



OVERLORD [ω] The bloody valkyrie

3章 混乱と把握

**Part 1**

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After the transfer, Ainz saw a hill in front of him. No, it wasn't high enough to be a hill, it was just a mound with a mere six meters of elevation from the base to the top.

Short vegetation with pointed leaves grew lushly on the mound, giving it the appearance of having been there for a long time. Looking around, there were many similar protrusions, giving the impression that the general vicinity was of this terrain. However, this was obviously untrue.

This terrain had been created through magic by Floor Guardian Mare. Buried under this layer of earth was the Great Tomb of Nazarick's stony surface.

Ainz activated 「Flight」 and instantly flew over the mound. In his broad field of vision he saw a single piece of land, overgrown with weeds. Not even the tiniest bit of the Great Tomb of Nazarick was visible, as if it was entirely covered by the mounds.

Ainz didn't linger over this scene and maintained his original speed as he continued his flight.

After passing a certain point, the scenery changed with the sensation of piercing through a thin membrane. The hilly terrain disappeared and the familiar sight of home was reflected in Ainz' eyes.

That was the proof of having broken through the protective Illusion barrier..

Without reducing the speed of 「Flight」, Ainz' destination was the large and solemn mausoleum at the centre, because it was the only entrance leading into the Great Tomb of Nazarick.

Flying straight to the stairs of the grey temple and finding numerous figures below him, Ainz repressed his anxiety and landed in front of them.

“Ainz-sama, welcome home.”

Along with a woman's tender voice, many other voices arose as well to welcome Ainz back home.

Standing at the front, dressed in a gown of pure white, was Albedo, the Great Tomb of Nazarick's Overseer, who was also the person with the greatest understanding of the current situation.

The four maids tending to her were battle maids, and standing a little farther behind were level eighty servants.

After Ainz finished his conversation with Albedo using 「Message」, he immediately ordered Narberal to use teleport. Not even five minutes have passed since the end of 「Message」 and

Albedo was able to organise this many people to greet him upon his return allowed one to glimpse at her organisational abilities.

Feeling impressed, Ainz waved his hand gently in response to the servant's greetings. He was supposed to say a few words in appreciation, but it wasn't appropriate under the current situation.

“Albedo, about the issue discussed over 「Message」 ...”

Did Shalltear really betray us?

He was about to say these words, but hesitated. Because deep in his worried mind, he was afraid that saying them would turn Shalltear's betrayal into irrevocable fact.. Furthermore, discussing a topic like this in front of the servants was too dangerous.

“Yes. Would you like to discuss this issue elsewhere?”

“You are right... let us discuss this in the Throne Hall, alright?”

“As you wish. Well then Yuri, present Ainz-sama's ring.”

From amongst the battle maids standing behind them, a spectacle-wearing maid quietly stepped forward.

Although the combat maid outfit she wore was the same as Narberal's, there were some differences in the details.

Narberal's maid outfit was intended to protect her, whereas Yuri's clothes emphasized ease of movement. This was confirmed by the lack of a metal plate on the front of her skirt.

Her metal gauntlets had prominent spikes. With clenched fists, they would become lethal weapons.

The top of the wide blue necklace was decorated with small translucent gems which didn't reflect light, but sparkled like a swaying flame.

With her hair tied into a low-cropped bun at the back of her head, and proper-looking facial features that were both sharp and cold, she gave an intelligent impression

This was Yuri Alpha. Vice-captain of the battlemajids. Sebastian, who served as the leader of the battlemajids, was a man, therefore it was said amongst the majids that the person responsible for holding the team together was Yuri..

She was carrying a tray covered with purple cloth with both of her hands. Resting on the purple cloth was a ring—— a ring of Ainz Ooal Gown.

Ainz picked up the ring and placed it on his ring finger.

Since the ring would allow the wearer to move around the Great Tomb of Nazarick at will, every time Ainz went to an outside city he would leave his ring behind, because he was worried about having it stolen from him.

Looking at the ring on his skeletal hand, Ainz nodded in approval. The unease of not wearing the ring for several days disappeared, filling him with great satisfaction.

“Well then, let’s go Albedo.”

Because they couldn’t teleport to the Throne Room directly, he activated the ring’s power to move to the room right before it.

Accompanied by Albedo, Ainz opened the thick, heavy door and headed deeper inside, towards the direction of the crystal-like throne. As they walked, Ainz voiced the question he wanted to ask earlier.

“Before we start, I wish to ask several questions. You said that Shalltear betrayed us. What was the reaction of Sebas, who was at the same place? He didn’t turn traitor too?”

“Yes, he did not show any signs of betrayal.”

“Well then, have you asked Sebas for related details?”

“Yes, we have already completed our inquiry. According to Sebas, they encountered bandits. After that, Shalltear supposedly went ahead to the opponent’s lair to capture more bandits. During this period of time, nothing suspicious occurred. She even repeatedly expressed her dedication towards Ainz-sama.”

“So, that’s to say, whatever happened afterwards was what instigated her rebellion.”

“Yes... in addition, it seems that she also brought along two vampire brides, but they appear to have been exterminated.”

“...Is that so. Those were just minions... no, this means something happened which was sufficient to exterminate them. Well then, my turn to explain what has happened on my side.”

By the time they reached the stairs leading to the throne, the discussion was almost finished. However, since they had not gone over the most important issue relating to the cemetery, Ainz continued to talk.

After it was all over, Albedo, who had been listening quietly nodded her head in understanding.

Although Ainz wished to ask whether the way he handled the situation was appropriate, there were more important issues that he wanted to know about.

Ainz looked at the throne and chanted the predetermined code words:

“Open Mainscreen.”

A translucent window opened up in front which looked similar to a control panel, yet distinctly different. The window was divided into several tabs, and each page was filled with densely packed text.

This was the Great Tomb of Nazarick’s management system.

Inside, it recorded the daily required administrative expenses: the current servant types and quantity, the activated magical traps, etc. The settings could likewise be roughly managed from here as well. In YGGDRASIL, this could be viewed regardless of time or location. However, Ainz found out through experiments that in this world, this system could only be operated at the heart of the tomb, the Throne Room.

*Having to come here every time is slightly troublesome... but the ring allows teleport... so there is no need to be too concerned about it.*

With experienced movements, Ainz opened the NPC tab.

A list of names of all of the NPCs collectively created by the Guild members were recorded on this page. After changing the displayed names from the original alphabetically arranged Katakana to levels in descending order, Ainz browsed the list from the top —— and after his eyes stopped on a single spot, he silently turned to gaze upon Albedo’s face.

“Yes, it has already become like this.”

Amongst the series of names in white text, only Shalltear Bloodfallen’s name had turned black.

Ainz knew the meaning behind what the change in the name meant, but nonetheless——

After repeatedly looking it over twice, three times, making sure that he did not observe wrongly, Ainz screamed ‘impossible!’ inside his mind. If skeletal faces could move, his would have an expression of dismay.

“...Is it death?”

Ainz steadfastly asked Albedo. He hoped silently that perhaps the transfer to this world had caused some changes in the systems. However, the truth that Albedo spoke could not be any more cruel.

“If it were death, the name would disappear and leave a blank space. Wouldn’t this mean that she has betrayed us?”

“Ah...you’re right.”

Ainz answered Albedo like this, then recalled the YGGDRASIL days when he had seen this kind of text change.

Although Albedo said it was betrayal, the system’s meanings were slightly different. In a broad sense it was similar to betrayal, but that was the result of being subject to mind control from a third party, causing the temporarily hostile NPC’s name to display a colour change.

Impossible.

Ainz once again denied this reality inside his mind. Like him, Shalltear Bloodfallen was an Undead, which meant that she should have been impervious to all types of mental influence regardless of whether they were beneficial or detrimental. How could Shalltear possibly be affected by mind control?

Shalltear simply betraying Nazarick was relatively more believable. She could, for example, have a particular reason for her betrayal—— dissatisfaction with her own treatment or outsiders offering better conditions.

If that was not the case, then after being sent to this world, something beyond Ainz’ knowledge had happened to cause the incident.

Ainz recalled Enfreia’s face. Correct, if there were those with innate talents with unknown powers, perhaps it was possible to influence the mental state of undead.

“...Could it be a special influence from being affected by this world’s peculiar beings and phenomena?”

“That is uncertain. However Shalltear’s betrayal is an undisputable fact. I recommend we form a subjugation team immediately.”

At this moment, it suddenly occurred to Ainz: the servants, who were welcoming him back just a while ago, could they have been gathered with the intention of subjugating Shalltear? In retrospect, the group had a selection of many servants which were rare in Nazarick, with divine attribute attacks which were which were effective against undead.

Albedo continued in a firm tone:

“I wish to volunteer to serve as the team’s commander. With Ainz-sama’s permission, I would also like to appoint Cocytus as deputy commander, and also to select Mare to be included in the team.”

This selection, which was the perfect lineup to eliminate Shalltear, demonstrated Albedo's seriousness in the matter.

Shalltear Bloodfallen was extremely powerful. If you were to simply compare her to the other Guardians, with the exception of Gargantua, she was the strongest. To be absolutely certain of victory against her, it was necessary to send the team members Albedo had chosen, otherwise it would be considerably difficult.

“What is your opinion on this?”

“No. It's too early to arrive at this conclusion. We need to first ascertain the reason for Shalltear's betrayal.”

“Ainz-sama has a really benevolent heart. However, regardless of her reasons, simply the fact that she dared to stand as the supreme leader's enemy makes her undeserving of such kindness.”

“That's incorrect, Albedo. I am not showing kindness to Shalltear, I'm only trying to understand the reason for her betrayal.”

If such a thing could happen to Shalltear, then it was necessary to find a way to resolve it. If it was dissatisfaction with how they're treated, other servants and NPCs could have the same problem. It was necessary to directly address the future possibility that it would occur to another servant, and to take the necessary countermeasures.

Even if it was forced control from being affected by abilities like innate talent, it was necessary to find a countermeasure.

Hearing the 「Message」 informing him that the NPC created by his past comrades had betrayed him, he felt like his position as Guild Leader was being rejected by his Guild companions, it was a severe blow that almost brought him to his knees. However, this was already beyond the scope of a guild master.

This problem shouldn't be resolved with his authority as Guild Leader, but as the Supreme Ruler of Nazarick. It was too early to be discouraged. Hypothetically——although it was impossible——if it turned out that Shalltear was actually subject to forced control, then it was necessary to rescue her.

A superior who put on an amazing countenance, yet was unable to hold out a saving hand during times of trouble, would fundamentally be unqualified to be the leader.

As ruler, it was necessary for Ainz to protect his underlings.

“Well then, where is Shalltear at the moment, has anyone determined her whereabouts?”

“Extreme apologies, it has yet to be confirmed. Taking into account the possibility that Shalltear could attack Nazarick, all of her immediate subordinates were locked up. At the same time, to strengthen our defenses, we also dispatched servants to the first floor.”

“Is that so. If that is the case, then first we must determine Shalltear’s location. Let us visit your elder sister”

## **Part 2**

Nazarick’s fifth floor was an extremely cold area, created with a glacier as concept

Producing the illusion of a blue iceberg emitting a glow from within, there was a tombstone-like object standing amidst the endless white land. Snow fell from the self-shrouding thick layer of clouds in the sky, dancing in the freezing wind composed of icy cold water vapour. In the distance, a frozen forest completely covered in snow could be seen, like a giant hiding under a white mantle.

Ainz’ clothes were blown about, flapping violently in the chilling cold wind. Remembering what Albedo beside him was wearing, Ainz asked:

“Are you cold? If there is a need, wear your armor. We have enough time for you to change.”

Any ice attack against Ainz was completely ineffective, and he would feel no coldness no matter how freezing it was. However, it was not the same for Albedo. This degree of frostiness would not harm her if she wore her full armor, but Albedo was currently wearing a white dress. Although she was asked before the transfer as well, it could be that she was just putting on a false front.

But Albedo gave the worried Ainz a tender smile.

“Thank you for your concern, but there is no need to be worried, Ainz-sama. This chill is absolutely not a problem.”

Ainz nodded and replied: “I see.”

Originally this place would apply ice damage and movement-slowing area effect. But its activation cost money, therefore it was currently deactivated. This prior decision was a stroke of good luck. Or perhaps Albedo possessed magical items or abilities to negate ice damage?

Basically, NPCs’ equipment were all conferred by the Guild member who created them. The ones Ainz knew well were Pandora’s Actor and a few others, and after the transfer he had briefly looked over everyone’s data.

Ainz cast aside the doubts in his mind, and looked at the magnificent two-story high mansion in front of him.

In this cold world of ice and snow, only this structure exuded a strange atmosphere. Like a building from a story, it gave off a fairy-tale feeling.

However the surface was a frozen layer of ice, creating a cold, discomforting ambience. In fact, this building did not have a fairy-tale name.

It was called the Frozen Prison.

All enemies of Nazarick were locked in here.

“Let’s go.”

Ainz succinctly instructed with a short phrase, then pushed open the large, ice-coated door. Even with its surface covered by a thick layer of ice, the door still opened easily, as if it was welcoming a guest.

The moment the doors opened, a gust of cold wind rushed out. The temperature inside the prison was even lower than that of the Arctic world outside.

With the cold wind hitting her body, Albedo started to shiver. Seeing this, Ainz pulled a crimson cloak out of thin air, the hem of which had the pattern of a burning flame.

“Wear this cloak, Albedo. It might not have any particularly strong magical effect, but it should be more than enough to block the cold.”

“Something so valuable! My extreme gratitude! I will treasure this for the rest of my life.”

Although he never said that he was going to give it to her, seeing Albedo’s smiling face, he didn’t elaborate and merely looked beyond the doorway.

A silent and dark passageway extended all the way into the prison.

“Ah, yes. The remnants of the Sunlight Scripture are also locked in here.”

“Yes. It’s only proper that Neuronist Painkill guards them strictly. So warm... like being embraced in Ainz-sama’s bosom... fufufu.”

“...Is that so. Well that’s great.”

Being in my flesh- and skinless embrace should not be warm. However, Ainz wasn’t so dense that he would say this aloud.

Putting Albedo, who was squirming about fully immersed in the cloak, out of sight, Ainz slowly walked ahead.

“What are you doing. There isn’t much time left... under these special circumstances.”

“Yes, yes!”

Ainz’ passive skill 「Undead Blessing」 allowed him to observe all of the undead concealed inside the place. Feeling that this would be bothersome, Ainz disabled the skill, ignoring the undead moving along the corridor, covered in a layer of blue white ice. If he did not take prior measures to deal with the moving obstacles, perhaps he would slip on the completely frozen corridor.

“...Ainz-sama, shall I call for Neuronist Painkill? She did not show herself to guide the way, letting the Supreme Ruler of Nazarick enter without a guide...”

“No need. Although it isn’t a bad thing, that fellow talks a lot. Currently there are some emergency matters which need to be resolved, so I hope to avoid wasting time as much as possible.”

“Understood. Then after this matter is concluded, I shall tell Neuronist Painkill not to talk so much.”

“No, no, that will not be necessary. I do not find it discomforting.”

“But then...”

Seeing Albedo beside him frown, Ainz allowed a smile to surface on his unmoving face. As the master, he felt it was a good thing that his subordinates would think about what was best for him, but if it wasn’t handled well, it could result in the subordinates not daring to complain in the future.

“It’s nothing. I love all of you, regardless of your strong points or weak points, because you were all created by my past comrades. I would be in the wrong if I felt displeasure when looking upon any settings which were made with dedication.”

Correct. If Shalltear’s betrayal was due to her settings, then it was necessary to forgive her, because she would only be following the intentions of her creator Peroronchino. However, Peroronchino wasn’t the kind of person to plant a bad seed inside the Guild. This confused Ainz, since Peroronchino was the type who enjoyed joking around, but dislike damaging relations between companions.

*Even so, is it really an external reason? Because that text display means mind-control... but then there is no way to confirm this. Or perhaps there were some changes in the settings after arriving in this world. I have yet to completely memorize all of the NPCs’ personality settings too. Furthermore, some parts of the NPCs’ personality settings were similar to the Guild members who created them... I think there shouldn’t be anyone who could completely export his or her personality into settings, therefore it could be due to this. Speaking of which, about Shalltear... could it be that her settings contain something akin to a timed explosive mechanism?*

*Because her creator enjoyed H Games, and input some kind of girl game conquest event in her... woah, that's very possible.*

Ainz gave a tired sigh. At the same time he felt the woman beside him display an abnormal change.

Although she was only looking forward and walking silently, it was different from earlier, because she was not following Ainz' pace. Furthermore although she was facing forward, she was not looking ahead, and her eyesight was fixed on a certain point.

When Ainz realized that Albedo was muttering something, he perked up his ears to listen.

"I love you... I love you... I love you..."

This phrase was endlessly repeated, like a broken tape recorder.

"... Hey Albedo, I said that I love all of you. Everybody...hm?"

Albedo moved oddly as she turned her head.

"No, but still, that is to say, it also includes loving me!"

"Ah...yes indeed."

"Goooh!"

With her feet close together, Albedo hopped in a cute fashion—— and crashed into the ceiling.

That was the cons of people with extraordinary physical ability.

Bump! No, rather it should be bang. The ceiling let out a startling loud noise, letting others know just how big of an impact it received. Hearing this sound similar to an explosion, supernatural semi-translucent monster-like entities slowly appeared from the floor and the ceiling.

These were the undead hidden in this prison cell which were picked up earlier by Ainz' ability.

"Ah, you guys can step down. It's nothing."

In front of Ainz was Albedo who was so delighted that she was about to burst into song. Although having collided with the ceiling, her race's ability could reduce damage, therefore it caused no pain at all.

The different types of undead respectfully bowed and withdrew, disappearing entirely, and returned to their guard positions.

"...Albedo, we are almost at your elder sister's room. Are you prepared?"

The previously jubilant Albedo instantly turned serious.

“Yes. Then I shall take out the doll.”

“Hm, give it to me.”

Albedo stretched out one hand towards the wall. A white transparent arm stretched out of the wall, placing a doll on Albedo’s hand. It was a baby doll, about the same size as a real baby.

Ainz took the doll, staring at it without blinking.

“It really is disgusting.”

It was modeled on an exaggerated baby’s shape, like an completely distorted cupid doll. The large eyes rolling around were particularly nauseating. Ainz furrowed his non-existing brows and looked towards the end of the passageway. Over there was a large mural in the centered around a door.

There was a mother and baby. It was a painting of a mother cuddling her baby.

If it were only this, then it would be a beautiful painting. Perhaps because it was made long ago, some areas had lost their colors and its appearance became appalling. It was almost impossible to discern the baby’s image, only leaving behind something similar to a wreckage.

Ainz pushed open the door.

The doors slid open silently—and cries of babies could be heard..

Not just one or two, it wasn’t even an echo..

The cries numbered in the tens, even hundreds, coming together to form one sound before being heard by Ainz and Albedo. However, no such babies could be seen inside the room.

Although they could not be seen, they were definitely there.

At the center of the empty room bereft of furniture, was a woman gently rocking a cradle.

Even as Ainz and Albedo entered the room, the woman dressed in black remained silent, merely keeping to herself and rocking the cradle. It was not possible to see her face, because it was entirely concealed by her black hair.

Ordinarily if an NPC saw the Supreme Ruler (Ainz) yet ignored him, Albedo would definitely chastise it loudly. However she didn’t say anything. Ainz knew why, because Albedo’s slightly guarded posture already spoke volumes.

“Is it about time to start?”

“It should be. Please be cautious.”

As if the words spoken between them was the signal, the woman’s movements suddenly froze and she became motionless. Following this, she slowly reached into the rocking cradle and gently picked up the baby inside. No, that was not a real baby, but a doll.

“Wrongwrongwrongwrong.”

She vigorously shook then threw it out. The doll which was thrown out with full force shattered to pieces as it smashed against the wall.

“Mybabymybabymybabymybaby——!”

With the sound of her gnashing teeth, as if this was the signal, the cries from the floor and the walls gradually grew louder and louder. The source of the noise eventually revealed itself as the semi-translucent baby-shaped slabs of meat slid down from the surroundings.

“Tabula Smaragdina really did configure many monsters in this place... I wonder how much money he spent in the end.”

This baby-like squirming meat pile was close to level 20 and called a Carrion Baby.

In YGGDRASIL, all one had to do was pay in-game currency or real cash to manually spawn a monster inside a labyrinth. These were different from the ones that respawned naturally and did not revive when killed. It was considered a luxury by most players and was rarely used outside of role playing.

Manually placing so many Carrion Babies——even if they were low leveled, showed how fastidious Tabula Smaragdina truly was.

As Ainz was feeling impressed, the woman took out a large pair of scissors from somewhere and held it tightly in her hand. Sharp eyes from that messy head of hair glared at Ainz and Albedo.

“Youyouyouyou, stolestolestolestolemychildmychildmychildmychild——!”

“...She really is your elder sister. You and her are quite alike.”

“Eh? Is, is that so?”

As if regarding Ainz and Albedo’s leisurely talk as a sign of malice, the woman used her murderous intent to fuel her charge towards Ainz. Using only a few steps to reduce the distance between them to zero, the woman in black mourning clothes dashed over with an abnormally large stride.

The woman stabbed her scissors at Ainz——

“Your child is right here.”

—After Ainz gave the doll to the woman, her actions froze as if a stop button had been pressed. Following this, she tossed aside the scissors and slowly accepted the doll.

“Good child good child good child!”

She hugged her beloved child tenderly, as if she would never again let go. Afterwards, she carefully placed the baby back into the cradle, and then turned her hair-covered face towards Ainz and Albedo:

“Momonga-sama, and my cute little sister, have you been well?”

“It’s been a while Nigredo. I’m pleased to see that you.... well, haven’t changed..”

Throughout this conversation Ainz managed to maintain his composure because he had already witnessed this crazy scene before in the game.

*I really did scream that time.*

A certain Guild member said he had created a new character, and took Ainz and some of the other Guild members to have a look. This resulted in everybody unanimously screaming out together, joining together to use all of their power to attack Nigredo. It was a nostalgic memory.

“Elder sister, it’s been a while.”

Correct, Nigredo was Albedo’s elder sister. Coincidentally, she was also an NPC created by Tabula Smaragdina.

If Albedo was a strong demonstration of the player Tabula Smaragdina’s favourite gap moe, then Nigredo was the strong manifestation of his other passion, horror films.

*He wasn’t a bad person, but he had a strong personality, in various ways.*

During normal discussions, he would be coherent. However as the talk became more in-depth, various parts of his personality that were hard to associate with would begin to surface. Whilst he was remembering his past Guild member, Nigredo parted her hair to make way for her previously concealed face, revealing her real appearance.

Perhaps she thought that concealing her face was disrespectful, but Ainz wished she had just left it as is.

Her face was truly grotesque - no skin, but rather a mass of exposed muscle.

There were no lips, only beautiful pearly teeth. There were no eyelids, only brightly shining eyes. Looking at the teeth or the eyes individually, they would be pretty, but seeing it as a whole could only be revolting.

The ugly face like those appearing in horror films contorted frighteningly. Although the lack of skin made it harder to determine, she was different from Ainz. Her face still had muscle so it could be inferred that that expression should be a smile.

“And Momonga-sama, for what reason are you....”

“...Ah, sorry. That time you were not at the Throne Hall so you don’t know. I am no longer called Momonga, my name has since been changed to Ainz Ooal Gown. From today onwards call me Ainz.”

After hearing a soft gasp, Nigredo then slowly bowed her head:

“Understood, Ainz-sama.”

“Well then Nigredo, I’m here to ask for your help. Can you use your ability to aid me?”

“My ability? Is it biological? Or is it non-biological?”

“...Biological for now... alive, right?. Let me explain to you clearly. The target is Shalltear Bloodfallen.”

“The Floor Guardian?... I’ve been disrespectful. If it is Ainz-sama’s command, I shall take immediate action.”

Although Nigredo’s voice was full of doubt, she still gave an immediate response to the request.

“Please, elder sister.”

After playfully giving a thumbs up in response to Albedo’s request, Nigredo began to activate several kinds of magic. They were abundant in variety, Ainz found that some these spells were familiar, and he just instructed Narberal to cast them last night.

Nigredo was a magic caster, one of the high level NPCs who held a position close to the highest tier in Nazarick. Although it wasn’t visible from her outer appearance, her class was specialised towards the investigation type, the collection of information. That was why Ainz had come here to ask for her assistance in locating Shalltear.

With a speed fitting for the power that she possessed, Nigredo was able to quickly report the results.

“Found.”

“Cast a 「Crystal monitor」 .”

After activating the spell, the crystal monitor which shimmered into existence displayed an armored figure standing vacantly in a patch of open land in the middle of a forest.

Ainz voiced his praise:

“Incredible, pinpointing the exact location of the target, it really is a well-deserved reputation for specialised magic cast——”

The words of praise disappeared as the image became more vivid.

The person displayed on the monitor display wore a full body armor dyed in a blood-like crimson color. Only the face part was open, revealing a large hole in the helmet which was shaped like the head of a swan, with bird-like feathers protruding from either side. Wing-designed decorations hung from the chest and shoulders, and the lower half of the body was a bright red dress.

One hand was holding a giant, bizarre-shaped spear, similar to a dropper used in Chemistry class.

This was Shalltear Bloodfallen’s full battle mode, a faith magic caster which had the specialised combat ability of the Valkyrie job.

“Spuit Lance! It was the Divine class magic item given from Peroronchino to Shalltear!”

Albedo let out a dismayed voice after seeing Shalltear’s weapon.

Ainz had Divine class items, so many that he could cover every part of his body with them. However, it did not mean these items could be easily manufactured.

YGGDRASIL magic items were created from embedded computer data crystals, but then the performance of computer data crystals dropped by monsters was uneven, therefore to manufacture Divine class items it was necessary to have several “extremely rare loot” computer data crystals for it to be possible. Not only that, if you wanted these computer data crystals to be embedded into a container—— such as a sword-type weapon——it had to be a weapon forged from ultra-rare metal for it to be possible.

As such, even for level 100 players, it was common not to have a single Divine class item.

Even Ainz Ooal Gown, a guild that ranked in the top ten, did not arm every NPCs with Divine class items. They would only allow them to possess one or two at the most.

And Shalltear Bloodfallen possessed the Divine class item Spuit Lance.

The name sounded a little silly, but it's ability was extremely vicious. Some computer data crystals could absorb a set amount of harm to recover the equipment user's stamina, and Spuit Lance was a prime example of strengthening this capability.

"...Let's go right now."

"Huh? Ah, please wait a minute! Shalltear is already fully armed. I believe a battle is imminent, therefore it is necessary to pick some bodyguards for Ainz-sama's protection."

"There is no time. If negotiations fail, we can withdraw immediately——"

『Ainz-sama, pardon me for bothering you.』

The voice of a woman could be heard in his mind. It was Narberal who had remained in Re-Lantier.

This poorly timed call made Ainz slightly annoyed.

"What is it Narberal? Right now——"

I am busy. Ainz who was planning to say this stopped midway.

Because he remembered interrupting Entoma's 「Message」 last night. Although it couldn't be helped, but if Ainz had acted immediately back then, the situation might be different now. He could have given the task of rescuing Enfreia to Narberal.

The slight feeling of remorse made Ainz reply calmly.

The NPCs treated Ainz as absolutely supreme, therefore even if his judgment was wrong, it was still very easy to place Ainz' words as precedence. Because of this, Ainz had to retain his composure, making sure to take careful and cautious actions, to avoid making mistakes.

*For an ordinary person like me, this really is an unreasonable demand...*

While mocking his own extremely flawed judgment, Ainz smiled as he reckoned that it really was not possible. Sensing that Narberal on the other end of the 「Message」 exuded the atmosphere of a servant waiting for her master, Ainz trembled as if he was struck by lightning.

*What am I thinking? I am Ainz Ooal Gown's Supreme Ruler, the one whom everybody calls by this name. Correct, I am not Suzuki. Impossible? Wrong, since I have chosen to call myself by this name, then it is necessary to change the impossible into the possible.*

"...No, nothing. What is it? Are you only contacting me via 「Message」 because of an emergency situation?"

"Yes. Actually there are some people from the Adventurer's Guild looking for Ainz-sama."

“...If it is about last night’s events, please ask them to wait for a moment... no, that can’t be. It should be about something else, correct?”

"Yes! Ainz-sama truly is perceptive!"

At this point Narberal became vague, her silence expressed her confusion. Before long, as if she had reached a conclusion in her mind, she spoke again:

"Actually, apart from that event, another problem has arisen. That is... related to a vampire."

“What? You said vampire?”

Ainz turned his eyes towards the 「Crystal Monitor」, focusing on Shalltear who was still standing upright rigidly.

“About that vampire, has the other side mentioned anything? For example silver hair, or wearing a crimson armor and the like?”

"Nothing unfortunately. The one who came to find Ainz-sama was merely running an errand. The other side only said that other details would be explained at the Adventurer’s Guild, and hope that Ainz-sama could head there as soon as possible. I heard that several adventurer teams were already there... The Guild member is currently nearby, what should I convey to him?"

Ainz shut his eyes. Of course there were no eyeballs, only the light in his eye-sockets vanished.

“About Narberal’s 「Message」, what is your view on this Albedo?”

After the explanation, Albedo lowered her eyes, then after a few seconds looked back at Ainz.

“Under the current situation without sufficient information, regardless of whichever option is chosen, both have advantages and disadvantages. It should be decided by Ainz-sama’s personal preferences. Personally, I believe that it does not matter if we ignore those humans.”

After Ainz expressed gratitude to Albedo, he slipped into deep thought.

Taking Shalltear as the first priority, it may end up unraveling into the worst case scenario.

If the Adventurer’s Guild was taken as the first priority, what kinds of changes in development would Shalltear’s situation have?

Thinking from the worst possible outcome, he felt that no matter which decision was made, it would still evolve into the worst situation.

At this instant if he still had his companions, it would be easy to decide by majority vote. However, they were not around. As the ruler of the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, and claiming such an important name for himself, he alone had to make a decision.

After a moment of hesitation, Ainz made his conclusion,

“Albedo, send people to monitor Shalltear. I will take a trip to Re-Lantier’s Adventurer Guild. After this matter is concluded, take me to Shalltear’s location.”

“As you command.”

“You heard that, Narberal?”

"Yes. Then this subordinate shall inform the messenger that you will be heading there."

“Ah yes, tell him like that. With that Albedo, sorry but I shall be heading to the Adventurer’s Guild.”

“Understood. I shall follow the instructions and send a few servants out.”

“Sorry for troubling you. And I will be giving my ring to Yuri, please keep it safe for me.”

Actually, there was something else he wished to give to the librarian, but Ainz felt there was no time left to spare and immediately activated the ring’s transfer ability.

The two sisters were left alone in the room, and the atmosphere relaxed. As if waiting for this moment, Nigredo’s lidless eyes flashed with curiosity.

“What is it? What’s going on with Shalltear?”

“Ah, she seems to have rebelled.”

“...Unbelievable... how could this be possible... really?”

“I can’t believe it either, but that’s how it is.”

“Then quickly getting rid of her would do. But looking at the way things are, it seems that Ainz-sama does not wish for that to happen?”

“Yes, because Ainz-sama is extremely compassionate... No, it should be because adjudicating her execution before investigating the reason for Shalltear’s betrayal could perhaps become a great mistake. Ainz-sama should be thinking along those lines.”

Oh——, Nigredo let out a subtle sound which could have meant agreement or could have been denial.

“I understand now. I’ll keep surveying Shalltear with magic until your servants gather and start their watch.

“Apologies for the inconvenience, older sister.”

Believing the conversation was over, just as Albedo was about to release the ring’s ability, she felt that her elder sister still had something she wished to say. Normally, the elder sister was the type to speak straightforwardly. There was only one reason which would cause her to hesitate.

Although she didn’t want to, if there was a chance that the topic was something other than what she thought it was, then it was necessary to ask her regardless.

“What is it, elder sister?”

“...Since I’m not allowed to leave this frozen prison, I’m not too clear about what’s happening outside. Is Spinel still well?”

...So it was that after all.

Albedo thought this to herself, and regretted asking. However with an unwavering tone befitting this question she asked:

“Elder sister, you still call the girl by that name...”

“I extremely despise that girl, even if we are all the creations of Tabula Smaragdina-sama... No, the way Spinel was created was different from the way we were. She is definitely not the type that others can open their hearts towards.”

“That’s not true, elder sister. She is quite adorable.”

“The way I see it, you have been deceived by her. Spinel will definitely bring a great calamity to Nazarick, I guarantee it.”

“...About this viewpoint, we shall forever share different opinions. I believe that girl would never become a scourge.”

“Is that so? If you—— the keeper of the Guardians have decided like this, then I won’t say anything more. However, I still hope that you, as keeper of the Guardians, will bear my concerns firmly in mind.”

“Got it, I’ll be sure to remember.”

Holding back an emotional sigh, Albedo transferred to another location.

However, while she would normally laugh it off, today, her words became lodged in her heart like a thorn.

She believed that the Supreme Ruler's creations were all utterly devoted. However, Shalltear still revolted. This meant that others could turn to betrayal as well.

Maybe, younger sister's betrayal was also possible——

She could not completely erase this possibility. However, for Albedo, this was not a bad thing.

At the transfer destination, Albedo arrived with trance-like misty eyes.

“Ainz-sama, my beloved, I am your faithful dog, your slave.”

Towards the absent man she expressed her true thoughts.

“Even if all of Nazarick were to turn against you, I would still stand by your side.”



### Part 3

“Come, come, come, Momon-san, please find an empty seat.”

There were six men in the room, three of whom were fully armed and ferocious-looking men. Another man, though also mighty and majestic but unarmed, stood up and welcomed Ainz. There was another thin and neurotic-looking man wearing a robe. The last was an obese man in the innermost corner of the room.

After Ainz sat down with everyone's gaze upon him, the man standing up immediately opened his mouth again.

"Let me introduce myself then. I am the leader of this city's Adventurers' Guild, Burdon Issac."

This middle-aged man looked quite capable and vigorous.

Exuding the atmosphere of a veteran of a hundred battles, there should be nobody who would question him being an outstanding warrior.

"This is the mayor, Panasolei Gierge Di Leitenmaya-san."

After Ainz slightly nodded, Panasolei lightly waved his hand in response.

Obese——no, to be honest, basically his entire body was fat. His belly was a mass of bloated fatty oil, and even his chin consisted of excessive fat. Because it was covered with fat, his face looked like that of an unremarkable obese bulldog.

The hair on his scalp was already thin enough to reflect light, and the remaining hair had already turned white.

"Momon-san, pleased to meet you."

Perhaps it was due to a stuffy nose, but when he spoke he would let out a fueue noise. Ainz once again nodded in acknowledgement to this fat, piggish man.

"This person is Re-Lantier's Magician Guild Leader Theo Rakesheer."

The man was extremely thin, like bamboo. While giving off a nervous disposition, the man nodded towards Ainz.

”Like you, these three men were invited to join us. They are all representatives from three of Re-Lantier’s adventurer teams that we take pride in. From the right to the left is Kuragura’s representative Igavaruji-san, Sky Wolf’s representative Berette-san, and Rainbow’s representative Mokunaku-san.”

The postures of these three men were magnificent and gave off the impression of strength, befitting the color——mithril—— of the metal that hung around their necks. Although the equipment they wore was certainly trash for Ainz, for the adventurers of this city it was relatively much better.

Each person’s eyes carried a different emotion, but one common sentiment between all of them was curiosity.

One of them—— Kuragura’s representative Igavaruji, glared with sharp eyes at the seated Ainz and asked coldly:

“Before this, there is something I would like to inquire about, Guild Leader Issac. I have never heard of the name Momon. Since he is of mithril class, he should have accomplished some feats before right? Just what has he done?”

Although his tone carried a little hostility, Issac, who seemed to not notice, cheerfully responded:

“His feats include taming the Virtuous King of the Forest, and resolving the cemetery incident last night.”

“The cemetery incident?”

Differing from the confused Igavaruji, the adventurer team Rainbow’s representative Mokunaku let out a gasp.

“Could it be the incident involving the large number of undead?”

“Fueee—— You are quite well informed. That news was quite troublesome, that is why orders have already been issued requesting no leaking of this information. Where did you hear about it from?”

Whether or not due to nasal congestion, a ‘fuee’ noise would often be heard during his speeches. It could also be because he used his mouth to breathe that his tone had almost no cadence. It felt a little strange, like he was reciting a play script word for word.

“Apologies mayor. I also heard little about it, and truth be told it is difficult to answer your question of the source from where it was overheard. On top of that, I do not know of any more details.”

As their eyes clashed, both men smiled. Mokunaku had a false smile whilst the mayor had a wry smile.

“Fueee—— sounds like a lie, but so be it. There should be plenty of people who know about the undead incident anyways. Fuee—— sorry, I’ve unintentionally interrupted.”

“It doesn’t matter mayor. As such the Guild has concluded its judgment and believes that Momon-san is qualified to be a mithril grade adventurer.”

“Just for that? Because he solved one incident? What about the adventurers who went through the advancement tests and rose step-by-step? Won’t they hold a grudge?”

The bare minimum of politeness demonstrated towards Issac earlier had completely disappeared as Igavaruji openly revealed hostile intent. At that moment, another cold voice joined from the side.

“Hey Guild leader, explain it clearly. To be honest, I share his sentiment. I don’t agree with Momon-san’s mithril rank.”

The one who interrupted from the side was the Magician’s Guild leader—— Rakesheer. He had a mocking expression on his face, but then Ainz understood that expression was in fact not directed at himself, but at Igavaruji. However, the man himself did not seem to recognise this and Igavaruji showed a friendly smile towards Rakesheer.

“Between the Magician Guild’s Leader and I, great minds think alike.”

“Ho, ho ho.”

As if hearing something hilarious, Rakesheer's thin lips curved to become even thinner. This wasn't an expression of good will, because his eyes clearly showed his contempt.

"Is that so? I feel that your view and my view are as different as night and day."

"What do you mean by this——"

"It's true, don't argue Igavaruji-san. Some in the Guild even reckon that Momon-san should be orichalcum class."

"What!"

Igavaruji's face showed plain disbelief.

Seeing that expression, Rakesheer entire face twisted in a smile.

"With only two people, Momon-san—— no, including the Virtuous King of the Forest, the three of them broke through thousands of undead, and defeated the individuals in the middle of carrying out an evil ritual."

"——Something like that is simple if you're stealthy enough!"

Rakesheer dramatically sighed and said:

"What you say is indeed correct. If I thought it was just that, then Momon-san would still not be orichalcum class. However a certain set of undead bones revealed Momon-san's true strength."

After Rakesheer said these words, he looked with solemn eyes at Ainz who was wearing dark armor.

"...Skeletal Dragon bones. Momon-san killed a terrifying undead with absolute defense against magic."

“That, that..! A S-Skeletal Dragon is indeed very powerful! But then, even mithril class adventurers are able to def——”

“—— defeat two at the same time?”

“What!”

The gasps came not only from Igavaruji, but also from the other two adventurers. Following this, the way the two men looked at Ainz appeared to have undergone a slight change, as if trying to gauge the depth of his skills.

“The remains of two Skeletal Dragons were left on the scene. Within such a short amount of time, would your teams be able to break through thousands of undead, exterminate two Skeletal Dragons and kill the instigators, preventing them from setting their scheme in motion? Amongst the adventurers who headed towards the cemetery, there were even some who witnessed wraiths, the twisted souls of the departed, and other powerful undead.

Igavaruji wordlessly bit his lip.

“Let me ask you another question. Allegedly, apart from Momon-san there was also a woman in his team. That young woman was a magic caster. Against Skeletal Dragons, which have absolute immunity against magic, she could only be said to be quite powerless. In this kind of situation, if you likewise only had two people... No, including the Virtuous King of the Forest, three people, would it be enough to accomplish that kind of feat?”

Rakesheer gave Ainz a respectful bow:

“As one of the representatives of this city, I express my heartfelt gratitude to Momon-san. If it wasn't for your swift response, who knows how many lives would have been sacrificed. I would like to express my personal gratitude, if you should require anything, you only need to say it and I shall do whatever possible to assist.”

“You flatter me, Magician Guild leader. I was only accepting Boreal-san's commission and resolved the problem, that's all.”

“Ho ho ho ho...”

Rakesheer laughed loudly, one filled with admiration.

“Sure enough you deserve orichalcum... no, you could even be called adamantium class. To accomplish such a feat with a small group, and to be so humble about it, even making it sound like a regular routine. I heard that your companion is able to use magic up to the third level... that can't be true right?”

“I am delighted by your praise... but, I do not wish to show my cards so easily.”

“Is that so, that really is a shame.”

As Ainz and Rakesheer joked, their attitude angered Igavaruji and he loudly yelled out:

“My team would've been able to handle it if we had been there! In the first place, having such few members is his own problem! It must be because of some defect in his character that he was unable to gather many members!”

The room's atmosphere became tense. As if to cool down the heat, an out-of-tune 'fueee' sounded out.

“Let's end this discussion here. Everyone here didn't gather in order to argue amongst yourselves, right?”

Hearing the last fueee sound, Igavaruji sat down deflated. However he still held eyes full of angst against Ainz. To this appearance, the two Guild Leaders reluctantly shook their heads.

“I can understand the feelings of those who value strength, but this is not the main issue at this time. We'd better resolve the question quickly, alright?”

“Mayor, thank you.”

“Ah? Although I do not know why you wish to thank me, please continue. Truth be told I'm not too clear either about what is going on.”

“Very well. If it could be immediately reported then, it would have been better...”

“Don’t worry about it. I was also busy at the time dealing with a matter relating to Stronoff-san.”

Another ‘fueee’ sounded out.

“Then, addressing the main point——”

“Before that, at least some basic etiquette is needed. Shouldn’t you take off your helmet?”

With an ironic tone, Igavaruji once again interrupted. Even if it were justified, it was still aggravating, and the other adventurers almost frowned.

“It doesn’t matter, what he said this time is correct, I have indeed been disrespectful.”

But when Ainz calmly removed his helmet, he revealed a fake face created with magic. The appearance was ordinary, not that of a handsome man.

“Because I come from a foreign country, in order to avoid trouble, I’ve been wearing my helmet. Please forgive my rudeness.”

“Che, a foreigner.”

“Give it a rest, Igavaruji. Adventurers who protect mankind from the threat of monsters are not divided by country boundaries. Your outspoken complaints against the guild’s unwritten rules since its inception truly makes me ashamed as a fellow adventurer.”

Just as Igavaruji was about to interrupt with another rebuke, he realized everyone present shared the same opinion, so he reluctantly remained quiet.

“...Because I am an outsider, being treated with prejudice has been commonplace.”

Ainz' statement made several people smile wryly. Igavaruji's face changed color out of anger, but when Ainz once again wore his helmet, there were no more complaints.

"Well then, I hope there are no more complications on that topic. I wish to immediately tackle the main issue."

"Because someone was late, I have yet to hear the contents."

"I am very sorry about this, please forgive me."

Ainz lowered his head in a genuine apology. When he was an office worker, he often had similar experiences where meetings would only begin after the boss declared that all members were present, and as a result he was had to suppress his urge to go home. Because of that he was truly able to relate to their feelings.

With his frank and honest apology, in stark contrast to the constantly cynical and sarcastic Igavaruji, Ainz came out to be more noble. A sigh sounded out, causing Igavaruji's face to become more repulsive, because he understood that his own self-evaluation had reached a new low.

However there was one person even more livid than Igavaruji.

"...Enough of this. If there are more interruptions, get out of here."

That person was of course Issac. With his eyes full of anger and not even half of the steadiness in his voice as earlier, the one he glared at was of course Igavaruji.

Igavaruji gently bowed his head in apology.

Seeing the other side's candid movement, Ainz was puzzled. From the hostility shown towards himself, it would not be surprising if at this moment Igavaruji were to display an attitude similar to the rebellious nature of middle schoolers towards their parents. Why then would he withdraw now?

After a brief moment of thought, Ainz arrived at a hypothetical conclusion.

At this gathering of mithril ranked adventurers, if one person was kicked out, what kind of criticisms would he provoke? Even if the truth was let out, there would still be the possibility that others would think he was chased out because he was worthless. With this, his position amongst adventurers would plummet. This should be the reason why he shut his mouth.

“First a brief report. About two nights ago, adventurers patrolling the roads on the outskirts of Re-Lantier came across a vampire. Of these adventurers who met the vampire, five were killed. Everyone’s gathering this time is because of this.”

After listening to the description of the vampire’s appearance, Ainz’ hopes were easily shattered. Due to being too afraid, the surviving adventurer only vaguely remembered the vampire’s outfit, hair color and appearance. However, what remained was the strong impression of a “silver haired large mouth”

Even if they only had a vague recollection of its appearance, anyone who knew Shalltear and overheard this would quickly connect it with her. In his heart Ainz was already certain of who the vampire was.

*I don’t know how the situation turned out like this, but I should better alter the memories of those survivors. This isn’t good, I have to quickly find an opportunity.*

As Ainz furrowed his illusionary eyebrows, the discussion continued.

“So that’s how it is. I’m not too clear on this incident either, but then explaining solely for my sake would be too much a waste of everyone’s time, therefore if there is another opportunity please allow me to listen, and I shall come ask you if I have any further questions.”

“Understood. Then everybody, are there any questions?”

“Where is the concerned area?”

“Beyond the city's northern gate, you can find a large forest after walking for three hours. It's just inside that forest.”

“What class were those adventurers?”

“Iron class.”

“... Please tell me, is it only because of a vampire that so many adventurers have been gathered? Are we intended to use a bidding approach for this?”

“That’s right, if it’s vampires, platinum class adventurers should be sufficient to handle it. right? I absolutely don’t understand why so many mithril class adventurers were called.”

“The reason is simple, that vampire is very powerful.”

Rakesheer interrupted with his answer, and everyone showed surprise as they looked at him.

“A very powerful vampire...?”

“Could you mean that the opponent is a higher class vampire... the one who appeared in the tale of the thirteen heroes, the vampire lord ‘Landfall’?”

“We don’t know whether or not the opponent is that vampire lord, but when the adventurers encountered the vampire, the opponent used the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier spell 「Create Undead」. What this means, I shouldn’t have to explain to you adventurers right?”

There was nothing more to say. Not only that, their stiff expressions spoke volumes.

“Well—— I absolutely do not understand what it means. Can you explain it to me?”

“I am really sorry, Mayor.”

“Being able to use magic of that kind of realm, if we were to make a simple evaluation, we can treat the opponent as having platinum class capability.”

Panasolei who roughly understood this explanation frowned.

“That also goes to say... I will stop talking in such a way.”

The light in Panasolei’s eyes sharpened, this was one of the changes that the others felt. From the lazy, sloth-like expression just now, it became a savage wild boar expression. No, this was Panasolei’s true appearance.

“In other words, Magician Guild Leader, your meaning is as such: a monster with the strength rivaling a platinum team, has skills that match a platinum team as well.”

“What you say is correct.”

“So simply put, it just got stronger?”

“Thinking about it in this way isn’t wrong either.”

“If we consider in terms of military strength, what is the equivalent?”

“Military... this question is rather difficult.”

Rakesheer was vexed for a moment, then spoke.

“This is roughly my personal way of viewing this. I should say this first, this view is not absolute. If we take the opponent as an army for evaluation, undead do not tire or require food... grudgingly I’d say it should be equivalent to about an army size of ten thousand.”

“What did you say!”

Hearing this conclusion, Panasolei let out a shocked expression, as if seeking the opinions of the other adventurers. Apart from Ainz, the others nodded in agreement with the Magician Guild Leader’s statement.

Issac opened his mouth to indicate “I will continue from what Theo said——”, and as if receiving the baton from Rakesheer he proceeded to say:

“Generally speaking, approximately twenty percent of the country’s adventurers are above platinum ranking. Within the Kingdom there are about three thousand adventurers, therefore in all of the Kingdom’s lands which consists of more than eight million inhabitants, there are only around six hundred adventurers of platinum ranking or above. Do you understand this? Adventurers of platinum rank or higher are that rare.”

“If it’s like this, even if I do not wish to understand, I already have. Then to counter this situation, I would like to ask you adventurers. Do you have the confidence to go ahead with the subjugation? If there is no way... how about seeking the assistance of Warrior Captain Gazef-san?”

Gazef Stronoff—— the Kingdom’s most powerful warrior, exceeding adamantium class adventurers. He could be considered the Kingdom’s final trump card.

However Issac immediately denied this.

“Indeed, perhaps no warrior is able to defeat Stronoff-san. However in a situation where Stronoff-san faced off against an adventurer team weaker than him, the victor would be the adventurer team. This is because the adventurer team would have different methods of attacking—— taking Stronoff-san for example, the amount of magic and martial skills used by the adventurer team would be four times that of Stronoff-san. Against a monster possessing special abilities, the truth is that this difference is enormous.”

“Well...”

“The best policy is to gather adamantium class and orichalcum class adventurers. Before that, let us first allow this city’s best adventurers to build a defensive net to stop the vampire’s invasion.”

“Wouldn’t this method be too passive?”

“Considering the worst possible development, this should be the best strategy. After all, isn’t the opponent a single person who is able to rival an entire army?”

“With a fighting power able to take on huge number of troops, scenes of terror in all sorts of places would appear... I honestly do not wish to imagine this happening.”

If the opponent was an army of ten thousand, their location could be easily determined from the marching. Also, to maintain such a large army, it would be necessary to prepare a large amount of rations, making it difficult to carry out a long-term siege.

But then, if it were a single person situation, how would this change? What’s more, if it were a person able to use different types of 「Invisibility」 magic, specialising in covert actions?

“However, about the Guild Leader’s opinion, speaking as an adventurer I say that establishing a defensive net is a very difficult task. This is because in order to harmonise each other’s movements, long-term training is necessary...”

“No need for that, it is enough if everyone is able to fight together. What do you think fellow gentlemen?”

The adventurers immediately raised objections to the mayor’s suggestion.

“It should not be possible. If we are to have a tacit arrangement for action, then it is necessary to devise of a tight-knit operational plan. But the more detailed the plan is, the more likely it is for mistakes to occur when unexpected situations arise. If it is like that, everyone acting by themselves instead of together might even be better. Speaking of which, why has the vampire appeared in that place? What has the Guild’s investigation come up with?”

“In this regard, because the opponent is an powerful vampire, the guild has no means to investigate finer details. Just as we were about to assemble an investigation group, the incident last night occurred, and our manpower was dispersed there.”

“... So that’s how it is. Are you concerned that these two incidents are related?”

“That is true.”

“Wasn’t the matter in the cemetery resolved by Momon-san? From the remains and relics of the first incident’s instigators was there anything to suggest a connection between the two incidents?”

This question made the place fall into a brief silence.

Ainz was puzzled. Before this the Guild Leader never hesitated in answering, yet for the first time his eyesight slightly turned towards the mayor. It was a asking-for-permission look. Just thinking about it a little, this could be related information to a terrorist attack against the city, and it was possible that some information but not all could be told to the adventurers.

“From the relics we gathered that the opponent was Zuranon.”

The three adventurer’s expressions turned serious.

But for Ainz, this was the first time he had heard of this name. He could not help praying to a god he didn’t even believed in, hoping that he wouldn’t be asked about things he knew nothing about.

*Ignorance is frightening. I must gather intelligence as fast as possible.*

“The secret organisation which deals with controlling the undead. Then it must be related to the vampire.”

“Problems arising at the same time both inside and outside the city... is the objective to divide our fighting force? Or both are diversions, and the real plan is about to commence... this would be too disastrous.”

“The priority of the task at hand should be to conduct reconnaissance. According to the ranger’s reports, there’s supposedly a bandit’s den close to the location where the vampire had been discovered... ..”

“The possibility that the vampire has already left that place is high... but then again, the possibility of it still remaining there is not zero. People should be sent there first...”

The adventurer who was speaking suddenly stopped talking.

It was only a natural reaction, because heading into the most likely place to find the vampire for an investigation was tantamount to agreeing to jump into the most dangerous place. If there

actually was an encounter, and if the vampire possessed the predicted battle prowess, it would be certain death.

The remarks just now was no different to politely asking someone to go to their death.

“...Let us put this aside for now. It is still more urgent to strengthen the city defenses first, because perhaps the vampire has already at this moment snuck inside the city.”

“... It is an easy feat to sneak inside the city just by using magic. This place is not like the Empire’s capital with sky cavalry and magic casters patrolling everywhere.”

It was possible to use 「Flight」 to enter the city from the sky, and it was also possible to use 「Invisibility」 to invade from the front. Magic was that troublesome, therefore concentrating combat power and putting it into defense first was a very natural idea.

“But then it will be incredibly difficult to deal with a situation without any sort of intelligence, therefore the cave should still be investigated first!”

This extremely reasonable proposal gathered the collected approval of everyone present.

This kind of situation was not favourable for Ainz.

It would be extremely disastrous if Shalltear’s current appearance was known by others. Although it was uncertain why future developments there would be beyond today, if Shalltear’s current appearance was well-known throughout the city—— even the Kingdom, then it could become a great obstacle to behind-the-scenes operations in the future.

Ainz thought desperately, but saw no other method to divert the course of events towards another direction.

In the end there was only one method which would prevent Shalltear’s appearance from being leaked out.

Ainz swallowed his saliva he couldn’t have secreted, and said:

“First, there has been a misconception. The vampire and Zuranon are unrelated.”

“Why? Momon-san, do you have some insider information?”

“I know that vampire’s name, because that vampire is the one I have been chasing to kill all this time.”

“What?”

The atmosphere in the room shook.

Ainz overclocked his brain thinking, in mental preparation for the main event that was about to start.

“That is an extremely powerful vampire. My true objective of becoming an adventurer was to obtain information on them.”

This was deliberately spread intelligence so that Issac would immediately take up the bait.

“Them? Momon-san, you said them?”

“Yes, two vampires, of which the silver haired female vampire’s name is...”

He suddenly stopped here. Originally he was about to say Carmilla, but female vampires going by that name was just too common. If there were any players around, this name would let them detect his own existence. At the moment he hesitated in deciding what name, he suddenly got a stroke of inspiration, and blurted out a name.

“Henupenuty.”

“Hah?”

He heard a stupefied question. However it was not just one person, but almost everyone in unison.

“...It’s Henupenko.”

Although it was a name he said himself, it felt like it was said differently from just now. If anyone questioned on this point, he intended to insist that he pronounced it wrong earlier.

“Henupenu...?”

“It’s Henupenko.”

Although he changed the female vampire’s name’s last syllable to “-ko”, just from this name itself, no YGGDRASIL players should be able to detect that it was a name he had came up with. Ainz felt full of confidence in this perfect name, and smiled proudly under his helmet.

“Is, is that so? Then that Henu.... whatever! Since we know that female vampire’s name... isn’t it about time for us to know your true identity? Which country are you from?”

“——Very sorry, now is still not the right time. I am charged with carrying out a secret mission. If you were to find out, I will have to leave your country, and the vampire will be yours to deal with. I do not wish to allow the matter to become a country-to-country situation. Mayor, you should understand this right?”

The mayor nodded slowly. Seeing this motion, Issac clenched his lips and glared sharply at Ainz.

The Guild Leader’s glare did not bother Ainz in the slightest, but to what extent would they believe his lie? Were there any contradictions? Ainz was unsettled by these two concerns, but pushing this restlessness aside, with a tone of anger not permitting others to intervene Ainz continued to speak:

“Let my team be responsible for the reconnaissance. If we discover the vampires there, we shall exterminate them on site.”

The dark warrior who arrived late decisively declared as such.

Although they could not see his face, they could clearly feel his confidence and determination from the tone of his voice.

Pressure, making others mistaken that it was in fact the air itself shaking, cause people to let out a gasp. All of the people present thought it was themselves which made that noise.

“T-then, the other teams——”

“——Unnecessary. I do not need any hindering burdens.”

He interrupted the other’s proposal, gently waving his hand to indicate this.

This rude announcement was made with an arrogant attitude.

Facing adventurers of the same class, such demeanour was inappropriate. However—— the adventurers present who had experienced hundreds of battles felt that this attitude was not borne from narcissism, pride or arrogance, but from cold calculation. At the same time he was also able to make such an assertion on the basis of his true strength.

This man was extraordinary.

It felt as if the dark armor was expanding in front of their eyes, the growing feeling of oppression, even the room had the illusion of becoming narrower. From this man they sensed an aura whom they would forever not be able to catch up with, for example that felt from an adamantium class adventurer.

This fellow could be called a hero.

Issac who could not resist remaining silent, took several deep breaths. No, every person present did the same motion, and the mayor was even sweating, loosening his collar.

As if whispering, Issac asked softly:

“——What about payment?”

“It is fine if this issue is discussed at a later time. However, until the completion of this incident... after the vampires are discovered to be exterminated, I hope to at least be able to obtain orichalcum class, so that when searching for the other vampire, my actions will be smoother, because having to prove my strength is troublesome.”

Suddenly all of the persons present made an understanding noise.

Adventurers neither work for cities nor countries, nonetheless until this date this city had never had an orichalcum class adventurer. If he became this city's highest ranking adventurer he would probably earn a lot of attention and reputation. Moreover, being able to give the rare blessing of orichalcum class would make this reputation spread further. Like this there would be more coming to be entrusted with highly dangerous missions, which would in turn increase the chances of receiving news on powerful vampires.

However, even if it could be accepted rationally, there was one man who couldn't accept it on an emotional level.

A chair creaked. Looking towards the source of the sound—— it need not be said. Of course it was the one who kept picking a bone with Ainz... Igavaruji.

“I cannot completely trust you. S-speaking of which, it isn't certain either that the vampire is actually that powerful! Even if there was magic used to control zombies, it could have been through the use of items. I wish to go too!”

Even after being shocked, Igavaruji was still able to object, all because he held unsatisfied hostile intent against Ainz, unwilling to admit to the extent of Ainz' true strength.

Perhaps it was displeasure towards his fellow adventurer's attitude, Berette said in a prickly tone:

“Igavaruji, your attitude——”

“——No problem.”

Ainz very simply agreed. However this was not out of well-meaning, since the following words were extremely cold.

“However, if you come along... certain death? I do not know whether it will be a complete elimination.”

It was an extremely rational tone, not threatening nor joking. It was spoken like he was decisively announcing to others his foreboding fate, causing Igavaruji to shudder. No, not only Igavaruji, but also all persons present felt as if they were encased by a cold biting wind.

Ainz gently shrugged:

“I’ve already given my warning. If you still do not mind then come along.”

“O-of course!”

Although it was a bluff, he would not back down here, not like this. As a fellow adventurer of the same class, how could he lose face in front of those who held the power in this city.

Just as the two were butting heads, Issac who had regained his composure a little asked Ainz:

“Self-confidence is good, but how can you be so confident? Of course we are all too clear about your exceeding strength, but from the evaluation of the opponent’s strength, you should also know that this task is not that easy. We are also concerned whether to entrust everything to you to handle. If... in the unlikely event that you are defeated, we also need to have a fallback planned out...”

Like a gunshot, Ainz immediately replied:

“I have a trump card.”

“What is it?”

Ainz took out a crystal from his bosom as a reply to the interested Issac.

“...Can’t be that! Impossible, hard to believe...”

The one who suddenly yelled out was Rakesheer. Panting, he continued:

“I have often seen this in precious ancient books... supposedly the Theocracy had one of that kind, hailed as a treasure... a magic item holding enormous power. This is one of that kind... a sealed magic crystal. Why would you have such a rare item!?”

“Really amazing... you’re right. And sealed inside the crystal is a level eight spell.”

“I must've misheard! What did you say!”

Ainz’ reply made Rakesheer let out a cry, one so strange that even a chicken being slaughtered would not make such a noise. His facial expression had also contorted to the point it was quite terrifying.

The ones caught by surprise weren’t just Rakesheer but also all those present—— no, apart from the mayor, everybody let out a stunned expression out of astonishment and fear. Even adventurers with little experience would be able to understand the meaning of Ainz’ words and the value of that item.

“...Eighth rank... that must be a concocted fabrication right?”

“...Perhaps it is a fantasy, but if it is that magic of that realm... really it is at the realm of myths.”

“Are you kidding? That is nonsense!”

The three adventurers——even Igavaruji—— displayed a look of fear, staring at the crystal on the dark gauntlet without peeling their eyes away.

“Apologies in advance! T-that item, may I borrow it for a second?”

“Why?”

“That... simply for the sake of a magic caster’s interest. I swear I will not make any strange movements! If you need anything as collateral, I can give all items on my body to you, for example this belt——”

Seeing Rakesheer who was already frantically removing his belt without finishing his speech, Ainz who slightly couldn’t bear this responded:

“I know, there is no such need. Please have a look, here you go.”

“Sorry, may I also touch it?”

“Then I want too!”

The sealed magic crystal was fumbled and passed around through many pairs of hands until it finally landed Rakesheer’s hands. He who was the last to touch it, stared at it with misty eyes, like a woman who obtained her long sought after, precious jewel. No, perhaps it was even like a youth who had obtained a desired item.

“Too beautiful... right, Momon-san, may I cast magic on it?”

Seeing Ainz wave his hand in agreement, Rakesheer delightedly activated the magic.

“ 「Appraise Magic Item」 , 「Detect Enchant」 .”

Activating two types of magic, the man’s expression gradually became exaggerated, followed by——

“Incredible!”

——The masculinity exuded earlier was completely gone. With innocent eyes, sparkling with pure delight, and also a different tone of voice, he looked like an overjoyed teenager.

“It’s true! Sealed inside is indeed a spell of the 8th rank! My magic is only able to see this little... but it is already magnificent, too magnificent!”

He was continuously howling like he was a lunatic, stunning everyone present at the scene. The next movement Rakesheer made was to take the crystal, licking it all over, then rubbing it against his cheek—it was simply crazy behaviour.

“C-calm down! What are you doing!”

Frightened by his friend who was not the type to show such mad behaviour, Issac stood up and got closer to Rakesheer. In fact, everybody looked upon him with either amazed or insufferable eyes. For a man holding a key position in this city to do such an action, it was just too difficult to see.

“Bastard! How can I calm down? This is just too magnificent! Sealed inside here really is an 8<sup>th</sup> tier! Although there is no way to know what kind of spell it is!”

Rakesheer could not hold in his excitement, gazing at the crystal with shining eyes. Soon he finally regained a little rationality, and asked Ainz:

“Momon-san! W-where was this crystal found? Tell me quickly!”

“It was found in some ruins, at the same time as many other items were discovered. Of course the magic was already sealed inside this crystal at the time. I’ve already had several great magic casters determine this.”

“So it’s like that! W-where are these ruins?”

“In a very faraway place... That’s all I can tell you.”

Of course, this answer of Ainz made Rakesheer clench his lips in regret.

“Well, isn’t it about time to return it to me?”

“Woo...ooo.”

Rakesheer looked all around, and reluctantly returned the sealed magic crystal to Ainz. Squinting while he watched Ainz pick up parchment to wipe the crystal, Rakesheer shouted out loudly:

“Back to the main topic, I—— object to Momon-san going ahead to exterminate the vampire!”

A surprised silence enveloped the scene. Issac covered his face with his palm, but just to be certain, asked with a bitter expression:

“... Why this sudden objection? Although the reason is obvious even without asking—— I’m still asking tentatively.”

“Well...because...because it would be too great of a waste...”

Absolutely crazy. Issac determined his friend’s current mental state to be such, and ignored him completely.

“Well then, we can ignore Rakesheer’s opinion...”

“One moment! The eighth tier really is magic in the mythical realm. Such a priceless item will be used on a mere vampire!”

Anger surfaced on Issac’s eyes. It was already intolerance beyond words, not an attitude that one in a high position ought to have.

Issac repressed his wrath and told Rakesheer in a level voice:

“... Sorry, Rakesheer. Really, don’t make a scene anymore.”

The strong emotions implicit in this sentence pulled Rakesheer back into rationality and speechlessness. His face was flushed red because of his shameful actions earlier.

Squinting to confirm that his friend was once again back to normality, Issac did his best to remain calm as he made an official request:

“...Well, Momon-san, I shall entrust all of this to you.”

Seeing the other side bow as he made this request, Ainz nodded full of confidence.

“Understood.” After saying this sentence, he looked through the slit in his helmet at Igavaruji.

“We will be immediately departing immediately, since a vampire’s penalty under sunlight is slowed movement.”

“Penalty? Hey, it’s their weakness. Indeed, their actions would be slower. I can be prepared in a short amount of time on my side.”

“...No need to discuss this with your companions?”

“Not a problem. They would understand.”

“... Is that so. Well then, meet you at the Re-Lantier’s main gate in an hour.”

“An hour? Would it be too early? There is still plenty of time before sunset.”

“I want to rush over there quickly. If you reckon that your courage is lacking, and need some time to steady your resolve, then I will leave you here and go by myself. Do you have anything to say?”

“Got it, I’ll immediately start preparing.”

He spoke in a clear and loud voice, making Igavaruji give a straightforward agreement and subsequently got up. Ainz coldly looked at Igavaruji’s departing back then turned to survey the crowd remaining in the room.

“Then I shall immediately depart. I hope that the others are able to protect Re-lantier well. I don’t wish to find a prickly situation when I return not having encountered the vampire.”

“Ah, although we cannot guarantee that there will be completely no problems, but we will do our very best. If you encounter danger, please retreat as well.”

Ainz nodded then left the room.

There were three people left behind in room: Panasolei, Issac and Rakesheer who was portraying a longing expression.

“Allowing everyone to see my embarrassing appearance, I am really sorry.”

“Not really, relax.”

Panasolei had a wry smile as he replied to Rakesheer’s apology. However, everyone’s evaluation of Rakesheer had significantly changed.

Rakesheer himself also felt quite useless. But even so, he still found it difficult to conceal his look of exhilaration.

Before, when he had encountered the pharmacist Lizzie, she was animatedly discussing the matter with the potion. Seeing that jubilant appearance, with cold eyes Rakasheer himself had questioned whether it was necessary to be so overjoyed about that kind of thing. Right now he was filled with the urge to laugh at the feelings he had at that time.

He understood. When something appeared in front of his eyes which he could not possibly obtain, anyone would find it hopeless to repress their heart’s amazement and touched emotions.

“Was the item precious to that degree?”

Rakesheer was silent for a moment. That was to repress the teenager-like emotion that surfaced earlier.

“Yes. That item could have significantly overturned all past knowledge and everything magic-related. In truth, magic beyond the sixth tier is only legend. However, that just now was the first time I had witnessed it.”

Different types of magic called ‘magic tiers’ supposedly first appeared in this world six hundred or five hundred years ago. Although afterwards several magic casters appeared which were hailed as heroes, but of those heroes who were able to use seventh tier magic and above, apart from the thirteen heroes, the others were rumours.

Amongst hero legends, there was a hero which used a magic which made others wish to decisively say that “it couldn’t be done even if you use spells above the seventh tier”. But it was generally agreed that it was a story without evidence? Also whether the thirteen heroes actually cast seventh tier magic and above was also dubious.

But then——

Rakesheer thought to himself, perhaps not all of those hero tales were fiction. He put this event firmly in his heart, and told himself to remember investigating this in his free time.

For example, wielding the Branch of Tonelico, the goblin king who destroyed countless dragons; the winged hero able to soar in the sky for a long period of time; the magic warrior riding a Tri-headed Dragon; and the princess who, along with her twelve loyal knights, ruled over the Crystal Palace, among others.

“Well, can we trust him completely?”

The one Panasoleii was talking about, was without doubt Ainz.

A potion taken from the hand of an adventurer wearing black armor, and throwing this vial of potion against the vampire to make the opponent retreat—— this was the testimony of the surviving adventurers.

Therefore they came to this city’s most prominent pharmacist Lizzie to enquire about the effects of the potion. The conclusion was that it was an item almost as rare as the sealed magic crystal just now.

If there was only one rare item, others would feel suspicious, but if there were two, others would want to know who crafted it. But then, why did the vampire stop its attack?

There were two possibilities. The first was related to enmity, the other was abiding by a mutual alliance. That was why it was necessary to consider the possibility that Momon's earlier information and this was possibly connected. Momon the adventurer's sudden appearance along with the vampire, was there really a hostile relationship between the two?

"Could he be working together with the vampire?"

This was his area of concern. The three people thought back to the man Momon and what he said earlier.

"This possibility is very low. What do you think Rakesheer?"

"I am of the same view. There are better methods if he wants to pretend that he killed the vampire and then send that female vampire into hiding."

Even if assuming he was working with the vampire, what Momon said just now would not be to his benefit.

"Would his objective be to become an orichalcum adventurer?"

"That shouldn't be the case, mayor. Adventurers do enjoy fame and popularity, but it is a long distance from having power. What would be the benefits after becoming orichalcum? Issac."

"...It would be possible to receive better paid commissioned work, and the reputation would be higher. With luck, it would even be possible to receive an official position with good conditions... however these are pretty much all of the benefits. If he wanted to gain power, other methods would still be faster."

The deep impression that adventurers gave to others was that of professional mercenaries in the business of exterminating monsters. Indeed, perhaps it was possible to become the Leader of the Adventurer's Guild, but it would be impossible to climb up to a position able to influence the Kingdom's politics.

“If he wanted money, all he would have to do was sell off that crystal and he would not have to worry about food or clothing for the rest of his life. With strength like his, it would also be possible to inflate his reputation rapidly. In truth, it seems that there are already a portion of the guards who refer to him as a hero from legends.”

Panasoleii nodded in agreement.

Defeating the towering large number of undead in one move, unstoppably breaking through the densely packed countless undead, that act of heroism truly was befitting of being named a genuine hero.

This was the word of mouth evaluation of the guards that witnessed Momon’s battle heroism. They even swore with their hands on their heart that if only he were present, there was absolutely no need to fear any monster.

“Having said that, or quite unfortunately, there isn’t any conclusive evidence which can prove that he is trustworthy. However, Momon-san’s rhetoric does not contain any inconsistencies, and furthermore, if he was the enemy why would he take out the sealed magic crystal for us to see? That is why we ought to place our faith in him.”

Rakesheer’s words made the other two people show sour faces. It was clearly written on these faces that having seen the maniacal behaviour earlier, his opinion was hardly convincing.

“Mayor, Isaac... both of you don’t trust Momon-san’s motives because he appeared out of nowhere, and when he did the vampire seemed to do the same, right? However, I believe Momon-san’s words were already a sufficient explanation.”

Both men nodded at the same time, indicating that it was correct.

“There is also the matter of the vampire stopping its assault on the female adventurer upon seeing Momon-san’s rare potion. If the vampire was chased all the way here by Momon-san, that also makes sense. Even more so, the female adventurer did not die, which could also be because the vampire wanted to let Momon-san know of its presence here, and deliberately spared the female adventurer’s life.”

“So that’s how it is... letting Momon-san believe it was nearby, effectively trapping him here. Because the female adventurer possessed the potion, the vampire figured out that she had a connection with Momon-san and let her go, in order to let the news of her presence disseminate faster. No contradictions...”

“... Considering Momon-san’s unrelenting pursuit of that vampire... it is really difficult to feel happy about him coming here.”

“Correct mayor. However, although we still do not know which country or of what religion he is from, it is still better to treat him nicely before he defeats the vampire, whilst we also increase our preparations at the same time. Although I personally think that we do not need such suspicion... ho ho, I really wish to talk about items with Momon-san. That armor seems to be quite valuable as well.”

“...Speaking of Momon-san, ah yes mayor, what of Zuranon’s corpse?”

“We do not know where they have gone.”

The mayor answered with a grimace.

The miserable corpses defeated by Ainz were placed in the safe care of the guards, but after daylight, they suddenly disappeared. Although it was speculated that someone invaded and snatched them away, the guards hadn’t been attacked and nobody saw any suspicious figures.

In order to prevent the transmission of magic, the place was created using a method which blocked the transmission of magic, which could be described as a kind of secret room. Therefore even the invader’s invasion pathway was unknown, and had simply disappeared like a wisp of smoke.

There were secret investigations still being carried out inside the city, but no related trails were found. The possibility of finding anything from this point onwards was zero. This also meant to say that any possible connections which could be discovered from the dead bodies had already ceased to exist.

“That man who conducted the undead ritual, could he have turned into an undead and escaped?”

“...That possibility cannot be entirely refuted.”

“This really is frustrating, and the forensics were not complete... is the secret shrine under the spirit temple the only thing left that may still have a clue?” It would be great if there is any evidence left behind there.”

“Hearing you mention this, it seems that Momon-san did not go inside there. If any valuable items of unknown origin are discovered there, can we give it to him?”

“Ah. If those items and their ritual is moved aside, just adhere to the adventurer rules and hand them to Momon-san.”

#### Part 4

Ainz sprinted along the street.

Warm air rushed through the helmet's gap, blowing into the spot where his eyes were. If he had eyeballs, perhaps he would be blinking non-stop, but since Ainz lacked organs he only felt that 'some wind was blowing'.

Looking down, the ground flew by as fast as an arrow. Maybe it was because the distance from the ground was small, or because of other reasons, but the feeling was faster than the actual speed being travelled at, although having said that it was not terrifying in the least. Every time the body sprung up, like reflex there would be increased strength exerted below the feet.

Despite the fact that Hamusuke was adept at maintaining his balance, apart from the humongous size, it was basically a hamster. It was also quite a difficult mount to ride because Ainz had to spread his legs very wide, and this unstable posture had to be maintained without the assistance of a saddle or horse armor. Even Ainz, who had superior balance over other people, had to be careful not to fall off.

*It would be quite difficult to draw swords while riding Hamusuke. Perhaps I should make a saddle and stirrups for him as soon as possible. When I am crafting this, perhaps a nearby armor blacksmith might come and help with its preparation.*

What made Ainz think this, apart from the unstable ride, was more importantly because of the figure moving parallel to him.

Riding parallel to him on horseback was Narberal. She was riding on top of a giant horse donned with a heavy metal armor, summoned by the item 'Statue of Animal - War Horse'.

The heroic sight of Narberal skillfully controlling the giant horse as they sprinted along the road was awe inspiring. Her upright figure, ponytail swaying with the wind, and coffee coloured gown billowing because of strong winds from the front, looked just like a scene out of a movie.

The difference was like heaven and earth compared to himself, who was riding an overgrown hamster. Feeling depressed, he looked forward and saw a group of men.

It was a four-man group. The armor they wore was more complete than the Swords of Darkness members' with whom Ainz journeyed together with before.

Ainz pushed the incident with the Swords of Darkness to the back of his memories, freed himself from his tangled thoughts and looked at the four men on horseback in a trance.

Majestic horses.

Ainz did not have much knowledge of horses, but that horse coat was a beautiful shade of colour, and the body shape looked quite sturdy. It should be some kind of famous horse.

The four men on horseback rode in an isosceles triangle formation, also like in a film scene.

*I am so very stupid, looking like a moron riding Hamusuke.*

His mood was dismal, but only Ainz had this feeling.

“The monster you ride is quite amazing.”

One of Igavaruji's companions who was riding alongside spoke to Ainz. The tone was different from Igavaruji's, lacking hostility. Perhaps it was because of an adventurer's curious nature that was stimulated, that the tone was filled with wonder and curiosity.

“What is that monster called? Is it famous?”

“... It's called the Virtuous King of the Forest.”

“Huh? What? That's the monster in legends!”

The man shouted out with wide eyes.

*I still cannot get used to this reaction. Is there a need for such a fuss over a hamster.... ah?*

In the corner of Ainz' vision, he saw Hamusuke pridefully sway its beard and twitch its ears. A stronger momentum was transmitted from the waist. He had half of his attention turned towards the conversation between Ainz and the others.

After Ainz used his gauntlet hand to mercilessly chopped Hamusuke's head, he heard a deeply emotional voice.

“No, it’s just that Igavaruji mentioned it before... so that’s how it is. He was jealous.”

“How did he describe me? Ah, never mind. It’s fine if you don’t say. I can roughly guess just by looking at your expression.”

“Hahaha, sorry. That fellow... isn’t actually that bad. It’s just that sometimes he covets immediate interests.”

“...With that kind of companion, your group is lucky to remain unharmed so far. Or is it that your group has changed many members?”

“No, ever since this group was formed there has not been any member who was discarded. Because that fellow’s personality and his capability are not on par, he is still quite an outstanding adventurer.”

“Outstanding...huh.”

Ainz turned to look at Igavaruji and saw a pair of sharp eyes filled with hostile intent.

“Must be hard.”

After Ainz smiled as he threw out this statement, he lightly raised his hand as a signal to Narberal, commanding her to repress her gradually emerging emotions towards Igavaruji. Ainz did not wish to start a dispute here, as there were more important matters which needed to be dealt with.

Hamusuke raised his head and looked over after Ainz indicated to Narberal.

“Master...my head hurts...”

Those raven black eyes glistened with tears.

He felt a little guilt. Perhaps his chop earlier was too forceful, but then again if he were thrown down at this speed, it wouldn’t be good.

Even if he hit the ground vigorously, Ainz would not suffer the slightest injury. He had conducted experiments using items with damage mitigating powers like himself, and had felt no pain even when falling from a height of a thousand meters.

The problem were the companions who would feel suspicious about such a sturdy Ainz. Since he had already permitted them to accompany him to this point, he hoped to likewise handle the matter to the end. Ainz’ wish was sincere and without hypocrisy.

“Run more steadily. I do not wish to forcefully clamp onto your body.”

“Understood, master is concerned for this subordinate’s body condition right!”

This time Hamusuke welled up with emotional tears. At the moment Ainz ordered him to watch the road when running, Igavaruji’s companion from earlier felt impressed again and praised:

“Oh, incredible, maintaining such a position while keeping balance. Even if you pre-empt and counterbalance, isn’t this position quite dangerous?”

“It’s because I’m used to it... anyhow I plan to install a saddle later.”

“Saddle...is a little detested... of course I am joking! If it is master’s opinion, this Hamusuke shall obey without objection!”

Enveloped by Narberal’s sharp gaze, Hamusuke desperately exhibited a loyal appearance. Ainz felt a tremor from his waist, a different vibration feeling from sprinting.

Ainz furrowed his brows on his illusionary face under the helmet.

*There was no need to use murderous intent to frighten a mere hamster? This degree of loyalty is delightful, but could it have gone too far? Discrimination against humans is fine, but it is necessary to be aware of the time and place... she doesn’t appear to fully comprehend this part... are her settings like this? If that’s the case then it can’t be helped, but still...*

Merely bringing Hamusuke along for the action had already made the name and fame of Momon the adventurer well known, and the Virtuous King of the Forest’s loyal appearance as well as it’s terrified behavior gave two different impressions to others. The former let others believe that Ainz was a great adventurer which was evaluated well. Although he was controlling Hamusuke in both cases, as long as there was an opportunity Ainz would prefer to grow his reputation into that direction. This was because he wished to quickly obtain the title of Hero and not a ruthless person.

Furthermore, obtaining allegiance from those outside of Nazarick would definitely be useful in the future.

Ainz reflected on his own actions slightly. Perhaps he was too rough in his treatment of Hamusuke, therefore he gently stroked the area where he had chopped earlier tenderly like he would to a small animal.

“Master...it’s really embarrassing...”

Ainz clearly heard the sound of gnashing teeth nearby, mingled amongst the sound of galloping horses.

*....It's partly your fault too, you know? Speaking of which, you were too forceful, apparently out of jealousy? Would it be better to have her do something else? Narberal is also very loyal, but... what kind of reward should I give her?*

Just as Ainz troubling himself not knowing whether to give a ring or a treasure, Igavaruji let out an unfriendly voice.

“Hey, Momon, we’ve already reached the destination.”

After indicating understanding, Hamusuke followed by slowly reducing in speed. Different from horses, being able to communicate directly with Hamusuke was his greatest strength as a mount. If he were riding a horse, Ainz who lacked experience, would not have the confidence to handle it easily.

*Riding Hamusuke is certainly a bit embarrassing, but I am also quite fortunate that because of this, I don't have to be riding a horse. However, in the future there may be an occasion when I need to ride on horseback. To cope with that contingency, it's still better that I train horseback riding.*

Ainz jumped down from Hamusuke. After stroking him with the intent of expressing gratitude, Ainz saw Narberal turn the horse back into a statue, and the men leading the horses to one side.

“Then, let’s be off. What kind of formation do you want when entering?”

“We walk in front, you people follow from behind.”

“We won’t mind whatever you want to do, but please show concern for us and be careful in your movements.”

After hearing Igavaruji’s impatient response, Ainz took Narberal and Hamusuke into the forest.

Just like the forest near Carne Village, this deserted forest was extremely difficult to traverse in. However for Ainz who was equipped with various kinds of magical items, it was as if it were flat ground. Also, because he was worried about Shalltear, his footsteps naturally increased speed continuously, and at times even Igavaruji had to request slowing down the pace.

Even if his requests were justified, the profanities used were full of hostility. Narberal who followed on one side almost shouted out in accusation several times, but was blocked by Ainz on every occasion.

“We’re arriving soon. Do not act rashly.”

Seeing Narberal’s wondrous expression made Ainz smile from under his helmet. At this moment Hamusuke felt that something wasn’t right, and continuously moved his ears as if trying to clearly locate the source of a sound.

Ainz, who knew the reason Hamusuke showed such a reaction, whispered in his ear:

“——Stop listening.”

“What? Master, what are you saying——”

“—— If what you are hearing is a metallic sound, that’s just the noise I am making with my hand. Pay no attention to it.”

“Y-yes, so that’s what it is. Forgive me for being rude, master.”

“Then, apart from that, have you discovered any signs of tracking?”

He had already ordered Niguredo to monitor, and in addition had taken many precautions, but still just for insurance he still asked for confirmation.

“None. In addition, it seems that nobody is tracking.”

“Hey—— has something happened?”

The man who was riding beside Ainz before probed with his question. It was not the group representative Igavaruji who came over to ask, for obvious reasons which need not be spoken.

Ainz gave his hand a gentle wave, responding to the other side that there was nothing.

“Is that so?”

The man had a look which showed that he did not accept this answer, shrugged and remained silent after knowing that Ainz had no intention to speak.

*Even though I harbour no hatred at all towards you people.*

Ainz did not say anything, only whispering this in his heart and silently advanced through the forest.

After journeying some distance into the forest, the sound of successively and hastily unsheathing of weapons suddenly came from the back. Ainz stopped his steps and leisurely looked behind.

“What is it?”

“Still asking that? If you’re walking in front, at least you ought to be a little on alert.”

For the first time, the men showed an endorsed attitude towards Igavaruji’s tone filled with hostility.

“Hey! You fellows hiding over there. Come out slowly!”

In the direction which Igavaruji shouted at, there was a tree sizeable enough to allow a person to hide behind.

In this tense atmosphere, Ainz calmly walked towards the direction of the tree. Although there were panicked voices calling Ainz from behind, he completely ignored them.

Narberal had an unworried expression. Although Hamusuke felt some doubt, he did not stop.

As if in response to Ainz approaching near the tree, a person wearing the same coloured armor as Ainz revealed himself from behind the tree. In its hand, the figure wielded a large battleaxe which emitted a weak sickly glow.

The appearance of a warrior full of vigor shrouded the entire scene with a strange atmosphere. No, it would be more correct to say that only a part of the place was shrouded in the strange atmosphere.

Ainz lightly raised his hand, gave it a wave and greeted:

“Thanks for the hard work.”

“Thank you, Ainz-sama.”

The person who appeared, Albedo, respectfully curtseyed.

“Then, Shalltear——”

“——Who the heck is she? Is she your companion? And what’s with ‘Ainz-sama’?”

This loud barrage of questions came in succession from behind Ainz.

To Igavaruji and the others, this was a natural reaction, but to Albedo who was maintaining an elegant curtsey, it was an offence which even death would not atone for it. An anger so fierce it would burn the surroundings to cinders burst out.

Hamusuke started shivering, his entire body’s fur stood up, surpassing previous levels.

The third party also displayed this reaction. Towards the angered individual, of course his face was deathly pale, and his forehead was drenched in sweat as he felt that at any moment now his life was not guaranteed.

“Allow me to introduce to everybody my companion —— Albedo.”

“Ainz-sama, to even call someone like me a companion... I am your faithful servant.”

“Now that you say it, yes. I withdraw my earlier statement; she is my subordinate. Is this sufficient to answer your question? Then Albedo, proceed in accordance with our earlier communication and take the next step.”

While the men were all stunned, Albedo got up and walked towards them.

“I almost forgot, my name is not Momon, my real name is Ainz. Not that you need to remember it.”

Seeing the men not hesitating to show their confused expressions made Albedo give out a cute smile. However that smile came with a cold emotion.

“So then... Albedo, get rid of them. Only capture one man...no, catch one more to act as backup. Interference has already been activated, so you can rest assured that there will be no use of magic communication.”

While Ainz’ impartial calm voice made Igavaruji’s men feel inexplicable dismay, Ainz continued to command:

“Also bring the corpses back to Nazarick. If they have such strength, they could be used for experimentation to see if it is an intermediary for creating higher-level undead.

“Understood.”

Albedo slowly and lightly swung the giant axe.

This movement was not coupled with killing intent, nor was there any hostility or other negative emotions.

It was a natural movement, because to Albedo, to behead such beings was just like chopping the leaves off carrots.

If it were not for Ainz’ command, perhaps she would not even wield the weapon and would still be able to confirm her own condition as unharmed.

Igavaruji’s men could not make heads nor tails of the current situation, but knowing that they faced a crisis, they all took up their arms for combat.

Shrouded by alarmed gazes, Ainz merely gave a slight shrug.

“My fault. What I said in the Guild was incorrect: rather than ‘death is certain if you follow me’, I actually meant ‘come along and I shall slaughter the lot of you.’”

Ainz pronounced a death sentence towards the crowd of men.

“I had already given my warning, but you would not listen. Therefore this is the result of your own choice. Please willingly accept your fate.”

Igavaruji's group chose to retreat.

Their immediate decision to escape without making any prior communications of opinion nor hand gestures was because they all understood the difference in strength. Furthermore, their choice was not to escape together, but to separate and flee for the highest probability of survival.

The opponent's movements appeared to be beyond Albedo's calculations, so she began to move after a brief moment of delay. Even if her physical abilities exceeded Ainz' by far, it would still be tricky to defeat enemies about to escape into the forest with one clean sweep.

She instantly caught up to her first target, using a capturing skill to make the opponent faint.

Albedo used her keen sense of hearing to grasp the constant metal sound in the distance mixed in with the screams of the person who had fainted. However, because the line of sight was blocked off by the trees in the forest, it was difficult to confirm the location. In addition, the men who wore no metal armor made, at most, the sound footsteps upon grass and wood. Therefore it was much harder for Albedo who lacked the guerilla fighter and thief jobs.

Albedo shook her head and sighed, then ordered:

“Mare, dispose the body. Ah, right, remember to get rid of the fellow who was discourteous to Ainz-sama.”



Igavaruji bolted desperately.

At the Guild meeting, he had already figured out early on that the man Momon was an adventurer stronger than himself, but Igavaruji was still reluctant to admit this fact.

But then, witnessing him riding the monster—— the majestic appearance of the great monster from nearby ancient legends, the ‘Virtuous King of the Forest’, he could only admit even if he was unwilling. To have the strength to tame a monster like that, he was certainly beyond the strength of mithril class.

After knowing that everyone's discussion in the room back then was true, Igavaruji was filled with rage.

*I don't know which country you're famous in, but don't get in our way. If you want information, I'll give it to you. So shut up and go elsewhere.*

His own territory was invaded —— These were Igavaruji's actual thoughts.

To realize his own dream, he relentlessly strengthened his body, experiencing numerous adventures where he narrowly escaped from certain death in order to slowly climb up class ranks, yet to have someone from the side leap over many classes. Of course this would make others feel dissatisfied.

If an opportunity presented itself, he would kick him off the ladder, and even spread false rumours to destroy other's evaluation of him. It was only because of this attempt that Igavaruji decided to travel with him.

As such, when Momon's companion clad in dark armor appeared, wanting to slaughter Igavaruji's group, he was able to choose to retreat without hesitation. Even in fear he was still able to take action faster than any other person, because he driven by the malicious thought of reporting Momon—— no, Ainz' bad news to the Guild as soon as possible.

*You deserve this. I will definitely make it back alive, and make public all that you have done!*

Even knowing that in this moment, that terrifying weapon could chop downwards from behind —— Even knowing that his life could be in danger, Igavaruji concealed his internal feelings and let out a jeer.

He was completely regardless of his companion's survival. No, if they became meat shields to allow his own survival, that would be all the better.

*I want to be the number one, then obtain orichalcum class, adamantium class, and become a hero everyone speaks of.*

Apart from himself, there was no need for any other powerful individuals. Companions were all stepping stones for him to reach the peak. He would become a hero which saved the world just like the thirteen heroes in the past. This was the dream Igavaruji had after listening to the hero legends from the bard visiting the village.

Destroying this dream, and surpassing his group. It was even more unforgivable especially because he was the kind of person who would do odd jobs.

Run, run, and run.

Being able to continuously run through the forest without running out of breath, it was truly fit to call Igavaruji a mithril class adventurer.

However——

Igavaruji faltered. A ripple was made in his heart, and quite a large one too.

*Where is this place? I feared that they placed an ambush... so I should have detoured...huh...?*

Igavaruji's sense of direction told him that he was correct, however, his sixth sense indicated otherwise. Even if it was his first visit to this forest, he could not have become lost. Yet for unknown reasons, he found himself not knowing where he was..

My senses must be wrong.

He determined that this was the case. However, he did not feel that his senses were wrong at all. It was ominous but he had no choice but to accept it.

“...Am I lost? How can that be possible... for a Forest Stalker like me to become lost?”

Igavaruji's learned job was ranger, specialised in field operations. That also meant to say that forests were like his backyard. However, now an inexplicable unfamiliar feeling surfaced, as if this forest had transformed into the bloody gaping mouth of a carnivorous beast.

“It's just like a maze...”

The supposedly familiar forest now appeared to have changed tremendously, making him feel unease and anxiety from the bottom of his heart.

At this moment——

A slight rustling sound could be heard.

Recalling the black executioner from earlier, Igavaruji frantically turned his head around to look at the source of the sound, and saw a child peering out from behind a tree.

It was a dark elf, a close relative of the forest elves, a race which lived in the depths of the forest.

*Why would there be a dark elf here?*

According to rumours, the dark elves' large village was located in the depths of a huge forest further south, a place never visited before by humans. Dark elves were basically like that, supposedly living far away from civilisation. In this regard, they were vastly different from the forest elves who would trade with humans.

It gave off a strange vibe that such a dark elf, and a child on top of that, would appear alone, making Igavaruji feel suspicion. At this moment, the child came out timidly.

*Ah, it's a girl.*

Wearing a female outfit, a frightened expression surfaced on that incomparably beautiful appearance, stimulating Igavaruji's abusive desires. Although the thought that this girl was sent

over by Momon had crossed his mind, the disparity in attitude between the two was just too great, therefore he felt that it was an impossibility and laughed.

More importantly, if this girl was a dark elf of this forest, it must know a safe route. Even if the black armored woman chased him, he could also use this girl to act as a meat shield. With this in mind, and figuring that intimidation was necessary to ensure her obedience, Igavaruji took a step forward.

“... Hey.”

He intentionally let out a deep intimidating voice, frightening the dark elf into taking a step backwards:

“That, s-sorry...”

Seeing that battled frightened appearance caused Igavaruji to let out a sneer, feeling that his plan should be carried out smoothly.

“No need to apologise. There’s just something I wish to ask you, so come here for a second.”

“Uh...uh, uh, that... s-sorry.”

Not knowing why the other side apologised again, Igavaruji was baffled, but the sandalwood wand in the hands of the dark elf girl was already being swung towards him.

Like chains, Igavaruji’s entire body was tightly bound by plants.

He was alarmed to the point that his entire body was trembling.

He was a mithril class, yet unable to block the magic cast by this girl?

Even if he used his entire strength to fight free, the plant did not budge one inch. Filled with anxiety, Igavaruji yelled out as a bluff:

“You sh-shitty girl! If you don’t let me go, I will kill you! Hey!”

The dark elf gingerly lowered its head and walked towards Igavaruji.

It was at this moment that Igavaruji realised that the other side’s dress was no trivial item. The clothing and armor was quite amazing, almost like excellent goods which Igavaruji would never ever receive. In addition, from her eyes—— the memory of his forest elf friends’ words once again dreamily came to mind.

Except, just before this memory was fully formed, a shadow fell across his face.

The girl forcefully waved her wand downwards.

The girl's face still had a frightened expression, but the eyes did not carry any emotion. There was no feeling whatsoever towards what was about to happen to Igavaruji. That timid attitude looked like it was a performance being instructed by others.

He mentally associated this girl and the demonic black armored woman from earlier.

“W-wait a moment! What are you planning——”

Albedo arrived just as Mare's wand descended on the man's head. The helmet hit by the wand deformed, and the skull underneath had also formed a depressed crevice, with the eyeballs squeezed out because of the powerful impact. The skull was completely smashed, just like playing watermelon bashing by the beachside in summer.

*TL: This is an activity called Suikawari in Japan. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suikawari>*

“You've worked hard.”

“T-that, Albedo-sama, i-its' done... w-was it alright?”

Albedo, who took off her helmet, smiled at Mare who had timidly raised his gaze.

“Excellent. Although the execution method was a bit messy, it was completely fine. Ainz-sama should also praise you.”

“R-really! Hehehehe.”

After the overjoyed smiling dark elf gave a glance at the corpse, Albedo asked:

“What about the last person?”

“Ah, t-that... has already been resolved. T-the... corpse was moved behind the trees.”

“I see. Beautifully done. Then, Mare, can you help me transport the corpses back to Nazarick?”

“U-understood.”

Albedo smiled again to the grinning and nodding youth who was holding the bloodied wand. He honestly was a good kid.

However, it would be better if he were a little more graceful.



## Part 5

“It’s been taken care of, Ainz-sama.”

Ainz nodded in satisfaction after hearing this from Albedo, who had removed her helmet and was carrying it at her waist as she walked over. With this, there would be no witnesses left regarding the matter with Shalltear. Lifting the shackles of the armor, Ainz relaxed and asked Albedo:

“You’ve worked hard. What is the status of the recovery?”

“Mare has already been ordered to transport it back to Nazarick.”

“I see. Then the problem is solved. May those who were killed by the vampire rest in peace, we, the survivors, shall have to restrain our grief and carry on.”

“Understood. Ainz-sama what... what is that thing clutching onto the hem of your cloak?”

Ainz turned to look, and discovered Hamusuke grabbing onto the hem of his cloak. ——It did so naturally, a face that was too large to be trying to hide behind him, but it was odd how fitting it looked——. Those large eyes were evidently moist, and its fur was also erect out of fear. Of course, the object of fear was Albedo.

“This is Hamusuke. It is sort of like my pet.”

“What! This thing managed to obtain the most coveted position of Nazarick?!”

“...Huh? ...Ah, Hamusuke. This person is my loyal Albedo, in charge of managing my residence, the Great Tomb of Nazarick. She is also your superior. Do greet her.”

“Just as master said, this humble servant is Hamusuke. Please take care of me from now on, Albedo-sama.”

“...Pleased to meet you too, Hamusuke.”

“Great. With that, let’s wrap up the greetings. From here on, Albedo and I shall proceed forward. Narberal, bring Hamusuke and Mare back to Nazarick... and treat the thing I put in your mouth carefully.”

“Yes!”

Narberal answered in high spirits. Hamusuke rolled the sentient item retrieved from the cemetery around his mouth and mumbled to Narberal:

“U-understood master. Also, this item is noisy! I also have more important matters to ask, can you calm down in my mouth for a bit? Then, your humble servant would like to ask a question... Narberal-sama, will this humble servant be in danger? Will this one be eaten?”

“Since you are apparently Ainz-sama’s pet, of course no one will devour you without permission under any circumstances. Do not worry, I will convey this to everyone.”

Ainz’ face had not moved, but he was smiling. It seemed that after the two of them had worked together in Re-Lantier, their relationship had improved.

“Good. Then we shall be off, Albedo.”

“Yes.”

Watched by Narberal and Hamusuke, Ainz led Albedo towards Shalltear’s direction.

“Seeing the corpses of these men, your loyal subordinate remembered what you mentioned in the Throne Hall, don’t we need to retrieve the corpses of the men and the woman Ainz-sama disposed last night?”

“About that...”

He was just about to repeat what he said to Narberal last night, that ‘it was necessary to make them the instigators of this incident’, when he was interrupted by Albedo.

“While fighting against Ainz-sama, they might have obtained some information. Since there is magic that can revive the dead, shouldn’t we retrieve the corpses to avoid this risk? Could it be that you have a particular reason in mind?”

Ainz stopped breathing. No, he never breathed in the first place.

What Albedo said had hit the nail on the head.

...*Damn.*

Magic that revived the dead existed in this world. That meant that there was a better way than autopsy to obtain detailed and accurate information.

Ainz recalled last night's events. His own identity, Nazarick's name and also Narberal's ability. Those people became aware of these facts and that woman was especially bad news.

Such a lethal mistake could not be resolved by admitting failure.

He could only hope that there were no individuals capable of using resurrection magic here. However, from the intelligence obtained from the Sunlight Scripture, it seemed that there were some people capable of using it in the Silian Theocracy. Moreover, there was a high possibility that the highest ranking adventurers could also use it. Those in the upper echelons of the government could also secretly possess a few individuals capable of using revival magic.

With that, once they determined that the deceased held important information, those in the highest positions in Re-Lantier would probably find people capable of using revival magic. Since they knew the problem was bad enough to shake Re-Lantier, those in the upper echelons would want to dig up more detailed information.

Ainz felt as if his nonexistent heart was rapidly thumping out loud.

*What should I do?*

Without question, they just had to retrieve the corpses. However, who should be ordered to go?

Ainz told Narberal to ignore the bodies at that place. Should he openly tell her that it was a mistake?

*...No, that should not be said.*

Since the current situation is that we still do not know why Shalltear betrayed us, I should avoid saying words that might further lower their loyalty. At times like this, it would be better not to give out orders in panic.

Ainz felt that he could empathise with the company superiors who would refuse to admit failure, and decided with a prayer in his heart.

“...What you say is correct. However I have a particular reason to ignore those corpses. Rest assured, everything is within my calculations... apart from the issue of Shalltear’s betrayal.”

“So that’s it! As expected of Ainz-sama. My thoughts were already anticipated long ago by Ainz-sama. I’ve spoken too much... my apologies. Speaking of which, why does Ainz-sama not use revival magic at all? When gathering intelligence, it should be possible to do the same to the deceased.”

“...Oh?”

Ainz naturally let out an out-of-tune exclamation.

“Did I not mention this before? Then have you heard about Demiurge’s healing experiments?”

“Yes I have. The experiment involving chopping off the limbs, then applying experimental magic treatment to the severed areas, right?”

“Correct. Let me ask you one more question. Do you know where the resurrection magic has to be applied?”

“Not on corpses?”

“...No. Ah, it shouldn’t be?”

Both Albedo and Ainz were in deep thought when realisation dawned in Albedo’s eyes.

“Ah, I was wrong. Ainz-sama said correctly - not bodies, but on the soul!”

“Correct. In Demiurge’s experiments, the severed limbs would disappear, and then regrow from the body. Therefore in a situation where magic was cast on the soul, what would then happen to the corpse?”

In YGGDRASIL, there were four different methods of resurrection to choose from in exchange for experience points..

The first type was on-site resurrection. The second type was resurrection at the entrance of a dungeon. The third type was resurrecting at a nearby safe town. Finally, the fourth type was resurrection at a specified location, such as a guild.

So, just what sort of resurrection magic existed in this world?

Needless to say, the one Ainz wanted to avoid the most was the fourth type, which would revive them back at their respawn point. If Nigan's respawn point was in the Silian Theocracy, then it would be tantamount to resurrecting an enemy who held information. He would have committed the folly of releasing the tiger back into the mountains.

Therefore, there was no way to conduct resurrection magic experiments. This result apparently had backfired.

“So that’s how it is. It really does require close attention. As expected of Ainz-sama. Such perception is admirable.”

Seeing Albedo lower her head and sigh, Ainz immediately shook his head and replied:

“You honestly need not mind about such matters. Still, it is necessary to find a place to carry out experiments... eh eh. Well then, let us pick up our spirits and set off again.”

Under Albedo's guidance, Ainz proceeded to head deeper into the forest.

Within it, the two people came across a vast clearing.

In a place that could be called serene, stood a completely dissonant, scarlet-armored figure. The appearance of a fantasy-like illusion shone brilliantly in the sunlight, but the bloody stench in the air destroyed this atmosphere.

Shalltear.

Her appearance was exactly the same as it was on the 「Crystal Monitor」, even her posture looked like it had not changed. Therefore, Ainz momentarily wondered if he was still looking at a monitor.

However, there was a realistic sensation here: the bloody stench drifting along with the wind.

Ainz continuously took deep breaths, but since his body was obviously incapable of breathing, he only went through the motion, or it may have just been a reflection of how he felt emotionally.

“Shalltear.”

Ainz called out.

Ainz felt that he had issued a commanding voice full of authority, not a useless deep and hoarse voice.

However, there was no reaction.

He called out again, carefully and intently looking at Shalltear.

Shalltear was not ignoring him. Her lifeless eyes were open but devoid of spirit, empty, giving off the impression that no consciousness resided behind them.

Albedo, who was also present, flushed with anger at Shalltear’s attitude. .

“Shalltear! Not only do you not offer a single word of explanation, you dare show such insolence towards Ainz-sama——”

“Albedo, you are noisy! Silence! Do not move! You are not permitted to approach Shalltear!”

With a rough tone, Ainz stopped Albedo who was about to take a step forward. Under normal circumstances Ainz would rarely display such an attitude towards his past-companion’s creations, but this time it was impossible to restrain his emotions.

He was shocked at Shalltear's condition.

"...Could this be... Is it possible? ...Unbelievable."

Ainz felt dismay as he compared his past experiences with Shalltear's current appearance. At the same time, he forcibly maintained his composure and made a calm judgment, knowing that the possibility was very high.

He opened his mouth to talk with Albedo, wanting to explain his train of thought to others and use this as a pretext to allow himself to get his facts in order.

"I am certain. Shalltear is currently under mind control."

"Is this because of the reason Ainz-sama talked about in the Throne Hall?"

"We still do not know if that is the case. While prying information from the Sunlight Scripture, I have witnessed something similar. This is indeed the result of mind control. I do not know for certain why the undead Shalltear was affected by mind control, but perhaps it may have been caused by something particular to this world?"

Ainz folded his arms, staring sharply at Shalltear who was standing rigidly.

"Shalltear's consciousness is being controlled by an unknown person, and something happened just before that person was able to give any orders. Perhaps she acted at the same time and defeated the opponent... leading her to remain alone here in an idle state. That should be pretty close to what happened. However, she may take defensive action should you attack or get too close to her, NPCs with an evil alignment have the tendency to attack, so do not go near her."

"Understood. But then there will be no means to forcibly restrain and bring her to Nazarick. It does not matter if the person controlling Shalltear is already dead, but if that person is still alive, then leaving her like this will eventually be dangerous."

"Your concern is correct."

The reason why Shalltear was affected by mind control was unknown. There might be a peculiar ability in this world that was effective against the undead. If so, Ainz could also be affected by mind control if he stayed here.

“Although using this item is a bit of a waste, it is still best to release Shalltear from mind control as quickly as possible.”

Ainz spread his fingers. On one of his fingers, he wore a simple ring a simple ring that had no kinds of decorations whatsoever. It was engraved with three shooting stars that emitted a silver light, and was actually the most powerful of all the rings in Ainz’ possession.

“That is...?”

In response to Albedo’s puzzled expression, Ainz smiled proudly despite the fact that his face did not move, and revealed the ring’s name.

“This super rare item, the 「Shooting Star」 ring, enables the use of the magic 「Wish Upon a Star」 three times without consuming experience.”

This was the gacha item Ainz gambled his entire year end bonus away for.

Amongst all the guild members, only two people, Ainz and Yorumaiko, had this incredibly rare ring.

No. Rather than describing this ring as a rare item, perhaps it would be better called a symbol of stupidity, having spent so much money on the game to get it.

Embedded in the ring was the super-level magic 「Wish Upon a Star」. The number of possible wishes that appeared would be proportional to the amount of consumed experience. This meant that activating the ring/spell in exchange for ten percent of your total experience points would present a single choice, whereas consuming fifty percent would give five possible choices.

There were quite a few wishes to choose from. According to a strategy website’s statistics, there were allegedly over two hundred of them. Additionally, there were some wishes which appeared more easily, and wishes which did not appear so easily, therefore it was a horrifying magic where any carelessness could make the user waste a lot of experience.

Also, magic casters who wanted to learn this super-level magic had to reach the ninety-fifth level first. Even in YGGDRASIL where it was easy to level up, reaching this level would still require a considerable amount of experience, therefore people hesitated whether or not to gamble their experience points on such a spell.

When using this ring to activate the super-level spell 「Wish Upon a Star」, the possible wishes one could choose from would be completely randomised, just like normal. However, useful wishes had a comparatively higher chance to appear instead of joke wishes. Also, the maximum amount of wishes which would appear was ten, and the magic had zero activation time, therefore it truly was the most powerful cash item.

Using such a cash item—one which even had an element of gambling—would of course be a shame, but Shalltear was irreplaceable. But expending his own experience points here could affect the usage of his other special abilities which consumed experience points to activate, therefore the choice was still made with hesitation.

Ainz gazed at the ring.

Ainz hoped the activated wish was one which would dispel all of the effects on the target. Although there were many alternative options to choose from, what came to his mind was this most direct method.

Because it would also cancel positive effects, this wish was seldom chosen in the game, so Ainz who made this decision smiled.

“Well then, ring, I WISH!”

Of course, the magic item could also be activated without saying this. However, having to choose this strong desire most ideal for the situation from among more than two hundred wishes made Ainz shout out like this. It was the same shout as one would make while rolling the dice on a do-or-die gamble.

Because YGGDRASIL magic also had the same effect in this world, the ring-activated ability would definitely release Shalltear from the mysterious mind control effect. No, this was what he wanted to believe.

The outcome Ainz had feared the most would have been if the ring itself failed to activate, but it seemed to have been a needless worry. The ring released its magic without a problem and... The red light in Ainz' eye sockets narrowed.

“What is...this...”

As if new information was being forced into his brain he felt... something unpleasant. Yet at the same time, and connected to it, he also felt a great sense of euphoria. A large variety of human emotions hit Ainz like a wave.

While the emotional ripples dissipated from his body, Ainz realised that this world's 「Wish Upon a Star」 was changed from YGGDRASIL's to the point that they were practically not the same.

When he knew about Enfreia's innate ability, he had fantasised about the possibility of obtaining it by activating 「Wish Upon a Star」. This speculation was not wrong. In this world, 「Wish Upon a Star」 had already become a magic which made the realisation of one's innermost desires possible. Although it would be based on the value of the consumed experience, 「Wish Upon a Star」 had become a magic which made the impossible possible. Moreover, if five levels were consumed—— five-hundred percent of experience, the magic would even enable the realisation of even stronger desires.

With this, Ainz was certain it would be able to remove the magic effect on Shalltear's body, and shouted out with a victorious spirit:

“Dispel all the effects applied on Shalltear's body!”

After the voice sounded for a second, the light in Ainz' eyes instantaneously flared.

“...How... How is this possible?”

Ainz' agitated appearance made Albedo realise that the situation had changed. She asked nervously:

“W-what is it? Ainz-sama!”

Ainz did not reply to the question, but instead recalled his extensive in-game experience in YGGDRASIL, the information absorbed from strategy websites, and combined this knowledge

with the variety of information gathered after arriving at this world. And most importantly the information he received from trying to use 「Wish Upon a Star」, which threatened to envelop his entire existence.

At the moment he made his conclusion, incredible anxiety and rage emerged in Ainz. However, even if his spirit was able to remain stable, there would still be one emotion left... fear.

The flustered Ainz shouted out:

“R-retreat! Albedo don’t get close! Retreat quickly!”

“Yes! Understood!”

Ainz immediately cast transfer magic. In the next moment, raised earth entered their view. Although he arrived safely at home, Ainz still frantically ordered:

“Albedo! Be careful and vigilant of anyone who follows the transfer!”

“Yes!”

Albedo took up her arms and stood beside Ainz. Ainz also held out his empty hands, ready to adapt to any changes.

Finally after some time had passed, Ainz slowly relaxed. Albedo also shifted from a lowered-waist defensive posture to a normal stance.

“Damn it!”

Even after calming down, a strong emotion of anger still appeared. After becoming an undead, Ainz’ strong emotions were automatically suppressed, but even after it was kept in check, new rage immediately resurfaced.

“Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!”

Ainz continuously forcibly kicked the ground.

Because his physical strength was extraordinary, a large amount of dirt was kicked up. Had there been no rain in the past few days, the surroundings would have raised an alarming amount of dust. Even so, it was unable to quell Ainz' anger.

“A-Ainz-sama, p-please calm down...”

Sensing that Albedo's voice carried fear, Ainz realised that his actions were not befitting that of the identity of a master. He rapidly regained his composure, and forcibly exhaled his non-existing breath, as if expelling the burning anger in his heart all at once.

“...Forgive me, I lost my composure. Pretend you didn't see anything just now.”

“Please don't say that. However, I am grateful that Ainz-sama was able to heed my advice! If Ainz-sama commands me to pretend not to have seen anything, I shall forget this incident in its entirety. However... what happened? Did I cause Ainz-sama to feel displeasure? If you are willing to tell me, I will work hard to never let this happen again!”

“...I was not directing that at you, Albedo. It was because I knew, after activating the ring's power, that my wish did not come true.”

Seeing Albedo remain silent, Ainz knew that his explanation was not clear enough and continued to elaborate:

“...There's only one power that can override 「Wish Upon a Star」's magic.”

If it were before, he would perhaps think that it could possibly be some power of this world that was acting as the obstruction, but Ainz could now confidently reply that it was not caused by such power. This was because when he activated the magic, he already realised from the feeling that rushed in.

“N-no way... that is...”

“Yes, Albedo. Only one... World-Class items.”

There were only two hundred of these items in YGGDRASIL, even Guild weapons and Divine-class weapons couldn't match them. If a World Class item was used, it would be a breeze to control undead which were immune to mental effects.

At this moment, Ainz thought about the Guardians still outside Nazarick. They could also be targeted.

Blaming himself for not considering this possibility, Ainz ordered Albedo:

“Albedo, immediately recall all of the Guardians outside. It is necessary to check if they are also being controlled like Shalltear. I must head to the Throne Hall right away! After, the place I must go to is... the Treasure Hall.”