she's not ready to attack, but her defenses are ironclad. Still, on the other hand, it's good for us too.»

Hearing Esprit's answer, Phobio was silent for a moment. Then he sighed heavily.

«As expected, I guess we'll just have to keep going until reinforcements arrive...»

It was a regrettable and undesirable conclusion, but it was the only one they could come to. Phobio gave up and concentrated on Peliod to fulfill his role.

.....

.....

...

And then, around forty minutes had passed.

«...We've worked hard, haven't we?»

«I'm too tired to talk. Can't do it anymore. I'm seriously gonna die⁴.»

Even though he was wounded all over, Phobio was alive. Esprit, who was protecting his soul and taking the damage, was barely conscious. Considering that she had thought twenty minutes was the limit, Esprit was very satisfied with the result. However, it was a result of exhausting everything she had. Peliod, on the other hand, was in good shape. Her movement was even better than it was at the beginning of the battle, which meant that she was recovering from the damage inflicted by Carrera. Strategically, this was a great victory, but tactically, this was a defeat. But that was okay, because both Phobio and Esprit had done their part.

«Tch, I'm so upset, just when I got a girlfriend too.»

«What's that? Is that why you worked harder than expected? Well, I'll give you credit for exceeding my expectations, so as a reward, I'll pass on your message to her.»

Since they could no longer stand, all they could do now was wait for death. And so, they made light talk with each other. Phobio wanted to enjoy the memories he had of Gobua, whom he had come to care for, but Esprit prevented him from doing so.

«You are the devil!»

⁴It doesn't really come through in English, but Esprit is talking in very short and curt sentences.

‘Yes. I am a demon, and so?’
‘That’s right. It’s so sad that you don’t get my sarcasm.’
‘Well, even I’ll feel troubled if you praise me so much.’
‘I’m not praising you, okay?’
‘Ah, yes. Well, I guess so.’

Through this intense battle, the two had become comrades with whom they could converse casually. And so, while drowning their fears of death and the humiliation of defeat, they impatiently waited for that moment. However, then—

Without changing her expression, Peliod held out her hand. The magic activation part of her body that was destroyed by Carrera’s magic had been restored, so mana could now be used more efficiently. Phobio, who was lying on his side and unable to move, could be dealt with at any moment. Peliod joyfully awaited Phobio’s screams of death, not imagining that Phobio and his comrade would be talking casually to each other to prolong the moment. Peliod did not feel any respect for the ones who had made things so difficult, and only pursued the pleasure that her instincts demanded.

—Dense compressed mana rays emitted from Peliod’s fingertips, only to gouge into the ground without penetrating Phobio. A hobgoblin leapt out of Phobio’s shadow, grabbing Phobio’s leg and throwing him down. Then—

“Whoa! My appearance, wasn’t it so perfectly timed?”

—a silly⁵ voice echoed throughout the battlefield. The owner of that voice, needless to say, was Gobta. In order to break out of this critical situation, he had rushed to the scene as a reinforcement and appeared in full force.

Gobta was not the only one to arrive. Gobua, a red-haired beauty in a scarlet military uniform, caught Phobio as he flew toward her. She held Phobio firmly to her chest and retreated to the back to protect him from Peliod’s attack.

‘Score’—is what Phobio thought to himself, but that was a secret.

And finally, Ranga, who appeared at the end, stood in the front to protect Gobta and intimidate Peliod who was trying to pursue him. He then launched an ‘Apocalypse Howling⁶’, without hesitation and succeeded in slowing down Peliod’s movement. Thus, Phobio and the Esprit within Phobio were saved from certain death. Esprit, who had returned to the body she had left behind, stood up and spoke.

“Wow, as expected of Gobta-sama! I believed that you would definitely come to save me!”

Esprit, whose eyes were sparkling brightly, was actually a fan of Gobta.

“Eh, is that so? I’m a bit embarrassed.”

“As one of the Four Heavenly Kings, please show me your cool side!!”

Esprit was flattering Gobta. She was not trying to stir things up, but really meant it from

⁵While the translation was silly, the meaning is actually more of a stupid/boneheaded type of silly.

⁶Ranga first used this attack in the last volume against Vega.

the bottom of her heart.

“Well then, when this battle is over, let’s go on a date—”

And this was where Gobta fell into the act:

“Ah, this kind of thing came just in time!”

It wasn’t a feeling of love or anything similar, so this was a point that should not be misunderstood. Esprit also left the front line, leaving Gobta with a drooping head. Thus, the collapse of the front was prevented by the efforts of Phobio and Esprit. After a change of players, the battle was brought to the third round.



A while after the outbreak of the Great War, several non-aggression zones had been formed on the battlefield. In these zones, battles between transcendent beings were taking place, and those who were not strong enough would be reduced to dust simply by approaching these zones.

Above the battlefield, the one-on-one battle between Frey of the Milim Four Heavenly Kings and Insect General Torun was becoming more intense than ever.

The Soaring Flock and Milim’s Guards could only watch from a distance to avoid being caught up in the aerial battle between the two forces who were leaving even the speed of sound behind. The same was true for the flying insects under Torun, who were spreading out in a wide disarray in their ranks. Thus, it seemed that victory or defeat would be left to the final battle between the two forces in the battlefield in the sky, but this was evidently a mistake. Looking at the battlefield from a bird’s eye view, only the forces of one side continued to decrease.

“Kishishishi, you’re weak. You’re quite good at running away!”

At first, Frey went on the offensive, but after her signature claw attack was evaded, she had been on the defensive. No, she had actually attacked several times, but those were of no use to Torun, and she did not even feel like a threat to him. If she had to be honest, there was probably nothing that stood out to him about her other than her speed. Of course, Torun was not the kind of guy who would let his guard down, which was the reason why the battle dragged on for this long...but he was beginning to think that it was time to end it. That’s why he had said what he did, but Frey only snickered in response.

“Oh, is that how you see it? In that case, I should be grateful.”

“What?”

Torun tilted his head, not understanding the meaning. She should have been the one feeling cornered, but Frey’s expression showed a definite smile of composure.

“Thank goodness you are an idiot.”

“What⁷? ”

“The most important factor in a battle, just what do you think it is?”

“Speed.”

“Well, that is also correct. However—”

Certainly, Frey agreed that speed was the most important factor. At the same time, however, there was a more important factor that should not be forgotten. It was not based on physical ability, but rather on intelligence. In other words, it was the way that one fought. When two fighters of the same level of ability clashed with each other, the outcome of the fight depended greatly on whether or not they thought about how to fight.

In this case, the current battle situation was proof. As soon as her first attack was avoided, Frey knew that this fight would be a prolonged one. She decided that it was important to take away the enemy’s strength without getting fatigued, so she adjusted her fighting style to one that sought optimum efficiency. This tactic was not limited to herself but also included her subordinates.

In other words, Frey controlled the situation of the battle to her own advantage by involving the enemy forces in the aftermath of the battle between herself and Torun. Frey’s most notable point was her intelligence in using Torun’s own power to drive the enemy forces to the brink of destruction. This was Frey. This was the true nature of the cunning Sky Queen.

Frey laughed, and Torun finally understood what was going on.

“Wha!? You, from the very beginning, were aiming for this...”

“Well, what do you think?”

“Impertinent... but you still can’t get a scratch on me, so I’m the one who’s gonna win!!”

Enraged, Torun accelerated and closed in on Frey. However, this too was predicted by Frey. Torun’s aerial attacks were so troublesome that even a Demon Lord Seed class would be unable to see them, but Frey was a different story. By observing his way of fighting many times, she could see through the patterns and even calculate predicted attack points based on Torun’s initial velocity.

It was dangerous to make assumptions in these situations due to the existence of powerful figures who ignored the laws of physics completely, but in the case of Torun, she had already confirmed that he was bound by the laws of the Cardinal World. That is why she explained to him.

“Assumptions are dangerous. I’m quite timid, so it takes me a long time to be sure.”

By the time Frey finished, Torun had reached the predicted position. And what Torun noticed was the pain of fingernails piercing through his chest exoskeleton. Torun’s shiny metallic exoskeleton was not as strong as an alienium fist. If so, adamantite would be strong enough to pierce it...and the result was the current reality.

“—Huh?”

Torun was distraught, but it was already too late. Despite his desperate attempts to resist,

⁷The way he says “what” here is more rude than previously, but it doesn’t come through in English.

none of Torun's powers were activated. The moment Frey's claws got to him, the victor had already been decided. And inside Torun's chest, which had been pierced through, there was the magic nucleus that was crucial for the insect majin (insectar). Frey's claws were clutching it...

"So then, good-bye."

Torun's magic nucleus was brilliantly shattered. And thus concluded Torun's death.

Lucia and Claire congratulated Frey.

"Thank you for your hard work, Frey-sama."

"Well done, Frey-sama. From here, we will conduct the full-scale sweeping operation of the site."

Frey nodded gracefully.

"Yes, please do. I'm really tired, but the battle is far from over. I don't think I should be resting either."

Frey looked around the battlefield. In her line of sight, she could see her comrades struggling in the battle.



Frey had the upper hand from start to finish, but there were others who did not. Although the disparity was not as great as that of Phobio's team, Gabil, who had come as a reinforcement, was showing desperate resistance while being tossed around by the enemy. Gabil was by no means weak. He had acquired new strength and was also growing to be one of the strongest. However, his opponent was just too strong. Insect General Beathop was a formidable opponent who was too much for Gabil.

Gabil's existence value was 1.26 million, while Beathop's was over 1.7 million. While the difference in existence value was not a decisive difference in strength, Beathop's combat ability, such as his physical ability, was directly related to his existence value by a high percentage. He was an insectar who did not possess any special powers and instead specialized in close combat. He was the worst match-up for the all-around versatile Gabil. If Gabil had been alone, he would have been defeated long ago. The reason why this had not yet happened was that he had comrades fighting alongside him.

"Gabil-san, are you all right?"

"Mm. I'm still alive and well! Rest assured, Suphia-dono!"

Gabil and Suphia, who had fought together against Midley during the Eurazania invasion, were once again teaming up against Beathop.

Suphia was also the leader of the Winged Beast Knights, but she left that role to her subordinates. This time it had taken longer to leave because Phobio had given up the command first,

but Suphia was not suitable for commanding, and she would always relieve herself of her duties after she finished raising everyone's morale. Rather than leading, it was better to slaughter as many enemy generals as possible in order to make the most of one's individual strength.

She was well aware of this and did not hesitate to throw herself into the battle this time as well. However, Zelanus' forces were not so easy to defeat, and she was forced to give her all even though she should have had the advantage of two-on-one.

"Good, good! This is what a battle should be like." An excited Beathop laughed loudly.

Beathop was drunk on his power. He enjoyed defeating the weak with his overwhelming strength, and for him, a battle was but a game in which victory was guaranteed. In this respect, Gabil and Suphia, his current opponents, were just the right combination of two opponents.

Taking them one at a time would have been unsatisfactory, and this situation of overturning a numerical disadvantage greatly excited Beathop. That's why he was enjoying the battle, even though he could have settled it much earlier. Such impure intentions were easily conveyed. Gabil and Suphia were desperately trying to find a way to win and lamenting their lack of ability.

"I have faced many strong opponents over time, but you seem to be the strongest of them all."

"Oh, I see. I'm flattered to hear that, but I'm not going to take it easy on you!"

Beathop's voice sounded really happy. In contrast, Gabil and Suphia spoke in displeasure.

"Hmph! How ridiculous! You say that when you haven't even been serious until now."

"Ah, that's right. If you're a warrior, be a warrior. Don't play with your enemies!"

Beathop did not intend to cut corners, but he certainly wanted to prolong the fun. Gabil and Suphia saw through that and were offended. However, it was thanks to that, that they were still safe, which was more frustrating than anything else. It was humiliating to be saved by an enemy's pride.

Indignantly, Gabil took a recovery potion. Similarly, Suphia chugged the expensive full potion without hesitation. Despite this, the countless wounds on their bodies showed no sign of recovery. The reason was simple; their existence values had exceeded the prescribed amount of the recovery potion. Suphia had also evolved under the influence of Karion's awakening, and now her existence value was enhanced to just under 500,000. Although she was not as strong as Gabil, there was a clear distinction between her and greater majin or Holy Knight class human beings, so even a potion that would completely heal a normal person would not be enough to do so for her.

The principle of full potions was to activate cells by means of magicules, and even to compensate for missing parts, thereby restoring cells to their original state. However, for majins with a high intracellular magicule density like Gabil and the others, one or two restorative potions would not be enough to replenish their cells. That is why the two had used over a hundred recovery medicines during this battle. For minor injuries, simply sprinkling the potion on their bodies was effective, so the two of them were already completely soaked with potion.

"It's a good thing that the taste has been improved. Though I'd like to refrain from taking any more recovery medicine for the time being."

“I agree. At first, I thought the strawberry flavor was cool, but now I’m just hungry.”

Because Suphia was more dependent on the recovery medicine than Gabil, she appeared to be quite fed up with it. However, she was still lucky to be safe. This was all thanks to the special training with Midley. For the past several months, the two had been learning the art of close combat against Midley. If it had not been for the Battlewill defensive shield, which they had become proficient at, they would have died without even the use of recovery medicine. But now, that good fortune was about to come to an end as the atmosphere around Beathop changed.

“Hey, hey, is Torun dead?”

The reason Beathop had been ignoring Gabil and the others who were exchanging pleasantries was because he had noticed that one of his comrades had been defeated by Frey. On a stalemated battlefield, it was dangerous for one side to break off. Knowing this, Beathop decided that it was no longer the time to play around.

“It can’t be helped. I wanted to take it easy, but I’m going to make a move.” Beathop declared.

It wasn’t that he had been playing around, it was just that Gabil and the others had been doing better than expected. Even so, this was an equilibrium that had been established because Beathop had been keeping the pace of the battle in mind. Similar to Karion’s strategy, Beathop, who did not want to go all out at this point, fought in such a way that he could leave some energy left over. Now, however, with the defeat of his comrades, he had shifted into a mode of destruction without thinking about the future.

“Kill” Leaving that mutter behind, Beathop disappeared.

Taking advantage of his leg strength, he immediately closed the distance with the force of an Instantmove and kicked Suphia. Suphia, of course, did not follow Beathop with her eyes, but rather with ‘Magic Perception.’ She had broken away from her old style of fighting with only her natural ability and had polished her skill-levels. But even so...

Beathop’s moves were too fast. It was only to be expected because this time he attacked with his full power, not caring about the damage to his own body.

“Gah!”

Suphia barely managed to protect herself with both arms, but the result was cruel. Her crossed arms were shattered, and she was hit with a powerful kick to the abdomen.

“Suphia-dono—!?” Gabil shouted as Beathop paused in his kicking position. He quickly glanced at Suphia while preparing himself. Suphia was barely alive.

Hmm... Suphia-dono is in such a state after only a single blow...

As a result, Suphia’s withdrawal from the battle was inevitable. Rather than despair, Gabil thought it was fortuitous that he was not dead. But thinking that way was naïve when you got right down to it. Gabil was a warrior, and he did not make a habit of unnecessarily hurting his defeated opponents. Moreover, it went against Gabil’s aesthetics to deliberately finish off a fighter after the victory was assured.

Of course, Gabil also understood that there were those who believed killing the enemy on the battlefield was the right thing to do. Still, he did not expect that anyone would make an

unnecessary pursuit in the face of a strong enemy. In other words, he had assumed that Beathop was also a skilled fighter and would not take any actions that would give Gabil an opening. However, reality was often cruel. Beathop turned his back on Gabil and swung his raised leg toward Suphia.

“Gack”

There was a dull gurgling sound, and Suphia coughed up blood. Beathop’s foot had crushed Suphia’s heart. At this rate, she would surely die—In his prolonged thinking, Gabil understood exactly what was happening.

How foolish—even if it gives me a chance to attack, he gives priority to the final blow... No, he must have confidence in his ability to endure.

That understanding was nothing short of humiliation, but perhaps it was not wrong. With the difference in competence between Gabil and Beathop, that outcome seemed highly probable. Gabil thought to himself. Though his heart was terribly turbulent, his thoughts remained calm. Should he bet everything on the hand he was given and aim for victory, or should he—

There is no need to hesitate. Rimuru-sama would also praise my choice!

It only took a moment to make up his mind. It was a gamble whether the plan would really work or not, but Gabil believed in his power without hesitation.

“Don’t let Suphia-dono die!!”

With that shout, he threw his precious Vortex Spear, something he considered a comrade-in-arms, at Beathop. And then, just as Beathop was avoiding it, he rushed over to Suphia. Then, Gabil unleashed his power. Even Gabil was not sure if this power could affect others, but right now, there was no other way to help Suphia but to rely on it.

“Turn back, fate! Hear my wish and create a miracle!”

Gabil prayed. He believed with all his heart that Suphia would come back to life, and that he could help her with his power. As a result—

The ‘Change Destiny’ of the Ultimate Gift ‘Psychology King Mood Maker’ could be activated only once a day, rewriting the tragedy that should have come—

Beathop cast a questioning glance at Gabil, who appeared to be exposed and defenseless even in the middle of a battle. He immediately concluded that Gabil must have given up the fight the moment he let go of his spear.

“Idiot”

—Is what Beathop ridiculed with a sneer.

“Together as comrades, I will get rid of you cleanly.”

Beathop showed no mercy even to those who had lost their will to fight. It was Beathop’s belief that mercy led to carelessness. However, because low-level insectars did not have emotions, Beathop was a superior individual in that he understood the concept of affection, thought it would not be a comfort for the adversary.

And so, a gust of wind blew across the battlefield. Beathop unleashes his power once again and sent a spindle kick towards Gabil. The alienium covering his leg blade gave off a dull glow,

and Gabil's fate seemed to be at an end. But that future would not come. Fate had been altered, and Suphia had been fully restored.

"Watch out, Gabil-san!"

As soon as she was resurrected, Suphia took evasive action, following her instincts of danger. As if caught up in the action, Gabil rolled away on the spot. Beathop's kick destroyed much of the ground, but Gabil and Suphia were able to escape from the crisis safely.

"Phew, I was saved."

"That should be my line. I thought I was dead, but Gabil-san saved my life."

"Mm. It was a risky move, but I'm glad it was a success!"

Perhaps feeling relieved to have escaped from the crisis, the two exchanged a few light words. But Beathop was still alive and well, and the real battle was yet to come.

"...? I thought for sure I killed her, but how is she still alive?"

"I would love to explain myself, but I won't tell you!"

"Well, that's fine. I'll make sure I get you next time."

Beathop broke off the conversation and tried to put all his strength into his body once again, but Gabil interrupted him with a laugh.

"That's impossible. I just realized this, but your power cannot be used continuously, can it? Otherwise, there would be no reason for you to waste your time talking with us."

Gabil spoke confidently. Beathop's speed exceeded Apito's, and the power of his fists and kicks was as heavy as Geld's. Moreover, his irregular movements, such as suddenly accelerating and then stopping, were so exquisite that even Apito could not have imitated them. Those movements were very difficult to recognize and were almost impossible to avoid. That is why, on the contrary, Gabil wondered about them.

Even Apito-dono said that it was easy to accelerate but difficult to stop suddenly. Hinata-dono used magic to twist the laws of inertia to make her mysterious movements possible, but there is no sign of this person using magic. In that case, the only thing I can think of is—

It was either the control of the law via special ability, or by brute force. With these two options in mind, Gabil continued his observation and noticed that Beathop was using 'Ultraspeed Regeneration' on his body after each attack. In other words, Beathop was demonstrating combat ability that surpassed his limits through forceful brute strength.

If so, there was only one way to deal with it. If Beathop kept on attacking with such unreasonable force, he would eventually self-destruct. All Gabil had to do was concentrate on defense and wait for that moment.

However, these were also attacks from a superior opponent who had surpassed their limits. He would be killed instantly by a single blow if he was not careful, and he would continually be walking on a tightrope that was much too dangerous.

Beathop's Limit Break attack, which required much sacrifice, was several times faster than Apito and could kill Gabil with a single blow depending on where it hit. A limb was sure to be damaged, and even taking a scratch would be a big deal.

Thinking that it would be difficult to continue to deal with such attacks, Gabil asked Beathop

to reconsider his tactics. Even without the Limit Break attack, Beathop was still superior. Gabil hoped that if he showed that he had been exposed, Beathop might be able to return to the conventional strategy.

“...”

There was an awkward silence. It was broken by Beathop’s loud laughter.

“Gyahahahaha! Great, that’s great! Really, you’re weak, but I can’t get enough of you!” After laughing like that, Beathop’s mood changed once again. “I acknowledge you. That’s why, I’ll take you seriously!”

The bet had failed.

“What!?”

Gabil thought it was a bad idea. He had made such a big show of pretending to be the better guy, and now he couldn’t back out. Gabil had Suphia behind him, so running away was out of the question. Now, he had no choice but to leave it to luck and do his best to survive the situation.

At least, if I had my Vortex Spear in hand...

The lizardmen’s secret treasure, the spear, had just been tossed away. He wanted to go pick it up, but he did not think Beathop would allow him to do so.

Gabil was resolved to the situation. In that moment when all his nerves sharpened in anticipation—

“Gabil-sama, you lost something!”

With Sukerou’s voice, the Vortex Spear was returned to Gabil’s hand.

“This guy too⁸, he’s been fighting alongside us all this time, right? Don’t let go of him again.” Sukerou said, in a stylish manner.

“Indeed.” Kakushin nodded.

“Right, right! With that, Gabil-sama is the strongest, so hurry and get rid of that guy!” Yashichi made a reckless request as usual.

Even the Vortex Spear in his hand was trembling as he nodded in return.

“You guys...”

Hot tears welled up in Gabil’s eyes.

Nn? Huh? Why does the spear seem to be pulsating to a beat—

He was about to realize something very important.

“Gabil-sama, we believe in you.”

“Indeed!”

“Gabil-sama, you’re gonna show us your cool side, right?”

The expectations from the three of them were heavy. It was more like a shove than a cheer...

In particular, Yashichi was especially terrifying. Both unknowingly and innocently, he was pushing Gabil into a corner. Gabil, no longer thinking about the spear, stood up proudly and puffed out his chest as usual. But then, something unusual happened. Cheers from Suphia were

⁸He’s referring to the vortex spear as a fellow comrade. It should also be clear that the spear is not necessarily given a gender, but I put in he/him pronouns to make it easier in English.

also received. And that was—

“Well, I agree. Gabil-san, those guys are right. You know, you look just as cool as Karion-sama in my opinion.”

That was a bombshell of a statement for Gabil.

Eh, I’m cool?



Suphia's voice was echoing in Gabil's head. He couldn't think about anything else. Even Beathop, the powerful enemy and threat right in front of him, had slipped out of Gabil's mind. Because, well, it couldn't be helped. Gabil had never been popular with the ladies.

Behind his back, he was seen with a certain amount of favorable attention, but at the end of the day, Gabil was a luck-pusher⁹. There was no way that he could recognize the subtleties of a woman's heart, so there was never a chance for a good mood to develop. Thus, he continued to renew his "no girlfriend" record until now.

And then came Suphia's comment calling him "cool." This moment in Gabil's life was the most important decision he had ever made.

I have no choice but to say it! If I miss this moment, I will never be able to get a girlfriend for the rest of my life—

Gabil summoned up his courage. It is said that facing death stimulates the instinct to procreate, and this must have been exactly the case with Gabil.

"Uh, I mean...that is to say. I-I too, have been thinking that Suphia-dono is, uh, b-beautiful..."

At a time when he should have been mourning in despair, on this battlefield that was so out of place, he made a confession to Suphia. He really did it. It was charming how his courage dried up in an instant, and his voice became more and more whispered. The fact that he was unable to say his confession until the very end was also typical of Gabil. However...

To Gabil's surprise, his pitiful remarks were conveyed to Suphia.

"Eh!? A-are you serious...you think I'm cute?"

He had said ""beautiful," not "cute." Suphia was also flustered by this extreme situation. As evidence, her way of speech had changed to something more feminine¹⁰. In a way, they were a perfect match for each other.

"Um, you are correct!"

Gabil, he was correct not to deny it here. If he had done so, his destiny would have turned out differently. However, by choosing the correct answer, the goddess of fortune had turned her favor upon Gabil.

"Well, uh, i-it can't be helped then, Gabil-san... So now, if you defeat him and finish this battle safely, I'll reward you with a smack on the cheek¹¹ as a reward!"

Suphia, in her fluster, did not even understand what she was saying. She was swept away

⁹The word used here is "ochōshimono (お調子者)" which doesn't have a clear English translation. It basically means someone who pushes their luck, can be frivolous, readily chimes in with others, easily flattered, and can easily get carried away. Lol, petition to add this word to the English dictionary pls.

¹⁰I changed the translation a bit to make more sense in English. Actually, it says that Suphia's tone of voice changed from "ore" to "atashi." Both of them mean "I" in English to refer to oneself. The only difference is that "ore" is more bold/masculine, and "atashi" is more feminine (though still in a tomboyish way—yeah, this would never come through in English). There are many different "I" pronouns used in the Japanese language, but essentially, Suphia became flustered and started speaking more ladylike than usual (she went from speaking like a boy, to speaking like a tomboy).

¹¹The pun is between 誅する/chuuusuru (kill in the name of justice) and チューする/chuuusuru (kiss).

by the situation and had made a ridiculous declaration without even realizing it. However, Gabil was different. He had firmly carved Suphia's words in his heart.

Eh, “a smack on the cheek”? Not in the sense of “give you a slap” but “to kiss”—is that what she meant!?

It was an unprecedeted situation. Gabil's brain was running at full capacity and he was panicking. Behind him, the usual Yashichi, Kakushin, and Sukerou trio were supporting him with cheers.

“Gabil-sama, you are so popular!”

“Hoo!! This is a surprise. I knew you were a man of action, but confessing your feelings on the battlefield is just so bold!”

“Indeed! That is what it means to be a man!!”

«Let's go Ga-bi-ru! Let's go, Ga-bi-ru! Let's go!!»

As always, once the Gabil marching song came flying out, there was no stopping it. Gabil abandoned all thoughts, and his body began dancing on its own accord. Because this had been repeated so many times, it had become a conditioned reflex. And so, he became fully immersed in a delusion of careless happiness.

Mufufu! I finally have a girlfriend. Heh, it's difficult being so popular!!

It was a bit too presumptuous, but since it was Gabil's own delusion, no one would ever find out.

One person who could not stand Gabil was Beathop. At first, he thought it was all a trap, but the three who came to the scene showed no sign of helping. That was convenient in its own way. Beathop's forceful movements had increased his fighting ability beyond his usual capabilities, so he didn't really have time to spare. Of course, ‘Ultraspeed Regeneration’ would heal his injuries quickly, but the problem was that he was still consuming a lot of energy. He had thought that he could recover his strength and finish them off all at once. That was the reason why he had allowed Gabil and the others to continue their farce.

And now, he was in perfect physical condition. Beathop resumed his ferocious onslaught on Gabil. Or rather, he was going to finish him off with a single blow.

Ignoring me like this, you're just spouting a bunch of nonsense. Fine. I'll show you what I'm made of!

In such a rage, Beathop unleashed a deadly spindle kick at Gabil. But then...

But then, something amazing happened.

“Hey, stop getting in my way!! This is the most important moment of my life right now!!”

Gabil shouted and struck Beathop with his spear. And just like that, Beathop was uncere-moniously blown away. It was an unbelievable event. All of Beathop's compound eyes opened in astonishment as he shouted. “You, what did you do!?”

But Gabil was not listening.

“S-Suphia-dono, by “smack” you mean *that*, right?”

Upon being questioned, Suphia understood what she had said. She was embarrassed, but

she couldn't just take it back now.

"O-oh. That, you mean that thing."

She said that as if telling herself it wasn't a big deal. Gabil nodded repeatedly.

"I understand! I, for one, pledge to win with all my might!!"

Gabil was inspired. Any sense of hopelessness was long gone. It was no longer a question of whether he could win, he *would* win. With this spirit, he glared at Beathop.

"Don't make a fool of me, small fry."

Beathop was indignant at Gabil's attitude. He thought Gabil had a big mouth for how much lower rank he was compared to him. At the same time, however, he had not forgotten the strange phenomenon that had just occurred. Although he thought it was just a coincidence, he remained vigilant just in case.

Was it really a coincidence? I've attacked with the intent to kill many times. I wasn't holding back, and I felt like it had worked. So then, why is this guy still alive?

Beathop's instincts told him that this was no coincidence. This was more dangerous than he thought, so Beathop braced himself. Gabil, on the other hand, was just excited that he might be able to get a girlfriend. They had completely different mindsets. One might feel sorry for Beathop in this situation, but this world was always absurd.

"Alright, here I come!" Gabil shouted with a fierce look on his face.

Beathop silently greeted him. And then, in the next moment...

The two men faced each other once again. Far from taking things easy, Beathop twisted his whole body like a cone in a super-speed flight with a power that exceeded his full strength. All of his power was concentrated into the poisoned needle of alienium protruding from the tips of both fists. This was Beathop's special move, the Spindle Needle Spear.

Gabil, on the other hand, was holding up his Vortex Spear, true to the basics. He did not panic, did not make a fuss, and took his time to assess Beathop and then delivered a killing blow. Two large whirlpools of power swelled and collided on the battlefield. And as a result, it was Beathop who fell.

"Vortex Crash!!" Gabil's special move pierced through Beathop.

"Amazing!"

"Gabil-sama, so cool!"

"Mm, brilliant!!"

It was only natural that the three of them were surprised and lauded him with praise. Gabil's offensive was so overwhelming that it made one wonder if the previous struggles had been for nothing. Beathop had not been careless nor complacent, and yet, this was the result. The secret lay in the Vortex Spear.

Gabil had been so occupied with his confession to Suphia that he did not realize that the Vortex Spear had evolved into a mythical-grade weapon during the critical situation. And, of course, Gabil was primarily recognized. As a result, Gabil's existence value exceeded that of Beathop's in total. Because the two sides were almost equally matched in terms of skill, Gabil was able to take the victory.

«Ga-bi-ru! Let's go, Ga-bi-ru! Let's go!!»

Gabil danced to the song of victory, cheered on by the trio. Suphia was also smiling as she watched, but then she suddenly remembered the promise she had just made and blushed. Gabil also blushed when he noticed Suphia's behavior, and the two stiffened as they looked at each other.

“It seems that we’re intruding.”

“Indeed.”

“Good luck, Gabil-sama!”

With those words, the trio left in haste. Gabil and Suphia were not happy to be left behind, but surprisingly, the two of them were a perfect match...

It did not take them long to be honest with each other, thanks to the suspension bridge effect on the battlefield¹². Thus, spring came to Gabil.



And so, the death of Insect General Torun had triggered a drastic change in the battlefield, but it was not just Gabil’s group. Karion, Midley, and Obera had also been watching the situation, fearing that the balance of power on the battlefield would be upset. In that moment, they made a decisive decision.

Karion was the first to make a move.

“Heh, Frey won. Well, of course, I can’t lose either.” He smiled wryly and glared at Abart.

Abart, who had many limbs¹³, was not only good at close combat but also at magical combat. His stretchable slender arms, covered with the exoskeleton that reached the peak of alienium, could pierce his enemies sharper than a spear. Not only that, but by using his free hands to make a sign, he could also perform magic without chanting spells.

At first glance, this combination of magic and unique physical techniques appeared to put Karion in a difficult situation. However, the reality was different. Karion was just waiting for an opportunity.

It was a matter of finding a way to preserve the Burst Roar, his special move, and defeat the enemy with less energy consumption. While thinking about this, Karion was searching for Abart’s weak points. As soon as the battle began, Karion realized that he had the advantage. However, that did not mean he was taking it easy. Abart’s strength was genuine, and if he was

¹²Just to clarify. The suspension bridge effect is a term used to describe when people make a mistake in assuming what is causing them to feel arousal/attraction. It’s a misattribution of those feelings. The general meaning is that the heightened emotions of the battlefield played a part in Gabil/Suphia’s feelings for each other.

¹³Just a reminder. Abart is kind of like a spider hybrid with spider-like limbs covering his back -shudders-

not careful, Karion could be defeated. Moreover, because he had a feeling that it would be dangerous, he did not want to bring about unnecessary injuries by rushing things.

In fact, this was the correct choice. Abart was a special individual who entered a rampant state whenever his physical strength was almost exhausted, tripling his attack and recovery power. If that had happened, Karion would have had a hard time and, or worse, would have suffered a defeat. However, Karion was able to maintain the battle line without any danger because of his wild intuition. He also recognized Abart's habit.

Karion, who knew how long it would take for the magic to be used again and how long it would take for the spear to be fully extended before it was returned to its original position, waited for Abart to simultaneously activate both of them. Finally, the moment had arrived. Frey's defeat of Insect General Torun had triggered Abart's impatience.

"I've been waiting for this. 'Beast Roar!!'"

Karion's technique pierced Abart's body. The flash emitted by the magic particles widened the area of effect and completely engulfed Abart.

Midley gazed down on the battlefield quite calmly. Insect General Saril, standing in front of him, was of no concern. Midley had perfect control of his body, always exerting only a certain amount of power. In some cases, he would even adjust his body to the same level as that of his opponent, enjoying the act of fighting more purely. In this respect alone, Midley was in the same league as Diablo. That is exactly what Midley had done with Saril this time as well.

"Hm hmm... You approach this naively. You seem confident in your poison, but it won't work against me. If your attacking style of relying on your poisonous tail doesn't work, then what will you do?" He taunted Saril as if to provoke him.

"Damn it, how cocky!"

Saril lost his temper at Midley's taunt. However, the increased power from his fury was meaningless if he couldn't hit his target. Saril, whose actions had become monotonous, was now at Midley's mercy. While it would have been easy just to finish him off, Midley refrained from doing so because he was aware of the eerie atmosphere that covered the battlefield.

What is this persistent feeling? Hmm, probing my power. Ho, so they've lost interest. In other words, they can kill me at any time...

This presence reminded him of Milim, whom Midley worshiped. However, unlike Milim, there was no warmth in it at all. It was cold and devoid of any emotion...an eerie presence. Midley had intentionally kept Saril alive in order to find out their true identity.

Hm, As expected of Obera-dono. She has noticed this presence as well as I have.

Obera, too, was looking around the battlefield without defeating the Insect General who was facing her. Since the difference in power was such that she could defeat her opponent immediately, it seemed safe to assume that she was aiming for the same thing as Midley. The others did not seem to notice.

Not to mention Carrera who was dealing with the enemy general Zess. She was engaged in a fierce battle with no room for others to intervene, and it appeared that she did not have time to

worry about unnecessary matters.

The same went for Geld. The Insect General with the appearance of an anthropomorphic giant centipede, was second only to Peliod in terms of presence, and seemed to be almost equal to Geld. It was no wonder that he could not afford to worry about other things, and Midley did not want to cause unnecessary concern.

Gobta and Ranga, who were facing Peliod, were probably much too much concerned with the superiority of the enemy in front of them. However, Midley was truly thankful that this duo had come to their side. Midley was thinking that he would have to rescue Phobio and Esprit because they would have lost their lives otherwise. However, the eerie presence in the battlefield worried him and he couldn't make a move.

Midley thought of returning the favor to Gobta by offering to help him with his training later, even though it would seem like an unnecessary favor from Gobta's point of view. And so, after a prolonged stalemate, the situation finally changed. Starting with Frey defeating Insect General Torun, Gabil took out Beathop, and Karion took out Abart.

Midley sensed that the ominous presence filling the battlefield had become more intense and dangerous. For reasons unknown, something bad was happening. He was convinced of this and braced himself. His colleagues, Karion and Frey also appeared to have finally sensed the ominous presence after defeating the Insect Generals they were dealing with. He guessed that they had instinctively been aware of it but were now sure of it.

Those two still have a way to go. Their fighting styles have improved, but it will be difficult for them to keep up with Milim-sama unless they learn to pay more attention to their surroundings.

This was a rather harsh evaluation, but it was Midley's true feeling.

"Kekeke. How dare you make a fool of me. This is a last resort move, but whatever."

Saril went berserk towards Midley who appeared to have no interest in him. He stuck his poisonous tail into his own body and activated 'Overdrive' of his own volition.

"Hmm..."

Against Saril, whose strength and speed had increased several times, even Midley could no longer afford to play around with him. With a foreboding feeling in his heart, he decided to end the battle. Midley, who had become serious, was strong. He restricted the oncoming Saril with his massive fighting aura, stopping his movements. He then delivered a killing blow to his helpless foe, and Saril's body was crushed to dust. It was an instant kill. He showed off a dazzling performance as a man strong enough to be Milim's playmate. However, Midley's expression was dark.

"I don't like it. As I thought, the chills are getting stronger."

Midley muttered to himself and looked up at the sky which had begun darkening before he knew it. The chills running down his spine were telling him that killing Saril had been a mistake.



As Midley surmised, Obera also had a sense of urgency.

This doesn't make sense. The pressure from the enemy has not changed at all since the beginning of the war...

Obera was treating Tishorn, who could slice through anything by vibrating the alienium exoskeletons on both of her¹⁴ arms, like a child. She did not finish off Tishorn because she was having the same concerns as Midley.

Many lives had been lost on the battlefield. The damage to her allies had been minimized by the use of restorative medicine, and the injured were quickly switched with their replacements, so there were no casualties. However, the insectar army had been repeatedly onslaught without regard to the loss of life, and they had already been reduced to less than half of their initial strength. Despite this, the enemy's strength that Obera sensed with her hyper-intuition¹ was still intact and undiminished.

The moment that Frey defeated Torun was the moment that this feeling of discomfort became a certainty. Even though one of the enemy generals had been defeated, nothing had changed. This meant that even the death of the Insect General had no effect on the insectar army—no, or perhaps it could be worse than that. In the worst case, it was even possible that the Insect Generals' deaths themselves were one of the enemy's schemes...

It can't be. As expected, that's just—

It wasn't impossible, she couldn't say for sure that it wasn't true. A colleague of hers, Zalario, had once complained to her about them. 'They are really persistent' he had said. 'They can be a nuisance even if you beat them, so you have to choose the right place.'

At that time, she thought it was a rare occurrence for the normally taciturn Zalario, and she only felt that he seemed to be tired, but now she realized that the meaning of his comment was very significant. Back then, she had already decided that it was not her job to deal with the insectars, so she had no intention to consult with him from the beginning and had not listened to what he had to say. This wasn't just Obera's problem, but also a bad habit of the phantoms as a whole, led by Feldway, but Obera still regretted that they should have informed each other of the major problems at least.

All that said, it was a bit too late for that. Since she knew nothing about the enemy, she had no choice but to be flexible and seek the most appropriate response according to the situation. With that in mind, Obera continued to observe the battlefield while dealing with Tishorn.

¹⁴I'm not 100 percent sure if Tishorn is a male or female, but in the Japanese raw, she seems to speak in a feminine manner which is why I'm using female pronouns in the meantime. Tishorn is the Insect General that looks like a mantis.

Then, the battle situation changed quickly without any decisive moves being made. Torun, followed by Beathop and Abart, were defeated. Even though so many enemy generals fell, the enemy's strength did not decrease even slightly. With such a result, there was no room to doubt that this was a part of the enemy's strategy.

It's dangerous. We should not take down any more Insect Generals—

Although they were enemies that must be defeated, safety was the priority. If something unforeseen was happening, they had to remove the cause of anxiety without being hasty. Obera tried to issue a warning, but it was a little too late. By that time, even Midley had already taken care of Saril. Only four Insect Generals remained. Tishorn, whom Obera was facing, Mujika, whom Geld was holding off, Peliod, whom Gobta and Ranga were struggling with, and finally, Zess, who was fighting with Carrera in another dimension of combat. Half of them had already been defeated.

Obera's blank expression turned dark for a moment, as if something bad was about to happen. Tishorn did not miss it and smiled.

"Hohoho, so you've noticed it. After all, the lowly Insect Generals are just the opening act. With His Grace's¹⁵ great power, whether I am present or absent, will not affect the big picture."

As it was, Tishorn was a high-ranking Insect General. She was the fourth most powerful. Tishorn's existence value is a little over 1.8 million, which was not that much different from Beathop's. Still, the fact that she had been part of the upper echelon of the Insect Generals for so long was proof of her power.

"Dimensional Slash."

The shockwaves emitted from Tishorn's arms became slicing extensions that slashed and tore at everything in all directions. The effect of the shockwave extended to the dimensional realm, and although the dimensional slash was instantly restored by the world's healing power, it was impossible for the materials on the surface of the slash to withstand it.

Naturally, even Obera was no exception. Obera could see through it at a glance and did not make the mistake of suffering such an attack, however, she still recognized that Tishorn was a threat. Partly because of that, Obera was acting in a way that would minimize the damage, but at this stage, she was not sure if it would be a good thing or a bad thing.

"Dimensional Slash"

Tishorn released another move, and a vicious shockwave came flying in. While avoiding it with a comfortable margin, Obera was gradually becoming impatient.

"Like a foolish one-trick pony, you keep repeating attacks that don't work."

"Hohoho, that is an interesting point you make. It's up to me, not you, to decide whether it works or not."

Tishorn's reply was plausible. No one was a fool to believe the words of their enemy. If she thought it would not work, she would have stopped it long ago. Tishorn was repeating the same attack because she believed it would work. And that was precisely why Obera did not like

¹⁵She refers to this person as "Okata-sama" which is kind of like saying "your honor/excellency/majesty" or even just "honorable person." This person can be a master, a King or Queen, or etc.

it. That is why she tried to stop Tishorn by inciting her to think it was useless. When that failed, Obera reconsidered Tishorn.

You really are experienced in fighting, taking the optimal action without any hesitation. Simply winning would be easy, but neutralizing her without killing her is tough even for me...

Obera had already seen through Tishorn's ability. The gap between her and Tishorn was vast, and she could say without a doubt that Tishorn was inferior to her. However, this was only true if she had not been injured in the battle with Michael. Obera's wounds were all healed, and it was true that she was in good physical condition. However, her lost energy had yet to be completely replenished, and the situation was far from perfect. Otherwise, she would have neutralized Tishorn long ago. The failure to do so was the reason for her current situation. Even so—there was no time left for hesitation.

“Your Honor, please shine your light upon us!!” Tishorn shouted, and at the same time, her combat ability greatly increased. Like Insect General Saril, she had voluntarily triggered Overdrive.

However, there was one thing that was different from Saril. Tishorn had full control over Overdrive and could effectively utilize the time limit.

“Dimensional Slash—Final Dance”

It was an attack incomparable to anything that had come before. A spectacular scene unfolded, with more than 10,000 dimensional slashes occurring, making it impossible for any human being to escape from this space of death and destruction. In contrast, Obera took action—she did not run away from the scene, and simply stood tall.

No, that wasn't it. Obera had given up on neutralizing Tishorn and decided to go all out.

“Divinity release,” said Obera lightly.

That was Obera's signal to go all out. The mythical-grade equipment she had been wearing regained their starry radiance. The circulation of Obera's mana had restored their full performance. And in Obera's hand, was a huge double-edged sword. That was the Beast Slayer—It was the result of Obera's beloved longsword transforming into its true form.

Against the cryptids, Obera's nemeses, she had abandoned the idea of taking things easy. If she had been lenient, the damage would have continued to increase without stopping. She had always tried her best to eliminate cryptids with optimum efficiency. Therefore, once Obera decided to fight, there was no choice but to annihilate her enemies without any regard to the damages in the surroundings. And now, her true power, which exceeded 20 million in existence value, was about to be demonstrated.

“Hohoho, it's too late to get serious now!”

As Tishorn said, Obera was already trapped in the space of death. Since Tishorn's interference prevented her from escaping through ‘Spatial Transportation,’ there was no way for her to avoid being sliced to pieces. That's how it should have been. But the result was—

“This attack is nothing more than child's play.”

It was true that a direct dimensional slash caused the space to rip open. And yet, just as the space returned to its original form, Obera's body was also restored to its original state.

“I-it can’t be!?”

“My body is connected not only to the material world but also to the spiritual world. This is nothing.” Obera explained indifferently, increasing her mana as if to say that it was now her turn.

The Beast Slayer began to shine. Upon seeing that dangerous light, Tishorn was bewildered by emotions that had arisen for the first time in her life.

My body is trembling. It can’t be, it can’t be that I’m afraid, right? Does this mean I’m frightened!?

She understood as such, but it was too late. There was nothing Tishorn could do.

“O vanishing one, may you scatter beautifully! ‘Planete Bombardment’!!”

A massive slash indiscriminately rained down from the heavens, delivering a merciless yet fair death. Tishorn, who was caught in the blast, vanished into dust, unable even to show the dignity of a powerful opponent.



Geld was struggling. The enemy he faced was Insect General Mujika. Mujika¹⁶ was a warrior-type insect majin (insector), clad in a garishly colored shell of a warrior’s armor, who wielded a sword with both hands.

Mujika’s strength was equal to that of Geld’s. Both sides refused to give an inch. And their subordinates were also going at it back and forth. The Yellow Numbers and Orange Numbers, who maintained an ironclad line of defense, were holding back a swarm of giant centipedes who were led by Mujika and were more than 30 meters in length. Because of the difference in size, teams had been formed to deal with each centipede.

Whenever they were injured, they would heal themselves with restorative medicine, and whenever they got tired, they would switch out with those in the rear to maintain the front line while avoiding overworking themselves. This was all the result of their regular training. Therefore, the battle remained in a stalemate even after several hours had passed, though the most notable matter was the one-on-one battle between Geld and Mujika.

Mujika wielded a long sword with a skill that could put a first-rate martial artist to shame, and judging by his high level of skill, it was hard to believe that he had developed this technique all on his own. They could have been a reincarnated person from the other world, but that was not important. What was certain was that Mujika was a formidable opponent.

¹⁶I’m guessing that Mujika is male based on some descriptions, but I’m not positive and could be wrong. He also refers to himself using “Sessha” which is how old Samurai used to talk. He was also described as an anthropomorphic centipede.

Geld caught the sword with his large shield. This shield was also a gem that had become a part of Geld and reached the mythical-grade level. It was akin to Geld's own flesh and blood and had been transformed to have properties similar to that of the exoskeleton of an insectar. Therefore, any minor damage could be repaired instantly.

The air shook and the impact was enough to even scatter plasma, but Geld kept a cool facade. In return, Geld swung at Mujika with his Meat Cleaver. However, Mujika was also a great fighter, and he anticipated his attack and parried it with his sword. Not only that, but countless legs popped out from the gaps in his armor and unleashed a barrage of blows as if to pierce through Geld.

The action taken by Geld, who appeared to be on the verge of a crisis, was to respond with a 'Demon Lord Haki' counterattack. Geld's haki along with 'Corrosion' effect of the Ultimate Gift 'Gourmet King Beelzebub'—'Chaos Eater'—bit at Mujika's legs with erratic movements, as if it had a will of its own. Mujika's legs would not be defeated either, and they were cloaked with an evil youki to cancel out Geld's 'Chaos Eater.'

These clashes were repeated, and the situation remained inconclusive. However, such a battle suddenly came to an abrupt end.

"Hmph. Even Tishorn is dead. How surprising. I didn't think the fighting force of this place would be this strong, but now His Grace's preparations are complete."

"Hm?"

"Well, it's of no matter to you. It's been a long time since I've met a warrior who can challenge me so well. I would have liked to compete with you more, but it's almost time."

Mujika said so nonchalantly and distanced himself from Geld. Then, he took the remaining insects and showed his readiness to retreat. Even after seeing this, Geld did not let his guard down. But then, Geld also noticed something.

Something is strange about the atmosphere of the battlefield. Could this intense fear be an omen of something to come...?

It was such an overwhelming sense of danger that he wondered why he had not noticed it before. Geld looked up at the sky. Dark clouds were swirling around, and he had a feeling that something was about to manifest.

"All hands, maintain full alert!!"

At Geld's command, even those who were undergoing treatment began to move. His unusually ominous demeanor made it clear to everyone that the battle was not over.



As soon as Phobio was rescued, Gobua scrambled to rebuild the front line. Under Benimaru's guidance, Gobua had developed into a first-rate commander. Through the large-scale combat

training in the labyrinth, she was able to train in all kinds of gruesome tactics and was therefore far more experienced than any tactician. The three hundred Kurenai members under Gobua's charge were also veterans who had grown up together with Gobua. They did not need to be ordered by Gobua to take the best course of action. Although they were only few in number, the war situation had been greatly improved. Furthermore, the presence or absence of a commander alone could affect a war situation. With Phobio back in the front line and in command, the Winged Beast Knights regained their vigor. In this way, Milim's forces gradually gained the upper hand, but...

In the midst of such an upswing, Gobta was dying. Peliod, whom he was facing, was an unbelievably dangerous opponent. Her poisonous mist was so deadly that it could even kill Gobta, who had a high level of resistance to poison. It was not merely something that could kill if consumed, but something that would melt the skin and burn the flesh at the slightest touch. The slightest contact with the skin caused extreme pain. Thanks to this, Gobta realized the danger of the poisonous mist. And then—

Wait a min...that's dangerous! Dead, if this keeps up, I'll be dead for sure!!

That's what he decided less than 30 seconds after the battle started. And so, without hesitation, he asked Ranga, who had rushed over for support, and decided to use the secret technique.

“Magic Wolf Unification!!”

Without a moment's delay after entering the battle, he ‘assimilated’ with Ranga. Thus, Gobta and Ranga were transformed into a sinister two-horned humanoid black wolf. It was the correct course of action. If the decision had been made even a little later, Gobta would have been killed in the battle, let alone Ranga.

“Now then, let's do this!”

〈Gobta, you may use my power to your heart's content.〉

At first, the two were excited, but that enthusiasm soon faded away. The reason was simple: Peliod was too strong. The ‘assimilation’ of Gobta and Ranga did not mean that their combat ability increased that much. The combination of Ranga's latent abilities and Gobta's sense of combat would only make them more powerful than the sum of their abilities. In other words, since Gobta's existence value was not that high, it was almost as if there was no change in the situation in terms of numbers.

Peliod, on the other hand, was a frightening presence from their point of view. Her existence value was 6.8 million, more than 15 times larger than that of the ‘assimilated’ Gobta & Ranga, and it was the second largest after Zess. Not only that, but she was also an extraordinary user of space-type abilities and could reflect even Carrera's ‘Abyss Annihilation.’ Even with their secret technique, she was a far superior existence.

The reason why they had not been defeated immediately was that Gobta and the others were good at physical close combat, while Peliod was better at magical mid-range and long-range combat. Therefore, from the beginning of the battle until now, Gobta had been in a tense situation where there was no room to relax. They were able to keep the battle reasonably close,

thanks to the fact that they could just barely maintain their advantageous position. But even that was about to come to an end as Peliod's condition changed.

〈Gobta, have you noticed?〉

〈This is bad, Ranga-san. Somehow, isn't she getting more and more powerful?〉

Gobta and Ranga were concerned about Peliod's current condition as they were facing her. Compared to the beginning of the battle, there was a sense that her fighting ability had increased. As evidence of that, she was steadily responding to the duo's movements more and more. Their feints were no longer working, and they were losing time on the offensive. Peliod's sharp attacks were beginning to reach Gobta's side, though not to the extent that they were completely on the defensive. Peliod had changed from previously launching monotonous attacks, to imbuing the intent to kill in each attack.

〈To grow in the middle of battle, it's a foul play, don't you think?〉

〈It happens often. I have experienced it myself, so I shouldn't be surprised if my enemies do the same...〉

〈Well, that's true, but it feels unfair when I'm the one being attacked...〉

The two of them were complaining to each other about such things, but they were determined to brace themselves for the situation. Gobta understood. They were the reinforcements, so no further help should be expected. Rimuru, whom Gobta respected and who was always there for him no matter what, was also fighting on another battlefield. This time, the enemy was so powerful that they could not expect any help. If anything, there was a possibility that Benimaru might come. However, Gobta would prefer that didn't happen, since it would put their home country at risk. In other words—

〈Well, we have no choice but to do something ourselves.〉

〈I agree. If the enemy is strong, we just need to become even stronger than them!〉

So, in the end, they went with their guts. As a commander, that was no good, but for Gobta, it gave him a reason to push himself. As the phrase “fighting the last stand¹⁷” suggested, for Gobta, who always maintained the mindset to retreat, this situation in which he could not run away helped him to push himself harder.

“From here on out, I'm going for a quick and decisive battle!” With that enthusiasm, he accelerated his attack.

However, it all ended up in vain. They even tried launching a two-stage attack to win the battle, taunting Peliod with ‘Dance With Wolves’ and at the same time unleashing the special attack, ‘Apocalypse Howling.’ However, even that was evaded.

Seriously!? That one was secretly trained, a special technique!!

This made Gobta feel a sense of danger. The same was true for Ranga.

〈Gobta, shouldn't we step back for now?〉

¹⁷The phrase used here is “haisuinojin (背水の陣)” which is a Japanese idiomatic expression that doesn't come through in English. It literally translates to something like “Backwater Formation” but the closest English description I could give for it is “fighting the last stand.” “背水の陣” basically means a last-stand moment, fighting a last-ditch battle, having burnt one's bridges/boats, or fighting with your back against the wall.

He even made such a proposal, but Gobta opposed it.

〈That's no good. If we leave now, Carrera-san will have to bear too much of a burden.〉

Ranga agreed with him. Since reinforcements were not to be expected, one of the options was to run away to regroup, but that was a last resort. Since this was not a duel but a war, fleeing before the enemy would have too great an impact on the whole situation.

However, as long as their secret technique wasn't working, there would be nothing left but an inevitable defeat. Gobta, who hated to lose as much as anyone else, wanted to avoid such a situation. Even so, he could not come up with any good ideas...and then it happened.

“I'll help you out, Gobta.”

Karion, who had defeated Insect General Abart, joined the battle upon seeing that Gobta was at a disadvantage. And that was not all.

“I'll help you too.”

Even Frey, who saw the danger of Peliod, rushed to the scene and offered to fight with Gobta. It is not a fair fight, but this was a war, not a one-on-one battle. Victory had to take precedence over honor, and Gobta welcomed the offers.

“I'm saved!!” he exclaimed happily, and with this, the battle was renewed.

—Or so everyone thought.

“How sad. So, so sad. My children, they are so weak.”

The monster's murmurs, though not loud, reached the ears of all the people on the battlefield. Everyone present understood that this was the signal for the final round.



Carrera was fighting an evenly matched battle against Zess, the leader of the Insect Generals. Although Zess was a formidable opponent, he was by no means an opponent that Carrera could not defeat. He was a good opponent, and she was enjoying this battle. Carrera showed off her recently acquired technique. Golden Gun and sword, the same fighting style as Lieutenant Kondou, was a style that suited Carrera well. Her movements were so natural and effortless that one could be convinced that Carrera had been an expert for a long time. In addition, Carrera was accustomed to fighting against insect-type majins. This was the reason why she was not even a step behind what normally would have been a disadvantageous match-up.

Yes, Zess was very similar to someone Carrera knew well. From his back to the exoskeleton that covered his entire body. Although their fighting methods were quite different, the quality of his techniques, and the presence of a superior opponent who overpowers others, was just like that of Zegion's whom Carrera had recognized as her rival.

Indeed, Zess had a tremendous presence. It easily surpassed Carrera's existence value and was almost three times that of Zegion's. However, Carrera felt that Zegion was superior in terms of threat level. She had fought against Zegion many times. It's why Carrera was able to outperform Zess's approach even if she had never met him before. Moreover, there were no longer any restrictions being imposed on her. Zegion's "don't target any parts made of Rimuru's cells" limitation, the weird rule that Diablo had come up with, did not apply to Zess. This was why Carrera was able to give it her all.

At the start of the battle, Peliod had been a nuisance. However, Esprit and her team did everything in their power to get rid of her. They were trying their best against a superior opponent.

Well, my friends are putting in a lot of effort, so I can't show them my bad side!

Carrera was enjoying the deadly battle with Zess, as if letting go of her boiling emotions. The blade, aiming at a gap in the shell, sliced through Zess's body tissue. In addition, close-range bullets pierced through Zess's compound eyes between dance-like sword blows. The battle was gradually tilting in Carrera's favor.

"Hahaha, how fun!"

"Tsk, the devil herself is an impudent brat..."

"You're pretty strong, but not as strong as Zegion."

"What?"

"Zegion is my acknowledged rival, but my battles with him have been nothing like this. I've fought him for several days straight, and I've never been able to inflict a single wound on him."

It was true. Even when considering the weird restrictions, Zegion's strength was extraordinary. Zess was indeed powerful, but Carrera's attacks had hit him several times. Carrera was convinced that she would definitely win as the battle continued.

"What now?"

"In other words, you are the weaker one."

"Ridiculous. In that case, I'll show you what it means to get serious."

Carrera's remarks were enough to hurt Zess's pride. Converting his anger into energy, Zess turned his killing intent on Carrera. Anyone below A rank could be killed by his gaze alone. No, even for a greater majin, there was a violent pressure that could have been fatal if handled poorly. However, Carrera shrugged nonchalantly. In return, Carrera herself increased her mana, refined her haki, and hurled it at Zess. The two opponents' heavy auras pressed against each other, and a huge vortex was formed on the battlefield. Any who touched the vortex was engulfed by the tremendous mana wave, and their lives were taken away. The Milim side had anticipated this danger, so no one approached Carrera. However, the insectars, who had filled the battlefield in great numbers, were greatly reduced in number by the vortex. And then—

Zess took a step forward, and Carrera intercepted him. Zess's fist ripped into Carrera's cheek, and Carrera's sword sliced through a gap in Zess's exoskeleton. Zess delivered a kick that could slaughter even a greater majin with a single blow. Unafrfraid of this, Carrera dove into Zess's range and fired her Golden Gun. The bullet from close range pierced through a gap in

Zess's exoskeleton, opening a hole. However, immediately after that, Zess's kick swung down towards Carrera's head as if falling out of the sky.

"Che!?"

Carrera barely managed to save her head, but it was not enough, and she was kicked in the shoulder.

"A fail to kill."

"It's shameful to have made a mistake."

Carrera's left shoulder was shattered, but she still had a wry smile on her face. She regretted having been injured when she had initially intended to defeat Zess with no damage, but she did not think that Zess would defeat her. After several hours of battle, Carrera had seen through Zess's habits. Nevertheless, Zess's power was genuine, and Carrera could be defeated if she was not careful. She had to accumulate damage little by little to ensure victory.

Carrera stared down at Zess with an imposing expression. Her uniform was torn at the shoulder, revealing pure white skin. That's right. The blood had already stopped flowing, and she was completely healed as if she had never been injured in the first place. The same was true for Zess, whose wounds inflicted by Carrera had all healed. For transcendent beings like Carrera and Zess, non-fatal damage was meaningless. The decisive factor was in how efficiently they could exhaust their opponents, and the opponent who showed the larger opening was at a disadvantage.

Carrera's first move had been big (Abyss Annihilation), and her total energy was less than that of Zess. Therefore, she was planning to be very careful from this point on.

Fufufu. I understand Zess's skill-level. He is strong, but I'm the one who will win.

Carrera decided that there was no need to overdo things anymore. It was all because she was sure of her victory, but then she suddenly noticed that the atmosphere of the battlefield had changed.

Nn? This feeling...what is it? Milim-sama was on alert, so I left things to her, but—

Milim-sama's presence had allowed Carrera to run wild as much as she liked. That's why she hadn't noticed it until later.

No, that wasn't all. The main reason was that Zess was so powerful that she did not have enough time to pay attention to her surroundings. And furthermore, it was a situation that Zess had intended to cause.

"Kukuku, so you've noticed. You are strong. I will admit that, but we're the ones who will win. This is not a duel, but a war."

"What?"

Carrera raised her eyebrows in displeasure. Zess, unconcerned, raised his right hand and pointed in a certain direction.

"Look."

Carrera did not turn around to look, but probed the situation using 'Magic Perception.' And then, she understood the meaning of Zess's words.



Right before Gobta's eyes, Peliod had been beautifully transformed. Although she had always had an unusually beautiful appearance, Peliod had now changed into the kind of mysterious beauty that anyone could appreciate. No, it was not just a change—it was an evolution. Peliod's scars, which had been accumulated during the battle, were torn wide open, and a lovely woman with beautiful 'skin' had emerged from underneath.

"A pleasure to meet you, I am Peliod. The queen¹⁸ who rules over the insects."

Even her speech had become fluent. It was obvious that she was no longer the same person they had been fighting, and that she had become a supernatural being. It stood to reason. This Peliod was the viceroy of the Insectars and indeed the female king who ruled over the Insect Generals. Now that she had revealed herself, Gobta's chances of victory were as good as lost.

"Please don't joke around, seriously..." Gobta unintentionally muttered his true feelings.

〈This is no longer a matter of increased strength. It's not the time to talk about being stronger than them.〉 Ranga nodded his head widely in agreement.

〈So, what should we do?〉

When Gobta asked that question, Ranga hesitated. He then spoke up, as if he had made up his mind.

〈We have no choice but to run away. Gobta, you feel she is dangerous, don't you?〉

Gobta was stumped by the bluntness of the statement.

〈No, well I agree...but to run away by ourselves, I'm not sure it's a good idea...〉

Gobta thought that Ranga's opinion was correct. If it was the Peliod they had been fighting earlier, they might have had a chance to win depending on the way they fought. But now, there was no chance at all. So much so that the current Peliod's presence was overwhelming. She had called herself the queen, and she far surpassed the power of all the Insect Generals. Yes, she was even superior to Zess, the head of the Insect Generals who Carrera was dealing with. Ranga and Gobta had sensed it accurately. Even if they fought, they would inevitably lose. However, they did not want to be the only ones to escape. If they ran away, they would never be able to face their friends. Continuing was hell, but escaping was also hell. However, there was no time to worry about that here.

"Shut up! You may look different, but what you do is the same." Yelling that out, Karion was the first one to make a move.

Karion chose the Burst Roar, his best special technique. Uncaring of what would happen next, he unleashed his versatile diffuse-focused particle cannon without hesitation. Karion's body transformed into will-containing particles and approached Peliod, who stood tall. It was a

¹⁸The word "Kōhi (皇妃)" can also translate to empress.

split second. Peliod did not move. But it wasn't that she couldn't move—

“Wha—it can't be...”

She didn't even need to move. Peliod's breath turned into a poisonous mist, clinging to Karion who had turned into particles. The mist then took away his kinetic energy, rendering him unable to move. However, Frey did not anticipate Karion's defeat at this point. She took flight during Karion's attack as a distraction and landed behind Peliod. And then Frey made her move.

“I'm going to have to seal your movements.” Frey declared this just after she had captured Peliod with her ‘Garuda Claw.’”

Frey's ‘Magic Interference’ was now so effective that it had taken on a divine nature to the ultimate realm. It was so powerful that it could block Adalmann's ‘Necronomicon.’ This ‘Garuda Claw’ that she relied on could seal any opponent's ability, no matter whose it was.

—No, rather that's what it was supposed to do. Even though she should have been in a tight spot, Peliod smiled. And then, she spoke.

“How sad. My children were defeated by such an opponent.”

“I beg your pardon?” Frey asked this question, but was silenced shortly thereafter by a powerful blow to the abdomen.

“Guu, guhaa!?”

Despite coughing blood with a startled expression, Frey followed her instincts and removed herself from Peliod. That saved Frey's life. If she had continued believing in the ‘Garuda Claw’ and remained in the same position, she would have been killed by Peliod's next blow.

“I see, you have good intuition. That claw made me a little weak, but I could have killed you with two blows. But it makes sense now. Putting power aside, you have a lot of experience in combat. In that case, my children's honor can be restored a little.” Peliod said as if singing.

“I can't believe it... you were able to nullify my claws so easily. So you were such an unbelievable monster.”

Frey was now convinced as well. Like Gobta and Ranga, this would be a place to die. The same was true for Karion, who was lying on the ground. Karion was so exhausted that he couldn't even make a sound, and he was unable to even try and fight back. In this situation, even running away wasn't an option.

Tsk, not to copy Frey's words, but I never expected her to be such a monster...

He regretted not seeing through this at the start of the battle.

Well, even if I had, what would it matter?

Karion mocked himself. Come to think of it, they should have been more cautious the moment Peliod had reflected Carrera's ‘Abyss Annihilation’ back at them. It was the fault of everyone who believed that she was a simple mid to long-range magic type.

Even so, I can't believe Milim didn't notice it either, so why isn't she making a move? No, I see... Insect Lord Zelanus is a much more dangerous opponent...

A chill ran down Karion's spine. And then he remembered it was a battle against Milim. The was only one reason why Milim, who was such an absolute existence, would not make a

move even in this crisis. It was clearly due to Insect Lord Zelanus, meaning that they could not expect any help from Milim.

So that's it, shit! Then, this war...

It would be a disservice to his comrades to even think beyond that point. Karion thought as such and began to think about what he could still do to help.



Frey was seriously injured, though not as badly as Karion. Such a Frey crossed eyes with Peliod. Frey was prepared to die. Since Peliod was the absolute being of this area, no one could stop her. If that was the case, Peliod would finish off the weakest one first. Because Frey would definitely do that if she was in her shoes.

I'm sorry, Karion. I was hoping to get to know you more, but... it seems this is as far as I go.

Frey made up her mind and prepared herself to get in at least one more final blow. But then, a man stood in front of Frey. This man—Midley, confronted Peliod to protect Frey.

“Hoho, so that’s how it is. The purpose of this special ‘Barrier’ that has been spread around the battlefield is to collect the energy of your dead comrades to you.”

“It’s not just to collect. I, for one, need more power to give birth to stronger children.” Peliod answered with a smile, turning to Midley. That was enough of an answer for Midley, and he was determined to get rid of Peliod at this point.

If we let her go, she is sure to create many more monsters like the Insect Generals we have just defeated. The problem is that we are the ones who want to escape.

Despite his bitter smile, Midley’s eyes remained hopeful.

“If so, then try defeating me first!” Declaring that, Midley took a deepened stance.

Shifting his center of gravity to his right foot, he lightly moved his left foot forward. At the same time, he clenched his right fist and squeezes it at the waist, holding his left hand out in front of him as a check against Peliod. And in the next moment, he exploded his power starting from the tiptoe of his left foot, using his own body as a cannonball and rushing forward. Then, he thrust his fist with all his strength and released a mass of fighting aura in the shape of a fist.

“Draconic Cannon!!”

The energy of the earth was integrated with his own fighting aura, and it coursed through his whole body from his toes, converging into a fist. Then he unleashed this special move—‘Draconic Cannon.’ It was a full-throttle attack with no restraint, and even the energy of the earth was combined with it. A divine blow that was powerful enough to be used against superior opponents. This was the true essence of Midley, the greater chaos spirit dragon majin. Unfortunately, it did not work on Peliod.

“That’s an interesting technique. If I learn this, my children will become stronger.”

With a laugh, she easily deployed a space-manipulating magic circle to eliminate the Draconic Cannon. But this was just as Midley expected. In fact, Midley did not expect this would work from the very beginning, and his role was to be a decoy. And, of course, it was Gobta who struck the real blow.

“Don’t forget about me! Eat this too!!”

Gobta jumped out of Midley’s shadow and launched an ‘Apocalypse Howling’ at the right moment. But that didn’t work either. Peliod was unfazed and deployed another magic circle at the same time to eliminate the ‘Apocalypse Howling’ as well. It was a complete surprise attack using Midley as a decoy, but it did not reach Peliod. However, there was still a glimmer of hope in the faces of Midley and Gobta. There was another true contender who had finally made her move. It was none other than Obera.

“You’re overconfident, little bug!”

While Peliod’s attention was drawn to Midley and Gobta, Obera was preparing a deadly attack. She unleashed her second ‘Planete Bombardment’ of the day. Unlike Midley and Karion, Obera’s existence value was comparable to that of Peliod’s. Therefore, the attack could not have left Peliod unscathed no matter how she was—no, that was wrong.

“Zalario was also a wise person, so I knew you would be too.”

“What!?”

“It can’t be...”

“No way, I didn’t expect it to this extent.”

Everything was in the palm of Peliod’s hand. And there was no time for despair.

“I will pay you back.” Peliod said to them with a smile.

The meaning of this announcement was revealed by a shower of meteorites falling from the heavens. Peliod had diverted the power of Midley and the others’ three special techniques and spread them over the battlefield. It was a devilish act. It was an act of tyranny that would take the lives of both friend and foe alike.

“Tsk!!” Midley glared up at the sky in panic.

〈Everybody, brace for impact!!〉 Gobta, being Gobta, alerted his friends of the danger via ‘Telepathy Net.’

Obera calmly slashed at Peliod. She intended to kill Peliod in close combat, since she was unable to use magic or emission techniques. Peliod frowned at this. As a matter of fact, there was not much of a difference between Obera and Peliod in their overall combat abilities. Peliod’s ‘Spatial Domination’ gave her the absolute advantage over mid to long-range fighters, but she was not particularly good at close combat, as evidenced by her inability to kill Esprit and the others.

The plan had been to gain a psychological advantage over Obera and overwhelm her. Yet, Obera was not discouraged at having her special attack broken. Obera was also a fierce fighter who had experienced fighting against cryptids. Having suffered from troublesome opponents with various characteristics, she was not fazed by a few things. Although Obera’s attitude was

a miscalculation, Peliod's advantage remained the same. By sprinkling death across the battle-field, all that energy would become Peliod's strength.

But isn't this strange? I was able to collect the power of my children, but not the others...

With this question in mind, Peliod looked around the battlefield and then realized that she had made a second miscalculation. The enemy forces, that is, Milim's army, were protected by Geld and his men.

“Don’t give up. As long as we’re here, no one will be killed!!” Geld’s strong and reliable voice echoed across the battlefield.

“Right!!”

The legionnaires led by Geld were also pushing themselves to meet their commander’s expectations. Even if their shields were shattered and their armor was lost, their sturdy bodies were filled with strength, and they protected the others from the falling meteorite showers.



That wasn't all. The demons under Carrera's command were also active in that moment. Restoration magic was flying across the battlefield, healing wounded soldiers. Moreover—

"Hey, hey, you've still got a lot more work to do!"

With that lighthearted remark, one of the devil chevaliers wielded god's miracle: Resurrection. By believing in Rimuru, they had even learned to resurrect the dead. Even if their bodies were shattered, their souls would be retrieved by the demon and resurrected at a later date. The morale of Milim's army remained high because even the dead could come back to life, albeit with a time limit. Everyone was facing this challenge head-on in order to accomplish the mission with all their might. Upon realizing this, Peliod was upset for the first time.

"The dead are coming back to life? There even exists such a secret technique in this world..."

Obera shrugged her shoulders and explained to Peliod, who cried out in surprise.

"Yes, I believe so. It was supposed to be forbidden, but it was so widespread that it became irreversible."

In fact, Obera had been astonished when she found out about it. She was told about this in the strategy meeting and couldn't help but want to look up and shout 'It can't be!' to the heavens. But that's another story.

Since this secret technique had already spread so widely that it couldn't be reversed, it would be more constructive to make effective use of it. Obera decided that it would be the right thing to accept it, since it would reduce the death count on the battlefield to as close to zero as possible. Therefore, Obera had predicted this situation to some extent. She did not expect that their own techniques would be repelled, but the damage was only done to the enemy's bugs. It was a pity that the energy was concentrated in Peliod, but considering that Peliod was the only enemy left, the situation did not seem that bad.

"Now then, prepare yourself. From here on out, it's a one-sided hunt."

Hunting down and killing her prey was one of Obera's specialties. Still mindful of the fact that she was leading a group battle against a superior opponent, Obera's face was even beginning to show a relaxed smile.

"What are your orders, Strategist-dono?"

Midley was also relieved that the damage to the battlefield was minimal. He had not expected such a scale of destruction, but he was happy to see that Geld and his team had averted the disaster. With his worries of the future now gone, he gladly joined Obera's command.

"I have no objections!" Gobta was also on board.

Against a powerful opponent like Peliod, they had no chance to win unless they worked together. It was difficult to get along with others on a spur-of-the-moment basis without any training, so they decided to obediently place themselves under Obera's command. Thus, Obera, Midley, and Gobta & Ranga were pitted against Peliod. But then, another intruder appeared.

"Mother. Allow me the honor of crushing your enemies!"

Mujika, who left Geld behind, had dug his way through the ground and jumped out. The tally was now three-on-two, but this number was subject to change.

“Don’t forget about me either.”

“Me too. I hope you didn’t think that was the end of it.”

Karion and Frey, healed by Geld, were back on their feet, though still wounded. Their wounds were visibly healed, but they had not regained their lost strength. They could not perform any major moves while they were out of energy, but they were determined to do their best to fight, which was better than doing nothing at all.

“I’m here too.” Geld was also in high spirits.

It was now six against two. Gobua and the Beastketeers were on the battlefield, dealing with the rest of the insects. Either way, Peliod was not a force they could reckon with, so it seemed safe to assume that those who had gathered here were the total force. Even before the assembled warriors, Peliod smiled bewitchingly.

“What a wonderful package. That’s right. I will use you all to create more powerful children.”

It was a confident statement in the face of Obera and the others. And it was on the basis of—

“Life Reconstruction”

Peliod was able to use her accumulated energy to strengthen the children she had created. Of course, this was only applicable to those who were still alive. However, Zess and Mujika were both still alive and well on this battlefield. Here and now, accompanied by two superior warriors as her escorts, the queen—the wife of Insect Lord Zelanus, had revealed her true nature.



Carrera, who understood the situation after Zess pointed it out to her, had a bitter expression on her face. She had been enjoying her fight with Zess, but now she felt disillusioned because of the curtain that had been pulled away. Immediately after that, she felt a chill and jumped back as fast as he could. A moment later, the place where she just stood exploded.

“Hm, that’s great. Thanks to Mother, I am one step closer to becoming the god of creation. I’ll need you to help me test this power.”

Zess, speaking more fluently than before, opened and closed his fist as he addressed Carrera. These were the words of the strong said to the weak, a statement that trampled on Carrera’s pride.

“Well, huh...so you say. You’re asking me to join you in a test of strength?”

“You have no right to refuse.” As soon as he said this, Zess lightly thrust out his fist.

It was a gentle jab—or rather, the speed of the jab was tens of times faster than the speed of sound. The shockwave was so strong that it burned the air and shattered the ground. Clearly, it was more powerful than before. The existence value of Zess appeared to have increased significantly, if not doubled. What was more troubling was that various special abilities seemed

to have been newly added to Zess' being.

How unfair, seriously...Carrera grumbled inwardly. After all these efforts to build a path to victory, she had to start all over again. However, although it would be difficult, it was not impossible. Because his level itself did not seem to change, although his power had increased.

If Zess had shown the same level of skill as Zegion, Carrera would have felt threatened. However, since this was not the case, Carrera did not lose her composure even though she was frustrated. That said, she was still annoyed at Zess's arrogant attitude, and she was determined to get back at Zess. The reason why Carrera's smile disappeared from her face was not because she was in despair of Zess's power. The real problem was the situation with her comrades.

This person looks pretty dangerous. She seems to be stronger than my prey (Zess), and I doubt that Obera and Midley-san can win even if they work together—

Carrera's estimation was that Gobta & Ranga, Geld, Karion, and Frey would have to fight all out to defeat Mujika. The enhanced Mujika had become a formidable opponent. If the battle turned out as Carrera had predicted, the odds of winning were 50-50.

Sacrifices would be made, going against Milord's will.

Carrera was faithful to Rimuru's orders. The reason why she was dealing with Zess in this way was because she had thought that by taking charge of the most troublesome enemy, she could avoid casualties to her other comrades. This was based on the assumption that Milim would take care of Zelanus, the enemy general, because she assumed that if she took care of the second most important enemy, the rest would be taken care of. Since she was wrong, she could no longer afford to be bothered with Zess, who was only the third greatest threat. Carrera had a big decision to make.

I wanted to save this just in case, but I don't want to regret not using it. Sorry Zess, I would have liked to enjoy fighting with you more, but it looks like it's time to say goodbye.

Carrera made a heartfelt apology to Zess. Carrera had wanted to defeat Zess and gain experience, but when her friends' lives were at stake, she could not allow herself to put her own enjoyment first. She made up her mind and pointed the Golden Gun at Zess.

“Huh, don't you understand yet that such a thing will not work?”

As Zess said, even Carrera's mana bullets condensed by the Golden Gun could only damage Zess's exoskeleton. Moreover, since the wound was regenerated immediately, the damage was practically zero. Nevertheless, Carrera continued to use the Golden Gun as a distraction. And there was a reason for that. It was something important—

“Then, die.”

—It was to use it as a trump card in a critical moment.

Before Carrera's words could reach him, the Golden Gun released a deadly bullet. The name of that bullet which could destroy anything was called ‘Judgment.’

“Ha?”

Zess looked dumbfounded at the gaping hole in his chest. It came late, the sensation of his life fading away. The magic nucleus that sustained his existence was destroyed, and he understood that there was no way to escape his impending “death.”

“You...you were cutting corners from the beginning...?”

“No, we were about even in strength, and you’re quite strong now. If we had gone head-to-head, it would have been difficult to win.”

“...Then, why...?”

“It’s because of just that.”

It was fun to continue fighting a battle that may or may not be won, but it was no longer the time for Carrera’s personal feelings to take precedence. The more Carrera struggled, the higher the probability that her comrades would be wiped out. In addition to that, there was another main reason.

“The battle with you was interesting in its own way, but you are weaker than Zegion, so I think I’ve had enough.”

Carrera told Zess the truth with an innocent smile on her face, a truth that would cause Zess to despair. It was a very devilish act, but Carrera did so without realizing it.

“...I am...inferior? I should be the next god of creation...” Zess muttered regretfully. And those were his last words.



Carrera did not feel any sense of accomplishment even as she faced the demise of her powerful enemy. Without even a moment to feel the afterglow of the battle, she began to go to the aid of Gobta and the others. But just then, the enemy, who had been hiding in plain sight, finally made his move.

“Fufufu. I’ve been waiting for this moment.”

“Huh!?”

Carrera, who had not felt anything until now, was startled by the pain running down her arms. It was not just pain, but a sign of damage being taken. She was hit with an incredibly heavy and violent impact, with both her arms barely defending her vital points. The attack was a kick from Insect Lord Zelanus, who appeared to have overcome even Carrera’s ‘Universal Perception.’ Carrera reacted quickly, but anyone else would have been finished off by the blow.

“Kuh, I knew you’d show up, but you sure are in a hurry.”

“If an enemy can be hit, one should not hesitate to crush them.”

Just as he said, Insect Lord Zelanus had been looking for an opportunity to beat Carrera. He was confident in his overwhelming superiority, but still, he kept his eyes vigilantly on Carrera until the time for victory, fearing the possibility that he might be defeated. It was Carrera’s ‘Judgment’ that he had been on the lookout for.

Minaza, who had sent him as a sentinel, had reported about a man named Kondou. Although Kondou had not revealed all of his powers, Minaza, who had been observing him, had judged

that he was ‘highly dangerous with unknown powers’ and Zelanus had taken this seriously. Zelanus, remembering this, had also inquired Michael and Feldway and knew that Kondou’s power had been transferred to Carrera. He had made a few predictions for the current operation.

In Michael’s case, ‘Castle Guard’ seemed to have prevented the attack, but Zelanus had no such ability. He had been waiting for Carrera to use her nasty power, because he was afraid that his own defenses would not be enough. This timidity and cautiousness were the factors that make Zelanus the strongest. And now, after waiting for a long time, his worries were finally gone. They had lost an important piece in Zess, but on the other hand, it was a good thing to have been so cautious.

It was a very powerful shot, even for an enemy. If I had been hit by it, I would not have been able to survive.

Despite his admiration, Zelanus’ worries were already a thing of the past. Now that everything had been taken care of, there was no longer any sense of danger for Carrera. Carrera also saw through Zelanus and understood the danger.

This guy is dangerous. Geez, it’s like there’s no bottom to his strength...

It was as if she was facing Zegion, no, it was even worse than that. Zelanus had no openings, and she felt like she had no clue how to attack him. Despite her displeasure, she had to admit it. Insect Lord Zelanus was stronger than Menace Lord Carrera. But even so...

Even so, that did not mean that Carrera would give up so easily.

“Ehh? Aren’t you a little bit petty for a man who calls himself a king?” Carrera spoke hatefully.

But Zelanus was even better at quarreling than Carrera.

“Huh, demonstrating bravado at this late stage of the battle, the demons are all losers at heart.” He looked down on Carrera with the air of a victor, calm and composed.

“Perhaps you think you’ve already won? That’s being a little too arrogant in front of me.” Even with that retort, Carrera’s expression did not show any room for complacency.

After all, Carrera’s arms had been shattered by Zelanus’ mere kick. It was difficult for Carrera to even hold the Golden Gun, let alone grip a sword. Carrera’s skeleton was originally made of Rimuru’s special orichalcum and had now evolved into hihirokane. It possessed the strength, hardness, and viscosity equivalent to that of mythical-grade armor, and had indestructible properties. And yet...

If she had been injured by a mythical-grade weapon, she would have understood, but it was unexpected that a mere kick could cause this much damage. That alone made her aware of the threat level of Insect Lord Zelanus.

The secret was revealed as soon as she looked upon Insect Lord Zelanus’s entire body. His exoskeleton was shining in rainbow colors. It was the very brilliance of hihirokane.

I didn’t expect to see hihirokane all over his body...

Looking at his body, it was obvious that Insect Lord Zelanus was the ultimate form of life capable of both offense and defense. His whole body was like a deadly weapon and the strongest shield. Carrera slowly observed the whole of Zelanus. The silvery cilia running from

his forehead to his back looked like long hair. However, upon closer inspection, each hair was covered with tiny protuberances that resembled the shape of a blade. Even the cilia were assumed to be made of hihirokane, since they appeared to be iridescent when viewed from different angles.

Does this mean that each of those hairs is a mythical-grade blade? I don't know how to manipulate them, but if I'm not careful, they might cut me into tiny pieces—

A pair of antennae were swaying on his forehead. Two pairs of wings on his back and hips glowed red, and three pairs of arms were alertly poised.

Those wings are also dangerous. They are terribly dense, but is it because they are compressed with energy? If I release them, the shape of the star might be altered...

It would probably be more destructive than Carrera's extreme magic. That's how much energy she could feel from those two pairs of wings.

And then, there were the three pairs of arms. One pair of arms was folded casually, but the other two pairs were ready for battle. The lowest arms, crossed in front of the abdomen, were ready to cast a spell at any moment. In addition, the arms in the upper part were discolored and deformed from the middle, becoming thin like a blade, and shining dully. If the first blow had been made with those thin arms, it was highly probable that Carrera's arms would have been amputated. As Carrera continued to observe, Zelanus placed one foot on Zess, who was prone on the ground. It looked like he was stepping on his son, but the reality was worse than that.

“What are you—”

Carrera's answer was a gurgling, grinding, chewing sound coming from Zelanus' feet. That's right. Zelanus was eating Zess, his son and head of the Insect Generals, right in front of Carrera.

“You know, this guy was proudly saying that he was the next god of creation ...did you intend to use him as a pawn from the beginning?” Carrera asked with narrowed eyes.

The answer was a loud laugh from Zelanus.

“Ridiculous. My successor must be the strongest. Even more so than myself.”

“...”

“There is no way someone weaker than me can become the god of creation.”

Then suddenly, Zelanus moved. With the mouth that had appeared on the sole of his foot, he had finished eating Zess. He had absorbed knowledge and experience in order to take Zess; power for himself. As evidence of this, Zelanus' speech had become fluent without an accent. And his power—

Carrera tries desperately to take a defensive position. But her hand would not move.

Not good!! If I get hit by that, I'll take irreparable damage!!

Although her thoughts were running a million times faster than before, reality was truly merciless. At least, it hadn't been up until now in Carrera's life up until now...

But apparently, this was not that moment. Zelanus' kick was caught by someone.

“Wahahahaha! It's my turn now. I'll stop holding myself back!!”

The girl who appeared had platinum pink hair and was smiling happily. It was Carrera's

new friend and one of the strongest in the world—Demon Lord Milim Nava.



“Carrera, I’ll take care of him!”

With these words, Milim and Zelanus entered into full-scale combat. Then, Carrera was out of the picture.

“Well, it can’t be helped. I’m still inexperienced, let’s just recover quickly.”

Carrera changed her mindset quickly and calmly. While recovering herself, she turned her attention to the battle situation of Obera’s team. The battle was fiercer than she had expected. With Carrera’s defeat of Zess, only Peliod and Mujika remained as Insect Generals. However, those two were still very troublesome. The most notable opponent was Peliod, the wife of Insect Lord Zelanus and the creator of all the insects. She seemed to be growing more and more powerful.

To fight against Peliod, five members led by Obera, excluding Midley, were fighting against her. Obera was leading and acting as a wall. As soon as she was exhausted, Geld would move forward and take her place. The remaining three, Karion, Frey, and Gobta & Ranga, were playing guerrilla tactics and repeatedly attacking Peliod.

This was, in Carrera’s opinion, a very dangerous strategy. For the exhausted Karion and Frey, even though they were of an awakened class, even a single blow from Peliod could be fatal. And although Obera and Geld were distracting the enemy, one wrong move could result in a catastrophe. This was why the roles of Obera and Geld were so important here. Especially now that there was no healer, this battle would not be possible without Geld and his high self-regeneration ability.

Midley was battling against Mujika in place of Geld. It seemed to be a one-on-one battle. Mujika, who had greatly increased in power, was much stronger than Midley in terms of existence value alone. However, the battle was still close, going back-and-forth. The reason for this lay in Midley’s seriousness. Midley, not in a mood to be shy about showing off his skills, had lifted all the restrictions he had imposed on himself and even displayed his ‘Dragon Body’ which he had never shown except when he was fighting against Milim. His limbs were covered with dragon scales while still retaining his human form. The whole body under his clothes was similarly protected other than at the joints.

Of course, this was not to say that his existence value increased, but only that the dragon man was exercising his power to the fullest. In other words, Midley was now in a state where all restraints and limitations were lifted. Perhaps because of this, the fighters were engaged in a heated battle, even engaging in high level psychological warfare as they tried to analyze each other’s abilities.

“Heh, As expected of Midley-san. I was curious to see if he was better than Zegion, but after all, it’s a close match!”

Carrera, who was watching the battle, was impressed by Midley’s strength. Mujika, who was a warrior by nature, possessed a certain level of skill. Otherwise, he would have been defeated by Geld long ago. His existence value had increased by several times even though he had been on an equal footing with Geld before the reinforcement. Even when compared to Midley, Mujika’s value was more than three times higher than Midley’s, and there was an overwhelming gap between the two.

Since Midley was able to compete with such a Mujika, it was easy to understand how insane Midley really was. To be honest, Zegion would win in a serious fight. However, if Zegion was fighting with the same amount of power as Midley...

In Carrera’s opinion, the two were evenly matched in skill-level.



After some fierce battling, Midley and Mujika were facing each other. Both of them were searching for an opening and were unable to attack the other. Then, Mujika opened his mouth.

“Why don’t we do this? Let me hear your name.”

“I’m Midley. Won’t you introduce yourself as well? It will be worth remembering if it’s a name coming from someone so fierce that it amuses me.”

Despite being enemies, Midley and Mujika acknowledged one another. Especially Mujika seemed to have become more human after ‘Life Reconstruction,’ and his technique was less mechanical and more brilliant. Midley, perhaps sensing this change, sincerely approved of Mujika’s performance. Otherwise, he would not have exposed his full strength. But this was still a battlefield, and both men were enemies. They acknowledged each other, but they were still trying to kill the other.

Midley laughed and brought out his left fist in a fluid motion. He pulled back his left fist faster than the speed at which he thrust it and used the recoil to throw a spinning kick.

This was a so-called feint, but in Midley’s case, it was not the only thing. When he clenched his fist for the first time, he had compressed the air and shot it out. Moreover, since he mixed the air with fighting aura, the power of his fists was more powerful than that of a mana bullet.

Mujika had his sword ready in response to the fist, so he was able to repel the compressed air bullet. However, immediately after that, Midley’s kick cleanly entered the gap left by lifting the sword to the upper level.

“Nng.”

The force of the kick, which penetrated under Mujika’s armor, ran through his entire body and affected his physical functions. Needless to say, Midley’s kicks were also filled with fighting

aura. Midley was a master of ‘battlewill.’

Just as the school of the Dragon Fist had sprouted in the other world where Velgrynd had arrived, even here in the Cardinal World, a unique style had been passed down. This style, which combined basic movements similar to those of traditional jiu-jitsu and physical manipulation of the body via fighting aura, also expressed the unrestrained spirit of Milim, the founder of the art. There was no name for this school of art, but if it were to be named, it would be the Dracofist Style. Incidentally, there was no ritual of inheriting a soul as was the case in the Dragon Fist. The knowledge and experience accumulated by the person were all that they acquired.

The lifespan of a person in the Cardinal World varied widely and could be greatly extended depending on how that person lived. Simply by practicing discipline and taking care of one’s physical condition with Battlewill, one’s lifespan could be extended several times over, and if you were an ancestral pureblood like Midley, you could even live over a thousand years. In fact, Midley was over 2,000 years old. He was strong because he had spent all that time in training.

Mujika was hit by Midley’s kick and instinctively took a step backward. Then he glanced at the impacted area and was astonished. His shell armor, which could not be damaged from any non-lethal attacks, had been dented and crushed. The lower-ranked insectar soldiers had no sense of fear, so they repeatedly launched suicide attacks as ordered, no matter how superior they were. However, the higher ranks, due to their scarcity, instinctively understood the difference in strength between them and their opponents.

As an Insect General, his sense was quite accurate, and he could easily estimate his opponents’ fighting ability. However, this was limited only to direct abilities, so he was unable to detect Skill abilities. And, of course, he was unable to see how much the target had been trained without actually fighting them.

Mujika was now on the maximum alert against Midley because of the blow he had just received. Although he had been empowered by Peliod, he calmly judged that he might lose if the battle was prolonged. In that case, the only thing he could do was to show his respect to his opponent by giving his all with his best technique.

“Taste my technique: Devouring Fangs.”

Mujika’s weapon, strictly speaking, was not a sword. It was alienium forged into a blade. And now that Mujika had evolved, it had become even sharper. Furthermore, Mujika’s mana was poured into the blade, which was comparable to a mythical-grade blade, and it had become so powerful that it could sever any substance. This blade approached Midley. However, Midley remained unmoving.

“Nuu!”—Increasing his aura¹⁹, he caught Mujika’s blade with his left arm.

That’s right, he caught it. A hard and unpleasant sound echoed. It was a melody played by the shockwave generated by the collision of equal strength and hardness.

“How can this be...!?”

“Why are you surprised? If you had the spirit, you could easily use your own body as a

¹⁹The words ‘aura’ and ‘spirit’ can be used pretty interchangeably in Midley’s case. It’s basically battle aura/fighting spirit that he uses.

weapon.”

It was not easy. In this case, Mujika’s reaction was only natural. However, Midley was a man who was always trained to deal with the unreasonableness of Milim. He had no idea that his logic was insane to ordinary people, and he never doubted that it was normal. Of course, it couldn’t be done with just willpower. It was a solid technique, though the reason was that he was covered with dragon scales.

Midley controlled his own fighting spirit and hardened his body. He anticipated where the attack would come and focused all his attention on that part of the body even if it might lower the defenses of other parts of his body. This had given his left arm enough defensive power to withstand mythical-grade weapons, so it would be quite reckless to attribute it all to mere spirit. It was only possible because it was Midley.

Midley’s essence was of the Dragon God status that Gabil would someday reach, and with his divine physical strength, he could compete with mythical-grade fighters with his guts in the name of spirit. And, of course, his skills were not limited to defense.

“Now it’s my turn.”

Midley spoke with a grin, dropping his left hand from the sword and lowering his stance. In karate, this was known as the horse-stance²⁰. Then, he diverted the huge amount of energy generated in his left arm to his right fist. Furthermore, from his feet, which were in contact with the earth, he took in the energy of the earth’s flowing veins, accumulating the energy of the planet itself into his body.

This was the essence of the ‘Dragon Demon Fist,’ the ‘Star-Body Assimilation’ Of course, the physical burden was unimaginable, but Midley was able to overcome it with his spirit. He thought only about winning, not about what would come after.

“Nuh!?” By the time Mujika could sense the danger, it was already too late.

“Draconic Blast!!”

This was Midley’s ultimate technique, the most powerful technique he could unleash, easily surpassing even the Draconic Cannon. At first glance, it was just a straight fist thrust, exactly the same as the one that had smashed Insect General Saril’s body to pieces, but its power was beyond the laws and common sense of this world. For Mujika, it was the same—he finally understood Midley’s abnormality after a gaping hole was made in the center of his chest through the shell armor, but it was already too late.

I’m not sure being vigilant would be enough...I must be going senile...

Mujika thought his final thoughts. But for some reason, the defeat felt good. Mujika died satisfied, not as an Insect General, but as a warrior.

²⁰Also known as a “square stance” in traditional karate. (Fun fact: it’s the stance Toph uses from Avatar: The Last Airbender)



Not bad, Midley-san—Carrera's eyes widened.

He was already a very likable person, but his strength was worth admiring even from Carrera's point of view. Simply watching the advanced offense and defense of an awakened master gave Carrera the feeling that she had gained a great deal of experience. But for now, the priority was to deal with the remaining problem, Peliod. Now that Midley had defeated Mujika, it was time to launch an all-out battle. It would be nice if Carrera could join them, but she was not ready to move just yet. Zelanus' blow had been that deadly.

Carrera felt frustrated at her inadequacy and analyzed the situation calmly.

Geez, these bugs are seriously troublesome...

Those were her true feelings and conclusion. Just now, Peliod's power had increased even further. While it was good that Mujika was defeated, Peliod had also been strengthened. The reason was that she had taken Mujika's power.

The power of Zess had been directly taken by Zelanus. Therefore, there was no collection for Peliod. However, once Mujika died on the battlefield, all of his power was absorbed into Peliod. By using that, Peliod could perform a Life Reconstruction on her own body as well. This was why Peliod's power was so troublesome on the battlefield.

Peliod's whole body was now covered with warrior-like armor, and in her hands was a sinister sword. Having taken Mujika's characteristics and experience as her own, Peliod now appeared to be capable of fighting melee combat.

Her weaknesses seem to be disappearing more and more. When it comes to taking away the power of the fallen in this battlefield, I am very grateful for Milord's policy of no casualties

The power of those who died on this battlefield, whether friend or foe, would flow into Peliod. The only way to break such a condition was to 'destroy' the barriers that cover the battlefield. But that was impossible. This was because not only Insect Lord Zelanus, the enemy leader, but even Demon Lord Milim was making efforts to maintain the barriers. If they hadn't, this planet itself would have disappeared long ago.

Zelanus' goal was to dominate the planet, not to destroy it. It was the only reason why the two sides agreed on this point and the environmental protection using the 'Barrier' was naturally maintained. However, as a result, Peliod's unrivaled state was established. It was a very troublesome situation, but it was already too late to realize it now.

But well, it doesn't seem like she'll get any stronger...right? Don't be too hasty. I just have to find a way to get to the bottom of this.

There were no insectar survivors other than the King and the Queen. Unless there were casualties from the allied camps, there was no doubt that she couldn't be strengthened any further.

And naturally, Obera and Midley correctly understood the situation as Carrera did. Therefore, they could not take any reckless suicide attacks or self-sacrificing tactics. The only course of action was to continue the endurance battle, which was a passive but steady approach to inflicting damage.

That said, since this had been the strategy from the beginning, no one was feeling particularly impatient. Even though Peliod was strengthened, the plan remained the same, and they maintained the strategy centering on Obera and Geld, steadily waiting for Peliod to get exhausted.

As expected, however...

Even though the powerful reinforcement Midley had joined the battle, the situation was not getting better. Rather, it was getting worse.

‘At this rate, we will be defeated’—Carrera felt a sense of crisis.

The battle between Milim and Zelanus was on a different level and far outside of her consciousness. What she needed to think about now was how to attack Peliod before any of her friends were killed. There was nothing decisive. It was a miracle that the battle was even balanced, and such a tightrope situation could not last for long. Even a single mistake would lead to a defeat in the battle like a dam bursting from a single ant hole.

Before that happened, she had to do something. Carrera’s expression turned angry as she glared at her motionless right arm. If she couldn’t move now, there was no reason to be here. In other words, it was a big problem that even affected Carrera’s reason for existence. That was why she asked for strength. In that moment, the Golden Gun glowed faintly.

«In that case, I will lend you my power.»

Carrera heard a voice that should not have been heard. Carrera was startled for the first time in a long time. And the next moment—



The battle was a second-coming of a myth.

Milim and Zelanus’ fists cut through the sky, rippling the atmosphere and shaking the earth. It was so violent that even the stars could have shattered, but that didn’t happen for one reason. Zelanus and Milim were protecting this battlefield with their own ‘Defense Barriers.’ This was also the reason why Milim had not joined the battle in the beginning. She had assessed the effects of Carrera’s Abyss Annihilation and calculated the damage that this battle would cause to the earth. Based on that, she began working to protect the planet itself with a Barrier.

Milim was a tyrant, but she was also a thoughtful person. Despite saying and doing whatever

she wished, behind the scenes, she understood exactly what the consequences of her actions were. That was Milim Nava, a demon lord who managed both sides of the coin. And so, Milim had handed over the role of rampaging to Carrera, but she soon realized that there was someone else trying to protect this planet. It was, of course, the enemy leader, Insect Lord Zelanus himself.

Hm. He seems to be thinking the same thing as I am. That's a bit troublesome...

Zelanus' actions were unexpected even for Milim. It made sense that he would try to protect this planet as the one trying to invade this world. However, Milim was not so easily convinced. If it was just a normal 'Barrier,' it would have been fine, but it had also been given an effect that was convenient for the enemy. That's why she wanted to destroy it, but that would affect her own 'Barrier' as well, which could cause serious damage to the planet.

You have some nerve to use my 'Barrier'!

Despite such frustrations, she was unable to make any rash moves due to the situation. The current situation was proof that the enemy leader was capable, so she could not afford to lose her temper. Even Milim, who could solve most problems with violence, had to act cautiously in the face of an enemy who might be her equal. While patiently waiting for the right moment, her turn finally came.

Zelanus made a move. Milim tried to move immediately, but there was a problem. Zelanus had carefully set up the 'Barrier' so that Milim could not break through it. Although it took less than ten seconds to disarm it, the delay was a blunder that could have been fatal. In the end, the effect was only a little harassment, but it did not change the fact that she had been outmaneuvered. Milim regretted it but praised it honestly and calmly vowed to make it up to Carrera. This was because she had arrived during Carrera's crisis just in time. Carrera would not have died, but if it had been fatal, it was unclear what would have happened to Milim's anger.

It was a relief to the world as well. At any rate, the worst was over for Milim, and all that remained was to defeat Zelanus. She happily joined the war and began to fight against Zelanus.

Zelanus was strong. He took Milim's fists without hesitation and hit back sharply. Milim also took it in stride, landing kicks, elbows, and head-butts in a flowing motion. Zelanus, too, did not lag behind Milim, but responded to her in an impressive manner. Both fighters fought fiercely, using only their bodies as weapons.

"You're pretty good. I didn't expect you to keep up with me this much, even though I'm not taking it easy on you!"

"Heh, ridiculous. I was a bit wary of how powerful you would be as the Creator's daughter, but I guess it's not that big of a deal."

Zelanus responded to Milim's flippant words with a pompous attitude, but in fact, he was not letting his guard down. Inwardly, he was merely acting condescending to Milim with the utmost caution. Zelanus was cautious, as evidenced by how wary he was of Carrera's 'Judgment.' Pride meant nothing to Zelanus.

Even though he was an absolutely powerful being, he was never overconfident. The essence of Zelanus was someone who gave his all without letting his guard down, no matter who the

opponent was. For that reason, Zelanus did not limit his vigilance to Milim alone. It was natural for Zelanus to always do his best, not just against powerful enemies but also against weak ones.

Thus, he had set up the ‘Barrier’ to delay Milim’s entry into the battle. In that instant, he was going to take out Carrera and take her power for himself. But that did not happen because Milim’s computing power was much greater than Zelanus had expected, and Carrera was also more stubborn than he had imagined. For Zelanus, the failure to finish off Carrera was a painful setback.

If Carrera recovered and joined hands with Milim, it would be a problem. In addition, if they were forced into a war of endurance, she might use ‘Judgment’ again, which was limited to once a day. If he analyzed the situation calmly, he could not afford to be optimistic. Therefore, Zelanus had used a sophisticated tactic in his conversation with Milim.

It would be profitable if she could let her guard down with this, but just what is the extent of the Creator’s daughter?

Zelanus was wondering how Milim would react. Milim, on the other hand, showed a wide smile with an arrogant attitude.

“Wahahahaha! So you say. In that case, entertain me some more!”

Milim was now in her true form for the first time. Beautiful crimson horns sprouted from her forehead, parting her lovely platinum pink hair. From her back, she spread her dragon wings and was donned in jet-black armor. In her hand, she was holding Asura, which had been given to her by Guy. It was rare for Milim to use a weapon. No matter what was said, she had acknowledged Zelanus to that extent. Zelanus also realized that his act was not working on Milim. In that case, there was no point in keeping it up.

“Why are you so cautious if you’re so strong? Is it cowardice?” Milim asked him curiously, and Zelanus answered as he pleased without hiding anything.

“Heh, just what is cowardice? I would rather be victorious as a coward than be defeated by the enemy without fear.”

Without losing his kingly bearing, Zelanus asserted that he had nothing to be ashamed of. Those were Zelanus’ true feelings, and he was proud of them.

“Victorious, you say? Just what is it that you want?”

“Heh, so you understand. To surpass the Creator is my mission.”

That was Zelanus’ true intention. In fact, Zelanus had been thinking about the reason for his existence ever since he had been named by Veldanava. He was not blinded by respect for the Creator as Feldway was, but rather had continued trying to figure out what he should do. The answer he came up with—“surpassing his creator.”

Zelanus’ body was immortal. Every cell in his body was controlled by his mind and could not only be regenerated instantly, but also reproduced. Zelanus was not affected by illness or injury, and his existence transcended mortality. Even so, he could die if his energy was depleted. Even if his body was immortal, his spirit had a limit. In other words, he was not immortal.

Zelanus had to surpass Veldanava at some point. Since he was unable to resist death in his current state, he was determined to improve himself by all possible means, even with cowardice.

That is why he increased the number of his subordinates without completing the task on his own. At great risk, he created Peliod to be his mate. He gave birth to children with her to be his own hands and feet.

The children, like their parent Zelanus, also sought strength. Zess was especially like him, and just like Zelanus, he was very cowardly. He was also cruel and cunning. Sensing the possibility that his newborn “younger brother” could threaten him, he tried to nip that in the bud. He even plotted to eat the individual who was born as the next generation’s queen and take their power for his own.

That attempt seemed to have failed, but none of that was of Zelanus’ concern. He’d let them do what they wished. If Zess were to become the next god of creation, that would have been a joyous occasion. Either he, the parent, or Zess, the son. The winner would be justified, and the next century would be built by the winner. However, Zelanus had no intention of giving up his throne, and he would have taken Zess’s power when he grew up.

Zelanus always had an accurate grasp of Zess’s power by loving him and gaining his trust, all to ensure his own victory. This time, because of the dangerous presence of Carrera, he was able to make good use of Zess as a stepping stone. Zelanus was satisfied with the result because he was able to take away Zess’s power. As long as someone as strong as Zelanus remained cunning and cautious, he was as good as impregnable. That is why Zelanus responded to Milim without any shame.

Milim realized that Zelanus was more dangerous than expected. She felt that if Zelanus was not defeated at this point, he could become an unmanageable disaster, so she decided that she should do her utmost to eliminate him.

“I would have liked to play with you more, but unfortunately you are dangerous. Sorry, but I’m going to have to take things seriously from now on.”

With a serious expression on her face, Milim declared this to Zelanus. Then she released her power without a word. At this point, even Zelanus could not afford to lose any more time. He had no other choice but to put in everything he had.

“Ridiculous. I’ll deal with you as entertainment before taking the summit. Show me the power of the creator’s daughter!!”

No longer worrying about the impact on the world, the accumulated evil power was unleashed. The power of the two opponents grew, and the air trembled. As long as there is no significant gap between their skill-levels, the battle would only prolong if they continued to chip away at each other. This was the common understanding, and it was why Milim had chosen to use her special magic to destroy the enemy in a short-term annihilation.

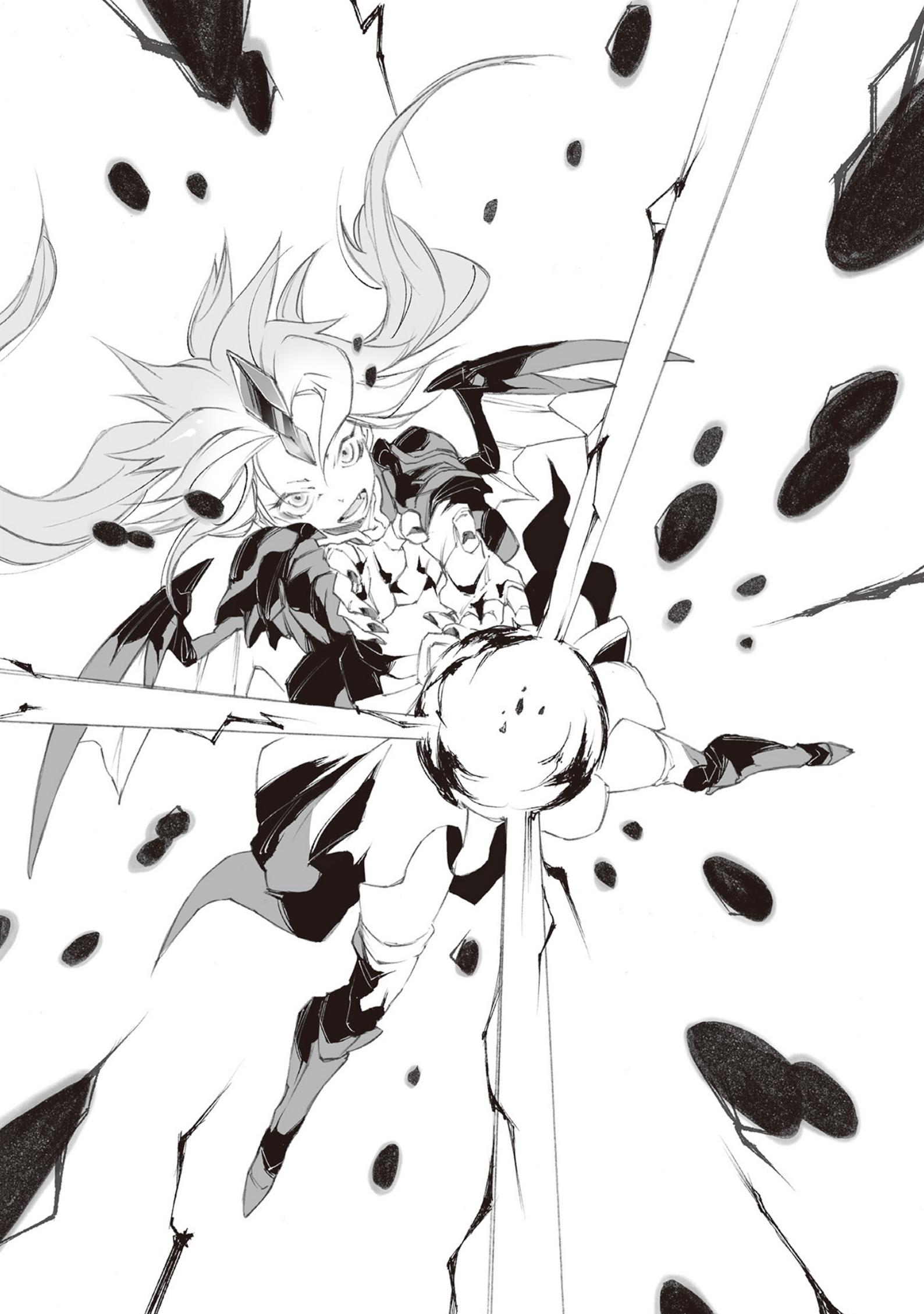
In response, Zelanus also refined his fighting aura. The clash of Milim’s high energy and Zelanus’ fighting energy generated plasma combustions all over the space. The aftermath alone was powerful enough to crush any poor monster into tiny pieces. Even a greater majin would not be able to survive if caught in such an explosion.

No third party could be allowed to enter the battlefield where such a tremendous explosion was raging wildly. They had already evacuated long ago and were watching the situation from

a distance outside the ‘Barrier.’ If they had been even a little late in escaping, they would have been in a hellscape by now. Even so, the real work had yet to start despite such a force being generated.

“I’ll show you the best! Drago Nova!!”

Stardust sparkled between Milim’s hands, and a force of unworldly destruction began to swirl about them. Milim gathered it into a bundle and launched it at Zelanus.



Even if you had the power to twist space like Peliod, it was impossible to take everything in. Milim, with that in mind, struck with the power of a tyrant. It was an outrageous move befitting of the title “Destroyer,” but in this case, she was correct. In a battle between supernaturals, the longer the fight went on, the more serious the damage would be. Since the current ‘Barrier’ was a combination of the power of both Milim and Zelanus, Milim used it to the utmost limit to set up a fight. On the other hand, like Milim, Zelanus chose a deadly special technique to annihilate the enemy.

“Devour them all—‘Devastator Virus’—!!”

Fine microparticles of darkness rose from Zelanus’ body and blocked the Drago Nova’s brilliance as if they had a will of their own. They were the dark cells that made up Zelanus’ body. Zelanus, who could manipulate the matter taken in from other worlds at will, was able to make his own body microscopic and invade his enemy’s body. The tiny, willful cells could break through even a ‘Barrier’ and devour the target from the inside, making it impossible for ordinary people to even resist.

The sparkling light emitted by Milim intersected with the dark particles controlled by Zelanus. While the light drove out the darkness, the darkness swallowed the light. It was only a moment in time, but that moment was so tense that it seemed infinite. And it was an unfavorable situation for both parties.

Milim had intended to win overwhelmingly, and Zelanus had intended to devour Milim with his cells. Finally, the outcome of the battle was revealed.

When the light and darkness converged, there stood Milim. The dark microparticles had clung to Milim’s body, but they were extinguished by Milim’s haki. Milim, though fatigued, was unharmed. And as for Zelanus?

“...So, this is pain. I didn’t think there was anything I couldn’t devour...”

Surprisingly, he was still safe. Milim’s Drago Nova was mainly composed of a special substance called stardust. It was a substance with destructive power beyond that of spirit particles, which only Milim could control, and unless its properties could be analyzed, it was uncontrollable for any human being. It was only natural that Zelanus had failed in his attempt to eat it.

However, while not eating it, Zelanus did succeed in killing it. Although some damage was sustained, it was at a sufficiently regenerative level to the point that it had no effect on the continuation of the battle. Milim suffered mental exhaustion and Zelanus suffered some physical wear and tear. That was the only result of this exchange of fire. Zelanus quickly stood up and stared at Milim with his compound eyes. Then he thought to himself.

Can I really win this fight?

Being the daughter of the creator, Milim was strong. It was said that she had inherited most of the creator’s power, but it seemed that she still had more hidden in her. Zelanus was sure of this.

He was sure of this because he had seen the Barren Lands, the site where she had once fought a deadly battle with the Demon Lord Guy. As is typical of the cautious Zelanus, he was

well informed. The land, also called the Desert of Death, was created more than 2,000 years ago, yet it was still contaminated by dense magicules. The power of Milim's Drago Nova was tremendous, but it was not contaminated to that extent. Therefore, he should assume that there was something more. The uncertainty of what that was made Zelanus feel uneasy.

For Zelanus, victory at all costs is not what he wanted. He needed to win safely and surely. Zelanus' belief was absolute, and based on that belief, any further battle was dangerous. There was no such thing as a "just in case" and Milim was still an unknown variable...

Zelanus was considering retreat at this point. Shortly after this, an event occurred that forced Zelanus to make a decision.



Carrera heard the voice of someone who should not have been here and realized that this was no longer the time to spectate. It was not possible, she thought, but she was not so foolish as to doubt the reality of the situation.

"Hey, did I fail to die?"

"Hmph, you've been summoned from the other world because I wasn't good enough."

The one smiling wryly was Lieutenant Kondou, who was supposed to have died by Carrera's hand. Unknown to Carrera, Masayuki's Ultimate Skill 'King of Heroes' had been activated just before this. In other words, the Kondou here was a physical entity, though not a living one. He was as real as the real thing, and yet not the real thing, a "dead champion (Einherjar²¹)" that was of the same quality as a Digital Lifeform. It would have normally been impossible, but through Masayuki's ability, he had rushed to Carrera in her perilous situation.

"Well then. I hope you're not saying that this is the end for the devil who killed me."

"That's right, of course not. I was about to beat him to a pulp, but then you interrupted me."

Kondou, too, did not ask back with a "How?" With a fearless smile, he nodded his head in an "In that case, good," fashion.

"I will lend you my strength as well, so please forgive me."

It was a very natural offer of cooperation. And Carrera accepted it as a matter of course.

"Well, why not? I'm like this too, so I'll borrow it."

She did not care about her pride as a demon. No, rather, she seemed to be quite happy. And thus, a powerful combination was born.

Even in this moment, the two were casually having a meeting.

"So, what's the plan? Are you going to take him down?"

²¹In Norse mythology, the 'Einherjar' were ghostly warriors who died in battle and were brought to Valhalla by the Valkyries.

Carrera calmly made unreasonable demands as soon as he became an ally. Kondou was also taken aback, but then let out a sigh and began to explain.

“As good as I am, even I can’t beat that.”

Kondou was realistic. Even though he had only just appeared in this world, he remained calm and aware of the situation. Based on this, he made a very rational decision.

“But right now, fortunately, his eyes are on other people.”

“Huh?”

“If you can’t win with a straightforward attack, just use subterfuge.”

Kondou said that and then placed his hand on Carrera’s.



To be more precise, he intended to put his power into the Golden Gun in Carrera's hands.

"Suddenly holding hands is a little embarrassing, isn't it?"

"Shut up. Now is not the time for jokes like that."

Actually, Carrera meant what she said quite seriously. Nevertheless, she was coldly dismissed and felt quite offended. However, Kondou was correct. It was indeed an important time to defeat the enemy in order to prevent any harm to her fellow comrades. Carrera focused her attention on what Kondou was planning to do. Then he noticed it.

"I see, it's your 'Judgment.'"

"That's right. I put all my strength into this bullet. You just need to concentrate on controlling it."

'You know how to use it, don't you?'—there was no need to ask such questions.

Kondou trusted Carrera. Carrera sensed this and was in a better mood.

"Yeah, leave it to me."

And so, she agreed with a big smile on her face.



Peliod was the ruler of the battlefield. Despite the twists and turns, things had generally gone according to plan. What she didn't like was that there were not as many deaths as expected. Moreover, there were no casualties from the enemy forces. Even if some of them were injured seriously enough to leave the battlefield, it appeared they were being given first aid with magic and recovery medicine, so none of them would die.

She had been planning to collect the power of the dead in this battlefield after going through great lengths to form a special force field, but she was unable to achieve the expected results.

Well, even so, I was able to devour my children and integrate their powers. I suppose you could say that was a success.

In fact, Peliod's current power was much stronger than it had been at the beginning of the battle. It was not simply the mere difference of energy values, but also the combination of the children's skill-levels. Adding the newly acquired melee combat ability to the 'Spatial Domination' that she had been so good at from the beginning, it was impossible for her to fall behind the small fry that clung to her. However, the small fry—Obera, Midley, Karion, Frey, Geld, and Gobta & Ranga—worked brilliantly together to minimize damage. Peliod was never fatally wounded, but when she tried to defeat them, it was surprisingly difficult. This irritated Peliod.

This is not funny. Even with all the power I've gained, I am still unable to defeat these

guys...

If she took her time, she would surely win. Despite this understanding, Peliod was unable to suppress her frustration. One person in particular whom she did not like was the majin named Geld. Although he was not as strong as the current Peliod, he was unusually sturdy. He should have died long ago.

Even though she had hit him directly multiple times with attacks that were intended to kill, he kept getting back up again and again. Moreover, those eyes of his were detestable. Even though he should have clearly understood the difference in their power, he was still staring at Peliod as if he would never give up. It was as if he was sure of his victory—

Just stop joking around already. That's the kind of look I should be giving you guys!

Obera was still understandable. She had sent scouting insects to investigate the cryptids, so of course she was informed of Obera's army as the opposing force. And after having witnessed her strength in this battle, she was aware of the danger that was posed. That's why she had Obera fire those two big shots in order to exhaust her. She never looked down on her. However, she did not expect that Geld would be such a nuisance.

He was only as good as Mujika before the Life Reconstruction, but his durability is abnormal. I wonder how long he can withstand my attacks...

This was why specialized types were so troublesome—Peliod kept her composure while trying her best to calm down her inner frustration. Then, as if to take out her anger, she swung her appendages to launch a ‘Dimensional Slash.’ However, most of the slashes were offset by Geld’s Chaos Eater, and the remaining slashes were also neatly avoided, only serving to increase Peliod’s anger.

This was not because Peliod was lacking in ability, but because Geld and the others were doing their best with their lives on the line.

Gobta had overcome his fear and devoted himself to troubling Peliod. Trusting Gobta, Ranga fully cooperated.

Midley enjoyed fighting, but he understood that if he died, it would be the end. He overcame those fears and was fighting purely to kill Peliod.

Karion and Frey were repeatedly attacking Peliod from the air and land, fully utilizing their awakened power. Indeed, their training in Ramiris’ labyrinth had paid off. Without that experience, they would have been forced to leave the front lines long ago due to a misallocation of forces.

Obera was still Obera, and she read the situation very precisely to give the best instructions. Geld was safe because she had been accurately switching the role of the shields.

As for Geld, his consciousness was already hazy.

As Peliod had predicted, it was a miracle that he was still alive. He remained standing with his spirit alone. The ‘full body armor’ that had become one with his ability had cracked and shattered, leaving only remnants. And his body had long since exceeded their limits, so battered that even the ‘Ultraspeed Regeneration’ could not keep up. The only reason why he was still able to fight was because of the secret of Geld’s power. His Ultimate Gift ‘Gourmet

King Beelzebub' included the 'Grant Protection' ability, which increased the defense of his comrades, and the 'Substitute' ability, which took the damage taken by others. Moreover, by combining these two abilities, one could achieve a completely different effect. In other words, it had the effect of transferring the damage you received onto others. Geld was able to distribute his damage to his subordinates while adjusting the amount of damage he took. But even that had limits. His subordinates claimed to be able to endure more, but Geld knew this to be a lie. Everyone had reached their limits, just as he had. Still, Geld stood. He looked forward and did not look away from Peliod.

"The one who looks away from the fight, loses"— He was simply following Rimuru's words.

It was really a casual remark said at a drinking party, but to Geld, it was the best thing he had ever heard. Even if it was not true, he believed that he could change it into the truth with his own power. That's the kind of man Geld was. However, even Geld had his limits. He was attacked again, and finally fell to his knees.

"Muu...I can't get up!"

"Ufufufufu, you finally sank. I'll congratulate you for your good performance, so let's kill you once and for all."

Peliod laughed. It was not out of mercy that she left Geld on the back burner, but that she was going to slowly torture him later. It was purely an experiment to see how much of an attack he could withstand. Besides, it would have been foolish to only be concerned with Geld at this point. Since the others were not as durable as Geld, she decided that she should remove the threat as soon as possible. Now that the obstacle was gone, victory was assured. The only concern was that Zelanus, Peliod's lord, had entered into battle with Demon Lord Milim, and the outcome of that battle was uncertain. It was still as planned.

However, the power of Demon Lord Milim was unknown. Peliod did not doubt Zelanus' victory, but she wanted to go to the aid of Zelanus as soon as possible to make sure of it.

Well, now that this stubborn fellow is down, the other small fry will be easily taken care of.

Confident in her victory, Peliod was about to launch her special technique against Obera and the others—then she suddenly stopped. It was because a chill ran down her spine. She sensed the presence of someone or something interfering in this battlefield, within the very space that Peliod controlled.

It can't be!? There are only a handful of people who can enter here—

Even among the powerful entities who were informed of the situation beforehand, it was difficult to enter this controlled space from the outside. Even if they interfered with space-time through offensive measures like Milim, it would have taken much more time after the anomaly was sensed in the 'Barrier.' And yet, this person appeared in this space as if there were no obstacles. There shouldn't have been anyone capable of such a thing. If there was, it was something than a simple life form—

Peliod located the coordinates of the person's appearance and fixed her gaze upon it. And there she saw a golden glow. The glint was coming from the barrel of a gun, and the muzzle

of that gun was pointed at Peliod herself. The person who was holding the gun was the Yellow Primordial, who had been left alone, thinking that she could no longer do anything. The target was close to the Yellow Primordial, her eyes were sharply fixed on Peliod's head. It was clear what she was going to do. And it was threatening enough to make Peliod shudder.

“Stop—!!”

Faster than she could speak, a bullet shattered Peliod's head. And without exception, the very existence of her life was reaped. Thus, Peliod was extinguished without even a moment to leave a word of farewell.



Zelanus sensed that Peliod has disappeared. Her existence was gone—in other words, she was dead. It was a grave situation.

“It’s time.” Zelanus muttered to himself, deciding to withdraw.

“Hm?” Milim was suspicious.

“I told you that further fighting is pointless.”

Peliod’s death was unexpected for Zelanus. It was to the extent that future plans were thrown into chaos, and he could no longer be concerned with the immediate victory. Even if he continued to fight Milim, it was 50-50 whether Zelanus would win or not. The reason why Zelanus had still decided to fight was that Peliod was planning to kill all the enemy generals, collect their power, and use it to support Zelanus.

If Peliod herself could be Life Reconstructed by integrating the power of the warriors here, she would be reborn as a super-enhanced being, though not as powerful as Zelanus. However, that plan had fallen through. As it was, he found himself in a battle that he was not even sure he could win. Zelanus was not optimistic enough to tolerate such uncertainty. Besides, there was an even greater concern.

This battlefield was covered by a complex of ‘barriers’ with the purpose of reducing the damage to the planet. Yet, the overall strength of the Barrier had been weakened by the death of Peliod, who had been a part of the Barrier. Just as Milim was holding back her power, Zelanus, too, had yet to show his full potential. He also judged that further continuation of the battle might cause unforeseen problems.

“Are you running away?”

“Ridiculous.”

Zelanus snickered at Milim’s provocation. Milim was not a fool, and she understood that she would not be able to give her best if the ‘Barrier’ was lost. That is why she had planned a short battle, and since the battle could not be won, there was no longer a reason to keep Zelanus in this position. It was true that Milim was hiding her power.

She did not use all the power she had in her body to the extent that, when using it, she even felt that defeating Zelanus would not be difficult. However, the problem was what would follow. Once Milim's power was released, it was difficult to stop it because after it exceeded the limit, Milim lost all reason and would enter a rampaging state. Milim's 'Stampede,' as Frey once told Clayman, really existed. Milim had told her so casually that Frey did not think it was real, but it was indeed a true story. Milim thought to herself.

My friends are also exhausted and some of them are even in danger if they are not treated soon enough. It's better to make a fresh start rather than to forcefully finish him off.

That was Milim's conclusion. Therefore, Milim decided to let Zelanus go.



Carrera confirmed Peliod's disappearance and smiled happily.

"Fufufu, look at that. We won."

Carrera turned around to say that, but Kondou was nowhere to be seen. Kondou had not been formally summoned by Masayuki's ability. He had only forcibly manifested using the Golden Gun that he had given to Carrera as a medium. It was an existence that made sense of an illusion created by Carrera's desire.

"Heh, I understand. You came here because you were worried that I wasn't good enough, right?"

Carrera spoke to the empty sky with a smile on her face. It was lonely, but Carrera was strong enough to bear it. That's why she was determined to become stronger so that she wouldn't have to make the same mistake next time. Gobta was raising his battle cry of victory. Ranga was howling in triumph as well. It was funny how surprisingly similar they were to each other. Geld collapsed in exhaustion and Obera helped him up as if to congratulate him on a good fight. Karion and Frey were nodding to each other, lending a hand to Obera and laughing with Geld. Gabil and the others rushed in to help Geld on a stretcher and sprinkle him with recovery medicine. He seemed to be in good health, despite all the fuss. As Geld and the others were carried away to Tempest, Midley murmured with emotion.

"We won."

"Ah, Midley-san."

"Fufu, I feel embarrassed to be addressed with '-san' by a primordial, who has lived longer than myself."

"Well, that's all right. I, for one, pay respect to those whom I recognize."

"I'm honored."

The conversation stopped there, and the two basked in the afterglow of their victory for a few moments. With so many wounded, it was hard to call it a complete victory. However, no

one was killed. Carrera was satisfied with that alone. As far as this battlefield was concerned, she had given strict orders to her demons to recover the souls of the dead, so they were able to deal with this scale of damage. Even so, if had had been hit by a powerful wide-range attack like Obera's devastating technique, the casualties would have been irreversible. The fact that they could all rejoice together in this way was no doubt a great victory.

"I will get stronger."

"Hm. The legendary demons I was told about were portrayed as monsters that didn't understand the human mind... But when we're actually talking to each other like this, I surprisingly find that we can get along."

"It's a bit late for that, isn't it?" Carrera laughed at Midley's frankness. Seeing Carrera like that, Midley smiled at her.

"If you are aiming for strength, then I won't lose either. If my body is about to give out after just that amount of exertion, then I am still lacking in kung fu."

"Ahaha. You're pretty good at it, but you still intend to train even harder than that."

"Isn't it natural? I have to push my mind and body to the limit so that I can give it my all for a longer period of time. Carrera-dono would be a good opponent for me, don't you think?"

"That's a good idea. I've been thinking of training more with the body that was given to me by Milord. I'm willing to take you up on your offer."

Carrera and Midley shook hands firmly. Since they both had the same goal of aiming higher, there was no reason to refuse. Milim joined the conversation in her usual manner.

"That's not fair! That special training, I'm gonna join too!!"

Milim was very happy and nonchalant about the situation.

"Hey, hey, does Milim really need to get any stronger?"

"Mm. Milim-sama is the strongest, so she has no need for any special training, right?"

Carrera was no slouch either, but there was always someone better. It was a well-known fact that Milim was out of the norm, and Carrera, who had come here and interacted with Milim, understood that fact to the point of disgust. Even so, Carrera was still one of the better ones and could respond to most of the crazy requests with a smile, but that was not the case with Midley. Unlike Carrera, Midley tried to be very serious and reserved. However, Milim did not get the message.

"Wahahaha! What are you saying? I won't allow you to exclude me from the fun!"

And so, she forcefully decided to participate. Gobta read the situation correctly here. He sensed the danger. Gobta saw Milim descending from the sky and had been secretly listening to her. He sensed something disturbing in the flow of the conversation. If things went on like this, he would likely be forced to participate, so he decided to make a strategic retreat. It was an excellent judgment of the situation.

"Well, I'm off to report my victory!"

And then, hopping onto Ranga with whom he had been disassembled, he fled the scene like the wind. The combination of Gobta's constant attention to his surroundings, and his willingness to absorb any useful information, had saved his life. Ranga trusted Gobta. His ability to foresee

danger had helped him many times, so he followed Gobta's lead without any doubts. As a result, Ranga also succeeded in escaping. As for the others...

"Nn? Uh, h-hey..."

"Hold on Milim, you can't possibly be planning to drag me into this too, right?"

Not only Midley and Carrera, who were the first to be caught, but also Karion and Frey were forced to join against their will. Thus, although the war in this region had caused a great deal of destruction, it had come to an end without any fatal damage—or so they thought.

"Blizzard, let all things be frozen over and put to sleep."

As if aiming for the moment when everyone was caught off guard, the world was dyed white. A blizzard of despair swirled from the outer edges of the battlefield to the center, encircling everyone so that no one could escape.

"It can't be, you—"

Milim was the first to notice, but by then it was already too late. She was completely caught off guard. There weren't many people who could fool a demon lord as ancient as Milim. However, it was not an impossible feat for the eldest sister of the True Dragons, Frost Dragon Velzard.

"It's been a long time, Milim."

"What are you doing, Velzard?"

"Fufu, I came here to see my lovely niece. I need your help with something."

"Don't look down on me. If you're going to ask me for a favor, you'd better behave appropriately. Get rid of that blizzard first and then I'll talk to you about it!"

Milim intimidated Velzard while holding back her anger. If things continued this way, her friends would be in danger. In fact, those on the outer edge had already been frozen and turned into ice sculptures. They were not dead, but even their vital activities had ceased. It might sound good to hear that they were in a state of suspended animation, but their lives could be destroyed by Velzard's will alone. Milim understood this.

She was caught completely off guard, aiming for the moment she relaxed right after the deadly battle with Zelanus. Frey felt an even greater sense of danger than Milim. If Milim were to become enraged and lose control, this entire area would be burnt to ashes. If that were to happen, the scale of the damage would be unimaginable, and it was uncertain how many people would survive.

I have to make a decision...

Frey decided that it would be dangerous for Milim to let Velzard do as she pleased. Most likely, the longer she delayed, the worse the situation would become. Thinking as such, Frey transmitted an order to the Soaring Flock without Milim's approval.

<Take out Velzard!!>

With that voice as a signal, the Soaring Flock moved out at once. There was no person who did not understand the terror of Velzard. Everyone was prepared to die in this suicide attack.

Milim, their beloved master, was kind to the point of fatality. The more people who fell asleep as ice sculptures, the more Milim's patience would reach its limit. Once that happened, there was no turning back.

Even now, she was forced to endure out of consideration for Frey and her other friends. If the situation worsened any further, she would have no choice but to follow Velzard's lead for fear of sacrifices. To Frey's knowledge, the only time Milim had ever fought seriously was when she clashed with Guy and destroyed the country, long before Frey was born. If Milim fought seriously with the intention of killing her opponent without regard to the cost to her allies, she would never have a hard time no matter who the opponent was. And yet, Milim never once fought seriously. In other words, they were Milim's shackles.

Because Milim was so kind, Frey acted so that they would not be a burden to her.

"Tch, we were late. You guys can run away if you want to, but if you're going to stay, you'd better be prepared."

"One crisis after another. Moreover, this time it's with the aunt of our lord. I hate a battle that can't be won, but if it's for Milim-sama's sake, I can't complain about it."

Karion made his announcement, and Midley followed him with a laugh. Of course, no one from the Winged Beast Knights left. The warrior priests led by Hermes had also abandoned their roles as medics and switched to battle mode. Thus, Milim's subordinates rushed to Velzard all at once.

"Y-You guys, stop! Hurry and get the hell out of there!!"

As if to drown out Milim's screams, a havoc of magic and spirit bullets were concentrated on Velzard.

"Milim-sama is loved. Me as well, I wish I could have served you earlier—" Obera murmured.

She was exhausted from the battle with Peliod, and her energy was running low. Even so, Obera stood up again and firmly fixed her gaze on Velzard. Velzard was an absolute force to be reckoned with. Frankly speaking, the probability of winning was zero.

Frey could not have been unaware of this, and if she had only wanted to survive, she would have ordered the army to 'disperse and leave this place.' The reason why she did not do so was probably because—

Fufu, she's a cunning one, isn't she? I didn't dislike her in the first place, but her decisiveness is deserving of respect.

Frey's aim was to get Milim to abandon her doubts. If they were killed by Velzard, Milim would no longer have a reason to hesitate. Frey made the quick decision that if Milim survived, that was all that mattered. Karion and Midley followed suit. Their subordinates also made the choice to share their fate without any hesitation. They all loved Milim. Obera was the same way, so she could understand their feelings. She respected those who had made the same decision as the subordinates she had lost, and she too was prepared to die here.

Carrera, who remained in this land, was also thinking about what she should do in this situation. An endurance match against the flawless Velzard was impossible. Velzard was not as

gentle as Velgrynd. There was no way for Carrera to win against Velzard, and whether or not she could escape from this place depended on her luck. However, fleeing was not an option to Carrera.

It can't be helped. If I'm not careful, I'll be disobeying Milord's orders, but I should probably go along with them here. Velzard-sama is lacking nothing as an opponent. Let's do my best to struggle!

And so, she made a quick decision. It was as good as a disaster for Carrera's subordinates, but none of them could escape from this place anyway. Victory over Velzard was the only way out. However, everyone understood that this would never happen. Therefore, the only thing Carrera and the others could do was to lead all the souls of the dead who would emerge from this place and keep them away from true death.

“Get fired up, guys. Make sure you don’t miss a single one.”

Carrera’s words were met with a collective nod of approval from her subordinates. At this point, there was no more time for recovery. The demons gave up their incarnated bodies and returned to their original states as spiritual lifeforms. Although their influence on the material world would be reduced, it was more rational for them to lead the dead. Thus, in a very short time, everyone was ready. But the next moment...

—‘How foolish’—

That cold and heartless intent reverberated throughout the minds of all those present on the battlefield. It was a quiet voice that was drowned out by the blizzard, yet it carried a very loud wave of thought. Perhaps in response to the voice, the blizzard turned into a raging blizzard, whiting out the battlefield. It was unreasonable violence. A supernatural disaster of such an unimaginable scale had appeared on the battlefield that the concept of resistance was laughable.





—‘Now, go to sleep.’—

The pure white ice and snow raged on. The soldiers were the first to be transformed into ice sculptures. Then came the captains, and even the top brass. Only a few were left. Those who had reached the Million-class level remained. But it was only a matter of time...

Witnessing the hopelessness of the situation, Frey prepared for her own death. The same went for Karion and Midley. The only reason they were still standing was because Milim was protecting them. If not for that, Frey and the others would have been overwhelmed by the energy that Velzard had unleashed long ago.

As proof of this, Carrera, who was a little further away from Milim, was unable to even shed her body and was left immobile. Carrera, the pillar of demons, was in that state. Her subordinates were no different.

And of course, Frey’s Soaring Flock, Karion’s Winged Beast Knights, and Midley’s band of priests and priestesses had all been turned to ice sculptures.

Velzard had not even attacked them. This blizzard was nothing more than a release of her supremacy (haki). For those who understood it, this phenomenon was an overwhelming feeling of hopelessness. Milim, who was protecting Frey and the others, was unable to move. If Milim abandoned them, then their fate would be sealed.

Ahh, kind Milim. You truly are a sweetheart. I love you.

Frey thought so sincerely. She suddenly felt eyes on her and turned her attention to see Karion smiling grinning fearlessly. Midley let out a big sigh and nodded his head with Karion. Obera was praying silently.

‘I’m sorry, everyone’—she seemed to be apologizing to someone. It was the very image of those who had made up their minds.

〈I guess you’ve made up your minds.〉

〈Yeah. Let’s do it with all at once, as flashy as possible.〉

〈Mm. If we’re going to fall anyway, let’s give Milim-sama one last glimpse of our heroism.〉

〈Fufufu. Now I finally understand how my subordinates felt. So that’s it. They didn’t die in vain. In that case, I’ll have to bring them something to brag about, too.〉

The Four Heavenly Kings under Milim were united in that moment. And—

“Wait, you guys—!?”

They took action before Milim could stop them. The coordination between the four of them was nothing short of brilliant. As if they had been warriors for a thousand years, they approached Velzard with a series of unerring, instantaneous attacks. But alas, all of that did nothing.

“I’m glad, really. Because you guys were as strong as I expected you to be, I was able to

deal with you without any mishaps.”

Velzard smiled and remained standing there coldly. In front of her, four new ice sculptures were born. At the same time, Milim’s expression froze. It was an expression in which all the other emotions had fallen away, leaving only one. In other words, a look of rage. Milim was furious that her friends were taken away from her.

“I won’t forgive you. Taking away my friends? I will never forgive you!!”

Milim’s cry pierced the battlefield. At the same time, Milim’s Skill—the Ultimate Skill ‘Wrath King Satanael’ began to operate at full power. Taking in the surrounding magicules and pouring in all of her own mana, it continued to generate even greater power.

Fueled by rage and the magicules emanating from Milim, it was the ultimate power to propagate magicules. The ‘magicule breeder reactor’ was so powerful that it could not be mastered, and was the essence of the Ultimate Skill ‘Wrath King Satanael.’

The magicules that were used as fuel were returned as more power. They were literally breeding. As long as this was activated, the amount of magicules in Milim would continue to increase rapidly. Moreover, no matter how much she consumed, they would never decrease, which was the ultimate power. Veldanova’s offspring, the title of the Dragon Princess was not an exaggeration. The sole individual who wielded infinite power—that was demon lord Milim.

And again, Milim roared loudly. At that moment, the heavens trembled and the earth shattered. The mythical-grade armor enveloping Milim’s body changed ominously, as if responding to her passion. It was not a measure to protect Milim from external enemies, but rather a measure to prevent her from being defeated by her own internal power.

The overflowing torrent of power fused with the armor, transformed it, and covered Milim’s entire body. Milim’s transformation was complete. Upon her back were a pair of jet-black wings. A single red horn sprouted from her forehead, shining in iridescent colors. The rest of her bare skin was covered with hard, shining dragon scales with mysterious patterns and dull, shifting colors. This was Milim’s true form. This was the true form of the Dragon Princess, who, despite her human body, possessed a power that surpassed even that of the True Dragons and manifested as the embodiment of absolute destruction.

“Ara ara, this is the second time I’ve seen you like this. Since we’re already here, why don’t I play with you a little?”

“Kill.”

There was no one left to stop Milim. Heaven and earth rumbled with the fury of the ancient demon lord. Immediately thereafter...

The world would once again be exposed to the wrath of the ultimate dragon majin.

ROUGH SKETCH



That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Chapter
2

**Report and
Countermeasures**

Chapter 2

Report and Countermeasures

“Has Velzard moved?”

Vega, who was staring at the video with a pallid expression, nodded to Feldway.

“Tch, both Demon Lord Milim and Zelanus are even more powerful than I imagined... Shit, they’re powerful as hell. Looking at that and smiling calmly, after all, the current me doesn’t even come close to that Velzard woman...”

Even Vega seemed to have realized the reality after watching Milim and Zelanus fight. No matter how confident Vega was, he could at least understand the difference with Milim and Zelanus.

“Don’t be so upset. I, too, had my own considerations when I heard that our long-time enemies, the insectars, had been destroyed.”

Zalario, who had just been recalled, spoke up in this way. The Milim forces had won a victory against the powerful enemy that had tormented them so much. Moreover, despite the heavy damage, there were no casualties among Milim’s forces. It could be said that it was due to a difference in conditions and strategy, but Zalario was at fault when he could not prepare for it. In any case, it was no excuse, and the reality was that Milim’s team was better than Zalario’s team. It was no wonder Zalario was not amused.

“So, what are you going to do, Feldway?”

That remark was a question about Velzard’s actions. She seemed to be planning something, but Feldway left it alone. Zalario believed that the rapidly changing situation had deviated from the original plan, and he wanted to say that it was time to correct the course. And there was one more person who was indignant.

“That’s right. If you hadn’t interfered with me, I would have defeated that divine enemy by now! Just what is your plan—let’s hear your explanation right now!!”

Upon returning to the Heavenly Star Palace, Feldway ordered Mai to visualize the war situation in various parts of the world. Then, he ordered Zalario to bring back Jahil, who had been launching a diversionary tactic against Luminas’ camp. Jahil’s behavior was also too flashy to be called a diversion. Zalario was right to stop him, but Jahil, who had been stopped, did not

seem to be amused. He was questioning Feldway as if planning to attack him.

“Hmph, don’t be so hasty. You couldn’t have taken down Demon Lord Luminas by yourself anyway.”

“What, are you mocking me?”

“That’s not the case. I’m just trying to proceed cautiously. Look, with Dagruel joining our ranks, the balance of power is now greatly in our favor. With Fenn as a Three Star Commander, Luminas is nothing but a distant memory.”

Feldway told Jahil this to appease his anger. However, Jahil’s dissatisfaction did not go away.

“Certainly, I acknowledge Fenn’s power. But Luminas, the enemy of the Divine Ancestor, must be dealt with by my own hands!”

In a sense, Jahil’s dissatisfaction was a grudge born of anger. Whether or not the takeover of Footman had anything to do with it was not clear, but his heart was boiling over with raging anger. That is why he attacked Luminas in a somewhat out-of-control manner. When he was stopped, Jahil was so furious at himself why he was hindered. But the next moment...

“Do you not hear me?”

It was Feldway’s one question, quietly uttered. It was not particularly intimidating, and it was uttered in a normal way. And yet, the air of authority that overpowered the statement caused even Dino and the others who were not participating in the conversation to become tense.

“N-No, it was my fault.”

Jahil regained his composure and immediately apologized. It was a very wise decision.

“Feldway, your dominance is poisonous to those who are not used to it. Please remember that now that you are in your true form, you are nothing compared to what you used to be.”

With Zalario defending Jahil, the situation was finally settled

And so the story goes back to the beginning. Currently, Feldway had three strategic goals. Get the Ultimate Skill ‘Hope King Sariel’ from Hero Chronoa. Eliminate the risk factor Hero Masayuki. This included taking the Ultimate Skill ‘Covenant King Uriel.’ And the most important objective, take the ‘Dragon Factor’ from Veldora.

Feldway had decided to rethink his objectives. First, he had to collect the skills. Since he had inherited Michael’s powers, Feldway was now able to identify the angelic Ultimate Skills, however...

It had been Michael, not Feldway, who was obsessed about collecting angelic powers. Since he had been the will that resided in the powers, he thought that consolidating all the other powers into one would lead to the all-powerful. All-powerful—in other words, the return of the omniscient and omnipotent²² Creator.

The theory seemed logical, but Feldway was skeptical. The reason was that Veldanava was not omniscient and omnipotent In the first place, since Veldanava himself had said that he

²²This is only one word in Japanese, but the meaning is both the words omniscient and omnipotent in English.

renounced his omniscience and omnipotence, there was no room to doubt his words. On the contrary, Feldway even thought about how nice it would be if Veldanava had lied. If that were the case, he would not have lost his power and been killed by humans.

But, then again, it was Veldanava himself who had given the humans their desires. The result of this was a cycle of cause and effect, and it was only self-inflicted. That is why Feldway did not doubt that Veldanava was no longer omniscient and omnipotent. For that reason, it did not make sense to keep looking for the missing skills. Moreover, it was meaningless to take all those powers if there were no recipients.

Feldway and Michael had planned to manifest Veldanava by using the best body of the lineage of the first hero as a vessel. However, this plan had completely failed. Michael was defeated and his body was lost. Now that this had happened, Masayuki should be considered a lower priority.

Emperor Masayuki, huh? I hate to be on the losing side, but victory or defeat was just a matter of time. It's not worth losing sight of the bigger picture. Feldway decided so.

Zalario and his team were unable to get Masayuki, who possessed the power of True Hero Rudra in his hands. Moreover, with Velgrynd in his ranks, they would only be beaten back with a half-hearted effort. At the very least, Feldway himself or Velzard would have to go there, or even ask Zelanus. Even if they won the battle, there seemed little to be gained.

As a result, the current objectives of the war were narrowed down. If Masayuki was going to be left alone, then there was no point in going after Hero Chronoa. Even if they eventually got rid of Masayuki, there was no need to target him first. They could just wait for him to come to them and avoid dispersing valuable forces.

After all, all hope has been lost...

As if to shake off those anxieties, Feldway's thoughts coalesced.

“So, what are you going to do?” Jahil asked impatiently, just in time.

“We are only targeting Veldora’s dragon factor. However, we need to move in such a way that our true mission is not revealed.”

Feldway then proposed a new strategy. And then—

After everyone left, Feldway muttered to himself.

“Now then, will Velzard accomplish what she set out to do?”

Velzard held the key to victory in this battle. At least, that is what Feldway believed.

“Her affection (desire)²³ is real. Therefore, the ending will not be shaken—”

Feldway was convinced of this, and a cold smile appeared on his beautiful face.



²³In the Japanese, the word “negai (wish/desire)” was put in parenthesis after the word aijō (affection).

In the holy city where Shion and Adalmann and the others were sent—the Holy Empire of Lubelius. I was sitting on the sofa, slowly relaxing. Next to me, Shion was proudly requesting another cup of tea. Luminas's maids responded accordingly. Shion accepted it as a matter of course, partaking in the tea ceremony prepared on the table, so I guess she felt no sense of tension.

What's with that? I'm supposed to be superior in terms of position, so isn't this difference in reaction a bit strange? Why am I, the master, so nervous over here while Shion, the one who is supposed to be the secretary, is so unconcerned...? No, thinking about it means I lose.

"Rimuru-sama, this sweet is delicious. I've already tested for poison, so please go ahead!"

Shion offered it to me, and I unintentionally put it in my mouth. I was wondering what kind of joke it was that Shion, who knew nothing about cooking, would be testing for poison, but that's fine. I didn't need to test for poison because it wouldn't work on me in the first place.

It sure is delicious. Shion may not have the best sense of aesthetics, but she did have a good sense of taste. That's why I think it's unreasonable... I mean, she never tastes the food she makes before serving it to us. And now that she's working on perfecting the taste with her Skill, the appearance and texture are still bad.

"What do you think? Is it good?"

"Yes, it is. It's not too sweet and quite refreshing. I enjoy the way it crumbles in my mouth."

This pastry was like a financier. It had a subtle savory accent and was seriously delicious. Shion heard my response and smiled widely. Then she dropped a bombshell of a statement.

"That's wonderful! I was confident this time as well, but I am glad to hear that Rimuru-sama is pleased!"

"Nn?"

I paused involuntarily and stared at Shion. There was a smile on her face as usual. I turned my attention back to the sweet in my hand, and then looked at Shion again.

"Could it be that this..."

"Yes! I made it."

"That's a lie, right!?"

It was an unbelievable statement, but it appeared to be true. I had been a while since I saw Shion's smug face, but I could forgive her for bragging about it this time. Shion had finally conquered the appearance and the texture of the food. By the way...

"Did you use your skill to make this taste and shape?"

"No. I made it with my own hands!"

Shion was showing tremendous progress. I guess a change of environment can be important after all. Shuna and Benimaru had not been able to improve her culinary skill no matter how many times they tried, but now Shion had suddenly awakened ever since she came to another country. Just what was the trigger? Just as I was thinking about that, I heard a voice answering my question.

"It was hard work."

Luminas came into the reception room blurting out these words. Luminas greeted me as

I was getting up from my seat with a “Sorry to keep you waiting,” and sat down on the sofa herself, as if there was no need to thank her. Then, she began to continue what was just said.

“What’s with that? She said she could cook with full confidence, so I entrusted her with the task, and then she prepared a novel-looking dish that couldn’t even be described as food at all!”

Luminas’ tone was strong. The word novel carried such weight that I couldn’t help but get a little mystified.

“What’s more! The texture was terrible, but the taste was good, so it was incomprehensible. Some people were even trying to reproduce it for fun. I was so worried about the negative impact on our food culture that I had to make a move myself²⁴!”

It seemed that she was feeling quite depressed and resentful.

“Uh!?”—I couldn’t help but think and was at a loss for words to say back.

“B-But even so, I’m impressed that you were able to correct Shion. We had already given up on her long ago, so it’s truly amazing.”

When I tried to cover it up for the time being, Luminas gave me a scornful glare. Shion also gave me a look of protest with her cheeks puffed out. I pretended not to notice this and waited for Luminas’ answer.

“I can only imagine how much you all have spoiled Shion, but that is none of my business. Therefore, I was going to leave it alone, but once it started to do some real damage, I couldn’t do so anymore. And so, I intervened.”

“Oh?”

Saying that I spoiled her would be a misnomer, but it couldn’t be helped that it seemed that way from the outside. That being the case, apart from Shuna, Benimaru and I didn’t know how to cook, so it’s just that we couldn’t take too strong of an attitude toward Shion. It would be pretty rude to point out things to others that I couldn’t do myself.

And so, I had been hoping that Shuna or Gobichi-kun would give her criticism, but... Shuna was too kind and gave up quickly, and Gobichi-kun was too weak to reach Shion’s heart. In the end, the situation had remained the same until now. The taste had improved, and it wasn’t enough to kill people.

As a slime with a long life ahead of me, I should have tried cooking myself to get closer to Shion’s feelings. If I had done so, I might have found more things to be improved and this problem might have been solved earlier. It was both my and Benimaru’s fault for turning a blind eye to our weak areas. As I reflected on this, Luminas gave me the answer.

“You should taste the food before serving it to your guests, because it may be laced with poison!”

S-So that’s it... That’s why Shion had been talking about poison testing just now. Or rather, it was indeed a good idea. It wasn’t that Shion had a strange sense of taste, but she was simply

²⁴Luminas always addresses herself with “warawa” which is a Japanese archaic pronoun normally used by women in samurai families. The author wanted her to sound like a haughty noble, but he wasn’t aware at that time that this pronoun was more of a self-deprecating and humble sounding way of reference.

the worst type of bad cook²⁵ who never tasted her food. If she got into the habit of tasting the food herself, she would naturally become aware of the problems with those dishes.

“As expected of you, Luminas. You are truly wise.” I said my compliments from the bottom of my heart.

Then Luminas let out a ‘hmpf!’ and turned her head away from me, her cheeks lightly flushed with embarrassment.



I received the unexpected good news that Shion’s cooking would improve, but it had nothing to do with the purpose of our visit here.

Ramiris reported that the battle between Milim and the insectar king Zelanus was at a stalemate. At the same time, the capital of Lubelius, the territory and home of Luminas, was being attacked by angelic forces from the sky.

Gobta and the others were sent to Milim as reinforcements, so things seemed to be okay there for the time being. With Milim there, they should be able to handle the situation unless something unexpected happened.

On the other hand, although Shion and Adalmann had been sent to support Luminas, I could not shake off my concerns about their battle strength. After all, the Holy Knight Order, which was the cornerstone of the Luminas fighting forces, had been placed in the Kingdom of Ingracia with Hinata, the leader of the Holy Knight Order. Luminas also had a fighting force called the Bloody Knights which consisted of vampires, but there were only about 400 of them.

Still, the Bloody Knights were individually over A-ranked, and there were several Surmounters who were as skilled lower-leveled Demon Lord Seeds. The quality of the team was quite high. Even so, I could not keep silent once I heard that Jahil’s appearance had been confirmed. And so, I left the cleanup at the Kingdom of Ingracia to Hinata and Masayuki and came all the way over in a great hurry. And yet, there was no sign of a fight, and I was led here, tasting Shion’s sweets and waiting for Luminas to arrive. Having said that, it had been only ten minutes at most before Luminas appeared. I was so surprised by Shion’s progress that I ended up spending more time chatting with her. With that, I changed my mindset and got down to the main topic.

“So then, how did the battle with the angels go?”

“They retreated, so there was no serious damage. In the first place, it seems that attacking here was not part of the plan.”

Luminas gave me a detailed account of the situation. As it turned out, it appeared that this place had been attacked because of Jahil’s rampage, or as I called it, harassment.

²⁵He refers to her as “meshimazu-san” which is a Japanese slang term. It can refer to someone who cooks crappy food, or just food that sucks in general.

“He and I have a history. We have been at odds with each other for a long time.” said Luminas.

When I asked her what she meant, she did not tell me, but when I told her that I had already heard some of the story from Silvia-san, she told me with a disgusted look on her face. First of all, Luminas had someone who could be called a father figure.

Divine Ancestor Twilight Valentine. A mythical being whose name meant the King of Twilight²⁶.

It seems that this Divine Ancestor Twilight created many intelligent life forms, and that some of the founders of these life forms became known as the Divine Ancestor’s High Disciples. The first of them was Jahil. The second was Luminas, as Silvia-san had told me. Each of the high disciples of the Divine Ancestor established their own country. In Silvia-san’s case, it seems that she herself only supported and helped her fellow high elves, but in the end, all elves were unified by her daughter El-tan—the Celestial Emperor Elmesia. Thus, the Sorcerer’s Dynasty of Sarion was born. Incidentally, Silvia-san and Luminas were said to still have a secret friendship even now. El-tan had nothing to do with it, and only Luminas seemed to know about it.

“Basically, I didn’t think I should interfere with Sarion. I did help them out a bit in the beginning, though.”

That’s what I was told. Since Sarion had been founded more than 2,000 years ago, I did not know if Luminas’ story was true or not. However, there was no reason for them to lie as Luminas and Silvia-san, being long-lived species, were like living pieces of history.

Convinced that it was most likely true, I listened to the rest of the story. I was told that Luminas and Silvia-san were the only two of his disciples that were still alive today. At the very least, no one else seemed to keep in touch with them.

The ancestor of King Gazel, the founder of the High Dwarfs, was said to have passed away, and the founders of the Fire Spirits (Enki) and the Water Spirits (Siren) had probably reached the end of their lives. Only the high elves, who were similar to spirits, lived a long life.

Speaking of longevity, the high humans were the most likely to have lived a long life. This race was created purely by reversing the attributes of the Divine Ancestor.

“I don’t like to admit it, but I am something like a replica of the Divine Ancestor, and strictly speaking, I am not a vampire but a High Blood. I was born from the blood of the Divine Ancestor. Jahil was created by cultivating the flesh of the Divine Ancestor. He does not seem to have inherited the ability to absorb power from others, but he, too, was close to immortality.”

The Divine Ancestor did not need to eat but sustained himself by depriving others of their life force. He had no particular weaknesses and was the embodiment of immortality. The Divine Ancestor had devised two replicas of himself, the high human race that lived in the daytime, and the vampires who ruled the night.

²⁶This might sound repetitive in the LN, but Twilight’s name has always been written with romaji (トワイライト/towairaito) which is why his name is then described once again using the word “tasogare/黄昏” meaning “twilight.” This was so those reading in Japanese would know that “towairaito” meant “tasogare.” It looks the same in English either way, but it’s different in Japanese.

A race that ‘lived in the daytime’ was a metaphor. Plants produced energy through photosynthesis, and animals sustained life by eating them. Through predation of the animals, predators accumulated large amounts of energy, and the earth was enriched by the decomposition of their corpses via microorganisms. The role of those standing at the top of the Food Chain was given to the high humans. In other words, the high human race was a part of the Food Chain. Therefore, it was impossible for them to escape their life span, and Jahil was no exception.

The average lifespan of a normal person living in an urban area was about seventy years old. This was the case without any magical means to prolong life. Although medical treatment was not well developed here, people seemed to live longer than expected because of the magical cures for diseases. People living in rural areas or in areas adjacent to monster forests seemed to have a shorter average life expectancy. I should also add that these figures were calculated without including the deaths due to numerous disasters.

On the other hand, high humans apparently lived for several hundred to nearly a thousand years, which was similar to that of the long-eared elves. It seemed that their physical strength was different from that of modern humans, and because they had a high resistance to magicules, they could successfully utilize and take advantage of them. But even so, as long as their bodies were not immortal, there was no escaping from their life span. That is why Jahil devised a method to extend his own lifespan indefinitely. That was the ‘Secret Art of Spiritualization.’

If the three elements that made up the body—the material body, the spiritual body, and the astral body—could not be maintained at the same time, then he decided that it would be better for him to inherit only the minimum elements that could maintain his ego. In other words, Jahil succeeded in transforming his material body into a spiritual body in order to preserve only the spiritual body and the astral body. Thus, Jahil was reborn as a spiritual life form of his own will.

Gadra’s mystic art: ‘Reincarnation’ was a very risky secret technique because it reincarnated the soul while protecting it with the astral body. However, the body obtained was completely one’s own, and all the experience and knowledge would be inherited.

Razen’s great secret art: ‘Possession’ transferred the spiritual body and the astral body to another person’s body, but the skills attached to the body were not inherited. It was much safer, but it was also incomplete in that the mana was dependent on the body and could become weak if not properly transferred.

On the other hand, Jahil’s ‘Secret Art of Spiritualization’ was perfect. Since Jahil himself had become a spiritual life form, he could safely and reliably inherit all the knowledge, experience, and authority he had obtained.

“Although it was necessary to prepare a body to be used as a substitute, it appeared that he was able to obtain bodies from his own blood relatives as much as he wished. Thus, Jahil solved the problem regarding his life span.” Luminas told me bitterly.

Indeed, if he had become a spiritual life form, it made sense that he was nearly immortal. I now understood that this was the reason why he was able to take over Footman so easily.

“However, perhaps because he was too conceited, he made a big mistake.”

Luminas explained that while Jahil was absorbed in his own research, his subordinates who

were in charge of politics began to compete with each other for supremacy, and before long, the country was divided. Eventually, the country was brought to ruin by the mistake of summoning the uncontrollable demon Guy.

“He resented me for destroying the Divine Ancestor and harbored hostility against me. I was glad to think that he had died on his own. I never thought that he would survive until now and be resurrected with such an insane amount of power.”

That’s right. Luminas had killed her father, the Divine Ancestor. For this reason, Jahil seems to have a grudge against Luminas. He was a troublesome opponent to be targeted by.

“Well. Even our Benimaru had a difficult time with him, so it’s quite troublesome.”

As I was giving Luminas some advice, Shion overheard my comment and interrupted me.

“Eh? Benimaru lost!?”

Perhaps she was surprised to hear that Benimaru had lost. Or rather, I’m pretty sure that I told all the executives about this, so I wonder if this slipped out of Shion’s memory? Well, that was fitting for Shion.

“He was not defeated.”

I corrected Shion’s words for Benimaru’s honor. In my opinion, if you don’t die, you win. In that regard, you could say that Benimaru won, though in reality, he just managed to keep the fight alive for as long as possible. If the fight had continued as it was, there was no doubt that Benimaru would have lost. Jahil was definitely a threat.

“I see, so then Luminas-sama, who defeated such an opponent, is stronger than Benimaru!”

That was it. I had been wondering about that too. No, actually, when comparing Luminas and Benimaru, I didn’t think there was that much of a difference in strength in my opinion. That’s why I had rushed to the scene thinking that Luminas and the others were in danger. I, too, wanted to hear about how Luminas fought off Jahil.

“Oh, you mean that.” Luminas began to speak casually.

“You know, I’ve had the experience of my city being destroyed by an evil dragon—”

Badump!?

I felt like I had heard this story somewhere...no, rather, I had received many complaints about it...

“When building a city, the first priority is to ensure safety.”

“I-I see. What an excellent idea...”

My tone became unintentionally polite, but I had no hesitation in choosing flattery here. Luminas gave me a cold look, then continued the conversation as if she had calmed down a bit.

“I had set up several layers of ‘barriers’ to counter any evil dragons, and they worked well.”

Now that she mentioned it, I remember that there were indeed many layers of ‘Defense Barriers’ in this sacred place. We had been allowed to pass, but no one suspicious could get through.

“I didn’t expect him to be that powerful. Jahil had the power to overwhelm Benimaru, and he seemed able to control his Ultimate Skill. Well, not as much as Veldora, but I didn’t think a half-hearted ‘Barrier’ would work.” I expressed my true feelings.

Luminas snickered.

“Don’t underestimate me! Unlike other places, this is a sacred land where my believers gather. With an unlimited outpouring of faith, it is easy to repel Jahil’s power.”

Her words were confident, and in fact, the results proved to be true. But was it really that easy?

«—Applying the ‘Secret of Faith and Grace’ could theoretically be possible, so—»

So, Luminas had refined the theory until it became a reality. It’s so impressive that it’s scary. I can’t even imagine how hard that would be for me.

«It is not a task that can be done by an individual alone. It is necessary to know the hearts of believers and to understand each other. It is not possible to achieve this overnight, but do you also wish to achieve this, Master?»

Hmm, I wonder? It’s not just my problem... For now, let’s put it on hold. Ciel-san seems to be satisfied with my answer.

In fact, there are many other projects that have remained untouched, though they seem to be useful in many ways. Moreover, we are still in the middle of a war, so I cannot afford to face the residents of our country right now. I put the matter on hold for the time being, as it was an issue to be dealt with in the future.



Alright, I found out why Luminas was able to survive the crisis, but that doesn’t mean the problem is solved. On the contrary, the real work is yet to come.

“—So then, Dagruel has defected. He is currently on the march, so I think we’ll be in contact with him within a week at the latest.”

I told Luminas the truth. I mentioned that Dagruel’s brother Fenn had done something to him, and that he had turned into a different person. I didn’t actually see him in person, and I only learned about it from Ultima’s report, but from a distance, Dagruel certainly appeared to be cloaked in a sinister haki. The army of giants who followed Dagruel also seemed ominous, so I expected that the battle would be quite fierce when the time came to fight.

Jahil was like the opener, and Dagruel was the main event. They were marching on foot, but it would not take them long to reach this point, judging from the way they were pushing forward through the Desert of Death without any difficulty. Frankly speaking, Dagruel’s defection hurt. I had envisioned this as a possibility, but when it actually became a reality, it was just too much of a headache.

“Well, Dagruel and I have been on bad terms for a long time. It’s not just because of conflicting interests, but also because Dagruel and the Divine Ancestor were on good terms.”

“Hey, hey, Jahil aside, is the discord with Dagruel because of the Divine Ancestor, too!?”

“Mm. Well, that matter is long over.” Luminas said this without seeming to care.

Apparently, that was around the time when Dagruel was called an evil god. That’s why Luminas didn’t seem to care, but if that was the case, it felt to me that Dagruel was trying to settle his grudge right now…

“So, it’s not surprising that we’re going into a head-on war with him.”

All that said, I think Dagruel is really strong. At that level, perhaps even I would struggle with—

«Hmph, that’s not possible.»

—is what I think, but Ciel-san seems to have a different opinion. Well, that’s fine. I’m not going to argue about it here. I don’t want to be a fool who underestimates the enemy and loses, so I have to assume that the threat is at a level that I will have a difficult time and come up with countermeasures.

«Understood.»

I’m glad to hear that you agree. Now then, let’s think about what we should do.

Geopolitically speaking, the Holy Empire of Lubelius was the key to defending the western part of the country. If this place were to fall, the enemy would gain a foothold to the Western Nations, and the situation would fall into disarray.

The army of angels could fly, so there was no way to intercept them at any point. Fortunately, the army of giants was on foot. They were much faster than normal human walking, and perhaps because they used some kind of legion magic, their average speed was 30 km/h, which was unthinkable for a normal army, but it was still better than being attacked from the sky.

The distance from Dagruel’s stronghold, the Holy Void Damargania, to here, the holy city of Rune, was about 2,000 kilometers in a straight line. Even if we assume that they do not bypass the Barren Lands and the Desert of Death, the distance is about 3,000 kilometers. Even by simple calculations, it would take more than four full days to complete the journey. Since they would also need to rest and such, it would normally take more than three times as long…but from what I recall about the glimpses of their march, I had a feeling they would come here without rest. In the meantime, I have been keeping an eye on them with the Argus spell. If there was any change, I should be able to detect it.

«It is easy to deceive the surveillance magic ‘Argus.’ If the enemy is cautious, the possibility of countermeasures cannot be denied.»

After all, that’s correct. ‘Argus’ is a magic that allows you to see the situation of an area in real time, and there is no way to confirm if the scene has been tampered with. Naturally, I

also take countermeasures on the assumption that I am being watched. So, if the enemy can manipulate the same kind of magic, I should assume that they are taking countermeasures. Of course, it might just be that I'm worrying too much...but either way, there is no doubt that we must not let our guard down.

I had other concerns. The fact that Jahil was intercepted should not be taken at face value. One of the objectives of the mission had been to make Dagruel defect, so it would have been logical to attack Luminas from both sides if they wanted to take her down. The reason why they did not do so was probably because of Jahil's outburst. There was a history with Luminas, and he may have had some kind of plan, but from what I heard, Jahil had been out of control. In other words, there may have been confusion in the enemy's chain of command.

Luminas possessed a considerable amount of power, but if she was sandwiched between an army of giants attacking from the west and an army of angels from the sky, even she would be helplessly overwhelmed. It seemed inconsistent that the enemy did not do so. In any case, since I had arrived in time, I wanted to make sure I was in the perfect position to intercept Dagruel's army before they arrived. So then, how much could be afforded?

"Assuming that they maintain the current marching speed, it will be four days at the earliest before Dagruel's army arrives. Hinata and the others will be back soon, but just in time for the decisive battle, I guess."

"Hmmm. Worst case scenario, I should call Hinata back right away..."

"I was the only one who left Ingracia in a hurry, leaving the cleanup of the royal capital to them. They also have to escort important dignitaries from various countries, so I think it will be difficult until the handover is completed."

It was a good idea to call back not only Hinata but also the Holy Knight Order. Masayuki was still in Ingracia, so it still wasn't safe. They may have defeated Feldway, but the next attack could be a full-scale one. Well, Masayuki had Velgrynd-san, and Testarossa was still there. The Imperial soldiers also seemed surprisingly reliable, so the situation was probably better than ours and they should be able to withstand whatever happens.

"Hmm, that's right. Hinata is representing the Western Holy Church, so it's not too much to ask." Reluctantly, Luminas agreed with me.

If we selfishly called Hinata back at this point, it might be taken as a sign that the Holy Church had abandoned the Western Nations. If that happened, the trust we had built up would be lost all at once. If things were really at their worst, it might be inevitable, but I was here to prevent that from happening.

"Well, I've brought my subordinate Gadra with me, so he should be discussing the defense with Adalmann by now. He's not as good as Hinata, but he's dependable, so I don't think you need to worry that much."

Luminas gave me an indignant glare as I said this.

"You are too carefree! It's probably because you don't understand the horror of Dagruel that you can speak so carelessly."

No, no, I think Dagruel is dangerous too. It's just that Ciel-san seems to be in easy win

mode, so I've been getting relaxed because I feel relieved. I don't like to be called a carefree person, but I feel like I'll be a jerk if I talk back to her. I swallowed my complaints in a mature manner and moved on to the next topic before I could receive any more criticism.

"Well, all that aside, let's check on our forces." I suggested it as such.

Because it was the military secret of another country, I didn't expect her to honestly tell me everything. Even so, if I didn't ask, I couldn't make a proper strategy. So, I asked the most important question.

"Let me ask you frankly, how many Surmounters are there?"

This was quite rude, but it was the most important question. After all, since we could not rely on the Holy Knight Order's captains, I really wanted to get a grasp of the strength of our forces. From this point onward, it would be better not to count those who were below A rank among the battle forces. Especially after observing Carrera and others, I even thought that it might be better not to bring them to the battlefield at all, as they could be wiped out by a single shot of large-scale magic.

As a matter of fact, the Holy Empire of Lubelius had announced the existence of a main force of Templar Knights as their defense force, consisting of knights who believed in Luminism. They numbered 10,000. They were, after all, the knights who protected the holy land, and were of a higher rank than those who had been dispatched to other countries. The combat ability of these knights was said to be at least B-plus rank at least. However...

I felt bad to say it, but for me, they were only so-so²⁷. They were strong in the category of human beings, but I could only see a future in which they would be kicked out in front of Dagruel. Of course, that depends on the strategy, but my character would not allow me to consider a soldier as a mere number. This was not a game, and we should aim for zero casualties. In that case, I wanted to have only the main force do the fighting, with the others assisting. I wanted them to fulfill their duty to protect the holy land as 'Barrier' maintenance personnel. Luminas seemed to see through my thinking.

"Only seven are the most promising. The demon lord's army that was entrusted to my shadows established a ruling system of seven great nobles with Roy—no, Louis, as the supreme king."

Ah, this was more impressive than I expected. I was surprised to hear that the Surmounter who was good friends with Vesta was one of those seven great nobles. By the way, Gunther-san, the butler of Luminas, had not been included among those seven names.

"Gunther here is also one of the disciples of the Divine Ancestor. In a way, he and I are like brother and sister."

"I am deeply honored by your words. I, myself, am far behind Luminas-sama."

²⁷Rimuru described them as "gojupphoyappo (五十歩百歩)" which is a shortened version of a Japanese idiom literally translating to "to laugh at a hundred steps after having gone fifty steps." It comes from a story where two people were running away, and the one who ran only 50 steps made fun of the person who went 100 steps even though they were both cowards who ran away. Basically, there's not much of a difference between them, so Rimuru is saying that the Templar Knights 'aren't that great' or are only 'so-so.'

Luminas introduced me to Gunther-san, who was preparing another cup of tea. I knew him well, and I had also thought that he was quite strong, but hearing about who he really was convinced me. He also told me that Louis was also a masterpiece of the Divine Ancestor. A masterpiece...I was a little skeptical about whether I could call it that or not. He created them, but they escaped and became wild and rampant. I heard that they caused a lot of damage until Luminas defeated them and brought them under control. Well, that was a long time ago, so I can't say anything about it now...but I've been told that it was one of the better incidents concerning the Divine Ancestor, so one could imagine how hard Luminas must've had to work.

Apparently the seven great nobles were descended from Louis. That's why, even for a demon lord's army, he was very proud. In any case, the strength of the Luminas forces had now been clarified. Now it was my turn to disclose the information just reported to me.

"According to the information from Ultima, Dagruel's force is called the Chained Titan Army²⁸ and consists of 30,000 Giant warriors. The average strength of the individual is about B-plus rank. Of course, the upper elites are all Over A rank, and it is said that there are nearly 1,000 such elite warriors alone."

"That's quite impressive" Luminas nodded at my report.

Luminas' statement here did not refer to the numerical difference between the 30,000 Chained Titan Army members and the 10,000 Templar Knight members, but only the numbers of the Over A rank warriors. It is not clear why Dagruel was even bringing lower ranked warriors, but what should be emphasized is that quality is more important than quantity. I could be sure of this, as our country had overturned a disadvantage of numbers many times before. So then, if we were to compare the quality...

Luminas' forces originally added up to 400 Bloody Knights, 300 Holy Knight Order members, and nearly 700 Over A rank members. Put that way, it would not have been too surprising to hear that the Dagruel side had nearly 1,000 members. However, since the Holy Knight Order was not present, there was no doubt that the Luminas side was at an overwhelming disadvantage. If the Luminas side was defeated and the sacred lands were destroyed, the Western Nations would surely collapse. Not only would the object of faith be lost, but the existence of the guardian would also disappear, and the Western Nations would be completely overrun in less than a month.

If Dagruel's only objective was the territory, the destruction might be less severe. However, the people living there would suffer, and there was no telling how they would be treated. At a time when our existence has been recognized, and we are about to join hands to create a prosperous and civilized society, being interfered with is out of the question. I would not allow anyone or anything to interfere with my self-indulgent life. Therefore, the defeat of the Luminas side had to be prevented. In that case, the real question is whether the current strength of the Luminas side is enough.

Dagruel's strength was unknown. It would be dangerous to underestimate him, seeing as

²⁸Was also called the "Binding Chain Titan" army in a previous translation.

how he was said to be strong enough to fight with Veldora in the past. Ciel-san seemed certain that I would win...but I wasn't sure if I would be fighting or not, since I didn't know what would happen in the future. I needed to be prepared for all kinds of situations. If he were to fight against Luminas, I wasn't sure who would win. Luminas also possesses the Ultimate Skill of the deadly sins series, so I don't think she would be defeated easily...but it's better to avoid a fight between leaders if at all possible. With me here, there was no need to worry about it, but one should be aware of the strength of the adjutants in this case.



Luminas and Dagruel are said to have the largest factions among demon lords, but their overall strength seemed almost equal. That is probably why Dagruel had not made any rash moves, but now that the situation had come to this, the strength of the lieutenants and executives would determine the winner. On the Luminas side, there were Gunther-san, Louis, and the seven nobles.

And of course, Dagruel had powerful beings on his side as well. Not to mention Dagruel's younger brothers such as Fenn and Glassord. I had heard that there were those who were considered to be equivalent to the Demon Lord Seeds, though still one step inferior to Million-class beings. They were the Five Warrior Generals, the strongest among the senior fighters of the Chained Titan Army. And the famous representative of this group was—

“It is troublesome that Fenn has returned. Dagruel will now revert to the ancient evil god, and Four Arms Basara will be awakened.”

—Yes, Four Arms Basara was the deputy commander of the Chained Titan Army. He was said to be as strong as the other deputy, Glassord, so he must be Million-class.

Still, there really were too many secret strongmen, considering those among the Luminas and Dagruel forces. I felt like questioning what the balance among demon lords really was, seeing how Karion and Frey were working under such a seemingly cute ferocious commander. When I unintentionally complained in exasperation, Luminas answered me nonchalantly.

“Isn’t it natural? After all, myself and the others have been demon lords since ancient times. We have taken in powerful people and expanded our power. To me, Karion and Frey were rather impressive as new demon lords.”

This was a very superior sounding comment. But in fact, the phrase “since ancient times” was very persuasive. After all, Luminas and Dagruel had been alive not within the span of one or two thousand years, but for thousands or even tens of thousands of years, if not more. She explained that even if one could reach the Demon Lord Seed within a hundred or two hundred years, it was very rare to reach the level of Million-class. When she told me that, I had no words to reply.

“In that sense, you are an anomaly! Just how many million-class members do you have

under your command? I would like to know what kind of trick you used to gather so many people in such a short period of time!!”

I was so surprised that my “Uh!?” was involuntary.

Asking me how it happened...I don't understand it either, so I can't give an answer even if you ask me. It seemed inconvenient for me to continue this conversation any further. So, I decided to ask Luminas about something that had been bothering me for a while, pushing that topic aside.

“By the way, you seem to know a lot about Dagruel's faction, but did you know about Fenn, Luminas?”

Luminas gave me an exasperated look, but still accepted my question.

“Nn? Of course. He was already sealed by the time I was born, but traces of the damage still remained. The Divine Ancestor used to tell me the story of those days with great pleasure. Besides, it is because of Fenn that the Divine Ancestor created the siblings Kisara and Basara.

Luminas said that Kisara and Basara were the founders of the Giants, whom the Divine Ancestor created based on Dagruel and the True Giants. Because they were born as twins, they were said to have quarreled over who was the older sister or the older brother, and their quarrels were so fierce that the damage was considerable at that time. Luminas' argued that ultimately, ‘the source of all the disasters could be traced back to the Divine Ancestor.’ The situation apparently calmed down when Kisara and Basara fought against Dagruel, lost, and then became his disciples.

“Indeed, poison was used to conquer poison, but it wasn't fun to see Dagruel's power grow.”

It seems that after that, the situation turned into a power struggle with Luminas. That situation changed when Dagruel and Kisara got married. It is often said that having a family settles things down, and apparently that was exactly the case. That peaceful period continued for a while, but it was nothing more than a period of preparation for the next war...peace and war repeated every hundred years or so according to the story. Well, I'm not interested in that kind of history, so I asked her to explain it in pieces.

Kisara, the wife of Dagruel, died in childbirth. Basara was very upset by the death of his twin sister, so they must have quarreled so much because they were that close. Well, I could only guess. A devastated Basara was put under house arrest by Dagruel. Apparently, he was forced into sleep, but Luminas said that he was almost certainly awakened. This was also mentioned in a report from Ultima.

«A long time ago, there was this troublesome brute known as Four Arms. I asked about how he was doing, but it seems that he has been locked up the whole time. The old man²⁹ said he would send him out if necessary.»

Because of that, it was almost certain that he would appear as an enemy this time. Since Ultima said that he was troublesome, he must be a big deal.

²⁹Ultima calls Dagruel “ojisan” which most commonly means “uncle” but can also mean “old man” or “mister.” You don't have to be someone's blood related uncle to be called that in Japan.

So, the group led by Basara is the Five Warrior Generals whose members are decided by an annual competition to test their skills. However, the average lifespan of giants is only about 500 years, so it seems that members were only selected from amongst the ancient titans—high-ranking fighters with a lifespan of more than 1,000 years. It is said that young giants sometimes reincarnate as their ancestors, and this had become an annual event of national pride in Damar-gania. Thus, the Five Warrior Generals might stand out, but they would not be as much of a threat as Basara, the leader of the group. I would definitely consider them lower in rank than the Beastketeers and the Two Wings. In other words, the Seven Great Nobles under Luminas were stronger.

Here is a summary of the forces on both sides.

First, the Luminas side—

Gunther and Louis are Million-class, and their existence value is a little over a million. The Seven Great Nobles are equivalent to Demon Lord Seeds, and their existence values range from 200,000 to 600,000. There appears to be individual differences among them. Additionally, there had been the Seven Luminary Clerics as a front force, but they had been wiped out due to a tragic incident. There was no time to replenish the champion class of the human race, so they would be reconstituted from the current Holy Knights in the future. Well, that's about it.

Next, the Dagruel side—

There are Glassord and Fenn, Dagruel's younger brothers. Glassord's existence value is said to be less than 2 million, and Fenn's is even higher than Dagruel's. They appear to be ridiculously strong. Basara, whom I mentioned earlier, is a little weaker than Glassord with a value a little higher than a million. He is almost on par with Gunther. The remaining Five Warrior Generals seem to be in the range of 150,000 to 300,000. Their threat level is not as high as that of the Beastketeers, but the problem is that there are other high-level fighters to deal with. The total number of those fighters is close to a hundred, with the minimum existence value over 100,000, and the maximum value close to 150,000. This was not surprising as replacements had to be made in the annual competition. However, the fact that there were nearly a hundred such strong participants was a threat that could not be ignored.

I believe that quality is better than quantity, but it's troublesome when the number of participants exceeds the minimum threshold. It would be easier if we could do a single blow finish³⁰ like Velgrynd-san, but I don't think Dagruel would allow that...

“It’s been a long time since I’ve felt threatened by numbers.”

“Well, I have always thought that I would be at a disadvantage in a full-scale war, despite being at ends for a long time now. I had made preparations accordingly, but unfortunately our strength was greatly reduced by some slime.”

“Wai—hey! That story is long over!”

Arguing with each other would not help to solve the problem. At this point, I would have

³⁰Another Japanese idiom being used here (lol, please stop for the sake of MTLs TT_TT). “Gaishū issoku (鎧袖一触)” literally translates to “one touch of the armored gauntlet” but is used to describe winning an easy victory, beating someone hands down/with a single blow.

no choice but to send out reinforcements from Tempest— Just when I was thinking about that, Shion joined the conversation with a big smile on her face.

“Fufufu, Rimuru-sama. Dagruel is nothing to be afraid of!”

Shion stood up. Then she called out to the other side of the door.

“You guys, come in.”

A group of nervous-looking men entered the room at Shion’s call. Hold on, these guys...

“It’s been a long time! I am Dagura!”

“I am Liura.”

“I’m Debura!”

I had left them with Shion and forgot about them, but they are Dagruel’s sons. I mean, I did actually have them in the back of my mind, but since I had suddenly become enemies with Dagruel, I hadn’t really thought about what to do with them...

“Yeah, it’s been a while. It’s good to see that you’re doing well, but are you guys aware of the current situation?”

If they wanted to go back to Dagruel, we should send them away without taking them prisoner. To tell the truth, they are stronger than Demon Lord Seeds individually, so it would be troublesome for them to become the enemy’s strength...but if we take them as prisoners, we would have to devote our forces to guard them, which could cause unnecessary confusion. Killing an unarmed opponent was out of the question, and I didn’t have any other good ideas. There was also a possibility of isolating them in Ramiris’ labyrinth, but that would increase the burden on Ramiris’ group, so it was safer not to do that. As I pondered this, I waited for a reply from the three of them. Then, I received an unexpected answer.

“Of course. Our father has switched sides, it’s so shameful.”

“We had also heard about Uncle Fenn from bedtime stories, but we never thought that he would be revived in this era.”

“Heheh, he was so diabolical, and he seems to have been on par with our father.”

Surprisingly, they were speaking as if on our side. So I decided to ask them.

“Uh, we’re going to war with your father, are you going to be okay?”

“Yes, we are. There are a few concerns, but rather than that, we’re more interested in testing how strong we have become now.”

“It’s just as elder brother said. We are trained by Shion-sama every day. Mental and physical training and good food. What’s more, we even have friends with whom we engage in friendly competition. Defeating those who try to destroy this environment must be the reason why we gained this power!

“Heheh, we’re all rather happy to be able to show off the results of our training. I’m going to use this power of mine as well and beat my uncle and the others to a pulp!!”

The three of them were all insisting in unison. They seemed to really mean what they said and were prepared to fight against Dagruel and the others. When I looked at Shion, she nodded her head with a look of satisfaction on her face, as if it was only natural.

“Uh...”

Well, what should we do? Is it really okay to send these three men off to war?

«I think there's no problem.»

As I was wondering what to do, Ciel-san answered without a moment's pause. But what about the possibility of their betrayal? I believed their words to be true, but if they were fake, it would put our allies in danger. Some of the others might even feel reluctant to fight alongside the sons of the enemy leader. However, Ciel-san's attitude was unwavering.

«I think that is highly unlikely. Because—»

I didn't even need to hear the answer. The door to the room opened and Shion's men rushed in. Then, a stern-faced older brother was the first to express his opinion to me.

“Rimuru-sama, we believe in Dagu-chi³¹ and the others!”

Huh, Gobzo...?

I almost mistook him for someone else because of the unusually fearless expression on his face. His appearance was the same, but his aura was different. And then there were his words about believing in Dagura and the others. Gobzo was not the only one. Shion's subordinates, the Yomigaeri, began to verbally defend Dagura and the others. It was proof that they sincerely believed in them. Or rather, perhaps they were worried that I was going to dispose of or confine Dagura and the others.

That's slightly disturbing. I'm a rational thinker, but it's not like I would have taken their lives out of the blue just because I was worried that they might become my enemies...

“Rimuru-sama! As you can see, our unity is solid. We are not trained to be soft, so we won't be shaken by the slightest thing!!”

Shion herself, perhaps feeling responsibility as the one in charge of Dagruel's sons, looked me straight in the eyes and advised me. That was enough for me, but then Luminas made a surprising statement.

“Rimuru, I must confess that even I have a desire to get rid of Dagruel's sons—”

‘No, I don't have any such feelings...’—is what I was about to say, but Luminas quickly continued.

“—But I think we can believe them.”

She was known to be on bad terms with Dagruel, so this was an unexpected defense. I asked her in detail how she had come to this conclusion. Then Luminas told me with a bitter look on her face.

“The improvement of Shion's cooking was only possible with their help.”

“And, what does that mean?”

“Who do you think tasted it? I disliked it, but there are curious people everywhere. One of the Seven Great Nobles foolishly came forward and had to spend a month in bed.”

³¹A cutesy nickname for Dagura. -chi is kind of like adding -chan to a name. Similar to how Elmesia calls Rimuru “Rimu-chi”

Apparently, he had thought it would be all right because the undead don't die, but he was wrong. That guy is an idiot...is what I thought, but I was hesitant to say it out loud. After all, wonderful inventions and discoveries are always made by those kinds of challengers. I think the first people to eat sea urchin and sea cucumber were amazing. They were said to have been forced to eat them as some kind of punishment, but in the end, those actions contributed tremendously to the future of gastronomy. In that sense, one could say that the noble had acted courageously. So, I nodded lightly and urged Luminas to continue.

"After that, no one wanted to taste the food, but those three were the ones who stepped forward. Everyone was so moved by their generosity, that even my subordinates had no choice but to acknowledge Dagura and the others."

I see, so that's how it was. It seems that behind Shion's culinary progress was a hidden story of unimaginable hardship. Incidentally, Adalmann had been famously quoted for saying, "I never thought I would be thankful for not being able to eat." Seriously, thank you everyone. I was truly thankful from the bottom of my heart.

"Well, if it means eating Sister's³² home-cooked meals, then I think we are the ones most suitable for the job."

"Big brother is correct."

"It's a reward!"

Yeah. These three are probably just crazy. But still, all is well if the result is good, and if Dagura and the others could avoid any discord, then they would be a force to be reckoned with.

"Then, myself or Luminas will take care of Dagruel, and Fenn will be left to Shion and the others."

"Hmph! I will deal with Dagruel. To be honest, it's a bit tough, but it will be easy enough just to buy time."

From Luminas perspective, she did not seem to think that she could beat Dagruel. In other words, from a strategic viewpoint, they should challenge and defeat all the enemy leaders in battle while Luminas is holding back Dagruel. In that case, if I were to be Fenn's opponent, we would have even more leeway in terms of strength.

"Okay, in that case—"

That's when it happened. Just as I was about to say the words "I think I see a way to win," the situation suddenly changed.



³²He refers to Shion as "Ane-san" which means "Elder sister/Big sis./Sister" However, it's not really used amongst actual siblings, and is instead often used amongst the yakuza or gangs towards their senior, meaning "madam" or "lady."

The news came via an emergency Telepathy Net from Ramiris.

〈Hey Rimuru, we're in trouble!〉

〈You know, you're always talking about troubling things are, but I'm going through a lot right now too, you know?〉

I tried to let it go lightly, but this time there really was trouble.

〈This is no time for jokes! You know, I've lost contact with Milim's forces. I ordered for it to be investigated immediately, but I have a really bad feeling about this!!〉

Ramiris spoke. Just a few minutes ago, Gobta and the others returned and reported that they had succeeded in defeating Zelanus. However, the problem happened right after that. Suddenly, the video monitoring the war situation stopped working. Fortunately, the portal remained connected to the site. Gobta and the others were urgently sent back to investigate the situation, and Ramiris being Ramiris, contacted me right away.

〈This is bad.〉

〈That's why I said so!〉

Good grief, this is truly what it means to have no time to relax. I don't think Milim has anything to do with it, but I do have an idea regarding the video interference.

«It must be Velzard.»

Ciel-san agrees with me. If so, then I can be sure with almost no doubts.

〈Tell Gobta and the others not to overdo it. I'll be back soon.〉

I told that to Ramiris and ended the conversation. Then, I turned to Luminas.

“Sorry. There’s been an emergency.”

“What’s going on?”

“Most likely, Milim and Velzard-san have gotten into a fight. I need to contact Guy, so I’m going to head back.”

When I told her that, Luminas nodded her head in agreement.

“Okay. We’ll be ready for Dagruel here, so don’t worry.”

“That’s right! Let’s just show them that we can defeat those giants on our own!!”

Luminas assuaged my fears by assuring me that everything would be fine. And even Shion assured me that they wouldn’t have any problems on their own. I couldn’t take their words at face value, but I felt like I could trust them for the time being until we worked out a countermeasure.

“Well then, I’m going back.”

“Yes, leave the rest to us!”

Oh, I just remembered. I should tell her about this possibility, too.

“Luminas, just to let you know, don’t be overconfident about the four-day grace period.”

The earliest that the Dagruel forces could expect to reach the area was four days. However, that was only if they maintained the current speed of march. There might be someone like me who can transport the whole army, so we needed to be cautious about that.

“Mm, that’s right. I had also considered that possibility. In fact, you yourself are able to do

so. It would be negligent of a commander to think that the enemy is unable to do what we can.”

Ah, I see that she understood me. In that case, I have nothing more to say. I could rush to their aid if the need arose, so it was time to deal with more important matters first.

“All right, take care.”

“You too.”

Luminas and I nodded to each other.

“Good luck, Rimuru-sama!”

With the support of Shion and the others, I returned to Tempest once again.



As soon as I returned, I went straight to the Control Room. And then, I was shocked to witness such an astonishing scene. Not good...

Really, really not good. On the image projected on the big screen, I saw Milim who was so furious, that she had lost her sense of reason. She had transformed into a strange form and was going on a rampage. Her opponent was Velzard.

She was a bewitching beauty with a smiling face, but she was not backing down from Milim, who had become a “destroyer” in the truest sense of the word. They were fighting each other evenly. Both of them. It was truly the return of the battle of the gods.

“What’s going on here?” I muttered to myself, and Ramiris answered without a pause.

“It’s a good thing that Gobta is filming!”

No, that’s not what I’m asking...

“I’m asking you what the situation is!”

“Ah, that’s right. As you can see, it’s the worst!”

Mhm, now I understand that Ramiris is completely useless. It was Benimaru who stood up from the luxurious commander’s seat and welcomed me, explaining to me as I let out a sigh of exasperation.

“We were all excited about the defeat of Zelanus, but suddenly we lost contact. I sent Gobta, who had just returned, to scout the area. It was confirmed that Velzard-sama and Milim-sama were in combat.”

Benimaru told me the story straight to the point. The battlefield was completely covered, a world of pure white ice with no signs of life. Ranga, who was with Gobta, had been trying to collect any scent particles using ‘wind manipulation’ in order to help us understand the situation. As it turned out, all the smells had disappeared. In other words, although the visual information showed that the people had turned into ice statues, it was safe to assume that the entire battlefield was in the same situation.

“I would have liked to check on the ice sculptures, but even with Gobta being protected by

Ranga, it was difficult, or rather, impossible to approach them.”

“Is it really that bad?”

“Yes. This video was also shot from the maximum possible approaching distance. Gobta whined about it, but I told him to be brave and do his best.”

In Benimaru’s case, I think he’s like a real demon, not just in spirit, although now is not the time to be speaking so casually. Carrera and her subordinates are still there, but I can’t get through to them with ‘Telepathy Net.’ We are supposed to be connected by the Soul Corridor. Everyone on the battlefield is either dead or alive. Indeed, this is certainly the worst possible situation. I didn’t want to think that Carrera and the others were dead. Besides, Karion and Frey-san must have been there as well. There were so many Million-class members there, it was unthinkable that they could all be wiped out in such a short period of time without being able to do anything. If there had been an emergency, we had all agreed to stall for time.

And yet, here we are. Although it wasn’t clear in the video, it looked like Milim had gone out of control. She seemed to be unleashing an abnormal level of power and having a big fight with Velzard... I wondered what could have caused that...

I can’t get the bad image out of my mind. However, being stuck in the moment would not solve anything. It’s no wonder Ramiris was completely overwhelmed, but I couldn’t let that happen to me either. The battlefield must be a hell of a mess. I made up my mind and changed my mindset. What should we do now?

There was no point in panicking. In such a situation, I should think about what I can do now. Keep my mind calm and collected. I should think of countermeasures one by one, and deal with them as best I can.

“All remaining members of the Dungeon’s Elite Ten are to be summoned. Gobta and the others should return as well, as it will be too dangerous.”

“But...”

“I don’t think the battle between Milim and Velzard-san will be settled that easily. At present, only Veldora and I are capable of dealing with a rampaging Milim, right?”

To be honest, I don’t like it either. I mean, if Milim really goes out of control, would anyone really be able to stop her? I heard that Ramiris interceded a long time ago when she clashed with Guy...but I can’t expect much from Ramiris nowadays. However, in the hope for that near-zero possibility—

“Hey Ramiris...just a question, but do you think you can bring Milim back to her senses while I’m holding Velzard-san back?”

“Hey! You, are you telling me to die!?”

I knew it. I was thinking this solution would be impossible, and I didn’t expect anything from the beginning, but now I had confirmation. For Ramiris, who had become a little kid, this was too much to handle.

“No, I was thinking it would be impossible. But I just didn’t expect them to come up with a plan to drive Milim out of control...” I muttered and let out a sigh.

While Benimaru and the others were busy gathering the executives, I had to think about our

next move. To be honest, I never expected this. It was bad enough to have a traitor among our own comrades, but to think that there was an even greater calamity waiting for us. No, I was well aware that it was an effective method, but I didn't expect things to end up this way...

«...If Milim really goes out of control, there is a possibility that the world will collapse. This is a forbidden strategy that does not concern friend or foe, and if they are willing to do this without any hesitation, we need to be prepared for a more serious situation.»

.....What does that mean?

«Unleashing the World-destroying Dragon Ivarage is the most likely scenario, but we should also be on the lookout for other dangerous means.»

In other words, anything goes, no rules. It's really the worst. Bringing a rampaging Milim back to her senses was already a difficult challenge on its own, let alone with Velzard-san interfering with it. I thought about asking Veldora for help, but as soon as Velzard-san's image appeared on the monitor, he suspiciously remembered something he had to do and ran away. That guy, he truly is unreliable when it matters most...

Well, it's the same for me, so I have no right to complain. If I could escape, I would run away as fast as possible.

However, this was no exaggeration, and could possibly lead to the destruction of mankind. To be honest, I felt troubled by it. Even if I alone survived, it would mean nothing. It was better to resist with all my might than to tolerate such a future. It's time to stop whining. I decided to switch my mindset to think seriously about the countermeasures from here on out.



Before the executives gathered, I had one more thing to do. That is, to summon a powerful helper.

←and so, I'm requesting immediate support.→

〈Understood, Rimuru-sama! Guy-sama seemed reluctant to do so, but please leave it to me, Raine, to negotiate the situation.〉

Yes, it was Guy whom I was trying to call. In all honesty, no matter how hard I try, it is impossible for me to deal with Velzard and Milim at the same time. You can't win a war with just mentality. I had no intention of entering a fight that I could not win, and if I had no choice but to do so, I would not spare any effort to improve my chances of winning.

And so, I tried to connect 'Telepathy Net' to Guy but was rejected. Did he get fed up after sensing the battle between Velzard and Milim? No, I don't think so. Unlike Veldora, Guy

understands what has to be done. In other words, he thinks that there is a more serious threat than this.

The fact that Ciel-san and Guy came to the same conclusion was depressing me. The problems just keep piling up. Even if I involve Guy and he can deal with Velzard-san, Milim will inevitably be left with me. Even though I could see the path up to that point, I had no plan beyond that, which was the cause of my uneasiness. I could just manage to fight. However...

It would be difficult for me to deal with Milim without affecting this planet, let alone the ground. Probably, it would be all I could do not to die. Well, even if I die, I can come back as long as Veldora is around, but if I retire, Guy's burden will increase, and then he'd be out of the game. No matter how strong Guy is, it would be impossible for him to fight against both of them at the same time. In the first place, the planet itself would likely be destroyed if he didn't deal with it well ...

It's dangerous no matter how you look at it. In addition to this, there was Feldway, Ivarage, and so on... Even though we had defeated Michael, it was just too many problems one after another. Now then, even if I really try to think of countermeasures, I can't help but fill my mind with unpleasant imaginations. While I was pondering this, I received a reply from Raine.

«Rimuru-sama, it's perfect! Guy-sama also heard my request—»

«Hey, Rimuru. Why are you using my Raine as your lackey?»

Uh!? Needless to say, it was Guy who interrupted the 'Telepathy Net' from Raine. He didn't seem to understand why Raine and I were getting along so well, but of course there was a reason for this. I had recognized Raine's talent as a painter and began to make various requests for my personal use.

Raine had responded to my requests with great pleasure, and now she had established herself as my personal painter. To be more specific, I became her patron and helped Raine's talent to flourish. As to how the relationship ended up like this...it happened after the meeting at Leon's castle—

After the meeting, I was also shown the paintings that had been confiscated from Diablo. As it turned out, the paintings that Raine had done were very beautiful. Just like a photograph...

Raine depicted a wide variety of expressions in her paintings simply by spreading the wings of her imagination without the use of models. Among them—that's right! There were nudes as well. As for me, I was obviously quite interested in them. From an artistic point of view, of course. The pursuit of beauty has no limits, and my desire for it knows no bounds.

I had no guilty feelings at all, but purely out of intellectual curiosity as a person who pursued beauty, I just happened to ask her a question. Raine, can you paint nudes without a model?—was the question.

Then Raine replied to my innocent inquiry. It's expensive, she said.

It wasn't a matter of whether she could do it or not, but a matter of expense. Discreetly, I held out the bag of gold coins. Raine quickly tucked it into her pocket without moving an eyebrow. On top of that, without losing her calm demeanor, she went on about how, "Gold coins are nonsense to a demon. However, I respect Rimuru-sama, so..." and so on and so forth.

I thought to myself.

This was only the beginning of an advanced level of psychological warfare. And so, I asked her “What is it that you want?” and pressed on.

«...it was not advanced at all, nor was anything even implied. Rather, it was a direct—»

W-Well, ignoring the outsider’s intrusion and proceeding with the discussion, Raine’s answer was as follows.

“I’m interested in points,” she appealed to me, looking at me with pure eyes.

From there, let’s just say that it was easy to win her over. I had numerous personal meetings with Raine. After that, I became her patron and began supporting her artistic endeavors. If Ciel-san had performed the memory save in my brain, I might not have been so enthusiastic about it. However, since it was not cooperative in the most crucial moments, I found my way through it with Raine’s paintings.

«...Tch.»

Hm? I thought I heard something like a click of the tongue, but... no, no, it must have been my imagination. I’m a little tired, so it must have been an auditory hallucination. Because I have no sense of remorse.

«I don’t understand why so many of them use nudity as a motif—»

N-no way, Ciel-san!? There’s no way that something Ciel-san doesn’t know about exists in this world. So it must just be my imagination! And with that, this story is over!!

Thus, the relationship between Raine and I became close, and now she was working for me as an outside collaborator. It was natural for Guy to be suspicious, but I didn’t owe him any explanations. That’s why, I responded to him with a firm voice.

«Now is not the time! This is an emergency, so come over here right now. As soon as possible!!»

With that said, I ended the ‘Telepathy Net’ with Guy.

The painting I asked Raine to do of Hinata has not yet been finished. I cannot allow this world to be destroyed before I see it. I vowed once again to do everything in my power to overcome this crisis.



Within five minutes of me giving the order to Benimaru, everyone had assembled. Benimaru

was standing tall as the commander—as for Diablo, he was participating with such poise that there wasn't even the faintest sign of fatigue from the previous day. Gobta, who had just been recalled from scouting because of the danger, was shivering in his seat. He could have rested, but he had a strong sense of responsibility. Speaking of which, Ranga had already retreated into my shadow. Even if it might be cheating, I thought he was cute in that way. I hoped he would take a good rest after the hardships he suffered.

On that note, Geld was in the emergency room with serious injuries. Although he was no longer seriously injured, he was so worn out that the recovery medicine could not keep up with his condition, so he was taken to the rarely used recreation facility. Gabil, who was accompanying Geld, was also hospitalized urgently upon Shuna's decision. Apparently, his condition had been worse than it looked, and it seems that he had been on the brink of death. The unexpected pitfall of recovery medicine was that it made one look healthier than they were because it removed injuries.

To a monster, magicules were equivalent to life force. If the magicules were exhausted, the monster could lose their life. For me, that was not a funny story, because I had been in such situations multiple times when Naming. I had to force Gabil, who was planning to attend the meeting, to take a rest. There was another seriously injured person.

Leon. Diablo had brought him to the medical facility, and he was in stable condition. Shuna reported that he would wake up soon. As one would expect from a former hero and a current demon lord, the recovery rate of his physical strength was quite fast.

I was hoping he would join the meeting when he woke up, but I couldn't force him to do so. Unfortunately, since we couldn't afford to wait for Leon's recovery, he would not be participating in the meeting this time.

The rest of the labyrinthine forces participating were Kumara, Zegion, and Apito. Adal-mann's group was participating in the defense of Lubelius with Shion, and Master Gadra had also joined them. Since the Dragon King team did not participate in such cases, everyone was here.

By the way, Hakuro was continuing his training as a bodyguard for the children. Sare and Grigori also remained in training. Sare seemed to be a head above the rest, while Grigori appeared to be a good match for the children. The reason why Hakuro was not invited was so as not to worry the children.

Chloe had come to my rescue under the false pretense of being sick, but now she was actually sick. That was one of the reasons why I was trying not to make Kenya and the others feel uneasy. In any case, I placed them in a safe hierarchy so that they could be safe even if enemies were to invade the labyrinth. But even so, I couldn't take any chances. In that sense, Kumara was going to join the children as soon as I finished leaving my message.

Besides, there was another reason. Momiji and Alvis had also taken refuge in this labyrinth. Kaede-san had also come to accompany them. She was the perfect person for the job, as she had experience in childbirth and was acquainted with pregnant women. Upon Kaede-san's strong request, Hakuro had been assigned to guard Benimaru's wives so that Benimaru could concen-

trate on the battle.

With this, all the members had now assembled, though I felt uneasy seeing as there were so few of us. It was no wonder as they were scattered all over the place, but with Carrera's safety still unknown, it was only natural to feel an unprecedented sense of crisis. In any case, I have to swallow such anxieties and behave myself with dignity just like Benimaru.

We decided to start the discussion in the conference room adjacent to the Control Room so that we could be notified immediately if something happened all while keeping a close watch on the situation. Or rather, this was not the time to be having a leisurely meeting, so I was going to formulate a strategy on my own. Unfortunately, the battle was still raging, and the earth was trembling.

Most likely, the Kingdom of Ingracia was also experiencing earthquakes. If this continued, it would cause damage not only on a continental scale, but also on a planetary scale. In order to prevent this from happening, I was going to ask for forgiveness for my selfishness this time.

The conclusion I had come to, that Guy and I would go out and do something about it, could only be described as a haphazard, reckless, and unplanned strategy. However, even my reliable partner Ciel-san couldn't come up with a better strategy, so I had no choice but to quietly give in.

"Everyone, thank you for gathering here." I greeted them and then went straight to the main topic.

"As for how to deal with Milim, I will go."

When I made that declaration, the room became tense. It was understandable. For the leader to make a move all on their own was essentially a bad plan. It was more common in my case, but it was still unusual for me to skip even a discussion in this way, so I guess everyone had their own opinions on the matter.

"Kufufufu... Well then, I will accompany Rimuru-sama..."

Diablo offered me that, but—

"No, you are certainly strong, but you can't hold back against Milim, can you? I'm sure a more suitable opponent will appear, so at that time, show me your skills to your heart's content."

—I refused it. No matter what anyone says, this was the decision. If we were going to fight against Milim or Velzard, hitting them with large numbers would only increase the casualties.

«...When it comes to an opponent of that level, there is no one we can count as a fighting force.»

Ciel-san was of the same opinion. Ciel-san assured me that Benimaru, Zegion, and even Diablo would be useless. It said that although it was only a possibility, the risk of death was very high. It might be possible if they were facing Milim with the intent to kill, but not if we were only trying to stop her. In that case, I had no choice but to do my best. Then, I called out to Guy who had come all this way.

"Sorry, but I'll be needing Guy's company."

“...Ah?”

Guy was staring at me, but I was not one to be intimidated by such things. Compared to facing this extremely dangerous arbitration all alone, it was much better to persuade Guy here.

“After all, Guy-san is the leader of the Octagram, right? As the newcomer here, I think there’s no choice but to ask my very reliable senior to go and help—”

The plan was to butter up Guy into good spirits and get him involved. It would increase the probability of success, so I’ll apologize in advance. Guy, however, interrupted me with a grim look on his face.

“You called me over here and now you want me to help you? You’ve got some nerve, you know that?”

“No, no, no, it’s because I’m a coward (chicken), so I want Guy to help me. It’s not a joke, I’m asking you seriously.”

Here, I bowed my head and asked Guy to help me so that he would understand how I truly felt. Seeing this, Guy’s attitude also shifted. Then, he began to speak to me in a serious tone.

“Do you understand? While I understand that you are worried about Milim and the others—”

Hmmm, it seems that Guy had come to the same conclusion as Ciel-san. Rather than mediating the battle between Milim and Velzard, I guess this was a matter of priority. The more I thought about it, the more depressing it became, but I just couldn’t shake the conclusion that we should be dealing with what we could for now.

“Are you talking about the possibility of Ivarage being unleashed? I’m certainly worried about that too, but if this world is destroyed before that happens, it will be the end either way.”

I said this to Guy, trying not to let his intimidation get the better of me, as if to show my resolve.

“...So, you noticed that.”

Guy said this in an uninterested manner and sat down silently. For the time being, he seems to have decided to wait for my reaction. Luckily, I decided to take advantage of this and proceed with my story.

“Actually, I don’t understand what Velzard’s purpose is. I don’t think that her intention was really to enrage Milim into a rampage.”

Making her lose control is a means to an end, so what does Velzard want to do beyond that? If we can understand that, there might be a way to do something about it, but...

Now is not the time to dwell on it. In order to save Carrera and the others, there is no choice but to put my worries behind me. As I was thinking about this, Guy muttered something to me.

“Most likely, Velzard wants to see me in earnest.”

“Huh?”

“She wants the same thing she’s always wanted. She wants to prove that she’s better than me in a serious fight.”

“Uh...?”

I wondered just what he was saying all of a sudden, and when I looked at Guy, I saw that

he had a very serious expression on his face. Apparently, it was a sincere statement.

‘That’s why I didn’t want to deal with it’—Guy looked uncomfortable

I can’t believe this world is about to be destroyed over this kind of a lover’s quarrel...

I was disgusted³³, but I couldn’t just leave it at that.

“Even if that’s true, this planet will be shattered if they keep on fighting. We have no choice but to stop it.”

“They’re trying to call us there, you know? Feldway’s plan will fail if we don’t go, so isn’t that the best thing to do?”

According to Guy, this planet could not be destroyed because it was created by Veldanava’s power. However, Milim’s power was still increasing, so if things were left as is, the planet would be contaminated by magicules. Even so, perhaps I should be grateful that the planet would not shatter.

Thinking about it, it was only natural to think that magic like Carrera’s should not be invoked on a planet. It was precisely because it was in this world that it had been able to withstand such a drastic power. Otherwise, the earth’s axis would have been distorted even if we were lucky. Guy’s argument made sense when he explained it like that.

If we joined in the battle, it would be just as Feldway intended, and we might even end up summoning Ivarage if we weren’t careful. I was convinced that Guy’s decision was correct if he wanted to avoid such a risk. However, even so...

I nodded involuntarily, but that option was long gone.

“Unfortunately, Carrera and the others have also been turned into ice sculptures, so I can’t just leave them alone.”

Carrera was not the only one. Frey-san, Karion, and the others who had been fighting there had to be rescued, or else we would never be able to live together in a world where we can all smile. That is why my determination would not waver.

“Tch, I get it. It can’t be helped, so I’ll go with you.”

Guy said this and stood up as if in exasperation.



“I think you’re aware, but if we get too serious, the area contaminated by magicules will increase. You have to be very careful, okay?”

Uh, that’s my line.

“You’re the one who’s already messed up once, so be careful.”

“That’s right! I can’t help you this time, so don’t do anything rash!”

³³The word is “akireta (呆れたが)” which means “disgusted” but can also mean “astonished” and “shocked.”

‘I’m worried about you guys being on your own—is what Ramiris said among other things, but it was an inexplicable feeling. But well, I’m not qualified to talk big either. It’s kind of funny to me that I have no plan so far, but it couldn’t be helped. Now was the time to be strong. Also, I had experienced similar situations many times before.

“So with that, Guy and I are the only ones who are going to stop Milim. I would like you all to defend the base (here) and respond to requests for help from other countries.”

I was only informing them of the decision this time, so some of them might be dissatisfied. However, this was the best solution that I had decided after consulting with Ciel-san.

“Rimuru-sama, after all, even if it’s just me accompanying—”

“Denied.”

I turned down Diablo’s proposal without hesitation.

If it’s Diablo, he would have been able to handle our fight. Even so, I turned him down because I wanted him to stay behind in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

“Reviving Ivarage doesn’t seem to be Feldway’s only goal. I think Dagruel’s attack on Luminas is also to get us to use our strength as a diversion. The only ones who can take care of things if I’m out of action are you, Benimaru, and Zegion.”

Diablo is a reliable guy, but that’s why I wanted him to stay. The enemy still had not just Feldway, but also the insect king Zelanus...

As long as the labyrinth remained safe, we would not be defeated in the truest sense of the word. Unless all three of them remained here, I would feel uneasy. Benimaru had the important role of commanding the team. Zegion was trusted as the guardian of the labyrinth. Benimaru’s command and Zegion’s strength, combined with the environment of the labyrinth, would surely be able to withstand an opponent like Zelanus. In addition, with Diablo’s uncanny ability to respond, I was inclined to believe that they would be able to cope even if the enemy launched an all-out attack on the labyrinth. Thus, I forced my way to convince the three of them. And Veldora, too.

“What about me?”

“Secret Weapon-san (Veldora) is truly the last line of defense.”

Veldora seemed to be dissatisfied with not being called by name, but he nodded his head in satisfaction after hearing what I said. I’ve said it many times, but as long as Veldora is safe, I can be revived. I don’t really want to try it, but there is a big difference between having insurance and not having insurance. I had suppressed the opposition with my own dogmatic and prejudiced opinion, so I decided to go out to battle immediately. The more time I spent, the less likely I was to decide, so I left the rest to Veldora.

“I’m counting on you, Veldora!”

“Mm, leave it to me.”

Seeing Veldora nodding his head, he gave off a reliable feeling. Ramiris jumped towards me.

“Rimuru, please help Milim!!”

“Yeah, leave it to me!”

To reassure the anxious Ramiris, I smiled and promised to bring Milim back to her senses. Half-hearted measures wouldn't work against the strongest demon lord Milim, so I hoped that my voice would reach her. If she could control her anger, she would naturally come to her senses. As a matter of fact, there was quite a bit of luck riding on all of this.

Guy holding Velzard at bay was a prerequisite. Then, we had to be prepared for a long battle while making adjustments to minimize the impact on the planet. It was an unprecedented act of recklessness. To begin with, facing Milim in a rampaging state while holding back is an act of suicide...

I assured Diablo that it was impossible, but even I was not so sure of myself. However, there was no choice but to do it.

"Benimaru, I'll leave the rest to you."

"Rest assured!"

I was glad Benimaru was here. We needed to be prepared for the requests from other countries, especially Lubelius which was in a war situation. There was no way to know what would happen next. The situation was changing every moment, and we would have to properly respond flexibly while distributing the remaining forces. Only Benimaru could be entrusted with such difficult adjustments. I nodded back at Benimaru.

Well then...

Just wait, Milim! Don't go on a huge rampage and cause any more damage!

Let's wake Milim up before it's too late. With everyone's anxious gazes upon us, and carrying too many expectations, Guy and I left the scene.



After Rimuru and Guy left, there was a heavy atmosphere in the conference room.

"This is the first time I've ever felt so impotent." Diablo muttered.

Those words represented the sentiments of everyone present.

"That's for sure. I was told that I had an important role to play in analyzing the war situation and taking command, but I would have been happy to serve as Rimuru-sama's escort, even if it meant throwing that all away."

Benimaru also spoke honestly. He could not strongly oppose Rimuru's decision because he thought it was the right choice, but in all honesty, Rimuru was more important to him than his comrades. This time had been different than usual.

Rimuru, who was always so easy-going, had been unusually nervous. He seemed to have been hiding it so as not to make everyone uneasy, but it was obvious to Benimaru, who had known him for a long time. Just that was enough to infer how bad the situation was.

“I never intended to, but I guess I was still being coddled by Rimuru-sama...”

“Yes. If that is what Rimuru-sama wishes, then I have no choice but to comply, though it is vexing that I cannot be trusted to hold myself back³⁴. ”

“That’s not the only reason though. Feldway, Jahil, and Demon Lord Dagruel...there are many enemies to be wary of and it’s difficult to say that our forces are sufficient. That’s why he decided it would be better to let you help us.”

Benimaru had seen through Rimuru’s thinking almost exactly. The two had known each other for a long time. It was only natural that he could do that much. That’s why he was feeling even more disappointed at his own worthlessness.

“Lamenting won’t do anything. The only thing we can do is simply fulfill the tasks we have been assigned with sincerity.” Zegion concluded.

Zegion also understood the importance of the labyrinth. That is why he warned everyone not to allow unnecessary anxiety to interfere with their original mission. Thus, Zegion and his group returned to their territory in order to perfectly prepare for an enemy attack at any time. Benimaru smiled wryly at Zegion’s attitude.

“Hmph, Zegion is right. Each of you, stay sharp and be prepared for the mission!”

In order to fulfill the responsibilities of those entrusted to him by Rimuru, he encouraged everyone to resume their duties.

Ramiris and her subordinates were busily moving about without hesitation. There was a lot to do. Being busy could also distract them from their anxiety. In the meantime, the usual atmosphere of the Control Room had returned...but the normalcy they had regained faded away upon Souei’s return.

“So, you’re back, Souei.”

“Ah. Where is Rimuru-sama?”

“A serious situation has occurred. He’s on his way to deal with it.”

“Tsk, needing to depend on him again...”

While thinking ‘that’s for sure’ to himself, Benimaru asked.

“So then, you seem to be in a hurry, is something wrong?”

Souei regained his composure and began to report.

“I’ve been investigating the movements of Dagruel’s people under orders from Rimuru-sama—”

After this preface, he described the results of his investigation in detail. Within the Holy Void Damargania was a place of refuge, an underground city buried in the desert. When the once prosperous royal capital was destroyed, the city abandoned the surface and developed a huge underground space centering on an underground lake, and as a result, a living space supporting the lives of tens of thousands of people was created. The women and children of the Giants

³⁴Hold himself back as in to “pull his punches” or “take it easy (on Milim).” The word used is “tekagen (手加減)” which means to go easy on someone, take situational peculiarities into consideration, make rough estimates, and make allowances for things.

seemed to be leading their lives as usual there.

Souei saw that they had not been affected by Dagruel's change. Relieved, he set out to investigate the cause of Dagruel's betrayal. Souei headed to the royal palace. There were only a few soldiers left, but the administrators were working as usual. They did not know about Dagruel's change of mind and treated Souei as an emissary from an allied country. After listening to them, Souei was able to pinpoint the cause of this betrayal. Although there was no guarantee that he was right, he decided to return to give the report for the time being, as he had no other information to go on.

“—I see. Including the sealed brother, the three brothers were once a single Titan, an evil god who rampaged as a destroyer of the world.”

“That's right. He reformed after being defeated by Veldanava-sama, and after meeting Queen Kisara, he became as calm as he is now...”

“Even if it's a myth, it shouldn't be brushed aside as nonsense. We should consider it to be based upon some degree of truth.”

“Ah, I think so too. If so, that means...”

“We have to be wary of the resurrection of an evil god...”

Benimaru and Souei nodded their heads in agreement. Those who had been listening to their conversation were also looking at this with serious expressions.

“Hmm, well it's certainly possible. Dagruel is an incarnation of naturally occurring power, and he fought against Veldanava a long time ago.”

The fact that Ramiris even mentioned such a thing had increased the importance of this reasoning.

“By the way, how strong was this evil god?” Benimaru asked Ramiris.

“He was very strong. Not as strong as me, but I think he was stronger than Master back then.”

“Hm?”

“Of course, Master is stronger now!!”

Ramiris hurriedly appeased Veldora, who was unhappy at being told that she was stronger than him. Whether or not all this was true was not clear, but at the very least, everyone understood that the evil god was a threat equivalent to a True Dragon.



Sometimes bad news follows like a string of bad luck. The news came from Myourmiles.

“This is serious! I just received an urgent message from Sister, no, Her Majesty Elmesia, that Sarion has entered into a state of war!”

He rushed into the Control Room and shouted this.

“What did you say!?”

Benimaru responded and asked him to explain in detail. Myourmiles answered that he had received a call through his cell phone. There were several ways to communicate between Tempest and the Sorcerer’s Dynasty of Sarion, but Elmesia seemed to have decided that a direct line was the most reliable. Myourmiles also sensed this and rushed over while conversing with her.

Myourmiles was out of breath but got right to the point. The two who attacked Sarion were Zalario and Jahil. They led the main force and launched a powerful assault.

“So it was not a diversion, but a full-scale offensive?”

“I’m afraid so.”

“Sarion has Silvia-dono, but it’s still severe...”

Benimaru growled as he grasped the situation. Silvia was indeed strong. Even if Benimaru were to fight against her, it would be a pretty good match. However, Silvia’s opponent was Jahil, whom even Benimaru had struggled against. There is always a certain level of compatibility in a fight, but with the powerful Zalario in addition to Jahil, Silvia alone would not be able to do anything.

“Surveillance Magic’ ‘Argus’ has successfully switched over. Local footage is here!!”

With quick resourcefulness, Alpha projected the situation of Sarion on the big screen. The projection showed a towering tree from the age of the gods, capable of embracing the huge city. The pride of Sarion—the Sacred Tree. Here and there, flashes of light were twinkling on its trunk and branches. The flashes on the monitor looked small and ephemeral like sparklers, but judging by scale, the images suggested that they were gigantic explosions.

“Jahil’s fire. This must be serious.”

“What should we do, Benimaru?”

When asked by Souei, Benimaru looked in anguish. If they didn’t send their forces here, Sarion would fall. However, there was no one who could be sent out. A half-hearted force would be nothing more than a drop in the bucket, and if they were to send a force, they needed to generate one that would ensure victory. Inside the labyrinth, they could carry out suicide missions without worrying about death, so even if they could not win the battle, they could easily stall for time. However, when it came to dispatching a force...

“I guess I’ll have to go.”

Benimaru, Diablo, and Zegion. Even with these three, victory against Jahil and the others wasn’t certain. As for the others in their group, sending them out would be like heading out to die.

“Shall I go?” Diablo offered, but Benimaru refused. He was not sure why, but he had a bad feeling about it.

“No, I fought Jahil once before. I was no match for him back then, but now I have a chance.”

Benimaru had been training hard in the labyrinth in order to reassess his own abilities. Although there was no visible change such as a large increase in the magicle count, his ability had certainly improved. Even so, there was no guarantee that he could win against Jahil, but in

order to blow away everyone's fears, he spoke boldly and showed his confidence.

"Hm."

Diablo also refrained from objecting to that statement, taking Benimaru's intention into consideration. Benimaru continued, thanking Diablo with a glance.

"Besides, if this is a diversion, it would be risky to further devote our labyrinthine forces, which is the main part of our defense. My intuition is telling me that it's better for you to stay here."

"I see. If Benimaru-dono says as much, then I will comply."

Benimaru is the man whom Rimuru entrusted with the command. In terms of the chain of command, he was above Diablo. He understood that and did not intend to oppose him. That did not mean Diablo was against telling him what he thought.

"—However, Zalario is strong, isn't he?"

Benimaru was wary of Jahil, but Diablo believed that Zalario was more of a nuisance.

"That man is a true warrior. Putting aside his magicle count, his level of skill is quite high."

Despite this being pointed out, Benimaru's decision did not waver. No, rather he was still feeling troubled, but he swallowed it down without showing it.

"I'm leaving. It's decided."

"Hmph, you're copying Rimuru-sama, aren't you? But even so, how are you going to take command?"

"I can do that on the go." Benimaru said.

He was aware that this was quite reckless, but he still intended to push through with his opinion. Veldora called out to Benimaru.

"Benimaru, have you forgotten about me? If it's me, I can defeat even a small thing like Jahil or Zalario with a single twist, can't I?"

Veldora's confident statement once again shook Benimaru's resolve. Now that Rimuru had defeated Michael, Feldway had less reason to target Veldora. His knowledge as a commander was urging him to make effective use of his forces rather than to conserve their maximum strength in the depths of the labyrinth. At the same time, however, Benimaru's instinct, something that might be called a wild intuition, was telling him that this was a bad idea. Therefore, Benimaru immediately rejected the idea without showing any sort of turmoil on his face.

"It is true that Jahil is no match for Veldora-sama. However..."

"Mm? What is your concern?"

When asked this question, Benimaru laughed. He had a lot of concerns. That was the reason why he could not send out Veldora, their strongest force, against Jahil.

"What I am worried about is the evil god we talked about earlier. I've heard that Demon Lord Dagruel was even brawling buddies with Veldora-sama. In addition, there is a giant named Fenn, the brother of Dagruel, who is said to have been sealed up since ancient times. They were almost evenly matched, weren't they?"

Diablo nodded at Benimaru's questioning glance.

“I didn’t see them fighting, but from a distance, I felt that Fenn was the better fighter.”

“That’s right. Ultima reported it, so he must be a threat. If that’s the case. Even with Demon Lord Luminas, I doubt if Shion and Adalmann and the others will be able to win the battle.”

Dagruel and Fenn, both of them should be considered as beings comparable to a True Dragon. On top of that, Glassord was also not to be ignored. Since it was said that he had been fighting on equal footing with Demon Lord Leon, he should be considered difficult to defeat. Furthermore, the giants had another powerful opponent in their ranks who had yet to be seen. Under such circumstances, if the evil god were to be resurrected...

It was all just a possibility. However, Benimaru could not shake off his uneasiness.

“But there is still time before they reach Lubelius, right? If I go there and quickly clean up the mess—”

“No, that is just wishful thinking. Just as Rimuru-sama has a secret technique to transfer an army, we should act on the assumption that our enemies can do the same.”

Rimuru had also advised him to think of a profitable strategy to gain some time. Benimaru agreed with this opinion, and never let his guard down. And then—

Benimaru felt a tingling sensation on his neck. It was his instinct telling him to be on the lookout for danger. He was almost certain that something would happen in Lubelius, though he had no proof of it.

“Therefore, I hope that Veldora-sama will be prepared for any emergency.”

Rimuru always said that Veldora was a secret weapon, and Benimaru felt the same way. It was always better to play your trump card at the last minute. If you were in a situation where you had to play that trump card, it was as if you were proving that the worst had happened. And if the unexpected happened, it would mean the defeat of your own camp.

“All right. Since I am here, go out there and play an active role to your heart’s content!!”

“Kufufufu, I didn’t expect Benimaru-dono to go there by himself. Please leave this matter to me. However, I only ask that you take command.”

Diablo also agreed to send Benimaru out. Thus, Benimaru’s departure was decided.



Benimaru would have to take some other people with him when he left. Jahil and Zalaro were confirmed enemies, but there was still the possibility that other strong opponents would appear. In such a situation, the defender was at the disadvantage because they had to be prepared to deal with whatever forces may attack them.

“I’m going with you.”

Souei was the first to come forward. Benimaru did not oppose this, and it was decided that Souei would accompany them without any hesitation. Souei’s abilities were ideal for toying with

the enemy. He was more versatile than his numerical strength suggested, so he could expect to achieve great results in the battle. But then came the problem.

The Kurenai was too exhausted to be dispatched with him. The same went for Gobta and Ranga. Ranga, who had been transferred from Rimuru's shadow to Gobta's shadow, was also in a deep sleep to recover his lost strength. Gobta was relatively healthy though...

"Why not just take Gobta with you?"

"I don't want to die yet!"

Well, everyone agreed that they would not participate. There was a plan to ask the labyrinthine forces to join, but Benimaru rejected the idea, saying that it would be better to have them play an active role in the labyrinth rather than to take them out to an unfamiliar place. In this situation, there was no choice but to participate in the battle with just the two of them.

"It can't be helped. Well, with the compatibility between Souei and myself, at worst we won't die."

"That's true. There's also Silvia-dono and Her Majesty Elmesia over there. If we cooperate well, we should put up a good fight." Souei also agreed with Benimaru.

The video surveillance of Sarion showed Elmesia as well.

"Sister, so you can fight—or rather, I was surprised to see how strong she is..."

Myourmiles said as such, but in fact, everyone was just as surprised and accepted the fact. Silvia and Elmesia were almost indistinguishable from each other, and surprisingly, their fighting abilities were not so different. The only difference was that Silvia used "thunder" and Elmesia used "wind." In any case, it was a happy miscalculation for Benimaru and his team to find out that they had another unexpected force on their side. This had slightly increased their chances of winning. Therefore, Benimaru and his group were not pessimistic and decided to set out alone. But then—

Beta, who was checking the images of various locations, shouted in a stifled voice

"Urgent report! Milim-sama and Velzard-sama, who are in battle, have started to move. If they continue in that direction, they will hit the Sacred Tree that protects Sarion!!"

Upon hearing this, everyone's eyes focused on the big screen. The red dot on the screen was Milim and the blue one was Velzard. They were moving at a frightening pace, as if intertwining with each other. Beta was right, at this rate they would reach Sarion.

"What's going on? Did Rimuru and the others do something?"

Veldora asked a question. But no one answered.

"Getting caught up in a battle like that means being reduced to ashes no matter where you are." Benimaru muttered, looking pallid.

"Perhaps that is what Feldway is trying to do."

In old Eurazania, Velzard's snowstorm had frozen everything in ice. As a result, fortunately or unfortunately, the damage itself had been minimized. It would be meaningless if Velzard did not lift the ice, but still, hope remained because it had not been completely lost. However, that was not necessarily the case from here on out. Any city would be vaporized in an instant by a direct hit from Milim, who had lost all rationality...

And it was not only Sarion that was in danger.

“Is he planning to let the world perish at Milim-sama’s hands?”

“I can’t say for certain, but he is crazy, so it is a possibility.”

Diablo calmly answered Benimaru’s question. If Feldway’s intention was truly to spread death and destruction, it could be possible that he was trying to summon Ivarage by using this as a trigger. Diablo pointed out this possibility. Benimaru also thought it was possible. If Diablo was calling him crazy, he must be that much more dangerous. With that kind of a person, there was no way to tell what he was thinking. Either way, at this rate, Sarion would disappear. Where would they target after that?

The Western Nations, or was it the Golden Land El Dorado? There was also the possibility that they would pass through all the cities and head straight for the labyrinth. They did not have enough information. In other words, no matter how much he thought about it, there was no answer to the question.

“This is not the time for idle chatter.” Benimaru said as such and stood up.

Rimuru was also there. If Diablo’s assumption was correct, he was probably trying desperately to stop it by now. In that case, Benimaru should be taking action instead of worrying about it. Benimaru was not averse to going with his guts³⁵. He had an overconfident side that often gave him the belief that he could do things as long as he tried. However, this was only for himself, and it went against his principles to involve others with it.

“Sorry, Souei.”

“Don’t worry about it.”

That conversation was enough. With that alone, their minds were prepared to march out to the frontlines of death when—

“I’ll go too.”

—Demon Lord Leon, who had slipped out of the sickroom and had been there for some time, announced that he was going to join the battle. And furthermore...

“I will accompany you. I have an unspeakable grudge against Jahil.”

Even Kagali had come to the Control Room, a determined expression on her face. Teare was right behind her.

“I have to beat up that son of a bitch and free Footman! I’ll do my best!!”

She declared that with tears in her eyes. Benimaru had no reason to refuse.

“I will not hesitate. I gratefully accept your offer.”

Thus, the participants had been decided. With this, the missing piece was now in place.



³⁵The word “konjōron (根性論)” which MTL’d as “theory of guts” can be described as “the belief that where there’s a will, there’s way.” Persevering with your guts and beliefs.

Even after Benimaru and the others had left, the Control Room was still in a flurry of activity. Information was being gathered from all over the world and delivered to Benimaru.

‘I don’t want anything more to happen.’ This was the common wish of all the busy workers. They were all praying for everyone’s safe return. However, even such a modest hope was then shattered.

“An urgent message from Adalmann-sama!! He says that they have come into contact with the Titan army at the Long Wall in the desert!!”

Benimaru’s prediction had come true in the worst possible way. Without mercy, the great battle had begun.

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

**Chapter
3**

Quake of the Titans

Chapter 3

Quake of the Titans

At the boundary between the Barren Lands and the Western Nations, there is a long structure called the Long Wall.

It is said to have been built by the work of the god Luminas in order to protect civilization from the hot sands known as the Desert of Death.

This Long Wall is considered sacred because it is protected by a special ‘Barrier.’ That is, the ‘monster intrusion prevention barrier.’

As the name suggested, its purpose was to prevent the intrusion of monsters.

It was common knowledge for those who lived in the frontier that this ‘Barrier’ was a zone of protection for the human existence. The ‘Barrier’ was activated to protect the Long Wall, preventing the invasion of monsters coming from the Desert of Death.

The principle was simple: by inhibiting the accumulation of magicules, its purpose was to prevent giant monsters from appearing. At the same time, it had the property of repelling magicules, so that more powerful monsters would not be attracted to it.

Of course, this was not a universal solution, and monsters sometimes invaded through the frayed edges of the barriers. However, since there were desert people who hunted monsters for a living, this had never been a major problem.

This Long Wall was considered to be the front line of the battle against monsters and was included in the patrol routes of the Holy Knight Order.

Through these regular patrols, the cracks in the barriers have been found and repaired. That work also included defeating invading monsters, thus protecting the lives of the people on the frontier.

These facts have been accumulated, and the belief in the god Luminas was thus enhanced. At the same time, the myth of the safety of the Long Wall was firmly unshakable. However, today...

After 2,000 years, the Long Wall would be revealed in its true form.

At the top of the Long Wall, there was a skeleton wearing sacred vestments.

It was Adalmann.

A few moments ago, a distortion of space had been detected. Immediately after that, a large-scale teleportation revealed an army of giants.

“Oh, just as my god predicted, the enemy has teleported.”

Far from being flustered, Adalmann was murmuring happily.

He was more excited than threatened by the fact that Rimuru’s prediction had come true.

Still, he did not forget his duty in his excitement. He finished the ‘Telepathy Net’ to his home country and then switched his attention to the battle in earnest.

On the other hand, the giants who had transferred to the new location were convinced that their surprise attack had succeeded. They believed that the enemy would be in a panic since they had all moved several days’ worth of travel with Mai’s ability.

Dagruel’s group had deliberately shown their march to catch Luminas off guard. The enemy must have seen this and taken countermeasures, predicting that they would not be fully prepared to intercept them.

But in fact, that was not the case.

As of yesterday, it was not something to be panicked about, and a defensive posture had been constructed to be able to respond to the situation without sleep or rest.

The majesty of the Chained Titan Army was still clear even though they were far away.

More than their numbers, their quality was overwhelming.

Each of them was a huge mass of muscles.

Various kinds of giants such as giant ogres, cyclops, and multi-armed giants (hecatoncheires³⁶) were approaching them in packs.

Adalmann laughed at the sight of Dagruel’s army as they emerged.

“Well, what a spectacular sight. This might be a bit of a challenge for my little skeletons.”

“A bit, huh?”

Adalmann was answered by a beautiful purple-haired woman standing next to him. It was Shion, looking great in her suit.

“To tell you the truth, it will be a little...it will be difficult, but we’ll make it work.”

Adalmann hated to lose, so he never complained before battle. It was even or so because his army was immortal and could easily be revived.

“Hoh...what’s your plan?”

Shion questioned the reason for Adalmann’s confident attitude.

“Hm, I can’t say that it’s much of a plan, but Albert’s command is quite good. Moreover, please take a closer look. Behold the line-up of my army!”

Adalmann said as such and then pointed to his subordinates—the Immortal Legion was all lined up in order.

“How is it? The equipment bestowed by my god has even reached the Bone Soldiers!!”

Shion understood after being told. In short, this guy (Adalmann) just wanted to show off.

³⁶In Greek mythology, hecatoncheires (or ‘hundred-handers’) were three enormous giants with fifty heads and one hundred arms each.

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Adalmann was leading the immortal monsters he had summoned himself.

It was a spectacular sight to see such immortal monsters perfectly lined up inside the Long Wall.

The main force was led by two thousand death knights.

The death knights, led by the death lord, were the immortal knights who rode on death horses. They were equipped with full-body magisteel chainmail armor, magimail, that gave off a faint glow. Needless to say, it was the best quality armor of the dwarf factory made in Tempest.

Although not produced by Garm himself, it was a high-class product made by his disciples, who lavishly used high-purity magisteel. The performance was guaranteed, and the product blended well with the mana of the death knights.

Since their defensive and offensive capabilities had been dramatically improved, they were more dangerous than their original A-minus rank. Now, they were as close to A rank as possible and had become strong enough to live up to their name as a main force.

And that's not all.

In addition to the main force, there were other hidden gems.

Deployed on the Long Wall were lower-ranking monsters that lacked direct offensive power.

The total number of them was 50,000.

- 10,000 Zombie Soldiers.
- 20,000 Bone Soldiers.
- 10,000 Bone Archers.
- 10,000 Bone Knights.

Looking only at the numbers, it was an overwhelming fighting force.

Of course, they were weak individuals with an average strength of about D rank, so they would be of little use even if they were operated as they were. However, what was noteworthy here was the equipment of the monsters.

Adalmann was proud of it; the latest weapons, which were manufactured at full capacity in the monster nation factories, were being used generously in battle.

The armor was standardized, so although the colors differed according to ranks, the uniforms of Tempest were identical in performance. The uniforms had a reasonable level of protection, and were even provided with fire-resistance, cold-resistance, and so on.

The most notable feature of the Bone Archers were the portable non-recoil missile launchers on their backs. The missile projectiles, which were launched at five times the speed of sound, contained not only explosives, but also compressed mana.

The Bone Archers were carried by Bone Soldiers, who were trained to support each Bone Archers with two Bone Soldiers. Thus, as many as 10,000 mobile artillery batteries were born.

However, the number of bullets was not that large. The total number of rounds was 50,000,

including one round loaded from the beginning and two rounds carried by each soldier.

Next, the Zombie Soldiers were all carrying automatic rifles (assault rifles). Although those were gunpowder weapons with no mana, their destructive power was not to be underestimated. They would not be effective against enemies with physical resistance, but they were expected to have good results against lower-ranked giants.

Although the manufacturing method had been researched and established, the production of these firearms had been prohibited upon Rimuru's decision. However, only this time, the experimental operation had been permitted under the condition that the serial number and the tracking magic were stamped on them.

Or rather, the documents had come to Rimuru in the middle of a busy day, and he had stamped his seal without checking it carefully, so only Ciel was aware. Rimuru himself was unaware of such a situation, but it was probably lucky that Adalmann did not know about it.

And this was not the only secret weapon.

Finally, there was the equipment of the Bone Knights.

Amazingly enough, they were all equipped with Imperial magic sabers. They even had spell guns hanging from their waists.

Equipped with armaments salvaged from the imperial soldiers, the sabers had greatly increased their offensive power while ignoring their defensive power.

It was extreme, but Adalmann decided that if he could incorporate suicide attack tactics into his immortal soldiers who did not fear death, then actual ability would be irrelevant.

This was the essence of the Immortal Legion.

An army of immortals, who did not require food or sleep, was assigned as the first force to intercept.

To make things even more troubling, these immortals all had their abilities increased under Adalmann's control. In addition, the 'Holy-Demonic Reversal' ability of the Ultimate Gift 'Necronomicon' changed their attributes, so they were no longer affected by the 'monster intrusion prevention barrier' that stretched along the Long Wall, and they could work in the daytime without any problems.

Unlike in the labyrinth, the dead could not be resurrected once destroyed...but because holy magic would not work, it was advantageous that they would not be purified by means such as 'Purification of the Dead: Turn Undead.'

Only those who had fought against them could understand just how terrifying the undead were now that they had become holy beings. Since they could not be killed by conventional attacks, the only way to stop them was to destroy them.

Now that very Immortal Legion had been deployed to intercept the enemy by making good use of the Long Wall.

The Long Wall was arranged in such a way that one could see everything in a panoramic view from the top, which was more than five meters high, making it easy for snipers to shoot at the enemy.

In fact, the original function of the Long Wall that Luminas had built was precisely to serve

as a defensive facility to thwart Dagruel's territorial ambitions. The appearance of such weapons was unforeseen, and the vampires were initially supposed to intercept them with their magic, but since they were able to secure the advantage in this way, the details were not important.

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Shion's eyes narrowed at the sight of Adalmann's prided subordinates.

Shion had honestly thought that it would be meaningless to have as many skeletons as possible.

However, she changed her mind the moment she saw the equipment.

No, what she was more concerned about was—

“Hey, Adalmann...I want to ask, how did you get all of that equipment?”

The equipment for subordinates was provided by their superiors. That was the common understanding among the corps commanders and executives.

Of course, if you applied for and received permission, your equipment would be distributed to you. However, that was a waiting list, and no one, not even the leaders, was allowed to skip out on that process.

In the workshop of Tempest, the Second Corps led by Geld was given priority. Since this was directly related to national defense, no one had complained about it.

Although all of them had been equipped recently, the large number of equipment made it difficult to do maintenance. Since they were made of magical steel, most of them could self-repair, but it was still true that most of the equipment reservations were filled by the Second Corps.

The next spot was for commercial use for adventurers.

Since the purpose of this business was a national policy to earn foreign currency, Shion could not interfere.

Therefore, waiting for free equipment took too much time.

In the midst of all this, there were many roughnecks enrolled in the Yomigaeri who spent every day in training.

That in itself was commendable, but it was not productive.

Some people might think that this was not a problem as they were professional soldiers, but since they often broke their equipment or tore their uniforms, they often used the repair workshop with a consistent frequency.

Of course, free of charge.

Therefore, Shion had received many complaints.

Under such circumstances, it was impossible to apply for new equipment, and the official equipment of the Yomigaeri was still in its initial state.

Even then, they were given only to the executives and early members, and not to the newcomers who had recently joined the group.

For those newcomers, apprentice craftsmen had given them the equipment they had made

for practice, and they had equipped them diligently...but the appearance was not consistent, and bandanas and armbands had to be used to emphasize the purple color to somehow keep up appearances.

Shion, who had no choice but to ask Rimuru for new equipment again, was filled with a sense of wonder as to how Adalmann, a newcomer to the group, was getting new equipment.

Adalmann answered this question with a smile.

“Well, it’s a simple story. I have been stealing cheap equipment worn by adventurers, crushing them, and using the money I get from them to buy iron ore directly. I also have contacts with merchants, so I make use of them as well.”

“No, wait. Do challengers even come to the level that you’re guarding?”

Shion was right to be skeptical.

Adalmann’s guardianship zone was from levels 61 to 70, meaning that something was being done behind the scenes.

“Hahaha! As for that, I had my men sent on missions to the location. It’s also good for training, so it kills two birds with one stone.”

Adalmann had been dispatching his subordinate monsters to the upper floors to make a lot of money. In the spirit of the “it’s all good as long as you don’t get caught” mentality, a rather absurd practice had gone unchecked.

“Yes, yes, I was very pleased to see that so many of the imperial soldiers had good equipment. But even so, the most rewarding thing was the defeat of the iron golem.”

Shion was convinced by Adalmann’s cheerful voice.

Not only was he playing with adventurers in the labyrinth, but he had also been diligently collecting materials.

The terrain of the 51st to 60th levels was rocky and sometimes golem monsters appeared. Among them, iron golems were rich in high-quality iron. If such monsters were defeated and stored in the labyrinth, high-quality magical steel would be produced before long.

Defeating iron golems was not only a good way to train for combat, but also to collect materials. It killed two birds with one stone, and Shion couldn’t help but groan when she caught a glimpse of Adalmann’s abundant financial resources. Or rather—

Huh? Could it be that this guy is making more money than me!? Shion suddenly realized.

There was a possibility that the other Guardians were also participating in other financial schemes. On the flip side, was Shion herself. Originally, she had no attachment to money. In her home village of ogres, the blood and knowledge of otherworlders was inherited. Therefore, she understood the concept of economics itself, but...

In the first place, Shion was indifferent to things like money. It was only recently that she began paying attention to such things.

‘Adalmann is making more money than me’—it was a bit absurd to be thinking that when Shion herself did not even have a wallet.

Recently, the number of Shion’s subordinates had been increasing, and she was just starting to realize that this situation was unsatisfactory.

There was a limit to the deception. The executives of Yomigaeri seemed to be having a harder time than Shion, and Shion could not remain indifferent to the money-raising schemes.

Incidentally, Benimaru and Souei were also making a surprisingly large amount of money, and they had been updating all of their equipment with those abundant funds. The benefits for their members were also generous, making it a popular place to work.

Surprisingly, Gabil was also reasonably wealthy.

He and Vesta jointly registered patents on their research discoveries, and he earned a regular income. Gabil's subordinates were also paid, so none of them had to worry about the cost of equipment.

That's why it was Shion who had the least money.

Ultima, who had been ordered by Rimuru to provide support, approached the stunned Shion.

"Now, now, Shion-san... You don't have to worry about money, just take it from the enemy!"

She made a truly absurd and devilish proposal.

As the Chief Prosecutor of the Public Prosecution Office, which was in charge of investigating the great evils of their country, this statement was nothing but problematic.

Shion, however, felt as if her eyes had been opened upon hearing this.

"I see, you have a point!"

"Right? I'm so smart!"

And so on and so forth, the two of them were having a good time.

Adalmann, who was listening to them, thought to himself.

As expected, it was wrong to bring this up on the battlefield.

It was true that Adalmann himself had robbed adventurers of their equipment in the labyrinth. However, he did so only after ensuring their safety.

And—

Despite his appearance, Adalmann still had some common sense left over from his former life as a human.

When arranging for the equipment, he had given various kinds of allowances to the craftsmen to receive preferential treatment. Even if they made a mistake, he would never say, "Do it for free!" like Shion would.

That's why he was able to prepare something reasonable promptly...

This is not good. I'd better keep quiet to Shion-dono.

Adalmann was very wise to think like that.

The mouth is a source of disaster³⁷. Master Gadra, Adalmann's good friend who had come to help, nodded his head in agreement.

No, it was indeed true that even Adalmann felt that there were some problems with the fact that his newcomers were better equipped than Shion's veteran guards.

³⁷A Japanese proverb (kuchi wa wazawai no moto) that basically means if you can't say anything good, just don't say it at all. Words can lead to disaster and the more you open your mouth, the more likely you are to put your foot in it.

Common sense demanded that the strong should be given preferential treatment over the small fry.

It would be problematic if he got criticized for this, so he shouldn't draw Shion's attention any further.

So, Adalmann decided to quickly divert the conversation.

"Well then, Shion-dono, as planned, we shall take the lead."

Shion-dono turns to the enemy and nods
in agreement.

"All right! I forgive you, so go ahead and be as violent as you like!"

Adalmann stroked his chest in relief upon hearing that permission had been granted.

And then, the battle began.

Dagruel's army, which was supposed to reap all the benefits of the battle and advance toward the holy city, was suddenly blocked.



"Hmmm, how cocky..."

Dagruel watched as his vanguard was blown to pieces by a missile and muttered in frustration.

It was an unexpected situation.

He had intended to strike the enemy when their guard was let down, but his plan had been foiled.

"What are you going to do, elder brother?"

Dagruel was asked by his dependable younger brother, Glassord.

It was only then that Dagruel realized that his voice had escaped from his mouth.

"Fufufu, it's been a long time since we've been in a real battle. Let's let them play for a while so that they can regain their senses."

It was frustrating that the first move had failed, but that was not a big problem.

The enemy's resistance was fiercer than expected, but even that was a trivial matter for Dagruel.

The Chained Titan Army numbered 30,000.

Among them were, of course, inexperienced and weak soldiers.

Even if they were sifted out, it would be enough if only the best remained. Rather, the survival rate of the soldiers would be higher if they dropped out before the battle intensified.

"Understood. The new recruits and those without 'Ultraspeed Regeneration' will be sent back here."

Glassord also understood Dagruel's thoughts, nodded his head lightly, and gave the instructions. He was very familiar with the situation and did not seem to be intimidated by the prospect of a major war.

When the generals were calm, the subordinates would regain their composure.

Since there was no disturbance in the chain of command, the situation was quickly reorganized.

After that, the giants began to throw projectiles using their monstrous strength. The attack was not prepared from the beginning but was simply an attack of crushing giant rocks to a reasonable size and throwing them as they pleased.

Even so, it was a very destructive attack.

In some cases, they were even equivalent to the missile launchers of the Bone Archers, which was telling of just how unreasonably powerful the Titans were in battle.

The rocks thrown in this way rained down on the Long Wall. The struck areas were severely damaged, and the monsters there were reduced to dust without any way to withstand the damage.

However, the Long Wall itself was still standing.

It was no wonder, then, that what emerged from the peeled-off outer wall was the faint glow of magical steel.

"That Luminas, she's prepared something nasty."

"It's difficult to transfer to the inside of the Long Wall because of the barrier. Unless we break it, the battle will remain deadlocked."

Glassord analyzed the situation in an uninterested manner.

Dagruel sniffed and observed the situation calmly.

His first strategy had been a failure, but that was a natural result if one really thought about it. After all, the cunning Demon Lord Rimuru was waiting on the enemy side.

He had thought that Michael would be crushing Rimuru, but to his surprise, he heard that Rimuru had destroyed Michael.

He should no longer be underestimated as a new demon lord. Although he had been recognized as a demon lord, he had now become a demon lord who should be recognized as equal to or even stronger than himself.

Rimuru's specialty was his tactics in spotting the enemy's strategy and then taking advantage of it. Through their past relations, Dagruel fully understood that Rimuru did not like to see his allies suffer any casualties.

As was shown in Rimuru's strategy, immortal monsters were the first to be deployed. If they ignored the anomaly that they could move even in the daytime, they were essentially just weak monsters.

However, their offensive power could not be ignored.

He had never seen such a weapon before, but as one could see, it was so powerful that a low-ranked warrior stood no chance.

There were some warriors who launched specialized attacks because of that, but they were knocked down by the attacks of the Zombie Soldiers who had been lining up. It seemed that the

Zombie Soldiers were not using magic, but rather were launching small pieces of debris at high speed.

Both attacks were effective against giants. Although their race had high resistance to magic as a trait, these attacks appeared to be physical attacks, and thus rendered their traits meaningless.

Low-level warriors without regenerative abilities were helplessly beaten.

Fortunately, the enemy's defenses were no better than those of ordinary undead. The battle was a long-range firefight, inflicting considerable damage on both sides.

The Long Wall built by Luminas may have been the reason for this strategy, but it was not fun for Dagruel to be having a difficult time against an opponent who would not normally be a threat to him.

"Give me a break. I didn't think that I was underestimating Rimuru, but I was wrong. I never thought that my little soldiers would be defeated by a bunch of low-class undead!" Dagruel unintentionally complained.

Dagruel remembered his old memories, and it wasn't like his personality had changed. He did not dislike Rimuru, and neither did he want to be enemies with his old friend if he could help it. However, Dagruel's heart was ravaged by memories of when he was an ancient god, when they had been freely rampaging just to dominate the planet.

He had made a show of his existence by rebelling against the god Veldanava.

And Dagruel believed that this was what Veldanava wanted.

A child could surpass their parents—it was a pure wish.

He could not disappoint god by failing to live up to those expectations.

There were those who have been forced to carry the burden of the God Killer.

Dagruel was one of them.

That is why he could not stop.

Even if it meant betraying his friends, even if he didn't know if it was the right thing to do.

Dagruel suddenly remembered something.

"Ever since that day when she murdered my friend Twilight, Luminas and I have been at odds with each other. This is another reason why we must fight."

That's right, Luminas, the demon lord whom Dagruel recognized as his rival, had achieved parricide.

He held resentment, jealousy, and respect towards her for the murder of his best friend.

With these mixed emotions, Dagruel held complicated feelings towards Luminas.

Suddenly, he had a thought.

About Dagruel's sons, Dagura, Liura, and Debura.

He could tell from their presence that they were on this battlefield.

Even though they were enemies this time, he wondered what kind of battle they would show.

Because of their pampered upbringing, his sons were only strong in power but not so strong in ability. They might be like ordinary demon lords, but in the face of the "real thing," they were sure to be crushed by a single touch of the armor.

Dagruel loved his sons, but he did not expect much from them.

No.

He had never dared to train them because he did not wish for them to bear the fate of “parricide.”

It was absolutely impossible to defy the Creator.

However, his sons were free from the curse.

That's right. I will follow my own path. That's why you should live freely in the way you believe!

And of course, to enjoy freedom, one needed the strength to protect it.

“Big brother, what about the boys?” Fenn asked Dagruel in an amused tone.

“I get it. If they stand before us as our enemies, we will beat them up with no mercy at all!

If they can use that pain as fuel, that's good, otherwise—”

—They would only decay³⁸.

That was the absolute rule of this world—survival of the fittest.

I hope you've gotten stronger. At least to the extent of not being intimidated by me.

Dagruel had no hesitation.

He would simply fulfill his duty.

Simple and straightforward, Dagruel was a warrior through and through.

And then—

It was only a matter of time until the titans' rampage violently swept across the war zone.



As Adalmann and his team started to fight, Shion was ready to go.

“You heard me, boys. I won't say much. But do you understand what we have to do?”

“ “ “Uoooooooo!! We'll take the equipment from the enemy and prepare it for ourselves!!”

” ”

Shion's subordinates were indeed the best of the best.

They were able to read their master's thoughts accurately and showed their motivation.

Seeing this, Shion nodded her head in satisfaction.

The Yomigaeri and Shion's fan club³⁹ had now grown to a surprisingly large scale.

Shion was finally beginning to think about the cost of equipment, but that was a problem that Gobzo and the others had been worrying about for a long time now.

And they had given up.

³⁸This word “kuchiru (朽ちる)” can also be used to describe “dying in obscurity” or “being forgotten with time.”

³⁹The word for this is “shineitai (親衛隊)” which means many things from elite guards/bodyguards to groupies, Schutzstaffel (SS), and fans.

Since Shion's subordinates were all capable people, it was agreed that they should be able to obtain weapons and armor by themselves. Therefore, it was acceptable for them to be ill-equipped, but this time, they had a chance to procure equipment in an absurd way.

Gobzo was the only one who thought they might get scolded later, but since this was the usual case, he agreed to it without worrying about it.

Looting in war was an act that should normally be prohibited. Looting from civilians was also never allowed. However, disarming the enemy in order to neutralize them was allowed.

As one could see from Adalmann's use of the weapons taken from the imperial army, it was often left to each commander to decide what to do with the equipment acquired from defeating the enemy.

Fufufu, even that Adalmann provided his own equipment for his subordinates. There's no way I can't do it too!!

Thus, Shion had a high self-esteem.

She had thought about asking Rimuru to help her, but changed her mind, thinking that she was being too spoiled. In this respect, Shion had grown up, but she still had a long way to go if she was jumping for the easy way of robbing from the enemy.

However, this time, it helped to boost the morale of the subordinates.

Shion was also suddenly motivated.

After all, the army of giants in front of them was wearing large armor. They could take all the materials they wanted.

It brought a smile to everyone's faces.

Now, as for Shion's subordinates—

The Yomigaeri numbered less than a hundred, and all of them were treated as executives. It was as it should be, as even the weakest of them were classed as Over A rank by Rimuru, who had named them after the death oni tribe.

They were hornless demons, and they were completely individualistic, with some of them recruiting subordinates from the fan club and others pretending to be lone wolves.

There were a few oddballs who appeared as young girls but had a large number of men in their ranks. It was a group where anything was possible.

And then there was Shion's fan club.

This group was led by Dagura, Liura, and Debura. The honorary president was Gobzo, but this did not mean much as he was more of a chore boy.

This fan club was also known as the Terror Knights.

The total number of those who were skilled in combat was as many as 3,000, consisting of various races of the Shion faction. They had been trained through the past battles, and just like the death knights, they had grown up to be an elite group equivalent to A-minus rank.

In this battle, they were to be the main force in the truest sense of the word.

The only problem there could be was—

"Is it really okay? If you want to go back to your father, now would be the time."

The relationship between Dagruel and Dagura and the others.

Father and sons.

They were worried that they wouldn't be able to seriously kill each other due to lingering familial affection.

They did not think that any of the brothers would betray them, including Shion. They were only concerned about whether they could fight seriously or not.

"Gobzo is right. You can come back after the war is over, so there is no need to push yourselves too hard."

Shion also called out to them.

However, Dagura and the others only laughed cheerfully.

"Don't worry! Whether it's our father or our uncle, we'll beat them to a pulp!"

"Right! Let's show them what we're really made of!"

"Heheh! My stomach's rumbling."

'His stomach is rumbling...?' For a moment, Shion wondered just what this guy was talking about.

—Although, Debura's comments were always strange. Well, he was fat, and it probably couldn't be helped. However, Shion still thought that it was by no means a sign of motivation.

All that said, it was too much trouble to get into it, so she just let it pass.

If they were saying it would be all right, it would be all right. The problem was with their uncle.

Rimuru had told her that Dagruel's change of heart had something to do with their uncle. Apparently, there were two of them, and one of them in particular was a very troublesome person.

"I hear that Dagruel has a brother, tell me what you know."

Shion asked the question straightforwardly, feeling that she should have asked earlier.

In response, Dagura and the others opened their mouths obediently.

Their reactions were quick, as they had no intention to hide anything.

"Yeah! I heard there are two of them. My uncle Glassord, who is my father's second-in-command, took care of me a lot, but I've never even met this Fenn guy."

"From what I heard, he was too dangerous and was sealed up? The story that he beat our father is also a bit unbelievable, but if the rumors are true, it's possible."

Shion nodded her head, though she didn't get much information.

"I see, Dagruel-dono was indeed strong. I would also like to ask him for a match, but if Fenn and the others are as strong as him, they are definitely a threat."

Judging by the fearless smile on her face, she did not seem to think of them as a threat at all.

Debra was encouraged by Shion's confidence, and he took advantage of the situation to copy her.

"Well, if you leave it to us, whether it's our father or our uncles, we'll have no problem!"

Upon hearing this, Shion started to feel somewhat uneasy.

There was a saying, “One man’s fault is another man’s lesson⁴⁰,” and that’s exactly what was happening in this case.

Ultima advised Shion.

“But still, you should be on your guard. Dagruel is seriously strong, and to be honest, it would be tough even for me if I didn’t take it seriously.”

Shion agreed with this opinion.

She wanted to challenge him, but she didn’t think she could win.

Shion, who had been in close contact with Dagruel, simply wanted to test her strength against the warrior Dagruel.

“Even so, it’s hard to believe that he betrayed us.”

“Mm, perhaps he betrayed us, or perhaps he had something he wanted to do? Well, there’s no use thinking about it since it will become clear once we beat him.”

Ultima answered Shion’s question in a matter-of-fact tone.

Dagruel was a naturally occurring indigenous god. They were super-living creatures that have lived far longer than the present human beings. Such long-lived species were usually acquainted with each other and had certain relationships with each other.

Perhaps he knew Feldway, too, Ultima thought, and if that was the case, the word “betrayal” would be questionable.

Whatever the case, she couldn’t come up with the answer no matter how much she thought about it.

Now that they were enemies, there was no need to do anything about it, and justice would side with the victor.

Shion agreed with Ultima’s thoughts.

“In the past, I would have gone off on my own and challenged Dagruel-dono to a singles combat.”

That is what the old Shion would have done, not thinking about whether she could win or not. It was something everyone could agree on.

Even now, Shion was thinking that it would be faster if she went and defeated Dagruel herself. As expected, she understood that such an outburst was a bad idea now that she was in charge of an army...

“And yet, I am now able to consider a strategy like this. I think I have become a well-rounded person.”

Shion praised herself in such a way, inwardly satisfied with her growth.

No one agreed—or so they thought, and it was here that Debura made a foolish remark once again.

“Eh? Shion-sama is not fat at all though!?”

Upon hearing this, everyone thought the same thing.

—He’s dead.

⁴⁰Another Japanese proverb “hito no furi mite waga furi naose.” Just like it says, it means that one should learn how to fix their behavior upon watching another’s problematic behavior.

Debura was the youngest of the three brothers, and no matter how much he ate, he seemed to only grow horizontally, as if he wasn't getting enough nutrients to his brain.

He was the biggest idiot of the three brothers, and the most easily carried away⁴¹.

He lacked the ability to read the atmosphere even more than Gobzo, and would make gaffes such as these without thinking.

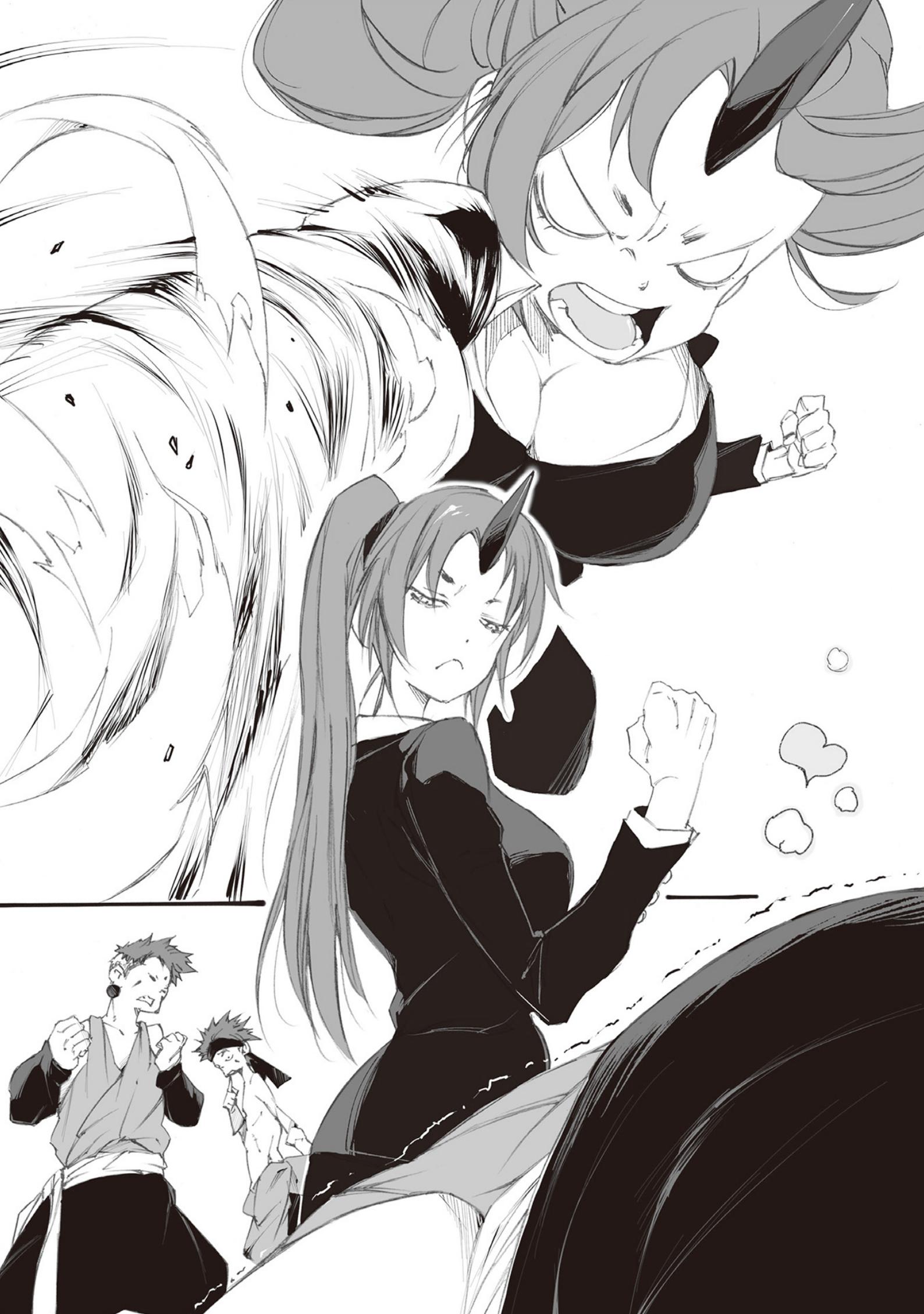
And, of course, his comment infuriated Shion.

No, Shion was not fat, nor did she care about that, but she was angry, so it couldn't be helped.

“Hoho?”

And then, with a very bright smile on her face, Shion clenched her fists and punched Debura in the stomach.

⁴¹Same word “ochōshimono” was used here to describe Debura as was used to describe Gabil in a previous footnote.
Easily carried away, a luck-pusher, someone who readily chimes in, etc.



It was the infamous corkscrew punch.

“Fucking idiot—learn for a damn change!” she said to Debura, who was lying on the ground.

“I-it’s a reward—”

Debura fainted with a big smile on his face, looking happy for some reason.

And his two brothers were looking at him enviously.

Although not as stupid as Debura, these two brothers were also idiots.

Shion, who was dealing with these three brothers, was feeling something frightening at the same time as feeling stunned.

In fact, she was rather impressed by them.

This was because she was gradually losing the need for restraint against them.

For example, Debura had only fainted even though she hit him quite seriously, and his body itself was still in good shape. In terms of endurance alone, he was definitely the best among the three brothers.

There truly were some frightening people in this world.

Yes, in many ways.

However, if they were her comrades, she could reliably count on them.

Shion truly believed in these three men from the bottom of her heart.

And Shion quickly changed her mindset.

Glancing at Dagruel’s sons—Dagura, Liura, and Debura—Shion’s mind wandered.

In any case, the Long Wall must not be breached.

Beyond the Long Wall lied an unprotected sacred land, and beyond that lied the sphere of human civilization.

It was a terrain unsuitable for protection, and its loss would mean the end of Rimuru’s ideals.

For Shion, this was something that could not be tolerated. Shion engraved this fact in her heart once again.

Just what was the true extent of Dagruel’s power?

He is said to have been an even match with Veldora-sama, so there is no shortage of opponents!! Even if I lose, we still have Ultima and Luminas-sama here. The one who wins in the end will—

With Dagruel, there were his two brothers. In addition, there were powerful beings that had yet to be seen.

Shion’s will to fight would not be discouraged in the face of an enemy whose strength was unknown.

In the worst-case scenario, she was determined to destroy Dagruel here, even if it meant the loss of her entire army or even her own downfall.

“Listen up! We let Adalmann make the first move, but the real hit comes later! Let’s show these fools just what we can do!!” Shion declared loudly to her fellow members with high morale.

In response, a roar of cheers rang out.

It was like a group of fans attending an idol concert.
For Shion and her followers, nervousness was nothing to worry about.
Shion smiled fearlessly. That smile encouraged and empowered her allies.
Ultima, who had been listening to the exchange between Shion and the others, smiled in amazement.

Shion's eyes were already the eyes of a predator aiming for their prey.
I'm sure she understands that Dagruel is a superior opponent, but she has a great mentality.
I should learn from her too.

She also secretly respected her.
For Shion, even an army of giants seemed to be nothing but food for her own improvement.
That ultimate positivity was an ideal that Ultima, a spiritual life form, wanted to see and learn a lot from.

It was no wonder that Diablo recognized Shion, and Ultima intended to do her very best to support Shion.

Therefore, she would interject at the right time.
“Shion-san. The operation is going well as planned, so we should probably start preparing.”
As she pointed out, Adalmann himself was about to make a move to shift the current battle situation, which had turned into a back-and-forth stalemate.
The war had just begun.
From this point on, things would only become more intense.



Adalmann jumped onto the back of Wenti, who had revealed her true nature as a gehenna dragon.
Wenti was soaring high into the sky as she had been waiting for him. She had reverted to her original form of a wicked dragon and was happily scattering ominous youki.

That youki would normally kill a weak human instantly, but to Adalmann, it gave him the power to fight back.

Perfectly comfortable, Adalmann glared down from above the battlefield.
“They're doing just fine.” Adalmann muttered.
The lower-ranked undead soldiers had been rendered incapacitated by firing all their missiles.

They were simply waiting to be overrun, but since they were essentially small fry, they should be praised for fighting the good fight.

That's what Adalmann thought as he nodded to himself.
“Well, I'm about to launch an inhumane attack now, but should I give them a warning?”
‘No need,’ Adalmann thought.

They were incompatible with invaders.

Adalmann, who had come to that conclusion, was supported by a voice coming from beside him.

“Well, now. This is not a one-on-one duel, so there is no point in making any verbal statements. Rather than abandoning our superior position fairly and risk losing, we should seize the victory, however cowardly it may be.”

This comment came from Gadra, who had been following him with flying magic.

As expected of his best friend, Adalmann laughed.

“That’s absolutely correct. At the very least, let us unleash a flashy and extremely powerful magic, and knock our enemies out of their minds.”

“Then it’s a competition. Let’s see who is better today!” Gadra responded happily.

Then Adalmann and Gadra quickly began chanting spells.

Both Adalmann and Gadra were now able to cast magic without chanting. However, when it came to the use of extreme magic, it was more comfortable to chant the spells to unify the mind.

Especially in the case of Adalmann, he had a firm image that magic was something performed by borrowing the work of god. He spun words of prayer as if giving thanks for his good fortune of having been given the Ultimate Gift ‘Necronomicon.’

Adalmann chose a forbidden summoning technique that could not be used inside the labyrinth.

The area of influence was too wide, so the damage was difficult to predict.

Adalmann chose this magic because he did not have to worry about the damage on this battlefield.

Naturally, this was a secret magic that was not known to the general public, and even if a human did have knowledge of it, it was said to be impossible to use.

According to ancient literature, it was said that several great mages had attempted it but failed. The reason for this was partly because it was difficult to control, but also because the process of integrating individual mana did not work.

In fact, Adalmann was also nervous about whether he would succeed or not as it was the first time for him to use this kind of magic.

However, he chose it only because it seemed to be the flashiest, so even if he failed, that would just be a story for that time. Gadra would laugh at him, but he would simply unleash a different kind of magic if that happened.

With that in mind Adalmann, determined the area of influence of his spell without any hesitation.

Although the mana consumption was high, it was not a problem for Adalmann who boasted a magicle count on the level of an awakened demon lord.

Preparations for casting his spell were completed without any problems.

Ah, I see... this explains why there is no need for spell chanting.

Filled with a pleasant sense of fulfillment, Adalmann fully grasped his power.

“Now then, Gadra, pay close attention. This is the greatest ancient magic—Tempest Meteor!!”

It appeared that once the spell was successfully cast, the mantra (word) was engraved in your mind, and you could cast it again instantly by simply selecting it. Confirming his ability in such a way, Adalmann released the spell.

In that moment, a gigantic magic circle suddenly appeared in the sky with a dazzling shimmer, and light poured down on the earth.

As beautiful as a starry night miracle—and yet, it was a terrifying light that called for death and destruction.

This magic bore the name of the country that Adalmann and his comrades loved. They liked that and it was chosen for that very reason. It also possessed a terribly destructive power that lived up to its name.

The magic that the great magicians of the past had wished to achieve had come into full effect in this world.

The light that poured down on the earth were meteorites.

Over a thousand meter-class meteors were covering the earth with destruction.

No matter how many giants boasted of their ‘Ultraspeed Regeneration,’ it was meaningless if the damage was too severe for them to recover from.

The area of effect was too large, and there was nowhere to run.

Limbs that tried to catch the meteorite were blown off, and heads were crushed.

The giants, who had intended to overwhelm the enemy with their brute force, were crushed helplessly by an even larger force.

Adalmann’s extreme magic was more effective than he had intended.

In a very short time, he had incapacitated as many as 30 percent of Dagruel’s army.

“Behold, Gadra! I’ve already won, haven’t I?”

The impact of the meteors caused a huge explosion. Looking down at the boiling earth, Adalmann declared victory.

He was surprised at the power of the explosion, which was more powerful than he had expected, but still boasted about it as if it were a matter of course.

Bone faces had no facial expressions, so it wouldn’t be recognized.

Adalmann was more than happy to show off to his rival.

However, this was not amusing for Gadra.

What Adalmann had used just now was one of the secrets of dark magic, a summoning magic that applied ‘imaginary matter.’ It was the ultimate magic to create (image) imaginary meteorites and summon them.

The imaginary matter that appeared in the world would become ‘real’ under the influence of the laws of physics. The effect was temporary but lasted long enough to destroy the enemy.

What’s this, why does he remember this kind of magic!? This isn’t ‘holy magic’ or ‘necromancy,’ but rather ‘summoning magic’ which is more like ‘dark magic’—that’s my specialty!!

Truly, Gadra could not give in to this.

If he lost to something outside of his field of expertise, there would still be an excuse. However, this was a direct challenge to Gadra.

He had to acknowledge the power of ‘Tempest Meteor,’ and he admired his best friend’s amazing work, but as a master of magic, he could not simply admit defeat.

Above all, Gadra himself had just joined Diablo as his subordinate. He wanted to take a shot at something big here.

And it was.

The survival of the human race was at stake in this war, but from another perspective, this could also be seen as a battle for supremacy in the world. In that case, Gadra thought it would be a good idea to gain some kind of recognition here.

If he did so, then at least he would not be abandoned by Diablo.

That’s why Gadra lashed back in a spiteful manner.

“Keep talking! I’ll show you the true essence of magic!”

With these words, he completed the magic he was constructing.

He had been reborn as a metal demon and was now able to use the ultimate magic.

Gadra made full use of the Ultimate Gift ‘Grimoire’ and unraveled the knowledge from the source of magic.

This magic, which even Adalman did not know about, was the essence of dark magic taught by Diablo and Ultima.

Gadra had spent his spare time steadily begging to learn from them.

The culmination of his efforts was—

“Come, all those who suffer from eternal hunger! Devour all with your fangs!!”

—‘Nihilistic Parade,’ dark magic of the most vicious caliber.

It was well-known that the most powerful holy magic was ‘Disintegration,’ the ultimate destruction magic against people and objects. It was also famous for the fact that only a few people could use it, but its high power was guaranteed. It was said that no one could survive a direct hit.

However, there were a few drawbacks.

The most notable of them was the narrow range of influence.

Even if it was the most powerful anti-personnel magic, it could not be used against entire armies. That is the kind of magic it was.

Incidentally, the existence of dark magic, the counterpart of ‘disintegration,’ was known only to a very limited number of people.

This was the dark magic Nihilistic Banish, which Ultima and others excelled at.

It was a terrifying magic that devoured the target with the emptiness that came out of hell. Moreover, this magic’s range could be expanded.

This time, Gadra had set the area of influence as the entire battlefield. He exerted all his mana into ‘Nihilistic Banish’ and completed it as ‘Nihilistic Parade,’ the magic of wide-area extermination.

Just as the magician intended, an extremely large magic circle appeared on the ground and

in the sky.

Then, as if connecting heaven and earth, a dark electrical discharge commenced—countless numbers of dark spots were released. They were the fangs of darkness that devoured all matter.

It was the forbidden dark magic art, the manipulation of the forbidden void.

The void unleashed in this world would not disappear until its negative energy was brought to zero. It filled the inside of the magic circle ‘Barrier’ that connected heaven and earth, causing it to disappear.

It was one of the ultimate magics that could destroy the world if wielded incorrectly.

As soon as the magic was invoked, Gadra smiled widely.

“Wahahahah! What do you think? Isn’t it amazing!?”

He seemed so innocent and overjoyed.

Adalmann, however, was not so much.

“You idiooot!! What are you thinking!? What would you have done if this dangerous magic failed and went out of control!?”

With the Ultimate Gift ‘Necronomicon,’ he understood the danger of ‘Nihilistic Parade,’ and his face was pale as he shouted.

Gadra, however, did not take offense and replied without hesitation.

“Because I want to show off too!”

Adalmann was deflated after hearing this.

“No, I don’t think that’s …”

Throwing away all dignity, he had intentionally spoken his true feelings. Adalmann was taken aback by Gadra’s childish comment.

Indeed, it was difficult for Gadra to make any excuses because it was true that the world could have collapsed if he failed to control the spell. Therefore, on the contrary, he opened up and spoke frankly.

“W-Well, it’s fine. We have succeeded!”

Gadra made an irresponsible remark that things would be fine as long as they were together.

Even if he was rotten, Gadra, who showed no sign of remorse, would still be an insane genius.

Recognizing this once again, Adalmann released a big sigh and gave up.

It was useless to say anything anyway, and in fact, there was no problem since he had succeeded.

The enemy forces had been greatly reduced in number by the two extreme magics, and they were on the brink of destruction. Their numbers were already less than half of what they had been at the beginning, and in a normal war, they would have given up and retreated long ago.

Although the visibility was poor due to Gadra’s ‘Nihilistic Parade,’ they seemed to be on the verge of successfully defeating the enemy.

Adalmann and his team, who hoped that the war would end in this way, looked upon the situation below with bated breath.

Sure enough, the result was—



Dagruel recognized the danger of the magic at first glance.

He had been planning to overrun the city as soon as the war started, but the small fry stopped him in his tracks. And just when he thought they had reached a stalemate, his troops were reduced by more than 50 percent with that extreme magic.

This was a miscalculation on Dagruel's part, but it was not a great loss for him.

Although it was kept secret from the public, magic could not defeat the Giants. A person who died by this means was not only out of luck, but also out of ability.

He could overlook the falling meteorites with a smile.

In fact, he praised it as a splendid magic, and even thought of using it to determine who would be qualified to participate in this battle.

If it had been an attack such as dropping a huge rock stored in a different space from the sky, he would have judged that it was too destructive to ignore because of the positional energy added to its mass. However, since 'Tempest Meteor' was an attack of magically created meteorites, the power of Giants could counter it without any problems.

A warrior should not be late in using magic intended to be used against a group.

In fact, none of Dagruel's core members nor his main warriors were lacking or even stopped.

That was the correct thing to do.

However, the magic invoked by Gadra was no good.

This was because 'Nihilistic Parade' penetrated and damaged even the absolute power of 'Magic Nullification' possessed by true giants.

The anti-magic guard 'Magic Nullification' automatically neutralized all kinds of magic attacks. Because of this ability, magic could not normally defeat giants. Therefore, even an extremely powerful magic like 'Tempest Meteor' could be overlooked with a smile. Those who would die from such magic would be dismissed as immature...

"That Ultima, she spread those forbidden spells so carelessly..." Dagruel complained, thinking of Ultima's innocent smile.

Only the kings of demons should know about the magic that invoked the emptiness of hell. As for the perpetrator who spread it, the one who came to mind the most out of the seven was Ultima.

Or Raine.

Mizeri was serious, so that wouldn't happen.

With Guy, Diablo, and Testarossa, these three surprisingly had common sense, so they were excluded from the list.

Carrera...was a possibility, but Dagruel judged that she should be excluded because she

was not good at teaching others.

In that case, Ultima or Raine were the most likely suspects.

So then, the culprit would be Ultima, who appeared to be good friends with the immortal Adalmann and his comrades.

That was the correct answer, but Dagruel wouldn't be happy to know that. Now was not the time to be looking for the culprit.

Fortunately, Dagruel could deal with this magic.

With a bitter look on his face, Dagruel raised his hands to the sky.

Then he released his power.

The attack characteristic of nihilism magic was the annihilation of existence through negative (minus) energy. If that was the case, it meant that the damage could be forced to zero if the positive energy became saturated.

Dagruel was a giant that could be called a mass of energy. Even if it was a 'Nihilistic Parade' with all of Gadra's energy, it was no problem for him to offset it.

Dagruel's army marched forward.

Accepting the deaths of their comrades, they overcame them as if nothing had happened.

In their eyes, they had the utmost trust and loyalty to Dagruel. They walked the battlefield as if there was nothing to fear.



"I-I can't believe it..."

"Dagruel-dono is the real deal. He neutralized such dangerous magic so easily..."

The two of them were at a loss for words.

As soon as the 'Nihilistic Parade' was drowned out, the giants resumed their march, seemingly unconcerned by the deaths of their comrades.

The formation had been previously broken by extreme magic, but before they knew it, it had been rebuilt.

Thanks to their extraordinary resilience, those who escaped instant death were regenerated as if nothing had happened—the number that were thought to have dropped significantly turned out not to be the case.

Their appearance was so eerie that it aroused fear in those who confronted them.

Adalmann and his team were fed up with seeing the movements of Dagruel's army.

"Good grief...don't they feel any fear?"

"Tell me about it. Normally, they should be thinking of countermeasures or pulling out for a while..."

It was troublesome to become enemies with those who did not understand such common sense.

Well, the same is true for Rimuru-sama's subordinates.

That's what Gadra thought, but he was not stupid enough to say that, so he pointed out something different here.

"More than that, I'm curious. It can't be helped that Demon Lord Dagruel erased the void, but how did he endure the 'Tempest Meteor'? It seemed to me that the meteorite disappeared unnaturally, but..."

Yes, it was as if the magic had been drowned out—Gadra said.

This was something that had bothered Adalmann as well.

It appeared that some of the lower-ranked giants had suffered casualties, but the elite warriors of the higher ranks were all unharmed.

They had expected them to be injured at least a little, if they recovered at all, but it was unnatural that they did not even have that.

The two men looked at each other, searching each other's thoughts.

They quickly decided that there was no answer to their question.

"So, what do we do now?"

"Mm, I used too much mana. Let's pull back for now. Even so, I'm glad that my army is an Immortal Legion that does not fear death."

"That's true. A deathless army of giants is a nightmare, but your subordinates are similar..."

The two let out a sigh as they spoke to each other.

The unbelievable reality that came right after they had expected to win was a great shock.

Adalmann stroked Wenti on the head and ordered her to return.

As they had originally intended, they had succeeded in striking the enemy with extreme magic. There was no need to stay longer.

Rather, they should quickly return and report the threat of Dagruel's army.

It was their steadfastness and resilience that was to be feared.

The opening act was over, and what came next was the clash of the major forces.

However, considering the threat of the giants that they had just witnessed, it was likely that the Immortal Legion would not be enough.

Their lack of fear and ability to resurrect was similar. Nevertheless, he had a feeling that the giants could overrun Immortal Legion with their overwhelming destructive power. He could envision a future where they would be crushed and shattered before they could even deal the giants a decisive blow.

Well, that's just the way things were.

All they could do was reduce the number of giants by killing as many of them as possible.

"Anyway, we should go back and report to Shion-dono."

"You're right. As for the future, we will need to discuss that."

Adalmann and Gadra return to Shion's location, thinking about future developments.

Shion received the report.

‘Now then, what to do?’—she wondered.

Shion was standing on the Long Wall and had a bird’s eye view of the battlefield.

She had witnessed Adalmann’s and Gadra’s extreme magic and thought that perhaps they would be able to win the battle, but in truth, a harsh reality was awaiting them.

Even without any report from Adalmann and his team, Shion had already recognized the danger of the enemy.

Two hours had passed since the battle began.

The battle had shifted to the next stage, a clash between the main battle forces.

Although the Chained Titan Army appeared to have greatly reduced its numbers from 30,000, the actual attrition rate was less than 10 percent. Now, they had formed an assault formation with their elite at the top and were clashing with the main forces of the Immortal Legion.

The formation was a crane-wing formation⁴² with 2,000 death knights in the center and 10,000 Bone Soldiers with secret weapons on both flanks. They were trying to surround the advancing Chained Titan Army but were outnumbered and could not enclose them.

It was a tactical error, but Adalmann was unfazed.

“Is it okay?”

“There is no problem. We will show those who do not know fear the true horror of ‘dead soldiers.’”

Adalmann, who was commanding from beside Shion, had not intended to win from the beginning.

His objective was to reduce the enemy’s strength.

The real main forces were the Yomigaeri and Terror Knights under Shion and the Bloody Knights under Luminas. In a sense, Adalmann and the others were expendable pawns.

As much as possible, they wanted to take out as many of the Over A rank warriors on Dagruel’s side as they could. At the very least, they wanted to find out the enemy’s weak points. That was the intention behind this plan.

Naturally, Adalmann was also satisfied with this strategy.

Regarding this matter, it was simply what had been agreed upon before the war started. It was the consensus of the Rimuru side to avoid casualties as much as possible.

This was also an effective strategy for analyzing the giants’ strength.

The Immortal Legion was immortal, so they would not be counted as dead. After all, Adalmann’s subordinates would not die even if they were killed.

The key to this strategy was to make the most of the characteristics of immortals, and it was a suicidal attack strategy to strike and eliminate lured giants in order to reduce their numbers.

⁴²Crane wing formation is kind of like a U-shaped formation with a concentrated striking unit in the center, and two wing units on the side flanks. It’s a good way to target and eliminate units on the battlefield (main force strikes while wing units support and prevent escape) while also preventing a heavy loss of forces.

Nevertheless, there were limits.

At first glance, the battlefield appeared to be in a stalemate, but the momentum was tilted in favor of the titan forces.

The Bone Soldiers launched suicide attacks, triggering the mana that filled the battlefield. The death knights finished off the wounded and fallen giants, but unless it was a sure fatal blow, the giants would revive.

The problem here was the giants' enormous stature.

The giants boasted huge bodies of 3 to 5 meters, and their muscular armor was so thick that it was difficult to deal a fatal blow to them. If too much time was taken, they would be crushed.

At first, things were going well, but as time went by, countermeasures were put in place.

Those with long weapons were being kept in check, and they could no longer approach carelessly. If they tried too hard, they would only be crushed like pieces of wood, and once that happened, the Bone Soldiers, who were inferior in strength, had become useless.

The death knights were also outnumbered and forced to fight hard, and their numbers gradually dwindled.

At this point, tensions were running through the Bloody Knights led by Louis, who was thinking that it was about their turn.

Shion also tried to deploy her reserve Terror Knights.

The 2,000 death knights were still almost intact.

If she adds 3,000 Terror Knights to them, she was sure that they would be able to fight against the giants' top fighters.

The number of Bloody Knights was four hundred, whereas there were a thousand Over A ranks. To close the gap, the Yomigaeri alone was not enough.

Shion thought that they could manage if there were ten fighters against one.

Shion was usually someone who thought that she could get by with her own spirit, but she did not want to see any casualties among her proteges. But here, as a commander, she bit his lip and tried to give the order.

But Adalmann stopped her.

"Oh dear, it seems that I'll have to make a move."

Adalmann, whose mana had been recovered, climbed back onto Wenti's back.

"You still have a plan?"

Adalmann replied to Shion's curious question with a clattering laugh.

"I've run out of ideas, so it's just a matter of what will happen."

With those words, Adalmann returned to the battlefield.

Adalmann activated a modified version of necromancy that he had been developing in preparation for this moment—the Immortal Legion Creation.

It was Adalmann's favorite because it was named after his own legion.

The effect of this magic, which had a special effect over a wide area, was astonishing.

Within its sphere of influence, it transformed the dead who died on the battlefield, regardless

of whether they were friend or foe, into undead soldiers who were loyal to his orders.

This was the forbidden secret of necromancy.

It was the culmination of Adalmann's research.

Moreover, this magic had been improved to reconstruct the nucleus of those who had already died.

In other words, in this case, the shattered Bone Soldiers began to gather around the death knights.

Dead giant warriors and even warriors who were still active gathered themselves together.

And thus, 2,000 death giants were born.

The magic weapons made of magical steel worn by the death knights covered the huge bodies of up to four meters in height. Because this was an amalgamation of the grudges of the deceased, it was no wonder that the armor had been transformed according to the will of the owner.

Adalmann had been anticipating this from the very beginning and had devised this secret of creating immortal giants.

"You're kidding, right? That Adalmann, even I had no idea he was preparing a hidden gem like this..."

Even Shion couldn't hide her surprise.

It was only natural as each of the death giants was an Over A rank monster.

"I can't believe it. I've never been happier to have you guys as allies."

This was said by Louis who was watching the battle beside Shion.

Thus, the battle situation was reversed once again.

The giants, who had been dominating with their power, had lost their advantage due to the emergence of a greater power.

Moreover, the death giants were immortal. Even if they were crushed or destroyed, they would be instantly resurrected under Adalmann's power.

Even so, the giants were not defeated.

The report of nearly 1,000 high-ranking fighters was false, and in fact, there were more than 2,000 elite fighters in their ranks.

And with the Over A rank fighters, their wounds would instantly be regenerated by 'Ultra-speed Regeneration.' They were invincible as long as they didn't take instant-death damage, and they were evenly matched with the death giants.

The number of fighters on both sides did not decrease, and the battle reached a stalemate once again.



Thanks to Adalmann's efforts, Shion and her team were able to relax.

It was a happy miscalculation that they had not been told about such a trick.

However, Adalmann had not wanted to create any strange expectations since this 'Immortal Legion Creation' was its first public presentation, or rather, it was a spur-of-the-moment event.

The result was what happened just now, and the person who was the most relieved was Adalmann himself.

"As expected of my best friend."

Gadra was also very happy.

Louis could only nod in agreement.

"It's true. The Seven Luminaries did such a foolish thing. I can't believe they let such great talent go elsewhere."

He spoke with serious regret.

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Louis remembered the old days.

In those days, Adalmann and Albert were famous.

Adalmann, a genius of holy magic and a high priest.

Albert, the strongest Holy Knight of all time.

Both of them were qualified to be heroes.

However, neither of them possessed the hero's eggs.

Still, they had naturally reached the level of "sages," and if nothing had happened to them, they would have reached the level of saints.

But both of them were simply much too talented.

That is why the Seven Luminary Clerics were jealous of them and had pushed them into a trap.

The Seven Luminaries feared that if those two continued to grow, they would become a threat to their own positions, and so they took measures to keep Luminas and the others in the dark.

As he recalled, it was the cleansing of the large-scale dead spirit disaster. But in reality, this turned out to be a battle with dragon zombies prepared by the Seven Luminaries, and the two sides were killed by the other.

They had gladly accepted the request and gone to the Great Jura Forest. But since they did not return to the holy city, they were presumed dead.

Not even Demon Lord Luminas, Louis' master, could have expected that they would fall into the hands of Demon Lord Kazalim after their death, nor that they would fall into the service of Demon Lord Rimuru after that through some strange fate.

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Luminas was frustrated, and Louis felt the same way.

They should have included these champions into their ranks at any cost.

And Albert, one of those champions, was just now drawing his sword on the battlefield.

“Hoh, that man was Adalmann’s subordinate. You can clearly see from a distance that he has a tremendous skill.”

Shion, who had regained her composure and was watching the battlefield, exclaimed in admiration.

Dagura, Liura, and Debura, who were standing behind her, nodded their heads in agreement.

“Albert-san is seriously cool!”

“He occasionally meets me in hand-to-hand combat, but he’s really strong, that guy.”

“Oh, he’s facing Uncle Glassord! I wouldn’t be surprised if either of them won!!”

At first, the three brothers were trying to support Albert, but their attitudes changed when they saw his opponent.

“He’s strong. So, there was a giant warrior who wielded a sword.”

“Yeah. That’s our father’s younger brother—”

“He’s second-in-command of the Chained Titan Army—”

“That’s our uncle who was our teacher!”

Dagura and the others replied to Shion’s mutterings.

His name was Glassord.

He was a top-notch two-handed swordsman and one of the strongest in the Chained Titan Army.

Although he was inferior to Dagruel in terms of the total magicule count, his swordsmanship was said to be superior.

He was said to be mild-mannered and intelligent for a giant.

Incidentally, the Dagruel of today would be considered calm if he were only more mild-mannered, but he was still feared due to his old notoriety.

Such a Glassord was fighting a duel with Albert.

Wielding a greatsword with his two-meter frame moving gracefully, Glassord clearly stood out from the others in terms of strength and was a unique presence on the battlefield.

Albert, on the other hand, was crossing swords equally regardless of the height difference.

It is an unbelievable sight for those who knew Albert as a top-notch swordsman.

Despite his huge stature, Glassord was able to perform sophisticated techniques with his agile movements. No one other than Albert would have been able to compete with him, and on the contrary, Albert might be the one who was abnormal for being able to compete with such a person.

He was able to parry and even counter the heavy pressure attacks that would have normally crushed him with a single blow. This was only because he had been given a set of mythical-grade equipment.

If he had been equipped with anything less than legendary-grade equipment, he would have been destroyed the moment he was hit.

Incidentally, one of Glassord's hidden characteristics was his 'weapon destruction' ability he used on his opponent's armor.

This literally meant that anyone who crossed swords with Glassord was destined to be defeated unilaterally by having their weapons and armor destroyed.

It was fortuitous that Albert, who was unaware of this, was equipped with mythical-grade weapons. It was a miraculous coincidence, and even the three Dagura brothers could not have known it.

Thanks to such good fortune, the collapse of the front line was narrowly averted. It was ironic that no one noticed it.

The threat was there, but the danger went unnoticed as the battle between the two sides heated up.



Shion and her team were in spectator mode, in contrast to the battlefield where even the strongest players had finally made their moves.

"However, Father hasn't moved."

"Since Uncle has already left, it must be about time."

"We'll take care of things at that time!"

The three brothers were so excited that they even said such things.

Shion replied, stunned by such idiots.

"Don't be hasty. Of course, I'll be dealing with him. You guys lead the Terror Knights and keep out of the way."

The three agreed without protest.

It was not that they thought they could win. They were just in a good mood, so their replies had been relaxed.

Still, they did not forget to give warnings while fooling around.

"I understand, but you shouldn't underestimate our father, okay?"

"Big brother is right. No matter how strong Sister is, our father is a true monster."

"Heheh! I've never been able to beat him."

It was not even a matter of winning or losing, but rather, it was difficult to even stand in front of that haki. It was obvious that the three brothers could not even compete.

From Shion's point of view, these three were reasonably strong men. They were growing stronger and improving with every mock battle, and she was looking forward to seeing their growth.

Shion could certainly sense the seriousness of the three brothers.

"Don't worry. I, too, will not do anything reckless."

It was a very Shion-like comment, as if coming from someone who didn't know what they were like.

There were no shifts in the battlefield, but her turn would soon come. Shion was prepared for battle, feeling it firsthand.

Rather, shall I just go all in at once?

Waiting did not suit her and breaking this stalemate to grab the victory at once might be a good strategy.

Right now, as long as they could do something about the enemy general, they were sure to win the battle...

That was what Shion thought.

Suddenly, a change occurred on the battlefield.

It was abrupt and harsh.

The battlefield was suddenly a no-man's land. Several death giants were blown away like pieces of wood.

“—That's!?”

Shion's eyes widened.

Every time there was a glimmer of silver light, a death giant of Over A rank was knocked down with ease.

Standing there was a slender man of extraordinary stature, his body bound by multiple layers of chains.

Even when sealed, the chains failed to hide his intense and foreign presence.

It was a presence that surpassed even Dagruel's.

Shion's whole body was covered with goosebumps.

Her survival instincts were telling her with all their might that this man was dangerous.

“Th-That's... I see, that's the sealed...”

“Is that the “Crazed Fists⁴³” Titan⁴⁴ who was feared as both a god of war and a raging god of evil—Uncle Fenn!?”

“Heheh, I'm hungry!”

Debra's irrelevant comment in this situation got him a corkscrew punch to the gut.

“Are you full now?”

Shion changed her mind after saying that.

Thanks to Debura's stupid remark, she was relieved of her tension.

An idiot, but a lovable idiot is what Shion thought as she observed Fenn.

He was over three meters tall, but it was his chains that were more eye-catching.

It was no wonder.

“Are those chains Gleipnir? That's a tremendous thing, isn't it?”

“Gadra. What is that?”

⁴³Previously called “Mad Fist” Titan, but “Crazed Fists” Titan was later chosen by others.

⁴⁴The word used here was not the same word for giant/titan (kyojin) that is normally used, but rather “kyoshin” which can also mean “divine giant” or “giant god”

“Yes. It’s from a myth recorded in an ancient text that predates human history—”
As if his wish had come true, the ever-garrulous Gadra began to show off his knowledge.

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Gleipnir.

Since mythological times, these chains have been used to keep the rampaging evil gods at bay.

If that story was true, then the chains would have evolved by absorbing the magicules released by the evil god.

Since that time, the chains have been a sacred weapon of the Dragon Emperor, sealing both the holy and the evil. It was no wonder that these chains had a performance that surpassed even that of mythical-grade chains in the current era.

But it wasn’t the chains that one should really fear.

It was the evil god enclosed in those chains who was the threat that one should be wary of.

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“In mythological times, it is said that the evil gods were sealed away by the Dragon Emperor. It seems said that two of the three brothers reformed, but one of them remained violent, so he was sealed by the chains of god. In other words, that is Fenn who is raging there, and the chains that bind him are the famous Gleipnir.”

Gadra spoke with great joy.

As if to prove his words correct, the chains wriggled and pulsated.

Despite being bound by such suspicious chains, Fenn was smiling.

It was as if to say, ‘I’m having fun.’

The chains were moving on their own and knocking down enemies without Fenn doing anything. Not even Over A rank warriors could stop them.

Shion was astonished.

Fenn’s existence value was said to be comparable to Dagruel’s, but it seemed to be surpassing Dagruel’s by a long shot.

“That’s funny. It’s said that there is always someone better than you, but to think that he is so exceptional...”

Most of Shion’s comrades also boasted a fairly high magicule count, and they had grown beyond comparison from the past, but Fenn was in a realm that even they could not reach.

The pinnacle that Shion knew—He was in the class of Veldora and Velgrynd, the True Dragons.

“That guy is an unimaginable monster. It’s impossible for you guys.”

Shion affirmed that.

On top of this, Dagruel was also waiting.

It was depressing just thinking about it.

“What will you do? Do you think we can’t win and should withdraw?” Ultima asked innocently.

Shion thought about this in a disinterested way.

No matter how much the battle was going back and forth, the board could be easily overturned by the appearance of such a monster.

As Ultima said, running away was also a good option.

Rimuru did not want any casualties. If they followed his orders to the letter, they should consider retreat.

Now that Adalmann and the others were enduring, it would be possible to escape from this place with just Shion and the reinforcements from the monster country.

However...

It was easy to retreat, but the consequences were obvious.

Those who were left behind, the innocent people living in this land, would be deprived of all their rights through an unreasonable tyranny.

And that would involve even the sphere of human existence, destroying the realization of Rimuru’s ideals.

What should they do then?

Even if she fought against this monster, annihilation was inevitable—

No, that’s wrong.

Shion was here to make sure that didn’t happen.

She had her answer.

It was not a difficult problem.

Shion prepared herself to fight as she made up her mind.

This was also easy as she had done it many times before.

The confidence of having been in critical situations multiple times and overcoming them was what kept Shion motivated.

And it was not just Shion.

“Ultima, which do you prefer?” Shion asked, and Ultima smiled as if to say, ‘I knew you wouldn’t run away.’

“I like that about Shion-san.”

“Well then, since you and the old man hit it off so well, I’ll take that one over there”—Ultima responded innocently

They decided who would fight whom as if they were discussing their favorite dessert.

Their exchange ended on a light note.

It was decided that Ultima would fight Fenn, and Shion along with her fellow leaders would fight Dagruel.

Following this, the Luminas team began to move.

“Well, well, like master like subordinate. It seems that Demon Lord Rimuru’s subordinates

know nothing of fear.”

Stunned, Louis also announced his participation in the war.

His eyes were met with the sight of a rampaging four-armed giant.

It was Basara, the leader of the Five Warrior Generals, and the maternal uncle of Dagruel’s sons.

There were several other strongmen in various parts of the battlefield who caught their attention. Following Louis, the Bloody Knights and the Seven Great Nobles also ran out to face them.

Thus, the battlefield became even more chaotic—



A sandstorm was raging over the battlefield.

Fenn moved, and the chains danced. As a result, a large number of death giants were broken into pieces.

Fenn’s eyes caught the sight of Adalmann, who was taking command on the back of the gehenna dragon Wenti.

His battlefield strategy was to target the generals.

In fact, Fenn’s action was the correct one, since Adalmann’s power was what made the immortals immortal.

Fenn swirled up a cloud of dust and ran at a tremendous speed. He was now in flight, closing in on Adalmann with a force that ignored the presence of anyone standing in his way.

“—Muu!?”

Adalmann noticed Fenn’s approach and tried to deal with him. He was not sure if he was safe in the air, but Fenn was moving too fast.

As if Gleipnir were of an infinite length, gehenna dragon Wenti was tied up without regard for space.

The chains were of a mythical-grade that would seal even the gods, so there was no way for Wenti to escape. She was slammed to the ground, unable to move.

Adalmann escaped as soon as he could, but Fenn did not miss it.

“You’re in the way! You’re dead!!”

He shouted in a straightforward manner and attacked to get rid of the interloper.

Adalmann expected this.

From the very beginning, he had protected himself with multiple ‘barriers’ so that he would not be caught by surprise.

And yet, with only a single blow, Adalmann was knocked to the ground and rolled over.

It was an extremely heavy blow.

It was a blow of such absolute violence that it took away not only his will to rebel, but also his will to live. Adalmann experienced it firsthand.

A terrible silence fell upon the battlefield.

In an instant, Fenn had taken control of the battlefield.

Meanwhile, Ultima had also started to make her move.

Before the battle began, Ultima had a secret meeting alone with Luminas. Luminas, who understood the threat of Dagruel, had predicted this situation.

Violence would overturn everything. Knowing this well, Luminas had devised all possible ways to win the war. She wanted to defeat Dagruel even if it meant using the absolute best-kept secret.

Dainty even in the midst of the battlefield, Ultima set out for Fenn with ease as if taking a stroll.

She then stood to protect Adalmann.

She looked at Fenn and laughed, as if to say, ‘If you take something from me, I’ll take it back.’

“That’s pretty good. Even I recognized Adalmann’s ability.” Ultima said.

Adalmann, like Ultima, was one of the Twelve Guardian Lords. Although he specialized in providing logistical support, the title of Gehenna Lord was not just a fancy name.

Fenn was simply too strong.

Ultima, perhaps not amused by this, unhesitatingly judged Fenn.

“Eh, I see. So he’s weak?”

Although Fenn had knocked Adalmann to the ground with a single blow of his aura-clad fist, he was not even proud of it. He did not brag because he thought of this as a natural result.

Ultima saw through Fenn’s thinking and thought that it was just as well.

Since she was the same way, she could understand Fenn’s feelings.

From the perspective of the strong, the weak were nothing but toys. Ultima, who had reigned as a king of demons until now, had no right to complain to Fenn.

The difference in their strength had been too great. Fenn did not care about him.

This time, Ultima was thinking that she was on the side of the underdog, and that’s all there was to it. Even so, she had no intention to give up easily.

As Ultima loved fights, she would try to win until the very end, even if she lost.

As long as you keep trying, you will eventually win someday. In that case, there’s only one thing to do.

She was very much at ease with this idea.

“Allow me to introduce myself. I am Pain Lord Ultima. What about you, Brawler-kun⁴⁵? ”

“You cheeky brat. I’m Fenn. You’re gonna die here anyway, so why bother remembering!”

As soon as they introduced themselves to each other, the fight was on.

⁴⁵She calls him abarenbō-kun. An abarenbō (暴れん坊) is “rambunctious kid/wild child” or a “hooligan,” or “brawler,” or “roughneck” and etc.

Shion, who remained on top of the Long Wall, was waiting to see how Dagruel would react.

No matter how Shion dealt with Dagruel, it was obvious that the war would collapse the moment Shion lost.

Luminas seemed to have some kind of plan, so a part of her mind had hopes for it.

But that alone was not enough.

One could not win a battle if they were expecting miracles to happen. Shion was determined to take the victory, even if it was by force.

“So that’s our uncle—Fenn, huh? Hey, hey, even I didn’t expect such a monster...”

“Big brother is right. Th-This is even worse than I expected.”

“Uncle Glassord is great too, but Uncle Fenn is something else.”

“Yeah. No wonder they sealed him up...”

Next to Shion, Dagura and Liura were discussing their impressions of their uncle whom they had never seen before. They had been talking about how they were going to beat their father, but now their spirits had been dampened.

It wasn’t that unreasonable, Shion thought.

Only a fool who did not know themselves would think that they could win.

“Heheh! If he’s that skinny, I can easily beat him with my weight!”

Yes, just like Debura, who only says this...

Debura really needs to be punished.

That’s what Shion was thinking.

Suddenly, the situation changed.

“Hm. Looking at me from such a high place...you’ve sure got a lot of time on your hands, don’t you?”

The voice came from behind Shion.

This was the top of the Long Wall, and although it was the front line, it was also a defensive base. Naturally, the ‘monster intrusion prevention barrier’ was in operation, and the area around Shion was covered with multiple layers of ‘multilayer barriers.’

To ignore all of that and be standing here...no, it was more than that.

The problem is that Shion had been completely unaware of any of this until he had spoken here.

She had not neglected to monitor him.

Even with a Skill like ‘Spatial Transportation,’ she should have been able to detect anomalies. Shion, who could perform ‘Spatial Domination,’ had her surroundings well protected.

And yet—Demon Lord Dagruel was there.

“Why is Dagruel-dono here?”

Shion turned to the giant standing behind her on the Long Wall and asked that question.

Dagruel answered gently.

His past aside, Dagruel was surprisingly a gentleman now.

“Hm. I was walking slowly, but could it be that you didn’t see me? If so, you are not even qualified to stand in front of me. It would be foolish to take you seriously.”

“I beg your pardon?”

Shion did not feel that she was being mocked.

On the contrary, she felt that Dagruel was speaking the truth in a very gentlemanly manner.

From Dagruel’s point of view, Shion must have been like a little girl.

Now she understood.

Shion had met Dagruel many times before, but now his intimidating presence was like a different person. Dagruel was undeniably radiating the air of a ruler.

However, Shion silenced him with her spirit.

She repelled the intimidation and came forward.

“The one who decides if I am qualified will be me! War Lord Shion. As Demon Lord Rimuru-sama’s most trusted secretary, I shall face you!!”

Shion introduced herself, adding a few extra words on her own. Then she pointed her sword Hercules Deluxe at Dagruel.

Some kind of skill or trick...even if there is a difference in ability, there must be a reason for this phenomenon!!

Any movement based on spatial interference would always leave even the slightest trace behind. even if it was a high-speed movement, it was impossible that there would not be even an oscillation of the air.

Shion told herself not to be fooled by Dagruel’s bluff.

But if this was—

Hmph, what’s the point in even thinking about it? At that time, I’ll simply have to scatter gracefully!

—Shion cleared her mind.

If the answer was as bad as Shion imagined, then admitting it would be the same as losing. She decided that there was no point in even thinking about it, since further protests would be pointless.

With Luminas-sama behind me, it is my duty to analyze Dagruel’s strength, even if only a little!

This bold decisiveness was one Shion’s strengths.

Shion let out a roar and fully immersed herself in combat mode.

Her body, optimized with the Unique Skill ‘Cook,’ helped Shion increase her strength beyond her existence value.

Shion’s body was made highly suitable for close combat with ‘Infinite Regeneration,’ surpassing even that of a giant. Physically immortal, she would not die unless her ‘heart core’ was shattered.

Even now, Shion was responding to her wishes by easily accepting forces beyond the limits of her body.

The full force of her blow in that state was so great that it was almost to the ultimate realm.

Shion exposed her full power from the very first move, intending to bury Dagruel.

“Oh no! Get everyone out of here!! This whole area will be wiped out!!”

Gadra, who had been looking around for cover, shouted, and in response, Shion's group quickly evacuated.

Immediately after that, Shion slashed at Dagruel.

Without paying any attention to her surroundings, Shion's consciousness focused only on Dagruel.

Dagruel, however, remained steadfast.

He looked at Shion with a pitiful gaze—

“I guess that’s all there is to it.”

—and muttered to himself.

And then there was a result.

At the moment Shion's sword made contact with his head, it was held in place by an invisible pressure.

“—Wha!?”

Between Shion and Dagruel, there was a wall of compressed fighting aura. It protected Dagruel and blocked Shion's sword.

The fighting aura was extremely dense, enough to blow away Shion's spirit. Because of this, Shion's slashes couldn't even touch Dagruel.

At this point, it was obvious that the current Shion was no match for him. Her defeat was certain.

“As expected, you were not even qualified to stand before me.”

Shion's eyes widened in surprise, and she suddenly stopped moving.

Dagruel did not miss it, but there was no need to take advantage of the opportunity, so he remained calm and did not move.

He simply told her gently.

“My only aim is Luminas. I won’t say anything bad, so don’t get in my way.”

Shion was not convinced by this admonition.

Burning with more fighting spirit, she began to challenge Dagruel.



Thus, battles had begun in various locations.

The Dagruel side was currently in the lead.

In such a situation, Ultima was fighting a desperate battle next to Shion.

“Isn’t this strange? Why are you so unconcerned when my nuclear magic: Nuclear Cannon is hitting you directly?”

Even if she was showing her frustration with Fenn, she couldn't currently afford to be as relaxed as her expression appeared.

Ultima did not like to admit it, but Fenn was strong.

Even now, she was using her Ultimate Skill ‘Poison King Samael’ to enhance the power of Nuclear Cannon, adding a ‘deadly poison’ effect, yet Fenn did not seem to care.

“I don’t know. It must be tough to be a weakling; you need to work hard and learn some tricks to even be able to fight.” Fenn laughed mockingly.

“So annoying, even though you’re just a brat.”

Ultima was calmly analyzing the battle situation.

She had not thought that she could beat Fenn from the start, and it was simply a matter of not losing.

However, there was something strange going on here.

Just like the magic used now, there was a sense of frustration that could not be explained simply by the difference in their abilities.

It was as if something had been overlooked.

And then, she suddenly remembered that there had been an interesting report.

That’s right, it was as if the magic had been drowned out—that’s what Gadra had said

The meteorite attack had not been as successful as expected. She initially thought it was because of the giants’ superior regenerative abilities...

Come to think of it, the damage wasn’t as bad as they thought it would be, right? Or rather, it seems that only the low-ranked warriors were injured...

They were weak and were either injured or killed—it was not unnatural if she only looked at it from that point. However, it was unnatural if one really thought about it, the fact that there was no one who appeared to be injured from among the elite warriors.

It’s as if the magic didn’t work...?

That was the idea that came to mind.

No way, no way, no way—Ultima’s instincts sounded a warning bell.

If that was true—

Ultima began to grow impatient; she had to let Luminas know as soon as possible.

Around that time...

Shion continued to attack even though she understood that she could not communicate with Luminas.

It could no longer even be called a battle.

It was like an infant throwing a tantrum, and Dagruel didn’t seem to have any respect for her.

Still, Shion did not give up because she believed that Luminas had a plan.

Shion and Luminas had been getting along surprisingly well.

In a way, it could be said Shion’s cooking had only become decent because of Luminas.

That is why Shion trusted Luminas unconditionally.

“Good grief, you just never give up. No matter how many times you repeat this, you won’t even be able to scratch my skin.”

“Keep talking! The warm-up exercise is finally over, so it’s time to get serious!!”

As if not to lose her spirit, Shion tried to slash at Dagruel again.

However—

“I said you’re too naïve!!”

Dagruel’s roar suddenly stopped her from making such a move.

Just by hearing Dagruel’s voice, Shion became unable to move as if in paralysis.

Dagruel calmly walked up to the motionless Shion and then shook his clenched fist towards her.

With just that, the corner of the Long Wall where Shion and the others had been standing came crumbling down.

Even 2,000 years of history was powerless against that violence.

And—not to mention Shion, who took the direct hit...

It was not a sad story, but merely the natural law of survival of the fittest.

It was simply a case of the absolute strong using violence to eliminate those who stood in the way of their will.

Thus, Dagruel’s victory was all but assured—but Shion had a smile on her face. It was because Shion’s eyes caught the light of a magic circle shining at Dagruel’s feet.

And the next moment...

“You are the one who’s naïve!”

A dignified shout was released with a force that seemed to blow away the dust that had been flying around in the air.

A beautiful and radiant girl in a jet-black dress appeared with a sweet rose-like fragrance.

The silver-haired girl who fluttered down in front of Shion was Demon Lord Luminas, the ruler of this land. She was staring at the Demon Lord Dagruel with her gold and silver heterochromatic eyes which held an intelligent will.

And then, without a moment’s delay, she completed the trap that had been set.



“Now perish. ‘Sanctuary Disintegration’⁴⁶!!”

Filled with the deadly intent to kill, it was the crystallization of the prayers of the people of the Holy City—that would have sounded good, but in reality, this was the product of Demon Lord Luminas’ ability, ‘the Secret of Faith and Grace,’ which had caused a limit break in the computational domain and gathered the sacred power of the congregation.

The greater the number of believers, the greater the power that could be gathered. It took some time, but it was well worth it.

The fact that the most powerful anti-personnel magic could be increased in range was an astonishing feat. With the strongest ‘Disintegration’ unleashed in this way, even a giant like Charybdis could be obliterated in an instant.

Dagruel, who had been caught off guard, had nowhere to run and had to take a direct hit from ‘Sanctuary Disintegration.’

“Hmph, you let your guard down, Dagruel. Guys like you create an opening the moment you are sure of your victory.

Dagruel had gotten more chances than she expected. Luminas was worried that Shion might have been killed if the situation had continued.

No matter how powerful Dagruel was, a direct hit of ‘Disintegration’ would kill him. However, Dagruel’s defensive membrane of fighting aura was so thick that it was difficult to break through it.

That is why she set up a maximized ‘Disintegration’ that could envelop Dagruel.

Luminas did not like the idea of hiding and watching, but she had no choice but to do so in order to win the war. Luminas had been observing the war situation for a long time, patiently waiting for the right moment to make a move.

That patience paid off, and she was rewarded with the best result.

“Don’t take this personally.”

Luminas was confident of her victory and sent her best wishes to Dagruel.

If Luminas and Dagruel were to fight head-on, the odds of Luminas winning were very small. Knowing this, Luminas did not consider it cowardly to carry out this strategy.

She had planned in advance so that she could win, and she would win. This was her way of life.

She showed her most powerful blow against Dagruel, who had been caught off guard, without even revealing her secret moves. It was a perfect strategy, and if that was not enough, there was no other way.

That was why—

“Hm, well that’s true. Did I let my guard down too? But it doesn’t matter. Because I have not been damaged.”

⁴⁶“聖域型極大靈子崩壊(サンクチュアリディスインテグレーション)”→ Sanctuary-type Maximal Spiritron Collapse (Sanctuary Disintegration)

—Those words made her freeze.
Luminas's lucid mind correctly recognized the impossible reality.
In other words, Dagruel was truly unharmed.
That made one fact clear.
“Luminas, is it over now? Then I guess it's my turn next.”
That's right.
If they failed to defeat Dagruel with their current attack, there would be no way for Luminas and her side to win.
“Watch out! If you're not careful, you will die instantly.”
Dagruel's declaration signaled the beginning of the time of despair.



The one-on-one battle between Albert and Glassord had intensified.

The area around them was wide open in a circle, as if nobody else could be caught in the middle of it.

But that kind of thing did not matter to them.
They recognized each other as their rivals and were enjoying the battle.
“Kukakakakaka! I am impressed with your skill. To be able to cross swords with a man of your caliber is a credit to your military prowess!”
“This power is not mine. This armor given to me by our god Rimuru-sama lends me strength. If I had remained as I was before, I would have already been defeated, unable to withstand the pressure of your sword.”
“Hah! Don't be modest! Even among the titans, there are few who can match me. To be able to use that armor is proof that you are first-class.”

Albert coolly accepted Glassord's compliments.
In fact, it was Albert's own ability that was bringing out the performance of the mythical-grade armor. The fact that Albert was not prideful because of it proved that he was not satisfied with his skills, and it was also a strength of his that he did not get disturbed by the words of his enemies.

Hm, as expected of him.
Glassord was also impressed.
In a momentary battle of swords, the one whose mind was disturbed first would lose. Deceiving the enemy with words was simply another fine tactic.
Then, as if moving on, Glassord continued his words.
“Nevertheless, why do you follow such a man?”
“—What are you trying to say?”

“If you have built up that much strength, there is no need to follow a weak immortal king (skeleton). It is true that his ‘necromancy’ is superior, but the true strength of a warrior is in their own body.”

He chided Albert in an agitated manner while brandishing his greatsword.

His words were never meant to be true but were intended to provoke Albert into a fit of rage. Emotional turbulence would lead to mistakes, which would immediately lead to death. This was also a tactic of Glassord’s.

Albert was not pleased to see a true warrior go to such lengths. And yet, his expression did not change at all—

“You seem to have misunderstood. It is true that I am Adalmann-sama’s escort and the one in charge of the vanguard. However, you have forgotten something, haven’t you?—Adalmann-sama is one of the Twelve Guardian Lords recognized by our god—”

“Hm?”

“Don’t you see? In other words, he is stronger than me.”

Albert’s attitude was one of straightforward honesty

With his own words denied, Glassord muttered a ‘Huh?’ and raised an eyebrow.

However, he said nothing more and held his greatsword up in a poised position.

He recognized that Albert was not someone he could play tricks with.

If so, that was a pity.

“It seems unavoidable. Although I have found a wonderful opponent, this battle is not a game. I have a duty to perform as well, so it’s time to get serious.”

Glassord was not insulting Albert by cutting corners. He had been making full use of little tricks to enjoy the momentary battle with Albert, but he was also fighting for his life.

But now that all the tricks and deceptions had failed him, he had to put aside his obstinacy and defeat him head on.

Glassord made up his mind with simple and clear thinking.

Glassord was a warrior by nature, and his skill-level was that of a master. This was because he had honed his skills without relying on just his strength. It was not because he had been weak from the beginning, but rather because it was what he desired.

In other words, his true power had been sealed within his beloved sword, the greatsword.

Now, it had been released.

The change was instantaneous. The sword was now a part of Glassord.

Albert had no way of knowing it, but Glassord’s existence value, which was less than 2 million, had then swelled to 10 million.

Even Albert was blindsided by this change.

Kuh, I should have tried to win the battle earlier; even if I had to force myself...

Albert thought this bitterly as soon as he saw Glassord’s swordsmanship. However, he also understood that it would have been a mistake. If he had done so, he would have been defeated before even seeing Glassord’s true aura.

There was only one correct answer.

He would have to repeat the same battles they had been fighting, head-on and honestly.

“There is no shortage of an opponent!!”

“That should be my line.”

The fierce clash of swords began once again.

Albert was overwhelmingly at a disadvantage. Like a willow caught in a storm, Albert could only fend off Glassord’s fury.

However, Albert’s eyes showed no signs of giving up.

The battle began to heat up, and soon the two of them were paying no attention to their surroundings, focusing only on their swords.



Adalmann appeared to have been knocked unconscious when he hit the ground.

It may have been a momentary event in terms of time, but on the battlefield, this would have been a fatal blunder. Grateful for his good fortune, Adalmann prioritized his understanding of the situation.

Without going back to his memory of what happened, he recognized that he had been hit by Fenn’s blow.

It was a despairing force.

Adalmann survived because gehenna dragon Wenti protected him and together they took the impact. And the reason why he had not been chased down was because Ultima had come to his rescue.

Even so, Fenn was one to be feared.

All the ‘Multilayer Barriers’ that Adalmann had put up were broken through, and only one defensive measure had been effective. Without that defense, Adalmann would have been mortally wounded by a single blow.

It is strange to say that my already dead body has been mortally wounded. Even so, the magic ‘Barriers’ I was good at, rather than being broken, this is ...

Adalmann felt that he had been ignored.

Incidentally, the remaining ‘Barrier’ was not a magical one, but a protective coating of fighting aura. Without it, Adalmann’s ‘Barriers’ would not have been able to be used. Without them, Adalmann might have ascended to heaven.

Although it could be considered as a push of force, it seemed more natural to think that Adalmann had been penetrated with something. If so, the secret of Fenn’s power became clear.

I see...I didn’t think it was possible, but it does occur to me. It seems that there is no doubt that the elite titans possess ‘Magic Nullification.’

That was the answer that Adalmann came up with.

It was the same as Ultima's view, and it was the correct answer.

Adalmann no longer doubted it to be true.

It would explain the low impact of the extreme magic and the fact that his own defenses had been ignored.

Even if he was wrong, it wouldn't matter.

Adalmann was not bothered by the fact that he could not use magic against the giants.

Either way Adalmann's mana had already been exhausted. It did not matter if the enemy had 'Magic Nullification' or not, since it was difficult for him to use magic anymore.

Adalmann, who was supposed to be dying, stood up as if nothing was wrong.

Every bone in his body was cracked and his holy robes were covered in mud.

Still, Adalmann remained unconcerned and looked to Fenn who was fighting Ultima.

As expected of Miss Ultima. She seems to have already realized that her magic does not work. Moreover, I'm amazed that she has managed to make it an even match with such a big difference in power.

To be precise, they were not evenly matched. Even a single direct hit would have made Ultima unable to stand up.

Ultima was courageously attacking repeatedly without fearing such a situation. It was precisely because of this that Ultima was able to fight against an enemy whose existence value was more than twenty times greater than her own.

However, the limit seemed to be approaching.

Adalmann had no time to be complacent. The reason why he was not panicking was because he knew that he would be of no use to them if he continued this way.

Exhausted mana and dying bones—that is how one would describe the current Adalmann.

If that was the case, he had better do something before going to help.

"Wenti, are you okay?"

"Yes, I was caught off guard—"

Wenti quietly took human form and answered Adalmann's question. She had decided that the damage was too severe and that she should recover even if she had to use her trump card.

Just once a day, Wenti could activate her 'super recovery' by changing her physical configuration. From dragon form to human form, or vice versa. Either way, it allowed her to ignore even mortal wounds. In this case, by transforming into human form, she was able to erase the intense damage she had taken on Adalmann's behalf.

Adalmann was aware of this power, so he was not surprised and continued the conversation.

"Thank you for saving my life."

"I'm glad you're safe."

"But now we have a problem."

"What do you mean by that?"

"It appears that magic doesn't work on him. At this rate, Miss Ultima is in danger."

"I see."

Fenn's energy amount was so extraordinary that it was reckless to challenge him in a straight-

forward manner. For Wenti, who had been thinking of using magic as a support, Adalmann's words came as quite a shock.

Adalmann, however, remained unperturbed.

It was hard to believe that he had used to be a priest. He evaluated Fenn as if he were a researcher.

"That giant is too strong. Even if we could use magic, it would be difficult to defeat him."

Adalmann plainly spoke the truth.

His combat speed, destructive power, and defensive power. All of them were first-rate, and his presence alone was comparable to that of True Dragon. Even if they attacked him with their meager force, they would be crushed.

Naturally, the same was true for Adalmann's magic.

If so, said Adalmann, then they needed to change their approach.

"Oh dear. It seems that it's time for my well-trained body to make its appearance for the first time in a long time."

"Huh?"

Wenti loved and respected her master Adalmann, but those words could not go unheard. She let out a questioning voice as if to ask 'Did he hit his head? He has a crack in his head, so I wonder if he is conscious? Perhaps he is not in his right mind? Or maybe he is talking in his sleep while dreaming...' She looked at Adalmann with suspicion.

It was only natural.

Let alone a well-trained body, Adalmann was nothing but bones.

What was this skeleton talking about?

As if to answer Wenti's question, Adalmann spoke to her in a frank manner.

"I didn't mention it. Although I held the position of high priest, my real job was something else."

"Y-Yes..."

"Actually, I was a Sacred Fist Master, which was the highest rank for priests and warriors."

"Is that so?"

There was no need for Adalmann to fight in close combat because he had Albert, who was an excellent escort and could play the role of a vanguard. So, before he knew it, he had become a rearguard and a healer.

This was because it was more efficient, but that did not mean that Adalmann abandoned his abilities. He was still active as a fist fighter.

The fighting aura which saved his life was proof of this.

"When I fought you, I didn't think it would be effective against you who are not humanoid, so I didn't have the chance to show you my techniques."

"O-Oh I see..."

Wenti was at a loss for a response.

She had known him for hundreds of years, but this was the first time hearing this truth.

Or rather, if he had such special skills, there should have been more occasions to make use

of them.

Even Wenti, who admired Adalmann, knew of a few unacceptable stories here and there.

“It seems that you have been convinced.”

“Eh, no. But that...eh? Wait a minute!?”

“Is there a problem?”

“Uh, aren’t there a lot of things?”

“Hohoh. What are the specifics?”

Wenti was at a loss to be asked such a question, but she at least had to ask this one, so she spun out her words.

“I certainly don’t think so, but can it be that you are planning to face that giant with your bare hands?” Wenti asked, hoping he’d deny it.

She had known Adalmann for a long time but had never seen him in physical training once.

No, she didn’t even see the point for a skeleton to work out...

I didn’t matter if he used to be a Sacred Fist Master or not...

Fenn was too powerful of an opponent to challenge with such uncertain information...

In short, Wenti was not enthusiastic about this.

And yet, Adalmann was determined.

“Fufufu, that’s a foolish question. I am a fist fighter, so it is only natural that I use my bare hands, right? Do you still have doubts?”

That’s not what I meant—is what Wenti wanted to retort, but all she could manage was a “No, nothing...”

Adalmann’s momentum was too overwhelming

I see. I now understand that he was deceived by his former allies. Adalmann-sama seems intelligent, but unexpectedly—

She stopped that line of thought and turned her eyes to the rampaging Fenn.

Now that things had come to this point, she would have to trust in the lord whom she loved and respected.

Although it became doubtful whether she truly respected him, Wenti decided to entrust everything to Adalmann.

“Very well then. I’ll tell you what we’re going to do. Magic doesn’t seem to work, so we’ll hit him with physics. This is the only way.”

Wenti wanted to go home just by hearing this. But she persevered and listened to the next part of the plan.

“Of course, your breath will not work either. This is because the principle of ‘Magic Nullification’ involves interfering with the spiritrons themselves, which make up magicules.”

Surprisingly decent—though it would be rude to say so, Wenti was surprised to hear that Adalmann was still reliable.

However, what he said next was—

“In other words, we have no means of attack. So here is a suggestion. Let’s combine!!”

“—Yes?”

Adalmann's plan was beyond Wenti's imagination.

Frankly speaking, it made no sense.

Nevertheless, Adalmann took Wenti's reply as an affirmative.

"Fufufu, I knew you would say that!"

"Eh, wait, that's not—"

Wenti's denial came too late.

Or rather, Adalmann, who was not listening to her, invoked his technique without a moment's pause.

"Now is the time to show you the secret technique I've been developing just for this sort of thing!!"

Wenti's body was getting weaker and weaker...

The secret technique that Adalmann invoked was 'assimilation by possession.'

She wondered how long he had been developing this technique, but it seemed to be succeeding without any problems.

Adalmann, as a dead spirit, was as close to a spiritual organism as possible. It could be said that he was possessing his dead body, i.e., his skeleton. By doing so, he could have an influence on this world, but what he was possessing did not necessarily have to be the skeleton.

In this case, he possessed Wenti as if he was possessing his own body.

This alone was not enough to be considered a secret technique.

The question was whether or not their consciousnesses would be mixed.

Unlike possession, in which another person's body was taken away, it was necessary to protect the consciousness of the subject. Because Adalmann had solved this problem, he was proud to call this a secret technique.

"Don't worry. Your consciousness is still intact even though you are possessed, right?"

〈Y-Yes...〉

"Well, I'm a little nervous about separating later..." Adalmann muttered quietly.

Wenti is not the kind of person who would miss that.

Or rather, she heard it perfectly because the two were one in the same.

〈H-Hold on!? Are you really sure about this?〉

Adalmann replied gently to Wenti's panicked voice.

"Even in the worst-case scenario, we can ask our god Rimuru-sama to prepare a new body for us!!"

Wenti thought that this was a brazen statement, but it might be allowed at the very least.

Rimuru also loved experiments, and he would be very happy if they showed him the results of this secret technique.

The real question was which one of them would be transferred to the new body—or rather, before that, Wenti had finally become aware of her current state.

The moment Adalmann possessed Wenti, her body had been transformed significantly.

The magicules of a gehenna dragon and the strong body that supported it were being controlled by Adalmann's steel mentality.

“Hm, this is a nostalgic figure.”

Standing there was a dark-haired young man in a jet-black priestly robe.

It was the young Adalmann from his former days.

Although there were a few differences such as the color of his hair, it was a perfect reproduction of Adalmann’s appearance.

Seeing that figure, Wenti thought to herself.

Huh? Surprisingly good looking!? Adalmann-sama is a respectable man!!

Wenti was unexpectedly self-serving, after all.

«I shall leave the rest to you, Adalmann-sama. I wish you the best!»

Wenti decided to put aside her earlier doubts and trust Adalmann completely. Thus, with a strong body and a huge mana pool, the true Gehenna Lord descended.

Fufu, I’m excited for the first time in a long time. In this state, I may be able to compete with Zegion-dono. Perhaps I might even be able to compete with Miss Ultima.

Adalmann thought as such.

He remembered his comrades who could not even cross fists with him while he was a skeleton. Now, even if he couldn’t win, a battle could still be fought.

Yes, now—

Apart from Benimaru, Diablo, and Zegion, Adalmann was confident that he wouldn’t lose to the other guardian lords.

Adalmann smiled fearlessly and kicked the ground.

His body was light as if he were flying.

Even when he was a skeleton, he had never felt so free from gravity.

Still, the giant Fenn was a formidable enemy. It was suicidal to underestimate him, since even Ultima was on the defensive.

It would have been impossible for Adalmann alone to defeat him. But if he was working with Ultima...

Fortunately, Fenn’s power was real, but his skill-level did not seem to be as high as that of Glassord who was fighting against Albert. He had not been able to kill Ultima yet because he was unable to handle the energy level of a True Dragon.

In that case, there is a chance for victory—Adalmann thought confidently.

“Let’s aim for a complete and overwhelming victory, not just a tactical victory to buy time.”

«Adalmann-sama, of course it is possible!»

Wenti also responded in a friendly manner, although the basis for her reasoning was unsure.

It was an exchange of a like-minded master and servant.

“That’s right, that’s absolutely correct! I am...we are one of Rimuru-sama’s most powerful servants—one of the Twelve Guardian Lords⁴⁷!”

This fact was the source of his confidence.

In the midst of this critical situation, both Adalmann and Wenti were running across the

⁴⁷Mentioned in previous volumes, but they are sometimes also referred to as the “Twelve Chaos Guardian Lords” or the “Twelve Patrons” or etc.

land happily.



Damn it, I knew it! Ultima wanted to curse at him.

She was bitterly convinced that Fenn could not be affected by magic.

Worst of all, the plan that Ultima and Luminas had made was to eliminate Dagruel with the most powerful ‘Disintegration.’

Even though she wanted to tell her that this was not the way to go, Fenn was not so naive as to allow her to do so. In the end, Ultima witnessed the light pillar of ‘Disintegration’ shining in the distance, realizing that the operation had failed.

“The insectars also had someone who could nullify magic, but this is different.”

“Hahahahaha!! So you noticed. Our ‘Magic Nullification’ is an anti-magic guard. Because it blocks the movement of spiritrons, no matter what kind of magic is used, it won’t work!”

“How kind of you.” Ultima replied with annoyance and sarcasm.

Magic was a demon’s strongest weapon, so giants were also their natural enemies. It appeared to be a characteristic of only the elites, but the compatibility was so bad that it was almost laughable.

—*Shit!! Guy definitely should have known about it. I wish he would have told me...*

She inwardly complained, but Guy was not there to hear it.

It was now that Ultima truly understood the importance of “Hō-Ren-So⁴⁸ (report, communicate, and consult)” that Rimuru had always talked about.

All that said, it was too late for that now.

She could not give up at this point and had to find some way to tackle the problem. Ultima realized that the clue was in the ‘Nihilistic Parade’ used by Gadra.

The reason why the old man went out of his way was because it was dangerous. Why is that?

The answer was obvious.

Because it had worked.

It had to do with the nature of magic.

Magic rewrote laws by influencing magicules, and since spiritrons were a part of magicules, it was inevitable that ‘Magic Nullification’ would be an anti-magic guard. However, among the dark magics, nihilism in particular had the characteristic of invoking the void of hell and

⁴⁸“Hō-Ren-Sō” is a Japanese abbreviation for a commonly used approach to decision-making in Japan. The ‘Hō’ is short for ‘hōkoku’ meaning report/reporting. The ‘Ren’ is short for ‘renraku’ meaning contact/communicating. The ‘Sō’ is short for ‘sōdan’ meaning consulting/discussing. In Japan, this was coined as a homophone with the word for spinach—‘hōrensō’.

making any energy disappear on contact. That is why ‘Magic Nullification’ could not nullify it.

This was already a certainty.

Ultima did not hesitate to limit her attacks to nihility magic.

“Die, dark magic: Nihilistic Banish—”

Ultima’s nihility magic attacked Fenn.

“Tch, such a pain in the ass. Demons really are good at harassing people!!”

Fenn’s fighting aura drowned out the void but failed to do any damage. ‘Nihilistic Banish’ was the most powerful dark magic and the counterpart of ‘Disintegration,’ but to Fenn, it possessed no more significance than mere harassment.

Even so, it was not meaningless.

Just as a pile of dust could form a mountain, and just as a drop of water could pierce through stone, repeated attacks would eventually bring Fenn down.

There was plenty of time.

Ultima searched for the path to victory and became more and more focused. She intended to repeat her attacks thousands and thousands of times with such precision that not even a single mistake would be allowed.

If Fenn’s attacks hit her even once, Ultima would be defeated. That was how big the gap was. However, speed, the most important factor in combat, was the only factor not so different between the two of them.

That is how the battle between Ultima and Fenn was established.

There was another reason.

It was the difference in combat experience.

Ultima had been trained in combat against Zegion, an overwhelmingly powerful opponent. This was put to good use, and she was accustomed to dealing with strong opponents.

The difference in existence values between Ultima and Zegion was not even by a factor of two. One would think that Fenn, with a difference of more than 20 times, would be more dangerous, but this was not the case.

To use an analogy, Zegion’s attack was like a spear. Insta-kill, and if you were pierced, you would die. On the other hand, Fenn’s attack was like a huge hammer. It had great power, and even a single hit could do a great deal of damage.

However, that was only the difference between a point and a surface.

The threat level remained the same even if the amount of energy required to kill the enemy was exceeded. Fenn’s attack was more powerful than Zegion’s, but it was no different from Zegion’s in the sense that it would kill you anyway.

Thinking of it that way made things easier.

She was worried about Luminas and the others but had already given up on that. There was nothing she could do by worrying about them, so she had already driven them out of her mind.

Ultima even regained the luxury of humming and began to play around with Fenn.

And then Adalmann returned.

«Miss Ultima, sorry to have kept you waiting.»

〈Who are—no way, Bone?〉
〈Hahahah, it's Adalmann!〉
〈Well, okay then. You know what you have to do, right?〉
〈Of course I do!〉

With high-speed communication via Thought Acceleration, the division of roles between the two was instantly determined.

Adalmann would play as the vanguard against Fenn, while Ultima would follow up with dark magic: Nihilistic Banish to reduce Fenn's stamina.

Now that they had come this far, it was just a matter of work.

“A wild brawler with nothing but brute strength is no match for us, right?”

Although it was a premature declaration of victory, Ultima said this with a wicked sneer.



The earth trembled.

The absolute tyranny of Demon Lord Dagruel had dominated the battlefield.

‘This is impossible’ was the honest impression of Demon Lord Luminas Valentine.

Her plan had been to kill Dagruel by using her most powerful secret technique on the first attack. The moment it did not work, defeat was inevitable.

‘Disintegration,’ which could turn any opponent to dust, should have killed Dagruel. Even the ‘True Dragons’ would have needed to be reborn in this life.

And yet, the result was disastrous.

Dagruel’s ‘Magic Nullification,’ a cheat of a trait, had completely ruined her chances of winning.

At that point, Luminas was able to foresee what would happen.

The battle between Albert and Glassord continued.

At first glance, the two fighters appeared to be evenly matched. However, if she observed their battle through the Ultimate Skill ‘Lustful King Asmodeus,’ the situation showed a different side.

In contrast to the light shining brightly from Glassord, the light of Albert was so faint that it looked as if it would disappear at any moment. Although the amount of life force that each player could cut was very small, the difference in the total amount of life force implied the victory or defeat.

Before Albert could cut down Glassord, the winner would be decided.

Albert would lose the battle.

However, Albert could not be blamed for this. On the contrary, Albert should be praised

for his excellent swordsmanship in a match against the King of Swords.

Glassord was also a master swordsman.

Taking the difference in energy into consideration, it could even be said that Albert's skill-level was superior to Glassord's.

However, that was not enough to change the situation.

At this rate, Albert's defeat was only a matter of time.

On the other hand, Ultima and the others were fighting a good battle against Fenn. The battle was growing increasingly fierce, but it had already become a game of attrition. It was beyond just doing a good job; she was genuinely impressed with Rimuru's subordinates.

The circumstances of Adalmann and the others were unknown, but he had integrated with the gehenna dragon Wenti. Thanks to that, he seemed to have gained a strong body and his magicule count had increased significantly, but still, against the 'Crazed Fists' Fenn, who is comparable to a True Dragon, the difference was obvious.

She especially had a lot to think about with Ultima since she had been a long-time tormentor of Luminas.

She felt a sense of admiration for her, but at the same time, she also felt a sense of bitterness at how troublesome she was.

Luminas was experiencing mixed feelings.

For Luminas, who could quantify life forces, the gap between the two appeared to be hopelessly wide. And yet, they did not give up, and even showed a margin of enjoyment in the battle.

But this was all based on mental concentration, as if treading on thin ice.

In Luminas' vision, she saw Adalmann, who had abandoned his whole-body defense and concentrated his energy only on the areas of contact to cope with Fenn's attacks.

The same was true of Ultima. Ultima was more stable than Adalmann because she could manage energy more naturally, but it would all be the same after a single blow.

In order to make up the difference in energy density, she was concentrating all of her power in one point. It was such an amazing technique that it could even be called a divine art.

However, this technique would not last for a long time, and a momentary lapse of guard could be fatal.

Nevertheless, it went without saying how hopeless it must be; to have to aim for wearing down the enemy's stamina in a prolonged battle.

It was a miracle that the battle was even being fought.

Furthermore, Fenn had not made use of Gleipnir. Once it was in full force, there was a fear that the situation would change drastically.

And finally, there was Shion.

Shion, who had been knocked down in front of Luminas, had risen again and was challenging Dagruel.

She could sense her determination not to retreat, no matter how many times she was beaten. However, it was brutal.

The difference in fighting ability between Dagruel and Shion was so great that Luminas, who could read it in the numbers, could not see anything but recklessness in Shion's actions.

Shion was only alive because she was under Luminas' protection. Otherwise, she would have almost certainly died immediately.

Even if Shion had an immortal body, if she was not given a chance to regenerate, she would lose her body. Although it was possible to regenerate from the soul, if not only the material body but also the spiritual body was lost, the "heart core" of the exposed astral body would be shattered, leading to death.

Luminas was preventing this from happening.

'Don't be reckless'—Luminas wiped her cold sweat as she watched Shion.

Dagruel's sons were in a panic, flustered and trying to stop Shion.

"Ah, Sister! It's impossible!"

"Shion-sama! After all, our father—!"

"Th-This is dangerous. You should just run away..."

But Shion was not afraid.

"Shut up!! Rimuru-sama will not be defeated. In other words, I won't lose either!!"

Though this was not very logical at all, Luminas thought that it was just like Shion to reason that way.

And, perhaps because of those words, even Dagruel's sons were enlivened.

"Uuuoooooooo! Faaather!! We are your opponents!"

"We've got no choice. I'm reaaaady, I've decided!!"

"Let's do it! And then we'll get praised!"

Having made up their minds as they said, they headed towards Dagruel.

"Hoh? You seem to have grown up to be able to stand before me."

Dagruel appeared to be happy, but he had no intention to take it easy on them, and the three of them were defeated in the next instant. They were so badly injured by a single blow that they could not even stand up.

They were still alive, so they must have been treated with a little bit of mercy.

This is impossible. There is no way we can win—

Halfway to the point of resignation, Luminas heard Shion's roar.

"Fufufu, good job you guys. That was good spirit. I'll take care of the rest, so you can just rest there!!"

Shion herself was seriously injured by Dagruel.

Even though she was already healed, the difference in strength between the two was still very great...

Even so, Shion stood tall and did not give in.

Her appearance was reminiscent of a very nostalgic scene.

It reminded Luminas of the Hero who saved her in the past.

“Let me help you!!” Gadra said to Shion, following behind her.

But there was no point.

Shion and her team’s attacks could not reach Dagruel, let alone even touch him.

This was a crossroads of judgement.

Should she continue to fight toward defeat, or should she run away from the battle and work to make a comeback?

A wise person would not have had to choose.

Yes, certainly—

Certainly, the old Luminas would have retreated without hesitation.

There was no point in fighting a battle that could not be won.

The country could be rebuilt, and there was no reason to stay here.

There was no reason for Luminas and the others, who had eternal lifespans, to fight a life-or-death battle.

However—

Is that really okay? Is abandoning Shion and the others truly the correct answer?

Luminas was at a loss.

Since Dagruel’s target was Luminas, there was a better chance that Shion and the others would be saved if Luminas retreated at this point.

She thought as much, but she also understood that this was an excuse.

She could not lie to herself.

Shion would not give up, just as Ultima and Adalmann would continue to challenge Fenn.

However, since there was no way to win, Shion’s death was certain.

But what if Luminas cooperated here?

Luminas power—with the Ultimate Skill ‘Lustful King Asmodeus,’ she could control Life and Death. Even if the others died instantly, they could be resurrected as long as they had Luminas.

If Luminas retreated now, Shion would surely die.

She didn’t want that.

Abandoning my friends, and just running away? Never, I will never accept such an unsightly way of life!! I am the proud Queen of Nightmares!!

And so Luminas, too, had made up her mind.

“Gunther!”

“Here.”

Luminas called out, and Gunther Strauss, her butler-like confidant, appeared like a shadow. Luminas gave the order without even turning around.

“I, as a proud member of the Octagram, intend to share the fate of Shion here.”

“What about the option to run away?”

Gunther advised that there was no shame in running away.

But Luminas laughed it off.

“Running away in disgrace is not befitting of me. Don’t you think so?”
Saying that, she gave a glamorous smile.
It was an alluring smile, not matching the appearance of a beautiful young girl.
Gunther was deeply convinced and remembered.
That’s right, a long time ago, when burying the Divine Ancestor, she had smiled just like this.

Luminas had always clung to life, but this was to keep her promise to her friends.
She was, at her essence, a proud queen.
The Queen of Nightmares Luminas Valentine was not someone who ran away.
The noble reigning vampire princess was a supreme being for Gunther and his comrades.
“—By your will.”
Gunther bowed reverently.
Luminas nodded in return and spoke.
“If I should perish, you may lead the people as the next king.”
Luminas’ declaration was filled with determination and resolve.
Despite this, Gunther remained calm and unmoved. If a steward was someone who obeys their master, Gunther was unmistakably an apostle of Luminas.
“What is a vassal who forsakes his king? There is not a single one of Luminas-sama’s subjects who would be foolish enough to follow such a man.”
“What is that?”
“The evacuation of the people has already begun, but as for me, I am determined to follow the young lady⁴⁹—”
“Mm...”
Luminas was puzzled by this unexpected defiance.
For the first time in his life, Gunther, who had been a faithful confidant of Luminas, disobeyed her orders.
“—When we perish, it will be together.”
Gunther answered and waited for Luminas’ reply, a look of unwavering determination in his eyes.
Luminas was confused, but gradually felt happy before she knew it.
“Hmph, do what you like.” she ordered happily.
I don’t know who he takes after, but he’s an idiot—Luminas laughed happily.

*

⁴⁹He calls her “ojou-sama

“Best of luck to you⁵⁰.”

Gunther bowed and left.

Deciding that he would be no match for Dagruel, he went to help Louis first.

He was as capable as ever—Luminas was impressed by him and then stood next to Shion.

Luminas was wondering if this was the right choice, but she did not regret it.

“It seems that your plan has failed, but are you still not ready to give up?”

“Of course not.”

Luminas nodded her head in annoyance, and the next moment, she asked with a grin.

“By the way Shion, are you sure you don’t want to run away?”

Shion was annoyed at the question.

“Of course!”

The last one standing would be the winner, so even if you couldn’t win, all you had to do was survive.

“It’s really quite simple, isn’t it?”

Shion spoke fearlessly.

Gadra seems to have a headache but did not seem to have any intention to argue.

Even Luminas was stunned by these two.

“In that case, leave the recovery to me. Even if you die instantly, I will revive you on the spot.”

With those words as a cue, the reckless suicidal attacks began.

Shion and Gadra attacked in waves, with Luminas providing support in the rear.

Even though Shion and Gadra were instantly killed by Dagruel’s attack, Luminas was truly reviving them. The power of the ‘Lustful King Asmodeus’ was to be feared, but Luminas’s precise measures were also impressive.

And then there was Gadra.

Thanks to his reincarnation as a mysterious metal demon race, he was able to fight a good fight even against Dagruel, a race that was not able to use magic.

Dagruel’s ‘Magic Nullification’ was versatile, but it was not without its weaknesses. While it was able to cancel out all magic affecting the user, it could not negate all the magic effects on other people’s bodies.

Body reinforcement magic was a good example. In other words, defense barriers and body hardening could be ignored, but already reinforced speed and so on remained unchanged.

Adalmann’s ‘Tempest Meteor’ was an example. The summoned meteorite was erased because it was imaginary matter, but if it had been a real substance, it would have caused a certain amount of damage.

Suppose that a rock of a certain mass was stored in a different space, and then it was dropped with a flight magic spell. It would be impossible to cancel the positional energy given to the rock. In other words, Gadra’s reasoning was that indirect magic could not be canceled.

⁵⁰Gunther uses the term “go buun wo (御武運を)” which essentially means “good luck” but particularly for battle and war. It can also mean “I hope you will survive in war” or “Godspeed.”

And he was right.

Gadra had applied reinforcement magic to his body to fight skillfully. It worked.

While Shion was down, Gadra moved forward.

When Gadra was knocked down, Shion quickly took over.

Although it was an improvised combination, they worked well together as if they were a skilled party.

The most important aspect was undoubtedly Luminas's ability, but it was a strategy that would not have been possible without any of the other participants.

Unfortunately, Dagruel was showing no sign of fatigue...

In front of Luminas, Shion rose up again.

No matter how much she was hurt, she stood up again and again without the fear of death.

To the point of simple straightforwardness, she was determined to do what she could do.

She had trust in Luminas.

She believed that Luminas would bring her back to life even from instant death.

Foul language aside, she was straightforward and simple-minded. That was the great thing about Shion.

However, this was not the case with Gadra.

As soon as he recovered from his near-death experience, all his injuries were healed and not even a trace remained. At first glance, it appeared as if nothing had happened to him as he was unharmed. However, exhaustion was accumulating in Gadra's mind.

Unlike Shion, Gadra was intelligent enough to think about how hopelessly they were fighting, even if he tried not to think about it.

This kind of battle could only be fought with an empty mind. The moment one became conscious of their fears and doubts, mistakes would be triggered.

And moreover, the opponent was Dagruel.

He was a demon lord with a魔力 count similar to Fenn's, and a skill-level only slightly inferior to Glassord's. In terms of overall strength, he was the most dangerous man among the three brothers.

Is it okay to leave things as is, or is there anything else I can even do?

Gadra worried.

Gadra's actions were slightly delayed, and this turned out to be a fatal mistake,

It was a minor delay that could barely even be called a mistake, but Dagruel was not so naive as to miss the opportunity.

No, it was the other way around.

It was correct to say that he had been overlooking him, and now he had stopped playing nice with him anymore.

"Oh dear, I thought you'd be more entertaining, but I guess it's a disappointment."

With a big sigh, Dagruel casually punched Gadra.

Naturally, Luminas would heal him immediately, but Dagruel intervened with a surprising move and prevented her from doing so.



Dagruel stood between Luminas and Gadra.

At this point, even if Luminas tried to heal, there was no way to get through Dagruel.

“You...”

“Am I in the way? I could have done it this way from the beginning, but I thought I’d see more variety, so I let you do what you wanted. I don’t expect you to thank me, but it’s not right for you to resent me.”

Dagruel’s words were true.

From the very beginning, all along, he had been accommodating them. By doing so, Dagruel had been trying to enjoy the fight as much as possible.

He was convinced that he would not lose the moment he made a move.

Dagruel’s power was that great.

Despite this, he had given Luminas and the others a chance because he remembered the words of his best friend, the Divine Ancestor Twilight Valentine.

‘You know that kid is my masterpiece. Unlike the others, she is a bundle of potential.’

The Divine Ancestor used to always boast to Dagruel like that.

Although the Divine Ancestor’s disciples were quite capable, only Luminas was treated differently from the others.

In Dagruel’s eyes, there seemed to be no difference.

In the end, the Divine Ancestor passed away without ever telling him why.

Moreover, his soul had been extinguished by the hands of Luminas, the daughter he loved the most.

The ‘Sanctuary Disintegration’ used earlier was the special magic that had defeated the Divine Ancestor. But even this had not worked on Dagruel.

It seemed that there were no longer anymore “trump cards.”

Even so, Dagruel himself had been playing along with the battle, trying to determine the power of his opponent.

But it didn’t seem to make sense.

Luminas had devoted herself to supporting the team and showed no sign of joining in on the attack.

He showed her a few openings to attack, but she just kept repeating the same attack pattern.

No matter how many times you repeat such childish tricks, there is no way that I will be defeated...

Dagruel felt that he had been taken for a fool. Therefore, he decided that there was no point in playing with them any further. But that did not mean that he stopped being vigilant. It was a rational decision to divide the vanguard and the rear guard.

“You sound as if you were taking it easy on us.”

“That’s a fact.”

Shion was choked up in anger, but Dagruel brushed off her chiding.

“What do—”

“Hm. It seems you don’t understand.”

Dagruel disappeared.

And in the next moment, Shion was silenced by a fist slamming into her abdomen.

The impact felt as if her insides had exploded. It was not a cute bit of violence that would disappear immediately, but rather one that continued to rampage as if coursing through Shion’s internal organs.

With this, restoration magic is meaningless...

Shion felt as such.

In fact, with the remaining destructive energy there, it would be meaningless no matter how much she was restored.

Luminas also saw through this at a glance.

That’s a problem—she bit her lip in frustration.

“How’s that? You must have felt secure in the knowledge that you had someone to protect you, didn’t you?”

“Ggh, wh-what the hell...”

“Hoh, so you are still undeterred. Your spirit is admirable, but determination alone won’t help you.”

Then, Dagruel kicked Shion in the face, seemingly uninterested.

Dagruel had nothing against Shion, and rather liked her. He was going to use this to take away her consciousness so that he would not be disturbed any more.

However, he seemed to have underestimated Shion’s stubbornness.

“R-Ridiculous! This won’t be enough to defeat me ...”

Shion stood up, coughing out blood while smiling fearlessly.

“...Good grief, I must be growing senile. I must apologize for misjudging you.”

He had intended to knock her out so as not to kill her, but that didn’t stop Shion. Dagruel recognized this and stopped going easy on her in the truest sense of the word.

“You would have been a little better off if you had awakened.” Dagruel addressed Shion.

“What are you talking about?”

“It has nothing to do with the dying.”

Dagruel said this as a final gesture and clenched his fists.

Upon seeing this, Luminas shouted.

“No, stop!”

Luminas sensed the change in Dagruel and realized that Shion was in danger.

However, Dagruel scoffed at Luminas.

“This person will die because of your cowardice.”

“Wha—”

Shion tried to argue but was silenced once again by Dagruel's blow.

She was not dead, but unconscious.

Shion was fortunate enough to have survived, and by no means did Dagruel take it easy on her, but it was impossible for her to continue the battle.

Dagruel was relieved that Shion had passed out because he had not wanted to make her suffer, nor did he want to kill her if possible.

Finally, only Luminas and Dagruel remained.

Luminas finally made up her mind.

"Very well. It's one-on-one Dagruel. I will take you on!"

Luminas took a stance toward Dagruel and braced herself.

She felt an inner sense of humor from her own words.

Although she had spoken with her pride as a demon lord, Luminas would be nothing more than a piece of dust to Dagruel.

"Hm. Luminas, show me what it was that Twilight entrusted to you. If you can't do that—die!!"

The next moment, a ferocious fighting aura gushed out from Dagruel's entire body.

Seeing this, Luminas realized just how much she had been taken care of by Dagruel until now,

Dagruel did not feel like he was taking things easy, but if he had been in this condition from the beginning, the battle would have been settled long ago.

He really is a monster. There is no effective way to deal with this, and the only possibility would be to wait for Rimuru to come to our rescue...

Since the secret plan had failed, there was no way to win a head-to-head battle with Dagruel. And yet, Luminas was still standing here.

For a moment, she wondered if she should have run away, but Luminas laughed and knew that was not the case.

Just what kind of demon lord would she be if she had abandoned her friend Shion, Luminas thought.

It's strange. I haven't known Shion as long as I've known Chloe...

She didn't want to fail Shion and the others, and that was why she was still standing here now.

Then she suddenly had a thought.

That Rimuru must also have a lot of difficulties. He has always worked harder than possible to live up to the expectations of his colleagues.

For the very first time, Luminas understood Rimuru's feelings.

Except for Guy, Rimuru was the only one who could beat Dagruel.

That, or—

Images of a free-spirited black dragon flashed through Luminas' mind.

It's just my imagination. It is impossible for me to expect anything from him!

Contrary to such thoughts, a smile naturally appeared on Luminas' lips.

Dagruel saw this and looked at Luminas with a curious expression on his face.

“Are there any more tricks to this at this stage?”

“Hmph, if I had such a thing, I would have used it long ago!”

Luminas puffed out her chest with pride.

At least until the very end, she would defend her pride as a demon lord by challenging the strong and never running away.

—*By some chance, do I also believe? That someone will help us this time, just like in the past...*

In the past crisis, Chloe had helped her.

It was a miraculous event that couldn’t possibly happen again.

Even Luminas knew that such a convenient story could exist.

Yet the reason she could think that way was because she had been inspired by the way Shion and Ultima never lost hope.

That must be it—Luminas thought.

Things must be really tough on that Rimuru. Even those who have nothing to do with this, such as myself, can't help but get their hopes up...

It was strange that she could laugh when she thought about it.

“—? Have you come up with a plan?”

“No. It’s unlike me, but I just thought that I’d try struggling to the very end.”

“Hoh.”

“Then, let’s go!”

With a great deal of spirit, Luminas opened up her mana to the max.

At the same time, she imbued Night Rose⁵¹ with the power of ‘Lustful King Asmodeus.’

Luminas’s “sure-kill” fighting style was to take away the opponent’s life force with her Death powers, and to convert it into her own energy with her Life powers. In this state, a slight difference in strength was not a problem, and the longer the battle went on, the more advantageous it became for her. If the main purpose of battle between elite fighters was to deplete the opponent’s stamina, Luminas was quite excellent.

Seeing such Luminas, Dagruel was also satisfied.

Even though they were his enemies, they were brilliant.

They were wonderful people no matter who he looked at.

They were reliable when allies, and now that they were enemies, they made Dagruel’s heart soar.

Truly, it's a shame to kill her.

However, he had to avenge the man who was his best friend.

By doing so, Dagruel would be able to fulfill his destiny as a God Killer.

This was the secret agreement he had made with Feldway through Fenn.

Dagruel cooperated with Feldway’s ambition to revive Veldanava. After that, the real work

⁵¹Night Rose is her mythical-grade sword.

would begin.

Moreover, the secret agreement with Feldway did not end there.

If Luminas was defeated, the entire western lands would be under the control of the giants. If the Great Jura Forest was overrun, that land would also belong to Dagruel.

Dagruel's true feelings were 'I can't stop here,' because it meant that he would be able to rampage to fulfill his vocation and satisfy his territorial ambitions. Before then, his instincts had already started to run wild—.

Dagruel decided that no further farce was necessary.

"To begin with—" Dagruel began to speak.

At that moment, everything stopped.

All acts of fighting on this battlefield had lost their meaning.

"—Once you've done this, you guys can't do anything, can you?"

Dagruel's murmur was the only sound that echoed through the world before fading away.

"—!?"

In a world where only consciousness remained, Luminas was perplexed.

"Hoh, so you're still conscious. Then all that boasting about his masterpiece wasn't for show."

Dagruel's "voice" held a ring of admiration, but a soul-chilling fear struck Luminas.

Luminas was wise and knowledgeable about all things. Normally she might have overlooked this, but now that she was focused on the battle, she understood what was going on.

She understood it.

—Time...has been stopped—

There was despair.

From the very beginning, there was no way to defeat Dagruel...

Despite understanding this, Luminas' thirst for life was not lost in the face of these circumstances.

Gathering information in order to survive—all this led to was more despair.

Luminas continued to struggle, even as she fell into the illusion of being swallowed by the bottomless depths of darkness.

Even in the Suspended World, the time of despair does not end.

Luminas closed her eyes in regret.

For the last time, at the very least, I would take that loathsome and irreverent dragon in my own hands and—

And, just when Luminas thought that far.

She thought she heard a loud laugh.

It happened the moment that Dagruel's fist was about to reach Luminas.

Luminas's thinking stopped there.

"Kuaahahaha! I am here!"

Luminas understood what that voice meant, and at the same time, she grasped the current situation.

A mighty fist loomed in front of her.

And then, a tanned brown palm caught it.

The evil dragon, who had never been here before, had caught Dagruel's fist that was aiming for Luminas.



—Just as there is no night that does not dawn, so does time move on with the advent of hope—

Just now...

The evil dragon who jumped through time and space, the invincible Veldora whom Luminas hated yet hoped for, had thwarted the attack of the hopelessly powerful Dagruel.

The time of despair had come to an end.

ROUGH SKETCH

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That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

**Chapter
4**

**Battle of the
Sacred Tree**

Chapter 4

Battle of the Sacred Tree

Time has rewound since Veldora's departure—

In order to stop Milim's rampage, I performed a 'Spatial Transportation' and went to the former Eurazania region.

The area that Velzard covered with ice and snow was too difficult to reach directly due to poor visibility. In anticipation of this, we arrived at a point a short distance away from the site.

From there, we followed a straight line, searching for signs.

Because Milim and Velzard were supposed to be clashing, I approached them with caution.

But my thinking was wrong.

And in a bad way...

"Tch, you're earlier than I expected. But it's too late now. Milim, use your power to destroy the Sacred Tree!!"

Not only Milim and Velzard, but also Feldway was there.

Or rather, he appeared to be a different person, so much so that one would wonder if he was truly Feldway.

He had an overwhelming presence.

It was so overwhelming that I doubted I could win even if I were to fight seriously now.

And for some reason, he was haughtily giving orders to Milim.

Milim, however, had undergone a terrible change.

It was unclear and deformed in the video, but up close, her ominous form was obvious.

Upon her back was a pair of jet-black wings. A single red horn was sprouted from her forehead and glowed with iridescent colors. The rest of her bare skin was covered with hard, shining dragon scales of dully changing hues, with mysterious patterns floating on them.

I wondered if this was the true 'stampede' Milim, and at the same time, I sensed a power that almost made me shudder.

Demon Lord Milim, who has manifested as an incarnation of absolute destruction, was truly a being worthy of the title Destroyer.

Why was such a Milim taking orders from someone?

What in the world is going on—

«The ‘Regalia Dominion’ was an ability of the Ultimate Skill ‘Justice King Michael.’ It seems that Feldway has succeeded in controlling Milim.»

Wha?

No, hold on a minute?

As if the rampaging Milim isn’t bad enough, but now she’s being used as a pawn by Feldway!?

That’s already something beyond the worst-case scenario...

«Fortunately, it doesn’t seem like he has complete control. Even though Feldway has turned the entire calculation domain over for Milim’s control, it seems that he is only able to issue simple commands.»

No, no, even that is more than enough.

I’m just lucky he didn’t order her to kill me.

Feldway didn’t seem happy about our appearance, so he was not planning to fight here. He didn’t pay any mind to us, and just gave the order to Milim and left.

«Because Milim’s control is unstable, he may be inflexible. Or perhaps he wants to prioritize the destruction of the Sacred Tree—»

Does that mean that Feldway’s control does not allow him to revoke an order once it has been given?

That was quite possible.

Just the idea of a serious Milim trying to kill me in earnest made me shudder. I should have been glad that it wasn’t the case, but I never thought that something like this would happen.

«It is completely unexpected. The fact that she went out of control means she must have lost her ability to resist...»

I, too, had known that Feldway had a domination system ability, but I never considered the possibility that Milim could be manipulated. Ciel-san could not be blamed alone.

In the first place, Milim should have been very strong against the domination power. She had always said that such a power would not work on her.

If it wasn’t for her rampaging state, it was assumed that the domination would have never succeeded.

No, rather that was what they were aiming for...

«If we let Milim run berserk, the world is in danger of collapsing. However, to remove that worry with Regalia Dominion...it’s a very bad gamble.»

Since Ciel-san is so vague about it, it must have been a strategy that would hardly succeed. Frankly speaking, it would be crazy to do that.
If that's the case, there's no point in worrying about it.
More importantly, what is this Sacred Tree that Feldway had set as Milim's goal?

«It is a divine tree that protects the capital of the Sorcerer's Dynasty of Sarion. It is a tree large enough to hold even a huge city, and seems to play a role in stabilizing the magicules of this world and preventing natural disasters.»

Ciel-san answered my question smoothly.

They're as knowledgeable and reliable as ever, but I couldn't ignore what was just said.

I have never been to Sarion, but it seems that the capital of the country was in a tree—ah, that's not it. I could only picture it vaguely, but if the capital is in the tree, it would be a disaster if said tree was destroyed.

We must stop them, that's all there is to it.

If that's not possible—

If not, we must at least buy enough time to evacuate the residents, or else there's no doubt that it would surely be a catastrophe.

“Hey, hey, this is a troublesome situation.”

Guy expressed his opinion as if it were someone else's business.

This isn't a children's essay, so he should say something more substantial.

“Do you have something to complain about?”

“No, I don't. I'm sorry.”

I don't need that kind of presence detection—I wanted to complain, but I tend to get caught up in things that are too long.

I pulled out of the situation so that we could comfortably do our best.

Rather than thanking me for my response, Guy complained in a disgusted tone.

“Still, that bastard Feldway... he's as sly as ever.”

“Nn?”

“I'm just wondering if it turned out to be a good decision to let you take me along.”

Guy told me that, and I agreed with him.

I was finally able to persuade Guy to come here, but if Guy had not come because he was worried about Ivarage's attack, it would have been a dead end at that point.

Guy was able to deal with Velzard, and I was able to deal with Milim.

If it had been just me...

Whoops, I don't care about such hypotheticals.

There is no time to dawdle. Because Milim is on the move.

Guy naturally went in front of Velzard.

I tried to follow Milim after calling El-tan to let her know what was going on, but for some reason, I couldn't get through to her cell phone.

It was as if she was busy—I had a bad feeling about that.

There was no choice but to follow Milim while contacting Benimaru.

While connecting ‘Telepathy Net’ to Benimaru, I tried desperately to catch up with Milim and launch attacks in an attempt to attract her attention. However, Milim did not care about my attacks.

While they weren’t serious attacks, they were still very powerful.

I had no time to lament.

Milim simply roared, and a mysterious power burst out.

The principle behind it was probably that the sound vibrations from her voice interfered with and broke molecular bonds. I managed to escape, but a river dried up in the aftermath.

It would be too dangerous to mess with Milim unwisely. I thought so, but at this rate, I knew that the collapse of Sarion was imminent unless something was done.

While wondering what I was going to do, I felt Benimaru and I connect through a ‘thought.’

«Although the probability of success is low, I’ve come up with a plan.»

There was no more time for hesitation.

With the extraordinary speed of flight, dozens of times faster than the speed of sound, we were very close to reaching Sarion.

Even if the success rate of the strategy was low, I had no choice but to bet everything on Ciel-san.

And so, I came to the usual conclusion, informing Benimaru about the situation and ordering him to carry out the operation despite my doubts.



Sorcerer’s Dynasty of Sarion was currently in an unprecedented crisis.

In such a situation, the Celestial Emperor Elmesia asked her mother, Silvia, in an easygoing tone of voice, while maintaining her normal, nonchalant demeanor.

“So then, do you think Rimu-chi is going to come?”

“It’s not possible. It seems that Demon Lord Milim has gone berserk, and he’s on his way to stop her.”

“Are you kidding me!?”

Elmesia couldn’t hide her surprise as the situation had turned out to be more troublesome than she had imagined.

“Incidentally, it seems that the cause of the problem was Frost Dragon Velzard, so he even brought Demon Lord Guy.”

It was one thing to say that he brought Guy, but only Rimuru could really do such a thing. Understanding this, Elmesia had no choice but to let it slide.

That being said, this would be a problem.

Currently, the capital of Sarion, the city embraced by the Sacred Tree, has been turned into a scene from hell by Jahil's onslaught.

Not only Jahil, but there was even a man who called himself the Three Star Commander Zalario, and the area was in chaos.

"The Sacred Tree's defense system has been reinforced to the limit, but it's still no use at this point..."

Elmesia was worried about the situation.

The Magus was mobilizing all of their resources to deal with the situation, but one after another they were being shot down. Even so, Elmesia felt that it was great that they hadn't yet been destroyed.

Sarion was proud of their Magus, a group of high-ranking military officers who were also known as "pure-blood knights."

They were the ones who were qualified mediators as full-powered representatives of the Celestial Emperor.

Consisting only of those ancestral to the ancient bloodline, they were considered to be the supreme force of the Sorcerer's Dynasty of Sarion—that said, in reality, they were an order of knights composed of those who were compatible with a 'magic cavalry' weapon.

Needless to say, these 'magitech knights'—also known as Magus—were a national secret. The reason why they were called by the same name was to protect the secret from being leaked.

Their overall height was about 5 meters. They had a magical steel exterior and were powered by dragon muscle fibers. It was an intelligence weapon that possessed its own ego and would search for its own match.

The true essence of this weapon could only be displayed while with its rider. Just as the true mastery of spirit users was to assimilate with spirits, these 'magitech knights' were also designed to release their true power only when they were ridden by their masters.

Normally, they were stored in the space of a magical gem that had been processed into a necklace or a bracelet.

As a side note, Kabal and Gido also had them. When they had been confronted with the rampaging Ifrit where they first met Rimuru and his friends, they had been prepared to call upon the Magus.

However, mobilizing the Magus in other nations would be subject to the charge of leaking confidential information, and would surely be a liability for Duke Elalude. Moreover, even if they had launched the Magus, it was uncertain whether they could win against Ifrit. They had been fighting in person, judging that they did not need the Magus if they only needed to protect Elen and let her escape.

The true strength of Kabal and Gido was equivalent to A rank, and their fighting ability did not change enough to double even if they used the Magus. This was also the reason why Duke

Elalude had chosen them as Elen's guards.

Thus, the fighting abilities of each individual varied widely, and there were also those who were weak on their own yet unbeatable when in the state of being a rider. The fighting ability of such 'Magus' was at least equivalent to special A rank. About three hundred of them were currently facing the enemy in a squadron.

"I didn't know we had so many Magus."

"I've been working on it diligently."

The thirteen royal families of Sarion often quarreled with each other, but this time they seemed to be united in their efforts, and they appeared to have invested their forces without any hesitation.

Even so, things would have been useless if they had opposed the plan and Elmesia had intended to abandon the idea if that had happened. It was a blessing in disguise that this was not the case.

Be that as it may, the conversation between Elmesia and Silvia continued.

"Since golem development is also proceeding at Rimu-chi's place, it looks like our advantage will be lost in no time."

"If that happens, they'll probably try to propose a joint development, won't they?"

"Well, I guess so. Rimu-chi is sensible, and we all agree that we don't want our dangerous forces to leak out, so I think they will distribute them while limiting the number released."

It was surprising how open he was, despite his usual secrecy.

Even the leading figures who were listening to the discussion were surprised, but that was because they were escaping from reality.

Even now, another Magus ace had been dropped. Their existence value was estimated to be over 500,000, but even such an ace-class knight could not buy enough time against Jahil.

Aside from Jahil, there were other notable generals in the enemy's camp.

Zalario went without saying.

His subordinates, Dhalis and Nice, had also achieved remarkable results in the battle. They had taken physical form as undead elves and had destroyed the Magus with great power.

"That's a big loss."

Elmesia unintentionally grumbled, but those were not her true intentions.

The survival of the nation was more important than money. They had to somehow hold on until reinforcements arrived, and that would be difficult as things currently were. Such calculations only made her feel like complaining.

"I guess we'll just have to make do." Silvia said with a resigned look on her face.

Incidentally, the most powerful force in all of Sarion were the mother and daughter duo of Silvia and Elmesia. The reason they were standing by was because they had been recalled by the elders.

"You mustn't, Your Majesty! Silvia-sama, please be careful."

"It is as he says. Regardless of the chances of winning, this time we are up against too much of an opponent. It is absolutely unacceptable."

Even the elders had come out and interfered with the two of them.

It was out of concern for their safety.

Few people knew that Silvia was Elmesia's body double behind the scenes. In fact, even the thirteen royal families did not know about it.

And yet, this time, the appearance of the two at the same time created chaos at the scene. Even so, the strength of the two could not be compared to the Magus, who controlled the 'magitech knights,' and they had succeeded in temporarily restoring the situation.

All the Magus had sortied and were doing their best to buy time. The reason for this was to let Silvia, Elmesia, and other important people escape.

If the two returned to the battlefield, the warriors' efforts would have been in vain.

However, even so—

"Frankly, it's not in our nature to run away alone."

"I agree with Mama. I'm afraid Rimu-chi will make fun of me later, so I guess I'll do my best too."

The two of them had already made up their minds.

"Your Majesty!"

One of the elders cried out with a desperate look on his face. A long time ago, he had been the minister who sent Laplace—Sarion into battle.

Since that time, he had always regretted it. He vowed never to do the same thing again, and this time he was doing his best to protect their beloved Elmesia.

However, Elmesia showed the face of a ruler and asked back:

"Who am I?"

When posed with this question, he had to answer as an elder.

"You are Her Majesty the Celestial Emperor."

"Is there anyone who shall stand in my way?"

The minister wept in his heart, thinking that it was cowardly to wield power at a time like this. However, he understood that this was Elmesia's way of life, and there was nothing he could do to stop her now that things had come to this point.

"That cannot be."

He had no choice but to say so and bow his head.

The Minister—now that the current elder had given his approval, there was nothing else the rest of them could do.

The leaders of the thirteen royal families must also fulfill their kingly duties.

As the foremost subordinates of the emperor, they were entrusted to lead the people according to her orders.

"Eh, Your Majesty—"

"Elalude-chan. Elen-chan will be protected by Rimu-chi, so please protect everyone."

"I, as well—I will accompany Your Majesty as well!"

"Hmm, I'm afraid it will be a hindrance. It's true that Elalude-chan is one of the leaders of the Magus, but he's just going to die in vain."

It was not Elmesia but Silvia who objected to the idea.

From Elalude's point of view, they were new acquaintances, but from Silvia's point of view, he was her beloved husband's younger brother. Even when she had pretended to be Elmesia, they had met several times.

That is why she rejected him coldly.

Elise Grimwald, Elmesia's grandmother and Elalude's mother, nodded in agreement.

In her capacity as the head of the thirteen royal families, she ordered Elalude, the archduke. "Refrain, Elalude. Listen to the other kings."

Although normally calm and composed, she declared this in a voice full of dignity.

"Do not be selfish, follow Her Majesty's will."

It was an overwhelming pressure.

The other kings, inner feelings aside, could not help but nod their heads in agreement.

"But Mother—"

Elalude still tried to argue but was silenced by Elise's stare.

It was the first time Elalude had ever seen his mother's genuinely angry expression.

One of the kings admonished Elalude.

"If Elise-sama had not stopped you, you would have been detained."

An older member of the royal family, who had long since given up the throne to his sons, tapped Elalude on the shoulder and spoke to him.

"Give it up. Silvia's been in seclusion since your big brother, that rascal Sarion, disappeared. It's no wonder you don't know how scary she is—but, ah, she's even scarier than Her Majesty."

"Yes, yes. We're no match for her even if we all teamed up. It's best to obey her orders and make a run for it."

It was an unspoken rule in Sarion never to say that he was dead. It was a natural habit because no one wished to incur Silvia's wrath.

And so, everyone lamented their own helplessness.

Once again, they were depending on them for their survival.

But if this was the wish of the emperor, it was the duty of the subjects to obey.

Even the young kings, seeing their elders, came to realize this.

There was no use in resisting.

At the same time, they were surprised to learn that Sarion was actually a monolith.

The parents' and grandparents' generations, who usually seemed to be at odds with each other, were talking to one another amicably. It was the first time for them to witness such a situation, but it was so natural that it didn't feel like they were lying.

Everyone was convinced that it was due to Silvia's and Elmesia's charisma.

Silvia was a spear master who wielded the vajra with her Ultimate Skill 'Thunder King Indra,' the highest level of the weather system.

Her daughter, Elmesia El'Ru Sarion, also had a different facade from that of the emperor of the Sorcerer's Dynasty of Sarion. She had awakened to the Ultimate Skill 'Heavenly Wind King

Vayu⁵², the highest level of the weather system that appeared to have been split off from Silvia. She was a genius in battle, slicing her enemies to pieces by freely manipulating a mythical-grade chakram.

Although Elmesia's ability was inferior to Silvia's, it was not far behind.

Once again, the two returned to the battlefield with everyone's wishes on their backs.

And with that, the result was finding a way out.

'Heaven helps those who help themselves.' Through their courageous actions, hope would continue to lead uninterrupted into the future.



Benimaru, Souei, Leon, Kagali and Teare arrived in Sarion sometime after Silvia and her team had returned to the battlefield.

They had only appeared in the images of the Control Room after their second sortie. Therefore, they were already exhausted.

The wounded seemed to be receiving medical treatment on the leaves of the giant Sacred Tree.

Silvia and Elmesia were facing off against Jahil and Zalario respectively. The defense mechanism of the Sacred Tree was working, which was the only reason why everyone had not died.

"As expected of Rimu-chi, you really sent us reinforcements just when I thought it would be too late..."

Elmesia greeted Benimaru and the others with emotion.

"Rimuru-sama always keeps his promises."

Benimaru smiled and nodded, staring at Zalario and Jahil.

Leon flew in front of Zalario to replace Elmesia. The Flame Pillar in his hand shone, giving off a strong presence.

Before he knew it, Souei was sneaking up behind Zalario.

Everyone was floating around the Sacred Tree to engage in aerial battles, so it was no surprise that Souei was floating in the sky as well.

Although it was two against one, the combination of Leon and Souei was at a disadvantage in terms of the difference in strength. However, Souei did not care about the fairness, and he was prepared to make a surprise attack without any hesitation.

On the other hand, as for Jahil...

"I won't forgive you."

⁵²Like Indra, Vayu is another deity in Hindu mythology (I sense a theme coming...). Vayu is known as the god of air, winds, and breath/life. Vayu is also considered to be a sibling of Indra.

Saying that, Kagali floated next to Silvia. At their level, they could create footholds in the air as well as on the ground.

‘Ah, they aren’t going to replace me’—thought Sylvia, but she could still fight if she tried hard enough, so she was thankful for their cooperation.

“How impertinent...”

Jahil grit his teeth, and Teare glared at him as if challenging him.

The three of them surrounded him in a three-on-one formation, and the battle was about to begin.

Benimaru grasped the battle situation from a bird’s eye view.

With the exception of the generals Jahil and Zalario, the Magus’ strength was the most outstanding in battle. They had quickly recovered and began to push back the phantom’s forces.

Now then, if we can defeat Jahil and the others, we will be victorious.

Even knowing that it would not be easy, Benimaru read the battle situation with a fearless smile on his face.

Despite his usual expressionless face, Leon, who confronted Zalario, was in a bad mood.

Leon was easily misunderstood.

He was not a good talker, and even his well-meaning actions were often the cause of resentment.

The few people who understood Leon were Silvia, his mentor, and Elmesia, whom he considered to be his ally.

To torment both of them to this extent was the second most offensive act to Leon.

By the way, it went without saying that the first-place spot was awarded to Chloe.

Be that as it may, there were other reasons for his anger this time.

He couldn’t forgive himself for being dominated by the enemy as they pleased, and he couldn’t forgive himself for causing trouble to Silvia because of it.

He had wanted to take out Michael, the cause of the trouble, with his own hands. But it seemed that Rimuru beat him to the punch, and he felt bad for owing Silvia a debt he could not repay.

If he did not repay the favor here, he would never be able to hold his head high.

Silvia alone had been enough. Moreover, this time, Leon was sure that this was not just a problem for Silvia and her comrades.

Velzard’s purpose was unknown, but it appeared that she was on her way towards them while fighting with Milim. If they were caught in the aftermath of the battle with Milim, this place could easily be obliterated.

Leon did not think that would be the end.

From here, if you go north from Sarion, there was no obstacle in the north to reach the Western Nations where mankind was thriving. Towards the west was the Desert of Death, and beyond that was the Holy Void Damargania. And if you headed a little further southwest, you would reach El Dorado, Leon’s domain.

Although Velzard's intentions were unknown, there was no doubt that one of these places would be targeted.

If it was just Velzard, he could take countermeasures against her, whatever her intentions may be. However, with Milim running rampant, it would be extremely difficult to interfere in any way.

Was this Velzard's will or Feldway's strategy?

Whatever it is, we just have to stop it.

That was Leon's determination.

Leon's credo was to make swift decisions and to punish even the questionable.

In this case, it was up to Rimuru and his team to stop Velzard and Milim, but there was no doubt that Sarion was one of the most important defense lines.

The fact that this place was under attack was proof enough, and as a result, it was necessary to eliminate the enemy generals before Milim and the others arrived. That way, they could deal with Milim's rampage with their whole strength.

Of course, it would be suicide to fight directly, but it would be possible to reduce the damage by making them change their direction. He could not let them go toward El Dorado, nor could he let them threaten the sphere of existence of mankind.

The best might be to lead them to the Barren Lands—

Although he felt sorry for Dagruel, Leon thought this would be the best option. For that reason, he would not allow himself to be distracted.

"Hmph, taking advantage of Milim's outburst, Feldway is also thinking in a very shrewd way."

Leon thrust the tip of his sword at Zalario while speaking to him.

Leon's fighting style was similar to that of fencing. He was skilled at a brilliant technique that mainly consisted of sword thrusts.

Some people might think that fencing is a style of swordsmanship for dueling and not suitable for actual combat, but that was not the case. The most powerful of all sword techniques is the thrust. If you miss your attack, your posture will collapse and you will be left defenseless—this was the great risk and the reason why it could not be used frequently, but Leon's swordsmanship overcame this weakness. Similar to Silvia's spear technique, Leon was able to avoid being pursued by attackers by combining his technique with high-speed body techniques.

On top of this, Leon's power was specialized in speed, and his weapon, Flame Pillar, was of mythical-grade quality.

In a serious fight, Leon did not rely on his golden circle shield (Gold Circle). Combined with the fastest speed that disregarded defense and the most powerful swordsmanship technique that focused on a single point, Leon was also called the flash hero.

In addition, Leon was able to manipulate spiritrons at will with his Ultimate Skill 'Purity King Metatron.' This enabled him to perform the most powerful 'Disintegration' repeatedly, and no one had the means to stop him.

This is the reason why Leon was called the strongest.

In terms of existence value, Leon was far behind Zalario. However, in terms of combat ability...

Leon's efficient fighting style was well-suited to compete with Zalario.

A warrior understood a warrior.

Zalario had also acknowledged Leon.

That's why—

"They said they were after Veldora's dragon factor, but I really don't know what they are thinking. Velzard is also acting on her own, so I would like an explanation."

He was speaking honestly from the heart.

In fact, Zalario has not been given any explanation.

He was waging a war to overthrow Sarion under Feldway's orders.

Jahil also wanted Luminas, but he was included in the operation.

Since they are willing to go to such lengths, there must be a reason for them to take this land...

There was no work more uninspiring than being forced to work without understanding the logic behind it. Putting aside the low-level soldiers who were expected to act as cogs in the wheel, Zalario thought this was an unpleasant way to treat a general.

It was because he was unable to resist Michael's control that he was willing to accept such treatment. However, Zalario, who had always been looking for an opportunity, got the chance to be released the moment Michael disappeared. Since then, he had been analyzing the system little by little and was almost ready to be released.

Since he was not obliged to explain it all, Zalario changed the subject.

"So then, Leon. Are you going to play with me? Or you, sneaking around behind my back, do you want me to deal with both of you at the same time?"

Zalario glanced at Benimaru and saw that he was not going to make a move. It's not that he was looking down on Zalario and the others, but he probably intended to distribute his forces appropriately on the battlefield.

That decision was tantamount to underestimating them, but it did not matter to the unmotivated Zalario. He could not disobey orders, so he would just let it slide.

Souei knew that his presence would be noticed because unlike Jahil, Zalario seemed to be on his guard.

Although Jahil was more threatening in terms of existence value alone, Benimaru's conclusion was that Zalario was more troublesome. Souei agreed with Benimaru's conclusion. Therefore, he did not intend to take Zalario by surprise, but was prepared to support Leon.

"If it's known, it's too early to talk about it. I don't have the leeway either, so we have to justify every action in order to win."

Souei proudly declared his intention to 'cheat.'

Leon had no objections to this.

It was meaningless if you lost, so it was only natural to aim for victory by all possible means. Thus, the battle against Zalario began with Leon taking the lead and Souei assisting him.

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Against Jahil, a three-way attack was launched by three people.

Silvia launched a lightning speed spear attack with her Vajra.

Kagali was firing long-range mana bullets. The power was controlled with the Ruin Scepter where a mass of mana was refined and launched.

Teare was in the foremost position, acting as the diversion.

Although this was the most dangerous role, Teare was not afraid. She was angry with her whole body, raging on behalf of Footman.

“I hate you! Die!!”

“Shut up! Damn trash who have no choice but to flock together, don’t joke around!!”

“You’re the one who’s being annoying.”

Teare retorted, throwing the scythe in her hand like a boomerang. It was a weapon given to her by an ogre called Kurobee before her departure.

It had a presence so ominous that it seemed to be the highest level of legendary-grade, or even mythical-grade. Teare intuitively knew that it was much better than her own broken scythe.

The scythe was called the “tear-dropping scythe (Teare Scythe).”

Kurobee had told her that it was a scythe that reaped tears, not lives.

Teare thought that it was the perfect weapon for her.

She would have to end her sadness this time.

The “Teare Scythe” targeted Jahil as if it had a will of its own.

At the same time, she rapidly improved her physical ability and approached Jahil at once. She dove into Jahil’s chest and delivered a powerful punch. Then she quickly broke away and caught the scythe as it spun back around.

And then, as if nothing had happened, she maintained her position to protect Kagali.

This was a fact made possible only because she was controlling her own body with the Unique Skill ‘Manipulator.’

Teare’s Unique Skill ‘Optimist’ could only be activated under the vague and specific condition of “when she receives an order.” This was because Teare’s ego was weak and fluffy.

However, upon being given a piece of Clayman—the “information particle” that made up the “heart core”—Teare changed.

She became stronger.

She decided that she must protect Kagali in place of Laplace, who had disappeared, and Footman, who had been taken over.

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At that moment, someone called out to Teare

«If you accept, you will be given power.»

It was a “voice” left by someone who was not here.

A sleeping Teare had been analyzed, and this had been planted in anticipation of her need for it.

It was to be able to respond when Teare desired power of her own will.

Of course, there was a price to pay.

But it had been paid in advance.

Teare’s power had long been analyzed and determined to be harmless. Likewise, it was determined that it would not do any harm if integrated with Clayman’s non-threatening power. It was planted in the spirit of service to strengthen her as much as possible while she was an ally.

I’ll take anything if you give it to me! I have to become strong!!

Teare accepted without hesitation.

The change was completed quietly and swiftly within Teare.

Teare’s Unique Skill ‘Optimist’ and the Unique Skill ‘Manipulator’ which had been reproduced from Clayman’s “information particle,” were combined to create the Ultimate Enchantment ‘Optimistic Performer Orpheus.’

It was all the work of someone (Ciel).

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Thus, Teare was reborn according to her own will.

Yeah! I understand, Clayman. I...we have to protect Kagali-sama!!

Teare vowed.

And then Teare’s power sprung forth. It was as if her late friend (Clayman) was helping her...

Her existence value of over 2,400,000, which had felt unmanageable, now felt unsatisfactory. By doubling the power needed at each moment, she would no longer be intimidated by the superior Jahil.

Jahil was not amused.

“Don’t you dare mock me, you puppet freak!!”

An annoyed Jahil launched a huge fireball.

Aside from the super-fast Silvia, Kagali and Teare had no way of escape. Their souls should have been obliterated by the blow.

However, the figures of Kagali and Teare flickered and disappeared, reappearing a slight distance away.

This astonished even Jahil.

“What? You guys didn’t have that kind of power...what the hell did you do!?”

Jahil carefully launched a fireball, trying to be sure this time.

The trick, which Zalario would have easily figured out, was as simple as deceiving a child. Benimaru was protecting Kagali and the others with his ‘Heat Haze.’

Even Jahil realized it the second time, having been forced to suffer this by Benimaru many times before.

“What impudence!!”

He was easily enraged and launched a volley of fireballs at Kagali and the others in a fit of emotion. But this only played into Benimaru’s hands.

Even though Benimaru had not dealt with Jahil directly, he was able to read into Jahil’s thought and behavioral patterns to give Kagali and the others the best advice.

Therefore,

“Oops, there’s an opening!!”

Upon saying that, Silvia’s spear pierced Jahil.

It did not kill Jahil, but it did make Silvia feel a little better about the situation.

And Kagali, too.

The Ultimate Enchantment ‘Domination King Melchizedek,’ the power given to her by Michael, had been taken away by Yuuki. Instead, Kagali, who was now free, had enhanced the Unique Skill ‘Schemer’ rooted in her soul and raised it to a level close to a near-Ultimate level.

Even so, no matter how excellent Kagali was, there was a limit to the level of non-divinity. It would be more abnormal for Kagali to be able to tamper with abilities at will like Ciel did.

Kagali had experienced this abnormality in a dream.

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The voice was clear.

«If you wish, I can give you power.»

This incomprehensible offer had been spoken to her in her sleep.

Needless to say, it was Ciel’s work.

Ciel could do almost anything in the labyrinth.

Rather than a dream, it was a conversation within Kagali’s subconscious. Ciel then offered her a contract.

In exchange for optimizing Kagali’s power, she wouldn’t be allowed to turn it against Rimuru.

Even if Kagali betrayed, the power would still be in Ciel’s hands... it was a ‘two birds with one stone’ proposal that combined both hobby and profit. Depending on one’s point of view, it might even seem that only Ciel would benefit from the proposal.

But Kagali, who had been craving for power, agreed to the proposal.

She had thought it was just a dream and did not suspect that she was being cheated. This

was a blunder for the normally cautious Kagali, but as long as she did not antagonize Rimuru, she would not suffer any disadvantage. For Kagali, there was no problem as she did not want to antagonize Rimuru for various reasons.

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And when she woke up, Kagali realized the presence of that power.

She understood it and now completely owned it.

“Give me back my Footman!!”

Kagali activated her power—the ultimate enchantment ‘Book of Prophecy Agastya⁵³.’

As if she could see into the future, her power predicted Jahil’s movements. Seemingly able to make up for the gap in power, the joint attack was successful.

After all, it was the combination of Benimaru’s judgment, Kagali’s prediction, Silvia’s action, and Teare’s resolve. Even Jahil’s evil power could not be overturned so easily.

Besides, Benimaru had fought against Jahil once before. When he first encountered Jahil, he had been flustered by the difference in power, but now he already understood the nature of Jahil’s power.

If you understood it, you had nothing to fear.

Benimaru had inherited Rimuru’s policy of never fighting a battle that could not be won. Therefore, the fact that Benimaru had come meant that he had a chance to win.

All the pieces of the puzzle—the fighting forces necessary for victory—were in place, and the moment of victory was just around the corner.

Unaware of this, Jahil barked out.

“So impertinent! You seem to have forgotten how terrifying I am.”

Aiming at Kagali with a volley of fireballs, Jahil shouted as he hid himself in the aftermath of the explosion. Then, he used the explosion as a propulsive force to approach Kagali quickly.

He planned to kill Kagali first.

Targeting the weakest first was an ironclad rule, and Jahil’s judgment was not wrong. However, it was too easy to read his thoughts and too easy to wait for that.

Everyone thought to themselves.

No way, it’s never been this easy to fight before—thought Silvia

I was aware of it, but Rimuru is not the only threat. They are a great help as allies, but I shudder to think of what would happen if they were our enemies—thought Kagali.

Teare, who was entrusted with the most dangerous role, felt a strong sense of security.

That’s how excellent Benimaru’s command truly was.

Although he was sometimes a wimp in front of Rimuru, he was a man with a sense of responsibility as a leader. Like Diablo, he became more dependable and hard-working when Rimuru wasn’t around.

⁵³Agastya is an Indian sage of Hinduism. A noted recluse and revered scholar of languages, medicine, and etc.

That's why Benimaru was now sharpening his nerves

He was connected to those under his command through 'Telepathy Net,' and through Benimaru's power—the 'Will Control' of 'Heat King Amaterasu'—all of them were able to work as if they were of one will.

The result was the reality that they were now more than equally able to compete with the far superior Jahil.

If Benimaru had been alone, it would have been impossible for him to win against Jahil. Because their powers were of the same lineage, he lacked the decisive power, so he could not win no matter what strategy was used.

As was before, he had no choice but to fight so as not to lose.

But now things were different.

They had Silvia, the decisive force.

They had Kagali, the safeguard.

They also had Teare for the perfect follow-up.

Benimaru's mindset was that he did not feel that he would lose.



Zalario looked at Jahil with a sideways glance and was a little surprised. Just by strength alone, he should have been superior to himself, but he was being overwhelmed by a lower-ranked opponent.

Jahil is not a fool. He is arrogant, but he is not foolish enough to let his guard down. In other words, that man is superior.

He understood this by glancing at Benimaru.

Although he was not directly involved in the battle combat, he was always there to provide appropriate support at key points. Since Benimaru's power was of the same lineage as Jahil's, he appeared to be able to effectively neutralize his flame attacks.

The fire attribute was very powerful when it was focused, but its thermal efficiency decreased rapidly when it was deflected. The same was true in the case of Jahil, who launched superheated flame attacks by interfering with magicules through the dominance enhanced by his ability. It was natural that the focal temperature would decrease if the heat wave was directed in another direction.

It should not have been an easy task, but Benimaru appeared to be doing it with a nonchalant expression. Zalario was frankly impressed and felt that he was worthy of praise, even though he was an enemy.

Still, Jahil was far superior to Benimaru in terms of the amount of energy, and Benimaru would not be able to withstand a direct hit. No matter how strong the power of magicule inter-

ference was, there was nothing he could do if he was hit by uncontrollable energy.

Hm, he seems to be doing a good job at avoiding such a situation, but isn't it about time that Jahil gets tired of it?

Zalario thought as such.

Jahil was a man known as the great sorcerer emperor. If he understood his current situation, he would realize that he would be in dire straits if he did not do something about Benimaru.

But still, how impressive.

It was no wonder that Zalario thought so.

Benimaru's guidance was truly skillful, and the explosions and impacts were just tremendous. At first glance, he appeared to be overwhelmed, which was the reason for the delay in Jahil's realization of the current situation.

And the coordination among their group was also efficient. Each of them was doing their role with great care.

Benimaru appeared to be directing all of this.

Benimaru himself was a warrior in his own right, but he showed greater talent as a general. Zalario secretly acknowledged Benimaru as a threat.

"You are underestimating me to look the other way while you are still dealing with me."

After the lightning-fast sword strikes clashed, Leon spoke in a calm manner.

He did not seem to be particularly angry, but simply spoke what he thought.

Zalario smiled wryly and replied.

"No, it's not like that. The skill-levels of both sides are on equal footing, so the one who is too hasty will be the loser."

Despite Zalario saying that, he was able to deflect Leon's sword with ease.

However, that did not mean that there was a lie in his words. It was difficult to distinguish between the two when one was a high-level swordsman.

The trajectory of a sword could be predicted from information such as the opponent's line of sight, body position, and the direction of their signs. If one was on such a level playing field, the victory or defeat would depend on how well they succeeded in their feints.

If that was the case, Zalario thought that it would be better to use conversations to keep things in check rather than trying to force a move and get injured.

The enemy was not just Leon, but also Souei, who was a troublesome ambush. He could not let his guard down even if the opponent was lower ranked. He would attack as if knowing when Zalario did not want to be attacked.

Existence value—it was a numerical value calculated by taking into account various things such as the elements making up the body, the amount of energy, various resistances, and so on...but after all, it was only a rough estimate.

In fact, just as Jahil, who specialized in power, could not catch up with his opponent who specialized in speed, a battle might turn out to be a toss-up if the two opponents are not well matched.

Zalario was well aware of such a truth.

He did not know their existence value, but he understood the strength of his opponents. On the other hand, he deeply understood from his years of experience as a warrior that if he judged everything just by that, he would be caught flat-footed.

Therefore, underestimating an opponent was out of the question. He had never let his guard down, even while he was fighting against Leon and Souei at the same time.

Leon had also recognized the nature of Zalario in a short period of time.

He is a very troublesome opponent. It's really difficult to deal with him without creating any openings.

Leon put his own situation on the shelf and thought about things.

If the enemy was careless, he could use his special attack, but it was unlikely that he would be able to do so with Zalario. No matter how good Leon was at one-hit-and-destroy strategies, he would leave himself open whenever he unleashed his special technique. If he tried to avoid such a situation, he would not be able to avoid a long battle.

In such a case, the one who was inferior was at the disadvantage.

As for Leon, who was competing only due to his skill-level, he could foresee a future where he would be defeated.

In other words, Zalario's policy was correct.

Having read each other so far, their correspondence was in sharp contrast.

Zalario was calm and collected, but Leon was losing his composure little by little.

However, Leon was not alone.

“Calm down. Don't let the enemy's words deceive you.”

Souei, who had stepped out of the shadows, whispered in Leon's ear. He then launched a seemingly reckless suicide attack on Zalario and was cut down with a single slash of the sword.

Needless to say, it was Souei's ‘Clone.’ However, since the attackers were able to launch a wave of attacks with a mixture of falsehood and fact, this worked surprisingly well.

Leon was the main slasher, but Souei took over whenever he got tired. By repeating this, they were able to continue the battle with as little wear and tear as possible.

Even for Zalario, this situation was not the best.

In the midst of such a stalemate, a sudden change occurred.

Benimaru made a move.

“Your Majesty Elmesia, I have a favor to ask you—”

Benimaru was talking to Elmesia, who had left the group to recover from fatigue.

Zalario listened in on the conversation without hesitation, thinking that he could afford to be relaxed even in the midst of battle.

“What is it?”

“Those knights over there, the Magus, right? I would like you to give up the command to me, even if only temporarily.”

Zalario was immediately pulled into the conversation, thinking that it was a reckless thing to say.

Leon was also annoyed at this.

He felt ignored, though Leon was interested in Benimaru's story as well.

"Hah? That's kind of impossible—"

"I understand that it's impossible. However, it has been reported that Milim-sama will soon arrive. If we do anything and this continues, the damage to this region will be immeasurable, so I've been ordered to do whatever I can to stop it."

"Was that from Rimu-chi?"

"Yeah."

Well then, it can't be helped—Elmesia had such an expression on her face.

"Normally, this would never happen no matter how friendly we are, but if Rimu-chi is saying it, I guess it can't be helped."

Like boss like subordinate, huh?—While muttering to herself, Elmesia summoned her group leaders.

Upon seeing this, Zalario thought to himself 'No, no that's really not possible.'

"This is absurd."

"Well, that's Rimuru for you."

"To that extent?"

"Yeah. Frankly, I just don't understand."

For some reason, Zalario began to sympathize with Leon, who was supposed to be his enemy.

Still, Zalario thought to himself.

He wondered what that Benimaru guy was going to do while dealing with Jahil.

As he watched with interest, he noticed the group leaders complaining about the situation. It was a very natural reaction, but Elmesia threatened them into silence.

She appeared to be saying that it was a matter of life or death, and that Benimaru was doing something to prove it.

An image was projected in the air.

Apparently, Benimaru had projected a long-distance image into the sky through his own power.

"What is that?"

"It appears to be an application of mirage. Benimaru seems to have improved upon the surveillance magic, 'Argus' developed by Rimuru-sama."

For some reason, Souei explained the reason why.

Incidentally, the battle was still going on. Even now, the sword clashes were becoming even more intense, but there was still time to converse with one another.

Zalario's swordsmanship involved a strong sword that cut down his enemies with a single stroke.

Zalario's nemeses, the Insectars, were covered with exoskeletons, so a normal sword would be damaged by repeated slashes. In order to prevent this from happening, Zalario had refined his technique to cut accurately at the enemy's weakest points.

Since time in the other world and the Cardinal World were different, Zalario felt as if he had

been fighting for more than tens of billions of years. Despite this, his skill with the sword had plateaued because he specialized in the characteristics of insectar enemies. Nevertheless, some of them were unusually good fighters, so Zalario's strength had reached an unimaginable level.

Zalario's unwillingness to fight was the only reason why the battle with Leon and his group was successful.

Leon and Souei had also recognized Zalario's true strength the moment they had confronted him. Nevertheless, both of them were quite determined to chat with each other and explain the situation without panicking.

The video clip that appeared on the image projection showed Rimuru and his team in action.

Rimuru was facing Milim, and Guy was facing Velzard. Velgrynd was also there for some reason, and they were cooperating with each other so as not to cause further damage to the surroundings.

"I didn't expect Velgrynd to cooperate. As expected of Rimuru, his talent for manipulating others is terrifying."

"I'd rather you call it natural virtue."

Leon and Souei were arguing with each other, but Zalario couldn't care less.

He did not understand why Milim and the others were heading this way.

In the first place, it was not clear whether this was part of the plan or not.

Was Feldway planning something, or was this just a coincidence? There was also the possibility that Velzard was doing this on her own, but if that was the case, he couldn't imagine what she was trying to achieve.

But if this was Feldway's scheme...

If Feldway had told Velzard something, this situation is also possible. In that case, what is the purpose?

Zalario thought to himself.

Milim and Velzard had been fighting, but this was done in a way that Velzard was able to stop Milim from going out of control. If Velzard set her sights on other targets, her hands would be free.

Milim would then go to the limit of her destructive power, and Guy would most likely move to stop her.

That was exactly what Velzard was aiming for.

Guy would not be able to afford to fight against Milim. She would take advantage of the situation and make Guy do her bidding.

It was easy to read that far, so he didn't think Guy would simply show up to the fight. It was only natural that he would bring along a collaborator, and it made sense that it was the Demon Lord Rimuru.

That much was understandable.

The problem was what came after that.

It is obvious that Velzard's target is Guy. But if so, there is no point in moving to a different location. In that case, I should assume that Feldway's intentions are involved, but...

Zalario, who had inferred up to that point, was now troubled.

Why would they bother to come all the way to Sarion, where they are already attacking?
To support Zalario's team?

No, I don't think so. Hey Feldway, just what are you thinking?

Zalario could not find an answer to his question and his frustration with Feldway grew.
This was something that should have been explained from the beginning.

If he didn't understand what was intended by leading Milim to this place, they might get caught up in the situation. If he didn't know whether they should cooperate or evacuate, they would be stuck.

That's what Zalario was thinking.

If the defending forces were only Silvia and Elmesia, Zalario and his men could easily take down Sarion. However, the situation was now in a stalemate because Demon Lord Rimuru had sent reinforcements.

It was weak reasoning to assume that they sent Milim after foreseeing such a situation. In that case, Zalario and the others should have begun their invasion after first hitting Milim to confuse the situation.

The fact that Milim would reach them only after the chaos was done would have made sense in that situation.

For example, precisely because no one could move, it would make sense to get in Milim's way—

With that thought in mind, Zalario turned his head to look behind him.

Standing there was the divine tree that had been standing upon this land since time immemorial.

The Sacred Tree, rooted in the earth and responsible for protecting the planet from all kinds of natural disasters, was still standing strong, even though it was exposed to the flames of Jahil.

In the past, the Sacred Tree had protected this land from the damage caused by the war between Milim and Guy.

In the north, there was Velzard.

Guy and Ramiris protected the human sphere ruled by Demon Lord Luminas.

The Nasca region guarded by Rudra was safe thanks to Velgrynd's cooperation.

However, the sanctuary of Damargania at the center of the damage, while it had not been destroyed because of the Heaven's Tower, still bore the scars of the devastation. Its former glory was still lost.

Even so, thinking about it the other way around—

One could say that only so much damage had been done.

The world was protected by God.

If one wanted to destroy the world, they would have to face many obstacles.

Guy the mediator, was the best of them.

He was feared by mankind as the strongest and worst demon lord, but he had kept his pact with Veldanava and continued protecting this world. As such, there were several beings who

played a role in protecting the world. Those were the demon lords selected by Guy, including Ramiris, another mediator.

And then there were their counterparts, the heroes.

In particular, there was Masayuki, the reincarnation of the most powerful hero of all, Rudra, who was now leading with Velgrynd at his side.

Apart from them, the sacred relics influenced by the god's hand, such as the Heaven's Tower, would also be in the way.

One such relic was the Sacred Tree.

Feldway's plan to revive Veldanava-sama has failed because of the loss of Michael. In that case, what would he be after next?

Zalario felt a chill run down his spine.

Only two relics remained in this world: the Sacred Tree and Heaven's Tower. There was also the labyrinth created by Ramiris, but that should be considered as a separate category.

After that, there were only a few notable presences left that would get in the way.

The six of Guy, Rimuru, Chronoa, Masayuki, Velgrynd, and Veldora, most of whom had been neutralized.

Guy was being blocked by Velzard.

Rimuru had his hands full trying to deal with Milim's rampage.

Chronoa and Masayuki were free, but they were probably exhausted and would not be able to move for a while.

Velgrynd appeared to be working to protect the planet. She was no longer a threat, as she appeared to be using most of her strength.

And Veldora was now in Ramiris' labyrinth.

While it may seem that Veldora was on the defensive due to Feldway's attempts to kill him, on the contrary, it could be said that he was now stuck in the labyrinth.

In other words, if Feldway's target was as Zalario expected, his situation was steadily improving.

This is bad—Zalario thought.

To be honest, Zalario had no desire for destruction. His true feelings were that if he was going to die, he alone should die. He had no intention of being involved in the destruction of the world, no matter how good a friend he was.

In the first place, Zalario was thinking that he should stop this foolishness because he was a friend.

I don't know if I am right or not, but I should assume as such and act accordingly.

Even if he was wrong, he could just say that the person who did not explain things was at fault. Zalario concluded in this way and began to change his mindset about what he should be doing from here on.

Then he looked around and noticed that Benimaru was leading the Magus in an imposing manner.

Well done—Zalario was impressed.

He is playing his cards right against Jahil, but on the other hand, he is not neglecting his preparations for the coming natural calamity.

In this respect, Jahil looked like the smaller person.

As for Zalario, who did not like Jahil, it was enough to give him a favorable impression of Benimaru.

Then it's settled—Zalario had decided.

Zalario spoke to Leon and the others.

"As you know, I am deprived of my freedom. I have regained enough control to be able to say what I think, but there is still Michael's control."

"...what are you trying to say?"

"If you've been through something similar, then you'd understand what I'm trying to say, wouldn't you?"

"Hm. You're asking me to help free you."

"It's good that you're so quick on the uptake."

In a casual tone, Zalario brought up a certain proposal—



Benimaru had taken control of Magus.

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Even though Elmesia gave permission, the knights were dissatisfied.

It was only natural.

Benimaru could understand their frustration of why they had to be used by someone from another country.

However, now was not the time to talk about such things.

It was because he understood this that Elmesia had lent him the command, and why Duke Elalude reluctantly showed his willingness to obey.

The knights who were members of the order were of the super elite and held titles, but even they had to follow suit here because if they tried to act up, they would be exposed to Milim's fury and be destroyed in an instant.

As expected, Milim-sama is terrifying. The topography of the Kusha Mountains has already been changed, and if things continue as they are, this place will also be destroyed in the same way. I must do my best to prevent that from happening.

Benimaru was determined.

Rimuru's order was a simple one; predict the course of the attack and somehow change it.

If things continued on their present course, the attack would directly affect the Sacred Tree that protected the royal city of Sarion.

Rimuru had not sounded confident with his words, but Benimaru knew. Benimaru knew that Rimuru's predictions were never wrong in such a situation.

He had said to evacuate everyone in case of a worst-case scenario, but they should first try their best.

The key was the Magus.

Rimuru said that if they attacked Milim with all of their combined power, they might be able to distract her, even if only for a moment.

He said that the possibility of defeating Milim was yet to be discussed, so there was no need to worry about injuring her.

No one is worried about that...

Benimaru smiled wryly.

Then, bracing himself, he raised his voice to the knights Elalude was trying to persuade.

"Listen up! If we do nothing, an unprecedented crisis will come upon this land. I have orders from my lord Rimuru-sama to stop it! You may not have the obligation to go along with this, but you must obey now. Otherwise, your homeland will be destroyed in a clean sweep!"

Benimaru did not intend to threaten them, but only spoke the truth.

If they failed to follow Rimuru's instructions here, Sarion would almost certainly be destroyed. Of course, Benimaru himself was not going to give up even if the Magus did not follow the order. He was going to do his utmost to save lives by helping with the evacuation, and after that, he was going to join Rimuru.

Jahil was nothing but a mere obstacle to Benimaru. Kagali, Teare, and Silvia alone would be enough to defeat him, but with Benimaru's support, the level of difficulty was such that it could be done with a single hand.

Therefore, Benimaru wanted to prepare for the coming threat.

In any case, he was waiting for the reply.

Benimaru used his own ability to project an image in the mid-air in order to convey the situation quickly.

As Souei explained to Zalario, Benimaru reproduced the image from a long distance by using his own power, 'Heat King Amaterasu.'

This technique, which was developed by Benimaru with reference to mirages, was very useful in outdoor operations.

If the situation of Milim's group was projected on the display, it would be more convincing. Benimaru thought as such, but it turned out to be a more terrifying scene than he had expected.

The mere sound of Milim's roar was enough to destroy the mountains and rivers.

Rivers dried up and mountains crumbled.

Rimuru was trying desperately to calm her down, but to no avail. While working with Velgrynd to avoid causing any unnecessary damage, he could only try to contain Milim's attacks as best he could.

—No, that's not it. It's because Rimuru-sama is distracting Milim-sama that the damage is only this small...

Rimuru was taking all of Milim's attention and Velgrynd was preventing the aftermath. It was natural for Rimuru to become desperate. In that case, Rimuru should have been able to redirect Milim, but that was also impossible. Milim's attacks were like a torrent, so while they could be withstood and deflected, it was impossible to change the directions themselves.

Is he just trying not to worry us, or is there another reason?

In any case, Benimaru had only one task to fulfill.

It means that if we can divert her attention for just a moment, we might be able to change its course. I'll do it.

Benimaru took a deep breath.

Failure would be a disaster. Worst case scenario, it could be the end of the world.

It was a bad gamble, but he decided to trust Rimuru, as he always did, because it was the only way to win.

Benimaru was fine with all this, but the Magus were not so lucky.

It was impossible for them not to be upset upon being shown such a scene.

In such a situation, Benimaru, who was standing tall, was at the center of attention.

Elmesia opened her mouth as the Magus became silent.

“Once again, I entrust the command of the Magus to Benimaru-dono. Does anyone have any objections?”

Elmesia asked this question with a hint of intimidation, but no one objected.

Well, of course. As expected, there are no idiots who would still complain after being shown something like that...

If Elmesia had seriously given the order, all of them would have obeyed Benimaru at the risk of their lives. But then, there might have been people who had worked without understanding what they were being asked to do, and without relieving their dissatisfaction.

Benimaru did not think that far ahead, but he ended up settling this in the best possible way.

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With no time to lose, Benimaru gave orders one after another.

Even though he was dealing with knights of another country, he did not hesitate to be bold.

Contrary to popular belief, many people seemed to find Benimaru's boldness to be reliable, and his reputation unintentionally began to rise rapidly.

Thus, the preparations proceeded steadily.



As we approached Sarion, I saw a huge tree.

It was still far away, but clearly visible. It made me understand just how big this Sacred Tree was.

But still—

No matter how big it is, it would be no match for Milim's fury. The power of Milim was so overwhelming that I was convinced of it.

I had already seen so much on the way to this place.

The only reason why this planet was still safe was because of Velgrynd-san's offer to help us.

She came all the way to here because she was worried that our planet would be thrown into chaos if things continued.

If the world collapsed, even Velgrynd-san would be in trouble, so I shouldn't really need to thank her that much, and even if that did happen, she could just escape with Dimension Leap. As for me, I accepted her offer of cooperation gratefully.

Apparently, a 'Split Body' had been left with Masayuki, so her current strength was only about 70 percent. Even so, she was helping out a lot, so I could rely on her.

This is why I always end up being spoiled.

"This might be a dumb question, but are you able to protect the Sacred Tree from being damaged?"

I took a risk and asked Velgrynd-san.

The result was as expected.

"You're still the same idiot as ever. Milim doesn't seem to be taking things seriously, yet I'm still doing everything I can to maintain the 'Star Barrier.' Despite this, Milim is able to control 'stardust.' There is no 'Barrier' in the world that can take her Drago Nova head-on."

Velgrynd-san gave me a cold stare, as if in a bad mood.



I wish I hadn't said anything unnecessary, but the destructive power of a beautiful woman's side-glance still made my heart pound.

"But you know, I heard that Drago Nova was also reflected—"

"That's because Milim was holding back. Stardust cannot be reflected, so it's useless to expect anything."

Ah, I see...

Or rather, so Milim really was in control of her power. But well, it was only natural that she couldn't go all out since she risked destroying the planet while trying to annihilate the enemy forces.

However, Milim was now in a state of rampage.

It was a mistake to expect her to take things easy on us.

In that case, we had to somehow break the order given to Milim before the serious Milim unleashes a Drago Nova.

So, what is to be done?

Ciel-san's plan was to gather all possible forces and attack Milim in waves to turn her attention towards them. In the meantime, I would neutralize Feldway's power and cancel the order he had given.

In fact, Milim was being controlled by Feldway's power, but it was not perfect. Ciel-san confidently assured me that I could break the control.

To be precise, it would be Ciel-san, not me, who would break the control...but in order to succeed, Milim's consciousness had to be distracted. That's why I couldn't accomplish this by myself.

I had thought that Velgrynd-san could deal with Milim while I took that opportunity to release the order, but now I was told that the aftermath could cause a catastrophe on the earth if that were to happen. Velgrynd-san came here without me asking her to, so I understood that this was to be expected.

If it were possible, I would have liked to be a target and take action to minimize the damage. However, it was impossible to do so, and it was a very reckless strategy that was difficult to estimate how much damage would be caused.

Moreover, the success rate is not that high—

«Good news. I have found a factor that may increase the probability of success.»

Oh?

I hate bad news, but I love good news.

«I have confirmed the presence of Demon Lord Leon and Zalaro in the vicinity of our destination. Since this is very convenient, I would like to ask them to cooperate with us. Can you give me your permission?»

Of course, that's fine, but will they help us?

Leon aside, Zalario seems to be an ally of Feldway...

«No problem. They will certainly cooperate with us.»

I don't know where Ciel-san's confidence is coming from, but in a situation like this, I had no choice but to leave it to them. I gave my permission without thinking.

It was not long after that I found out what the results would be.



What Zalario suggested was to have Leon and Souei attack him at full power, putting a burden on himself. He wanted to find out how Feldway's 'Ultimate Dominion' worked while he was exercising his full strength.

Leon had also been under Feldway's control, but now he seemed to have been released. He was not sure what would happen if the power was used again, but that is why he thought that he could get a chance to escape from this situation by examining it.

Leon also responded to this.

Enviable, in Leon's case, it appeared that Demon Lord Rimuru had sealed the 'Domination Circuit' that was built into an Angelic Skill.

Unfortunately, that did not help with testing Zalario, but it was worth attempting the strategy of applying a burden. That's why they decided to go ahead with the plan.

That's when it happened.

A strange voice was heard.

«I have heard your story. If you wish, I will recreate the power of the angelic system so that you will not be influenced by anything.»

This proposal came out of the blue from an unknown party; an absurd story when you thought about it.

There was no way they could simply nod 'yes' to such a suspicious proposal.

Leon and Zalario looked at each other involuntarily.

What to do—The two looked at each other and understood that it was not the other party's work.

Both of them were wondering what should be done.

Leon recognized that this was Rimuru's doing.

It was ridiculous even imagining what kind of method he had used.

It wouldn't be strange for him. In that case, it's a good idea to leave it to him.

Leon made his decision.

To begin with, he was easily able to mess with the ‘Domination Circuit’ built into other people’s abilities, so probably anything could happen. It was as if he was advertising that his powers were bullshit without even trying to hide it.

Not only Leon, but the other demon lords were also unanimous in their opinion that ‘Rimuru is a load of bull.’

In Rimuru’s opinion, he was being extremely misunderstood, but he was just as guilty of letting Ciel do as it pleased, so he had no reason to complain.

Zalario, on the other hand, was in a state of confusion.

On the surface, he was calm and maintained his appearance as a warrior. However, Zalario’s inner self was in turmoil.

How did you do that? How can you speak directly to my heart like that!?

Zalario had never experienced such a direct communication with his heart before.

Leon ignored it, but the earnest Zalario was caught in the middle of it.

If it had been Leon’s work, he would have assumed that it was a direct thought attack. However, Rimuru was not present. This was an impossible phenomenon according to Zalario’s experience and common sense.

And that was not all.

Zalario, naturally, had put up a psychological barrier to prevent any and all kinds of mental attacks. Since Zalario was a mental organism to begin with, the defense of his heart core was ironclad.

Furthermore, it would be unthinkable, even with common sense, for someone else to modify another’s Ultimate Skill, which was closely related to the desire of the individual.

I don’t understand. Is it even possible in the first place?

It was hardly possible, but the voice did not sound as if it was trying to deceive him with a lie.

Zalario was willing to put himself in danger to gain his freedom.

And yet, the voice made an incomprehensible offer, as if it were so simple.

It was so funny that he couldn’t help but laugh—

‘What’s the price? What’s in it for you if I accept your offer?’

—So, it was no surprise that Zalario asked back.

The voice answered.

«I would like to ask for a little help. It’s a very simple job, so just follow my instructions and attack with all your might.»

—is what it said

It was a very suspicious answer.

It sounded as if Zalario would have no disadvantages, which made it even more suspicious.

On the other hand, he found it strangely refreshing.

‘All right. I’ll accept your offer.»

And Zalario agreed.

With that, the contract was concluded.

«Subject's acceptance confirmed—now executing 'Skill Alteration.'»

The change was dramatic and instantaneous.

From this point on, the mysterious voice—Ciel—took the center stage.

Leon's power—the Ultimate Skill 'Purity King Metatron' was modified into the Ultimate Skill 'Light King Surya⁵⁴' with an improved performance.

Zalario's Ultimate Skill 'Judgement King Israfil⁵⁵' was also modified into the Ultimate Skill 'Retribution King Metis⁵⁶' by Ciel.



Ciel-san informed me that the pawns had been successfully secured.

It seems that Leon and Zalario agreed to cooperate with us.

That was an incomprehensible story.

Leon is still good, but isn't Zalario an enemy?

What is going on here?

«It was really easy. 'Analyze and Assess' was done on 'Justice King Michael,' which contains the 'Ultimate Dominion' that allows absolute control over angelic skills. I just used it.»

So, there was such a cheat technique.

It's annoying when used by enemies, but so reliable when used by allies...

Or rather, it's so amazing that I can't help but feel it's a bit of a letdown.

Ciel-san interfered with Leon and Zalario through its power and concluded a negotiation. At that time, it had apparently played with their abilities just for the sake of it, so I wondered whether I should praise its hobby to that extent.

«Ufufu, thank you very much♪»

⁵⁴Surya is a Hindu god of the sun and ruler of the planets. Considered a sibling to others such as Indra, Vayu, etc.

⁵⁵In Muslim tradition, Israfil is the angel of music who will sound the trumpet on the judgment day.

⁵⁶So, this Ultimate Skill was translated as the Metis (which is why I didn't change it). Metis was Zeus' first wife and a Greek goddess of wisdom, prudence, and deep thought. However, I think that this might be "Retribution King Nemesis" instead. Nemesis sounds similar to Metis in Japanese, and she was also the Greek goddess of retribution and indignation—it makes a little more sense to me in this context. Not 100 percent sure, but those are my thoughts.

No, I haven't praised you yet, though?

I was rather dumbfounded, but Ciel-san seemed happy, so I kept quiet.

Anyway,

It's a happy miscalculation that we have increased our strength.

Leon and Zalario have maintained the status quo. They are pretending to be fighting and waiting for further instructions from Ciel-san.

I, on my part, contacted all parties concerned to be prepared for such an eventuality.

I would keep close communication with Benimaru to avoid even the slightest error.

Benimaru seems to be playing a role of assisting the battle against Jahil, but he said not to worry about that either. Not only Silvia-san, but also Kagali and Teare were fighting together to corner Jahil.

It seems that this situation has been made possible by the fact that Benimaru, who is in the same power lineage as Jahil, has been directing the strategy to exploit Jahil's weakness.

Compatibility really was important, because Benimaru alone could not have won the battle.

I was relieved that Benimaru was in good hands, so I would keep an eye on the others.

I explained the situation to Souei and told him to cooperate with Leon and Zalario when the time came. I even explained the situation to El-tan, who was also connected to the 'Telepathy Net.' I had given her an outline of the plan and asked for it to be conveyed to the Magus as well.

Benimaru's command alone would be sufficient, but now I felt even more secure.

By the way, I was very surprised when I saw the Magus for the first time. It reminded me of an armored robot like those in cartoons.

It was as if they shared the same senses with each other, but their huge bodies of less than 5 meters were, in my opinion, those of a robot's.

I would study this later when things were at peace.

Now that there was such a fun opportunity, I had to make this mission a success.

If we failed here, Sarion would be reduced to ashes.

I tightened my resolve once again and continued to observe Milim.

She was still cloaked in a tremendous haki and showed no signs of fatigue.

Even now, her power was unfathomable, but what was truly frightening was that her presence seemed to be growing little by little.

That Milim was growing stronger even under these circumstances.

No, to be precise, she was releasing the power that had been suppressed.

Whether it was a matter of existence value or not, I was sure that she was better than Michael whom I had just defeated.

Just thinking about fighting such a thing head-on made me shudder.

But it had to be done.

The time of the final battle was near.

I would be ready for anything, thinking of every possible countermeasure in anticipation of every possible situation.



Zalario could not hide his confusion.

Even though he could feel it, he could not understand what happened to him,

Now executing ‘Skill Alteration’—He thought he heard a voice saying that, but shortly after, it felt as if the chains binding his heart core were shattered.

It was only Zalario’s imaginary landscape, but he certainly felt it.

Because Feldway had inherited the power of ‘Justice King Michael,’ Zalario had remained under his control. But now, he was released in an instant.

Although he had acquired the Ultimate Skill ‘Judgement King Israfil,’ it was better to throw it away than to remain under his control. That’s what he had thought, but for some reason, the power seemingly remained as it was. Now it seemed to be more convenient to use.

The performance of the Ultimate Skill ‘Judgement King Israfil’ was similar to backwards compatible ‘Covenant King Uriel.’ Although it compensated for what was lacking in some respects, the direction of its power was similar to that of ‘Covenant King Uriel.’

In other words, it was a power specialized in spatial management. It could manage the flow of any kind of matter and wavelengths within the area of influence.

The only exceptions were “information particles” and “stardust.”

In other words, not even Leon’s signature spirit attack—‘disintegration’—could penetrate Zalario.

Of course, if they had the same amount of energy, it could work, but the gap between Leon and Zalario was too large. If Zalario had been serious, he could even reflect Leon’s ‘Disintegration.’

However, Leon did not make use of any special moves of his own during this fight. This was because he hesitated to use them due to doubts about his power.

Therefore, although there were no big events, it was a fortunate event for both fighters.

Zalario’s power had been reborn by Ciel.

Ultimate Skill ‘Retribution King Metis’—a destructive ability (Skill) that surpassed even the Ultimate Skill ‘Covenant King Uriel,’ allowed one to freely manipulate any materials and wavelengths within the target space at will.

Although “information particle” and “stardust” could not be manipulated, it was a performance suitable for one of the strongest, as if it were specialized for combat.

Zalario understood it intuitively.

I can’t believe it. Why? I certainly accepted the offer, but I didn’t say that I would be your ally...or rather, no, no, that was the problem before.

It couldn’t be helped.

An Ultimate Skill was something that was normally extremely difficult to acquire. It was so difficult that even Zalario, who had been alive for more than tens of billions of years, had just finally acquired it by himself.

He knew of its existence, but he thought he did not need it. Perhaps that was why he couldn't acquire it, but still.

It is a fact that it is not easy to acquire. And yet you changed it so easily? Is that possible? Or rather, just who could do such a thing—

Zalario was horrified at the thought of it.

The Ultimate Skill was a system made by the creator Veldanava to manage the world. It could be used as a substitute for the administrator's authority, but with a more specialized and convenient authority, it could be used as if one were a god.

Under certain conditions, it was even possible to resuscitate the dead.

Is it possible to recreate such a power that could easily destroy even the providence of the world?

Zalario shuddered.

It was a strange story from the start when he thought about it.

“Who the hell would do something like this—”

Zalario muttered unintentionally, to which Leon replied.

“Rimuru did it.”

“Rimuru? Are you saying that Demon Lord Rimuru did this?”

“That’s right. Don’t think too hard about it. Just understand that that’s the way it is.”

That’s absurd—Zalario thought.

However, seeing Leon’s distant gaze, he guessed that he had been through a lot.

“You guys are being disrespectful to Rimuru-sama.” Souei said with displeasure.

Apparently, he was angry that his master had been mocked, but Zalario was the one who wanted to say, ‘hold on a minute.’

“Your master is insane⁵⁷!”

“Exactly.”

Zalario involuntarily objected, and Leon nodded in agreement.

The two of them were a bit uncomfortable having unexpectedly hit it off.

“How’s the confirmation of power?” Zalario asked Leon to change the subject.

“Don’t underestimate me. I’ve got the feel for it.” In response, Leon answered.

In fact, Leon had taken the ‘Light King Surya’ as his own. He accepted it as if it had been his own power from the very beginning, without any sense of discomfort. Now Leon could interfere with spiritrons without any difficulty.

In fact, Leon was superior to Zalario in terms of basic skill-levels.

Zalario had a lot of experience as a fighter, but his enemies were uniform insectars, and he did not have the concept of training his skills. The same could be said of Obera, who fought the

⁵⁷The word used for “insane” also means someone who “lacks common sense.”

same opponents all the time; their techniques were optimized to suit their enemies. Once his sword reached the mythical-grade level, he was able to easily cut even the exoskeleton of his enemies, so his skill-levels were no longer being polished.

In that respect, although the time he had lived was incomparable to Zalario's, Leon was a Hero who had fought against numerous enemies. It was not surprising that Leon's experience was superior to that of Zalario's.

That is why, even though Zalario had been taking it easy on him, he was able to compete in the battle without using any of his powers against an overwhelmingly superior opponent.

For that reason, Leon—

“You haven't used your skill for a long time, so will you be alright?”

In response to Zalario's question, he just smiled and answered.

“No problem. Now I can handle you without hesitation, what about you?”

Zalario couldn't help but smile wryly at Leon's attitude which was as if he was going to prove it to him.

“I'll do my best to deal with you later.”

He dismissed the situation and turned his attention to Milim, who had now become visible.



I looked around at my friends waiting in the distance and confirmed that they were all ready.

As expected of Benimaru, his formation was superb.

With that, we could launch a wave of attacks on Milim without any waste.

Souei was also visible.

He was standing still in the air—or rather, he was floating in the air, but it still looked as sexy as ever.

Something like that was unnecessary in the middle of battle, but it didn't seem intentional, so I guess he couldn't stop it.

Anyway, Leon and Zalario were on both sides of Souei. They appeared to be getting along well with each other, so it seems that Ciel-san was right, and they had really agreed to cooperate with each other.

This was not so much Zalario's betrayal but rather Feldway's lack of virtue.

Well, it was a lifesaver in this case, so I have no complaints.

I would keep in mind that the question is what would happen after this matter was over.

Well then, I'll just leave that to Souei.

⟨Benimaru, final check, are things okay?⟩

⟨It's perfect. Leon-dono and Zalario-dono are now under my command, so there is nothing to worry about.⟩

I was satisfied with his confident answer.

The showdown was only a moment away.

We were approaching at a speed several tens of times faster than the speed of sound, so if we missed the first move, it was all over.

The time it would take for Milim to fire her Drago Nova would be shorter than the blink of an eye. All she had to do was to make a quick stop, get herself ready, and then shoot.

For those of us watching, it might seem like a long time, but in reality, it would only be about three seconds.

We couldn't attack Milim in flight, so we could only aim in that moment. We would direct Milim's actions by repeating a series of attacks, and then I would invoke 'Void God Azathoth' to remove Feldway's Regalia Dominion which interfered with Milim's thoughts and actions.

Leon and Zalario would support me with their all-out attacks, so I think the success rate was increased.

With a wave of attacks from the Magus and the aforementioned four—Benimaru, Souei, Leon, and Zalario, it was the strongest special attack. Even Milim would have to stop her movements and defend herself at least a little.

That was the outline of the plan.

Then came the decisive moment.

Milim was about to attack the Sacred Tree, and she stopped in the air.

The attack of the Magus had started.

As if it was a beautifully staged event, the beam cannon fired with a single, unrestrained movement.

Normally, I would have admired the scene, but this was not the time to do so.

I could see that the ray of light was a high-power heat ray equivalent to nuclear magic: 'Nuclear Cannon.' It was a robot weapon that could shoot light beams in rapid succession; El-tan sure has a great hidden gem.

Well, let's talk slowly about that some other time.

As expected, it was no match for Milim.

Benimaru's precise command had concentrated the light beams to a single point. The focal point temperature exceeded 100,000,000 degrees Celsius, and while it was very dangerous, it didn't seem to get through to Milim.

Because she was ignoring it without even taking a defensive stance.

It looks flashy, but does this attack have a purpose?

«It was able to distract Milim and buy a little time.»

O-Oh...

It was almost pointless, but it sure did its job well.

Ah, Milim thrust both hands out in front of her.

She didn't seem to be distracted at all, and at this rate, nothing I do would work. At this

point, I could only rely on the attacks of Benimaru and the others.

Souei made the first move.

“Thousand-Hand Shadow Kill.”

Souei’s shadow stretched out into a thousand arms to capture Milim.

But...

Even though Souei’s power, the Ultimate Gift ‘Moon King Tsukuyomi,’ was activated with all his might, Milim’s movement was not even stopped for a moment.

Not to mention ‘Insta-kill’ would never work. It was as I had expected from the beginning, but unfortunately, it ended without getting Milim to pay attention for even a moment. Still, I knew that Souei was not the kind of person who would give up after that.

He himself made a move to pin Milim down with his own hands.

«Don’t worry. That is Souei’s ‘Split Body.’»

Ah, that’s right.

I was impressed by how convenient it was to use.

In this way, while Souei was unable to achieve the purpose of stopping Milim’s movements, he had succeeded in slightly hindering those movements.

Then, as if to cover Souei, the ultimate destructive light danced wildly.

“Disappear as dust, Hundred Split Light Breaker⁵⁸ (Hundred Breaker)!!”

This was Leon’s sure-kill technique.

Each and every luminescence was so large that it could swallow a person, and Leon’s ‘Dis-integration,’ which could change its trajectory at will, was the strongest technique imaginable.

Needless to say, Souei’s ‘Split Body’ was instantly reduced to dust.

However...

Milim was unfazed.

From the moment Drago Nova was ready to be activated, an Invisible Barrier was generated to envelop Milim. She was clad in the shimmer of “stardust” and was able to completely block even spirit particle attacks.

It was definitely better than ‘Covenant King Uriel’s ‘Absolute Defense.’

Leon’s sure-kill technique was so powerful that even I would have had a difficult time with it, but it ended without much effect.

However, the attacks did not end there.

Before the aftermath of Leon’s attack, Zalario had already been on the move.

“Supernatural Sword Flash Slash (Insanity Hash)”

Zalario, who was the epitome of simplicity and fortitude⁵⁹, seemed to have accepted Benimaru’s instruction without any resistance.

⁵⁸Another MTL of this was “Manifestation of Avalokiteshvara” which also shows up in Hinduism, although mostly known as a Buddhist deity.

⁵⁹The word used here was “shiichijitsugōken (質実剛健)” which in Japanese means the combination of ‘unaffected and sincere, with fortitude and vigor.’

Since he agreed to cooperate, he probably had no intention of breaking that promise. He seemed to think that it was the duty of a soldier to obey their commander, even if it was an enemy. Although he had been on the enemy side, he was surprisingly trustworthy.

At the same time as Souei's attack, Zalario unleashed his move.

I don't know how he did it, but it was a technique that he had never shown even when he was fighting against Leon and Souei.

Zalario's mighty sword, which could even cut an alienium exoskeleton in two, had the power to kill just by swinging it. Now, it was aimed at Milim with the intent to kill.

It's existence value was no joke, estimated to be over 20 million.

With a denser sword force than Souei's and Leon's attacks combined, it was a lightning-fast blow to the point of stupidity.

However...

It made Milim's Invisible Barrier glow brightly, but that was all.

It was an unbelievable sight.

Any one of those attacks should have been too powerful to be underestimated. And yet, they did not seem to mean much to Milim—the simultaneous attack of the three of them seemed to have failed, but there was still one second left before Milim activated her Drago Nova.

And that was enough time for Benimaru.

Benimaru's mouth was set in a fearless smile, as if to show off his naturally combative nature.

〈All right, here comes the real thing!〉

Souei, Leon, and Zalario moved accordingly, though they did not actually say anything out loud.

It had been as planned from the beginning.

The Red Lotus that Benimaru held in his hand was shining with a beautiful red glow.

It was a terrifying red light that would burn away all matter, but it blended with Benimaru's blackened haki and—

“Prominence Acceleration—!!”

It radiated like a black sun.

The jet-black darkness was colored by the Red Lotus' flames.

The black and crimson sunlight, with its brutal violence, took on the shape of an oriental dragon. Then, as if it had a will of its own, it surged and attacked Milim, as if to swallow her up.

Milim had no choice but to react to this.

Because Benimaru's Prominence Acceleration, though instantaneous, generated more than tens of millions counts of energy.

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Power was calculated from the relationship between output and total amount of energy. No

matter how large the total energy was, if the output was low, the power was weak. On the other hand, no matter how large the output was, if the amount of energy was small, the power could not be high.

In the case of Benimaru, the output power was perfect. His total amount of energy was not small, but it was not enough to fight against Milim.

And yet, how did Benimaru unleash such a super-powerful special move?

«—Master's power has been lent.»

Huh?

I was not aware of any symptoms, but Ciel-san, just what are you doing all on your own?

No, well, I don't have a problem if it helps everyone, but you should have explained it to me first...

«Since it was still in the experimental stage, I planned to report it after it was successful.»

Hmm, too much of a perfectionist as always.

It might just be a minor experiment to Ciel-san, but it seemed important to me.

No, that kind of complaint is for later.

For now, I'll ask for an explanation of what happened.

According to Ciel-san...

My Ultimate Skill 'Void God Azathoth' has an inexhaustible source of energy known as 'Nihility Collapse' that is difficult to handle. Ciel-san had been considering how to make the best use of it to our advantage. As a part of such experiments, it approached some of the executives to negotiate with them.

If that's the case, why don't I just do the experiment myself—

«Putting Master at risk is not possible.»

And so, that was flatly denied.

I think it would be safe in the labyrinth, but Ciel-san seemed to think of this as unacceptable.

As the target in question, I guess I should be thankful to them for being so overprotective of me.

In any case, Ciel-san had devised and built a system to supply the energy of 'Nihility Collapse' to a few people who were connected to me through 'Soul Corridor.'

Indeed, it was Ciel-sensei at its best.

In principle, it seemed to be an application of 'supply and demand,' but as a secret technique that integrated the Ultimate Skill 'Void God Azathoth' and 'Harvest King Shub-Niggurath,' Ciel-sensei was the only one who could accomplish this.

Although this mechanism was still a work in progress, it was the secret to Benimaru's instantaneous surge in power—the 'Nihility Supply.'

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The ‘Prominence Acceleration’ wrapped itself around Milim as it tried to bite her.

Milim stopped moving as she tried to shake it off.

“Demonwire Bind”

Souei used his threads to capture Milim.

“Hundredfold Prison”

Through Leon’s will, a cage of ‘Disintegration’ was completed.

The Invisible Barrier sparkled like a star, but Milim’s Drago Nova did not activate. This bought us enough time.

By the way, Zalaro did not seem to have any capturing techniques, so he only applied pressure with haki. It was effective enough, but I secretly felt that it was not enough.

Now then, the ideal situation was in place.

I, too, was ready. In order to make sure that everyone’s hard work did not go to waste, we had to make this a success.

I’m counting on you, Ciel-sensei!

«Leave it to me.»

I don’t think it’s right to rely on Skill at these critical moments, but since Ciel-san and I are one and the same, this was the same as me doing my best.

After arming myself that way with the perfect logic, I braced myself and waited for the results.

«—Erase Effect (Reset)—»

It succeeded very easily.

Apparently, because Ciel-san understood the power of ‘Justice King Michael,’ it was thus able to duplicate and negate its influence.

Thus, Feldway’s ‘Regalia Dominion,’ which had been influencing Milim, lost its effect completely in that instant.

*

The operation was a success, and all was well.

I would have liked to congratulate everyone for their good work, but Milim was still in a rampant state.

Milim’s order to destroy the Sacred Tree had been lifted, but the problem was still not over

from here. If we continued to fight here, the aftermath of the battle alone would cause Sarion to suffer tremendous damage.

We needed to relocate...there was the Republic of Ulgracia and others around Sarion, and across the sea, there was Leon's country. Since the Western Nations were spread out in the opposite direction, the best route to minimize the damage would be to lead them to Barren Lands via the sea.

This would affect the territory controlled by Dagruel, but it was too late for that now. However, because I didn't want to cause any damage to the people living there, we had to make sure to evacuate the people in the area.

At times like these, it was up to Souei.

«Souei, I'm going to lead Milim to the Barren Lands now, but I don't want the people of Dagruel to be harmed. Can you do something?»

I told him the gist of what I was planning.

As expected, I received the answer I was hoping for.

«Leave it to me. I've left a 'Clone' for such an eventuality, so you can move immediately.»

As expected of Souei, a true professional.

No faults at all.

Normally, I wouldn't be thinking 'I guess it's possible,' but with Souei, I was convinced.

Souei's manly capability was proven once again, and even though I usually felt sarcastic about it, today I felt happy.

I was so relieved to know that he could handle this situation, so I left it to him.

But then something terrible happened.

Time stopped.

Who the heck did not read the situation and did something so unnecessary!!—I inwardly complained as hard as I could.

Rather, it wouldn't have been a problem if Milim stopped too, but she was moving about as if it was only natural. Moreover, during a Time Stop, the world's defense power was at zero, so Milim running rampant had now become an extremely dangerous existence.

She had already been dangerous before, but now things could be over with just a touch.

Fighting her here was a bad idea, so the only place to lead her was the Desert of Death.

It was good that I had attracted Milim's attention before she went on a rampage, but if I continued to guide her away, we wouldn't be able to make it with enough time for the evacuation route I requested of Souei.

There are almost no uninhabited places in the world and destroying the ecosystem before that was a problem in itself.

“This way, Milim!”

I shouted to get Milim's attention and started moving anyway.

This was a very unpleasant turn of events, but aerial combat with Milim in the 'Suspended World' had now begun.

If I had not been able to handle Time Stop, it would have all been over at this point. I was

grateful but fighting Milim in this situation was hard.

I could feel my strength being drained away.

On the other hand, Milim's strength looked to be inexhaustible, and in fact, it was increasing rapidly. Even with elementary school-level mathematics, it was clearly obvious who would run out of stamina first.

We were doomed at this rate.

It would be a problem to just wait until world collapsed, but I didn't even know who had stopped time in the first place—

Chloe was ruled out.

Guy or Velzard was a possibility, but I didn't think it made sense since they were both among those who could move.

Just who was it that did something so unnecessary...

Feldway?

It was certainly the perfect way to harass a victim, but was this really the right time to use it?

This was not the time to be looking for the culprit, but I needed to find out who did it in order to do something about the situation.

At that time...

⟨Rimuru, can you hear me?⟩

Veldora spoke to me through 'Telepathy Net.'

To be precise, the 'thought data' was transmitted via 'Soul Corridor.' In the 'Suspended World,' it was almost impossible to use magicule-based skills, so it was difficult to transmit even information aside from exceptions like us.

Or rather, it seems that Veldora was not affected by Time Stop either.

It's as expected, or just a matter of course...

⟨Yes, yes, I can hear you.⟩

⟨What are you talking about!? In this situation, Shion and Luminas are in danger!! Adal-mann and the others are having a tough time, but there is no one who can stand up to Dagruel's 'Time Stop.'⟩

⟨Hm? Was it Dagruel who stopped time?⟩

⟨Mm, that's right. That Dagruel is trying to end the battle quickly!⟩

I see, the culprit was suddenly revealed.

The fact that the culprit was currently fighting Shion's group meant that, as I had feared, the enemy had used 'Spatial Transportation' on their whole army. That's fine, Shion's group must have worked hard enough to make Dagruel take them seriously.

The 'Suspended World' was only useful to cut off the weak; it was extremely useful against those who could not cope with it. I had gotten hit with it myself, so I never thought that Dagruel could use it.

Now then, what to do?

There were two problems here.

The first was that Shion and Luminas would be wiped out unless someone came to their rescue.

The second problem was the means of transportation.

During Time Stop, ‘Spatial Transportation’ was basically impossible because it required flying “information particles” to understand the surrounding information. Although it was possible to move them within a visible range, it was meaningless because it would be faster to move normally.

This was because, regardless of the distance, the coordinates of the destination had to be read by interfering with the “information particles.” If the “information particles” had to be moved back and forth, it would be faster for me to just move.

In this case, even if I went to the rescue right now, Dagruel would have finished his complete control of the area before I could reach Lubelius.

The result would be the same whether I went there or asked Veldora to do so.

And since I was currently dealing with Milim, Veldora was the only one I could ask...

〈Veldora, even if you can’t reach them in time, will you go to their rescue right now?〉

〈I’ve been waiting for you to say that!〉

In truth, I had hoped that Veldora would be in charge of the final defense of the labyrinth. However, now was not the time to say such things.

Right now we had to find a means of transportation, I had to keep my spirits up—

〈Rimuru-sama, Ultima and her ‘thoughts’ are connected. We can send the coordinates to Veldora-sama.〉

Oh!?

It was Diablo who interrupted the conversation at that point.

«Spatial Transportation’ is possible even in a ‘Suspended World’ as long as the coordinate information is known even at a long distance. Since Ultima is on site, I shared her senses and perceptions to acquire information.»

I-Is that so?

So, in other words, it’s possible because they’re connected to me through the Soul Corridor?

«That’s correct.»

It declared that to me proudly, but long-distance transfer during a Time Stop really was a foul trick.

It was normally impossible.

To have those able to recognize the ‘Suspended World’ even be connected to each other with a ‘Soul Corridor’ was so exceptional that I was left speechless.

In that case, anything was possible.

But I would not hold back.

〈Ultima, I’m counting on you!〉

«Yes! Rimuru-sama, leave it to me!! Veldora-sama, is this all right?»

«Mm, good work! Kuahahaha, my turn has come at last!!»

Veldora's laughter was very encouraging.

Moreover, the fact that Diablo and Ultima were now able to recognize the 'Suspended World' was also very reassuring in this situation.

And then, I sensed that Veldora had teleported—

The world began to move once again.

As I believed he would, it seemed that Veldora did a good job.

I felt relieved and resumed my mission.

I flew toward the Barren Lands while trying to distract the out-of-control Milim.



Jahil was feeling resentful and helpless as he dealt with Kagali and the others.

He had expected them to be inferior small-fry, but he had been unable to inflict any decisive damage on them. He couldn't help but feel angry.

Even so, his thoughts were calm.

He was fully aware of what was happening around him.

No way, I don't believe it...I never expected that the Dragon Princess would have such a ridiculous amount of power...no, more than that—

Zalario's betrayal was the problem.

He didn't know how it happened, but even Zalario was cooperating in detaining Milim.

This was a serious problem.

He didn't care about his allegiance to Feldway or anything like that.

For Jahil, the problem was the lack of reliable allies in this region.

If it was just Kagali and the others, he could defeat them as they were. However, if even Zalario became Jahil's enemy, it would be difficult even for him to escape.

«Feldway, this is a whole other situation!!»

Jahil vented his anger on Feldway in a furious 'Telepathy Net.'

After a brief silence, Feldway responds in a muffled voice.

«Zalario betrayed us...?»

«This is no time to be dumbfounded! At this rate, even I will be in danger. I'm withdrawing, is that all right with you?»

Jahil was arguing on this, but he was already moving to retreat.

It was humiliating for Jahil to face such lowly opponents, but his cautiousness was the reason why he had been able to survive until now.

Otherwise, he would have been obliterated by Milim's attack long ago.

Jahil took hold of the Origin Blood and released a power he hadn't used before.

The power of the Origin Blood was strong. Jahil was forcing it to accept him as the master, but it was still dangerous to use it too often because of its repulsive power.

However, it was also true that it was an ultimate weapon that could be relied upon when the time came. When its power and Jahil's ability were combined, it became the ferocious Evil Blood Wave that could vaporize even the largest of nations.

In principle, this was the same as the so-called vaporization bomb.

By burning magicules scattered over a wide area all at once, an explosive firestorm was generated.

Jahil had not been fighting at random.

While he was fighting off Teare and Silvia, he had also been secretly dispersing magicules. And now they had spread enough to fill the battlefield, transforming it into a deadly hellfire at any time at Jahil's will.

These guys will withstand my Evil Blood Wave, though.

Because it was an extensive anti-army technique, it lacked decisive power against powerful opponents. However, it was impossible for greater majins to survive.

The widely scattered magicules covered Sarion's Magus. Zalario's subordinates would also be engulfed and burned to the ground, but that was not of Jahil's concern. It was a perfect distraction to save his own life, so he did so without hesitation.

“All you worthless things should understand just how great I am!”

Jahil shouted as such, and the Evil Blood Wave exploded into flames.

The Sacred Tree was engulfed in flames.

The epidermis erupted with the extreme heat.

The Magus, who had been deployed vertically and horizontally to protect the Sacred Tree, were also engulfed by the flames in that instant.

Silvia and Teare, who were standing in front of Jahil, and Kagali, who was a little behind him, were also caught up in the flames, unable to react.

“Geragerageragera! Go to hell, you maggots! You'll regret what you did to me in the afterlife.”

Jahil laughed heartily and snuck away, hiding in the flames.

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The raging flames were so intense that even the atmosphere was burning up.

However, the moment Jahil was out of sight—

“Good grief, thank goodness that bastard is so inattentive.”

At the same time Benimaru said that, all the flames were extinguished.

The catastrophic damage from the fire turned out to be minor. Silvia, Teare, and Kagali did not suffer a single burn. Even the Magus, who were in the most dangerous situation, were all

unharmed.

Some of the ‘magitech knights’ who were exposed to the instantaneous heat were unable to move, but their bodies were protected, and they did not suffer serious injuries.

Although the Sacred Tree was supposed to have burst into flames, each and every branch of the tree was still fresh, although the surface was a bit scorched. This was proof that the tree was not as damaged as it looked. It would be restored to its original state in a few days.

“Seriously, it was really difficult to manipulate the air without Jahil noticing, you know?”

“As expected of Your Majesty Elmesia. As I had hoped, you took the appropriate measures.”

Benimaru smiled briskly as if to appease the complaining Elmesia.

As one could see from this exchange, the reason why the Evil Blood Wave did not cause as much damage was because Benimaru had been working behind the scenes.

Benimaru’s work had been so active that he could be considered a truly outstanding help, competent in all matters of the project.

He had assisted Kagali and the others against Jahil while leading the operation to stop Milim. In addition, he had noticed Jahil’s plan and negotiated with Elmesia to stop it before it could cause any damage.

The magicules spread by Jahil’s power was a special flammable substance known as Blood Mist. This was one of the powers of the Origin Blood, which vampires sometimes used in their own techniques.

It had a smell that was slightly different from naturally occurring magicules. Benimaru detected it through precise ‘Magic Power Manipulation’ and realized that Jahil had been up to something.

As a matter of fact, there was one other person besides Benimaru who had noticed this anomaly.

Silvia.

Silvia had immediately sensed the danger, but she had no idea what to do about it. They could escape from the danger by evacuating as much as possible, but there would still be people who would suffer damage. Moreover, if they made a move, Jahil might speed up his actions.

She had been worried about what to do and asked Benimaru for advice, as the damage was expected to be more widespread.

Benimaru, who had been aware of this, was able to accurately grasp the situation.

That alone was a great achievement, but it did not mean that he came up with the solution. The answer came from the heavens.

«Use Elmesia’s Ultimate Skill ‘Heavenly Wind King Vayu’ to collect only the Blood Mist, and the Ultimate Skill ‘Heat King Amaterasu’ to burn only the magic blood.»

Upon hearing this, Benimaru acted without hesitation.

There were some things in this world that were best not pursued too deeply.

Even when Rimuru had connected the energy circuit of ‘Nihility Collapse,’ he had heard

that “voice.” However, Benimaru pretended not to notice anything and accepted everything as it was.

Everything is according to the will of Rimuru-sama. If this heavenly voice is working in Rimuru-sama’s favor, I shall obey it.

Benimaru had taken it upon himself to be active both in front and behind the scenes. With the cooperation of Elmesia and others, he had overcome the difficulty this time, too.

Thus, thanks to the efforts of Benimaru, Silvia, and Elmesia, Jahil’s plan was foiled.

Although Jahil himself had been allowed to escape, Benimaru decided that he should not take any chances with his limited resources, so this was the best possible outcome.

Once everything was settled, Benimaru collapsed. He had seen that Jahil escaped and relaxed. Perhaps anticipating this, Souei quickly supported him.

“It’s no wonder, he has done such a great job!”

Elmesia’s eyes were full of respect as she looked at the unconscious Benimaru, and her words were kind. From Elmesia’s point of view, Benimaru was a champion who saved Sarion from a crisis. Recognizing how hard Benimaru had worked, it was only natural for Elmesia to react in this way.

However, Benimaru aside, Elmesia’s work still remained to be done. The most important job was to deal with Zalario and his army, which was still alive and well.

Elmesia was concerned. Jahil’s escape has kept the battlefield in a lull. Both sides were waiting to see how the other side would react, and Elmesia was wondering whether or not the battle should be resumed.

Because Benimaru had moved to neutralize Jahil’s attack, Zalario’s forces had not suffered any damage.

In other words, Sarion’s forces were at a slight disadvantage, let alone in balance.

The rest of the army was not that much of a threat, but the two enemy leaders were really troublesome, and the problems were endless.

In the first place, it was uncertain whether the enemy would agree to a truce or not.

While simulating various possibilities, Elmesia thought at lightning speed—

But before those simulation results could even finish, her worries were soon cleared.



Dhalis and Nice were in charge of Zalario’s army.

They and their confidants were those who had lost the battle for an undead elf incarnation, and their egos had been extinguished. The Throne-angel class was weak-willed.

Even though they had been fighting for so long... no, it was the other way around. It was

precisely because of the repetition of the same work for such a long and unchanging time that their souls were worn out and their egos faded away.

One of the reasons for this could be that Zalario was a warrior.

In contrast, there was the army of Obera. The camaraderie was strong in her army, and everyone loved Obera. There were many who had been killed in battle, and Oma had been the only deputy left, but they were all valiant warriors who were willing to risk their lives for Obera.

Zalario's army, on the other hand, was a mechanical force, organized and disciplined. There was no need for an ego; they were all mere cogs in a wheel, doing only what they were ordered to do.

For this reason, Zalario had few true comrades, and now there were only two—Dhalis and Nice.

They approached Zalario and asked him a question.

“For some reason, that man Benimaru seems to have protected us as well. As a result, the battle has been suspended, but would you like to resume it?”

“Zalario-sama, are you sure? Didn't you betray Feldway-sama?”

Dhalis made a matter-of-fact confirmation in a clerical manner. Nice kept Zalario in mind and tacitly asked him about the future plans. Zalario thought that these were interesting questions because of the differences in their direction.

Surprisingly, a sense of individuality has been born.

It hadn't occurred to him until now, but Zalario's lieutenants also had their own opinions which he had not noticed before. Zalario was happy to know that.

“Huh, you guys are so serious.”

“”—!?””

Dhalis and Nice were startled when Zalario smiled. They were shocked to the point of earth-shattering surprise. It was only natural as Zalario's smile had never once existed in their memories.

“Z-Zalario-sama?”

“By any chance is this some kind of a plan!? Or are you testing us?”

Zalario controlled his flustered deputies with his hand and spun his words.

“Calm down. I have decided that further fighting is pointless.”

“What!?”

It was a formal declaration of the end of the battle that came from Zalario's mouth.

Dhalis was surprised but had no objections. He obediently complied and passed the order on to the entire army.

“And Nice, I did not betray Feldway. On the contrary, he took away my free will and betrayed the trust I placed in him as a friend!” Zalario announced this with quiet anger.

It was a declaration of farewell.

“Then, from now on, with Feldway-sama...”

Zalario nodded his head in agreement to Nice's fearful question.

“That's right. I have decided to part ways with Feldway.”

This statement made not only Nice but also Dhalis gasp.

Zalario continued.

“Fortunately, you guys did not have an Ultimate Skill. You were not enchanted with an Ultimate Skill and are free to protect your ego. You may continue to follow me, or you may join Feldway. I will give you a moment to choose whatever you like.”

Dhalis and Nice were confused by the sudden proposal.

“Y-You don’t need us anymore?”

“P-Perhaps, did I make some kind of mistake?”

They were upset in this way, but Zalario calmed them down.

“No, that’s not it. I, too, have been freed from the domination, and I have realized the importance of freedom. That is why you guys should see the beauty of this world as well.”

With that said, the two of them looked around once more.

The sky was clear and cloudless, as if the previous turmoil had been a beautiful lie.

The Sacred Tree, having been protected from the threat of Milim, stood majestically, although its charred bark was still noticeable. Its branches spread wide as if supporting the sky, and its huge lush green leaves were growing thickly.

A pleasant breeze blew over Zalario and the others gathering on the leaves. It was a breath of fresh air that blew away old thoughts.

“We are now in a truce with the Insectars, who have been our enemies for a long time. I was going to follow Feldway as a favor to my friend, but I cannot tolerate his way of doing things. I am going to find a new way of life.”

Zalario told this to them. He clearly declared that he would not obey Feldway to the point of being disrespectful. Moreover, although Zalario was a warrior, he had no taste for finding new enemies. He had been fighting all this time only because he had to, not because fighting itself was his purpose in life.

He had been forced to fight his whole life, but perhaps it was time to turn his attention to something else. Zalario thought as such.

And his lieutenants agreed with him.

“—To tell you the truth, I have been thinking about many things since inhabiting an undead elf. It seems that my body is inhabited by the will of someone else, and if it’s allowed, I would like to find a hobby other than fighting.” Dhalis confided hesitantly.

That’s fine—Zalario nodded.

“I don’t have any particular opinions about it. I will continue to follow Zalario-sama.”

Nice’s will was firm. Being useful to Zalario was Nice’s only consistent wish.

“I’ll allow it.”

Zalario accepted the offer.

Zalario was determined to live freely, but not irresponsibly. He would not abandon those who loved and followed him.

“In that case, so will I.”

“Are you sure? I won’t stop looking for hobbies.”

“Fufufu, finding a hobby would be fun, but we’re not in a hurry. Let’s wait until everyone has settled down before we start having fun.”

That’s a good idea—Zalario thought.

Their lives were still going on. It would not be a bad idea to slow down and take time to consider what to do.

However—

For that, it was necessary to lead the world to peace.

“Then it seems we have found our next goal.”

The world was so beautiful. And yet, Feldway did not even bother to look at it. Right now, Feldway was the one who was disturbing this world.

As a friend, I cannot overlook this outrage—Zalario thought.

“Listen up! The enemy is Feldway!! Let us break through his delusional ambitions and stabilize the world!!”

<“ “Understood—!!” ”>

Zalario’s army was as united as a cog in a wheel.

This time, too, the decision was made unanimously.

Upon Zalario’s order, all the soldiers disarmed at once.

“I see no point in further combat action, so what about you?”

Zalario, who went to Elmesia alone, said as such.

Elmesia agreed with Zalario’s opinion.

“I agree. It didn’t seem like you liked the fight either, so let’s call it even.”

Elmesia’s statement was equivalent to a declaration that she would not hold them accountable for the war.

As a ruler, she should have taken compensation from the aggressor, but Elmesia made this proposal to forcefully bring the battle to an end.

The royal families also supported this proposal. Or rather, they had no choice but to support it. In effect, the continuation of further fighting was a matter of national survival. Although the ‘magitech knights’ could be repaired, the Magus had been badly damaged. If the battle had continued, there would be many casualties. The loss of life could not be compensated for with money, and the nation’s strength would have been reduced. The upheaval by Feldway was expected to continue in the future, and military power could not be wasted at this point.

Fortunately, no leader was foolish enough not to understand this. The emperor’s decision was not disputed, and everyone agreed with it. The summit conference between Elmesia and Zalario resulted in a successful agreement to the battle’s conclusion.

Following this, a declaration of collaboration was issued.

Thus, for the time being, Zalario’s army would be stationed in Sarion to prepare for the unprecedeted crisis that was to come.



Looking down from above, Feldway discerned the entire battlefield.

“Zalario betrayed me...”

It was a shock to Feldway. The departure of Zalario, one of his few confidants and old friends, was an event that he had never imagined.

That’s why, he went crazy.

He had lost Michael and then he was betrayed by Zalario.

It was only after the loss that he understood how important they had been to him.

Are you abandoning me too? If that’s the case, I will not hesitate anymore. I will risk my life to prove the existence of God!!

Feldway’s heart became further distorted and broken.

Unbeknownst to anyone, and irrevocably irreversible.

“What are you going to do, Feldway?” Vega asked.

This one was really easy-going. He lived freely for his own purposes and pleasures, without any sense of responsibility.

Looking at Vega, Feldway smiled faintly.

“Hm, everything is going as planned.”

“But hey, wasn’t Milim supposed to knock down the giant tree?”

“It could have gone either way. We can always destroy it later.”

Although Zalario’s betrayal had not been planned, it was true that Feldway’s plan was still intact. Thus, Feldway’s confidence was not shaken.

The hour of destiny was near.

Any doubts that had lingered in his heart were erased by the feelings of Zalario’s betrayal.

It was as if Feldway was now driven by only a single purpose.

That is why he would not stop now.

“Vega, you and Dino will head out to conquer the labyrinth.”

“Oh? I’m finally getting my turn!” Vega laughed happily.

Mai, who has been standing by, also got up at Feldway’s gaze. Vega and the others could not leave the Heavenly Star Palace because they had not been given the “key.” Mai had been given a duplicate of the key, so she was able to send Vega and the others on their way with Instantaneous Movement.

Incidentally, the key from the other world to the Heavenly Star Palace was also in Feldway’s possession. But for the “key” to the Heaven’s Tower, which connected the palace to the earth—only Velzard possessed the true lock.

However, the Cardinal World was already registered in the “key” possessed by Feldway

and the others, so there was no longer any inconvenience for them to move around. Mai, for example, had a duplicated “key” as her ultimate enchantment, so she could move to the Heavenly Star Palace from anywhere.

This “key” was also given to Dino and his comrades, but they were not very happy about it.

“Eh, me too?”

Dino reacted in disgust but was ignored.

Now that Veldora, the biggest fighting force in the labyrinth, had left, this was the perfect time to take advantage of it. No matter what Dino said, the decision would not be reversed.

“Expect good news.”

Vega left with those words.

Mai led the way, followed by a drooping Dino, Pico and Gracia taking their leave along with him.

Thus, silence fell over the Heavenly Star Palace.

Feldway, who was left alone, laughed with a genuinely pleasant smile.

It was a roar of laughter tinged with some kind of madness.



Feldway, looking down at the ground, began to make his own final move.

That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime

Rimuru Disappears

Epilogue

Epilogue

Rimuru Disappears

As I was leading Milim to Barren Lands, I suddenly had a bad feeling.

I thought of something awful.

I wondered if my current actions could be exactly what Feldway had intended.

It was a feeling that I had realized only because I was often moved according to Ciel-san's will.

No, rather, I think it's just a hunch...

I had doubts about the situation because there was only one possible destination.

If someone wanted to guide me somewhere—it was the Heaven's Tower, that's for sure.

After all, inside that tower was a relic of god so strong that even Michael's attack had been completely blocked. The surrounding Desert of Death also served the purpose of preventing further damage from Milim.

It was too bad for Dagruel, but it was also convenient that we were now on hostile terms. After all, doing this would no longer hurt my conscience.

No, I still felt sorry for him, but I also felt that it was inevitable since we were enemies. That's why, I could accept this as a force majeure.

Therefore, the Heaven's Tower was the only place to lead Milim, but they didn't see through that, did they?

No, I'm thinking too much...

«...No way»

I didn't think that Feldway would exceed Ciel-san's expectations either.

After all, even the battle just now was a feat that could not have been accomplished without Zalario's cooperation, and there was no way that he could have foreseen that much.

If he had known that Zalario would betray him, he could have done something else...

Hmm, there was no use in worrying here, but I felt bad somehow.

I was feeling a bit uncomfortable, but I was not sure if it was because I was thinking too much.

Then I received a nasty report from Ramiris.

〈Hey Rimuru, I'm in trouble!!〉

‘Yes, yes, I’m in trouble too’—is how I was about to reply, but Ramiris continued faster than I could respond.

〈Dino-chan and his friends are attacking us! We’re ready to intercept them, but I’m worried because Master isn’t here!〉

Ahh, I hate this so much.

If I hadn’t asked Veldora, I would have still been in the ‘Suspended World.’ Dagruel’s power was as strong as that of True Dragon, so he seemed to be able to stop time for quite a long time.

If I had let Milim run amok in such a state, the Sacred Tree would have been destroyed long ago, and there was no way to know what the repercussions would have been.

That’s why, my judgment must have been right, but...

〈All I can say is good luck.〉

〈Hold on, that’s not the kind of answer I’m looking for, you know?〉

〈No, I do understand. But, you know, I’m also desperately trying to deal with Milim right now...〉

〈I can’t even reach Benimaru either! That’s why, if you don’t come back soon, I’ll be in trouble too.〉

I understood that Ramiris was worried.

The reason why she couldn’t contact Benimaru was probably because he had pushed himself too hard. I had confirmed that he was safe, so I believed he would recover soon as there was nothing wrong with his body.

〈Anyway, do your best and hang in there for a while!〉

〈I understand, but really, please come back soon...〉

After much grumbling and complaining, the communication with Ramiris finally ended.

I wished she would be more considerate of me. However, it was true that this was no time for jokes.

The battle between Guy and Velzard was still going on without any intervention from others.

There was an intruder in the labyrinth and the battle was likely about to intensify.

Milim was still running rampant, and I didn’t even have a clue of how to stop her.

«If only someone could deal with Milim even for just a few moments, then she could be stopped by the Regalia Dominion...»

I didn’t like the idea of that on a personal level, but it couldn’t be helped in the worst-case scenario. That said, I was in trouble because there was no one here to stop her.

Just canceling Feldway’s order had exhausted Benimaru to the point of collapse. Even if I asked him to do the same thing again, it would be impossible until he regained his strength.

Or rather, from this situation, it felt as if the attacker was responding appropriately after

seeing our movements. Even though the attacker had the advantage, I didn't expect it to be so one-sided.

I needed to find an opportunity to counterattack somehow—although it may seem like I had enough time on my hands if I was thinking this way, I really wasn't ready for Milim's onslaught.

Directing her here meant being targeted by Milim.

There was no way I could afford to do anything about Feldway, so I tried my best to neutralize Milim's attacks, aiming for the Heaven's Tower.

Finally, it came into view.

The Heaven's Tower' hould be able to withstand Milim's attacks. Once I was inside the tower, I should feel a little better.

But sadly, the worse a premonition was, the more likely it was to be correct.

“I've been waiting for you, Demon Lord Rimuru.”

While I was matched up against Milim, a voice from the heavens reached my ears.

It was the malevolent voice of Feldway descending to the ground.

“Damn it, you really were aiming for this!!”

I clicked my tongue, but it was already too late.

Before I could think about what to do, Ciel-san rushed to warn me.

«Withdraw from this place immediately!»

Based on its unusual appearance, there was no doubt that this was an emergency situation. Although they were saying “withdraw,” they really meant to say, “run away.”

As much as I wanted to do so, I couldn't.

Because I was facing Milim.

This situation is exactly what Feldway intended.

It's the worst.

The reason I was not panicking was because I could perfectly read what was going to happen next.

Feldway's next move was—

“Now then, Milim! Follow me once again, ‘Regalia Dominion’!!”

Ah, I knew it.

Without any hesitation, he performed the final move I had been worried about for a while now. Milim lost her strength. From the looks of it, it seemed that Feldway had taken control of her once again.

It was good that Milim's rampage had been stopped, but I was sure that the brunt of it would be directed towards me—this is what they call a “checkmate,” right?

If I had to battle against Milim in addition to Feldway, there was no chance for me to win.

“Quit messing around, you coward!!”

I didn't care if he thought I was a sore loser or a whiner, but I at least wanted to complain.

Feldway looked down at me and laughed.

“How unsightly⁶⁰, Demon Lord Rimuru. You’re in my way, so I’m going to ask you to disappear now.”

Perhaps he wasn’t laughing at me but acknowledging me.

Because Feldway had run away from a showdown with me.

I was sure that Feldway, who had acquired Milim as a pawn, would try to defeat me two-on-one, but surprisingly, that didn’t happen.

“Blast off to the end of time and space: ‘Chrono-Saltation’!”

It was a familiar phenomenon.

It was the same attack that had wiped Velgrynd-san off the face of this world only a short time ago—with that in mind, my consciousness black out.

I was transported by Feldway’s space-time transfer to some unknown “place,” where the past, the future, and the present were all uncertain.

⁶⁰A moment of silence for the OG raw MTL—“*You’re a pussy, Demon Lord Rimuru.*”

Afterword

Finally, I have finished writing volume 20.

I was told that the deadline would not be extended, but the truth is that it was really difficult because there were a lot of problems. To be more specific, I was in a slump. I was mentally not motivated to write at all...or rather, I was in a situation where I could come up with a scene but couldn't concentrate on writing it down.

In addition to writing the main part of the book, I had a lot of work to do, so my energy was quite low. But even so, this was the first time that I had ever felt so much of a lack of motivation to write. I had no choice but to change my writing environment as a last resort. I was worried about how it would turn out, but I went to Tokyo to enjoy hotel life. I stayed in a hotel and tried my best to live a life of writing.

Of course, at my own expense. Well, I was told that the publisher would publish my book, but I felt that it would only increase the pressure to write more and more, which I didn't like. I was worried about a situation where I couldn't write, so I refused the offer, saying that I didn't want to be trapped anymore and that I would pay for it by myself. As a result, I was able to complete my quotas every day, as if my three months of writers' block had been a lie.

I guess the environment is very important after all. It is more important than anything else to have a normal life and to keep your writing rhythm. I know it is difficult to do so, but still...

I would like to thank the hotel staff for their kindness. I was so comfortable that I didn't want to go back home. I-san, who oversaw the hotel, said to me with a straight face, "Don't you have to go back?" His delivery was so stone-cold that it didn't sound like a joke to me... I-san is probably serious, so I will try my best to prevent that from happening (bitter smile).

During my stay in Tokyo, I had a chance to meet with some writers and some of them said that they were in the same situation as me. It seems that many of them are mentally damaged because they cannot go out due to the coronavirus. Many of you may have probably increased your work at home due to coronavirus, and people like me, who are not good at self-control, might be experiencing the same kind of suffering to a greater or lesser extent. In such a case, it is important to have a change of pace!

Please take a break and try not to overdo it.

I hope that my work "That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime" will be of some help to you and give you peace of mind. I will continue to do my best to complete the story.

See you again in the next volume!

やすくなつて

ふせ
伏瀬／作

もりよ／絵

キャラクター原案
みつばー

ゆめうらたちの活躍が
児童文庫化!

新登場!!



転スラが読み



①最強のスライム誕生!?

上 中 下

②ジュラの森の大異変
上 中 下



③桜金色の魔王現る

上 中 下



④異世界から来た者たち

上 中 下



⑤スライムの魔王誕生

上 中 下

1~5巻まで新イラストで発売中!!

**Regarding
Reincarnated to Slime 20**
Story by Fuse, Illustration by Mitz Vah

