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Web Novel  
Volume



Re:ゼロ

Re: Life in a different world from zero

から始める異世界生活



# Manifesto

Hello, this is Phantaminum and Beloved (of WCT fame). This is a continuation of a project that aims to standardize nomenclature and formatting, while dividing Web Novel chapters in the same way the Light Novel does. Colored illustrations have also been added where possible for maximum enjoyment. You may find a list of all volumes I have already finished, or plan to work on, at the [final chapter of this document](#).

This document is a compilation of Re: Zero Web Novel chapters that correspond to Volume 37, spanning Web Novel Arc 8 Chapters 44 to 60, including the remaining parts of the Intermission preceding Chapter 44. Witch Cult Translations ([website](#)), was used as a source of the translations for all the Chapters. Parts of Chapters 44, 46, 48 to 50, 54, and 56 to 59, and the Intermission were produced with the use of Machine Translation tools.

For the sake of completeness, I leave you with the same wall of text detailing what I did using the available translations. Feel free to skip it if you don't care/have already read it.

The original translations have been proofread, edited and reformatted by myself, on top of whatever original editing and proofreading work was done by Witch Cult Translations. This means that the formatting should remain consistent no matter which source is used.

I have tried to follow naming conventions present in the Light Novel as much as possible, only diverging when community-given names differed greatly. I have also tried to conserve as many of the original translator notes by Witch Cult Translations as much as possible.

As a fun quirk, I have done something which I admit is probably not consensual: to flip the languages whenever someone speaks what is colloquially coined as Engrish. This means, that in the case where the story

uses English, where possible, Japanese will be written as Romaji (Japanese in Latin script). When this happens, a note was added with the original expression (and its translation), and the new expression that was converted to Romaji. Basically, I made everyone using English look like weeaboos.

I hope you enjoy this as much as I did. If you have anything to point out, I'm often lurking in pretty much every Re: Zero discussion site, be it the Reddit Discord Server, the Subreddit, or 4chan's /a/ board. Alternatively, feel free to use [this document](#) to suggest corrections or other changes.

P.S.: Much thanks to Joy Kirbs from Discord for aiding me in redesigning the covers.

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# Arc 8 Intermission - Ubilk (Part B)

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 1 “How to Fell the Stars”, Parts 1-3

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by DatShazam, Beloved, Kazatashi, Punibaba, Translation checked by Garcar, Aligned by Ice) – [Complete](#)

The large-scale evacuation of the Imperial Capital of Lupugana, accompanied by the retreat on a scale unprecedented within recorded history.

While casualties among the civilians and the soldiers were by no means negligible, the present outcome was nevertheless far less severe than had been originally anticipated; in large part because of the mindset by which the Imperial citizens lived their daily lives.

—The people of the Empire must be strong.

That teaching and philosophy had pervaded each and every citizen of the Empire, and it had succeeded in allowing many to take the best possible measures for surviving in this extreme situation.

In addition to the success achieved through such individual resolve and actions, the fact that various plans made for times of emergency, such as the coupled dragon carriages, had been fully functional was also significant. These were the achievements of the person who had grasped the forthcoming threat of the Great Disaster, the arrival of which had originally been foretold by a Stargazer, and made the proper preparations.

The fact that said person had been unable to arrive at the fight against that very Great Disaster could be called a bitter regret.

???: “Still, that selflessness has kept the Empire alive! I express nothing but the utmost respect, General First-Class Chisha...!”

His voice bellowing, Kafma Irulux mowed down the hordes of the undead with thorns discharged from his arms, fighting hard in order to defend the road leading to the Fortified City behind him.

The Imperial Army that had been deployed incrementally along the highway going from the Imperial Capital to the Fortified City had been gradually falling back towards the city while supporting the evacuation of the retreating citizens of the Empire, with the aim of merging with the group within the fort.

Among the Generals who had participated in this decisive battle for the Imperial Capital, the role that had been assigned to Kafma was of the utmost importance, and although he himself would not admit it, it could be said that the work he had done was influencing the survival of Vollachia.

The resolve of the people of the Empire had had a large impact on the reduced casualties during the evacuation, the advance preparations bearing a large impact on the sturdy defenses of the Fortified City, Kafma’s valiant efforts having a large impact on the high morale and minimal losses of Imperial Soldiers.

Serving as the rear guard to the formation that was gradually falling back towards the Fortified City, he used the power of the “insects” he had taken in to slow the march of the undead, an achievement worthy of being left behind in the annals of history.

However, all of that would be contingent on whether the Vollachian Empire escaped ruin.

Thus, Kafma's eccentric achievements were also the results of fighting without taking his own survival into consideration.

Kafma: “—Hk.”

As far as the eye could see, the hosts of undead had blanketed the vast plain.

While striking them with thorns, bullets of light, and blades of wind, Kafma gritted his teeth against the appetite of the “insects” that were eating away at him from the inside, stifling his urge to scream.

The Insect Cage Tribe could use the power of the “insects” that coexisted within their bodies, and depending on the type of “insects” that were taken in, they could manifest a wide variety of abilities and combat techniques. But, the relationship between the Insect Cage Tribe and the “insects” was always a symbiotic one.

Neither was it one-sided usage, nor was it assimilation.

Naturally, the “insects” would seek compensation from their host for their work. That would usually be the host's Mana or lifeforce, but if that was found to be insufficient, it would be their flesh and blood.

Already, more than fifty hours had passed since Kafma had decided to fight with the resolve to die, and during that time, he had quite literally been forced to go without eating or drinking.

Although his consciousness had been sharpened like never before by his awakened fighting spirit, to the “insects” inside his body, the host's state of mind was irrelevant. They would simply lodge a complaint to the host about the fact that they were hungry, run out of patience if the host refused to lend an ear, and start to devour their flesh.

Kafma: “I'm the one breaking the promise. But still...!”



He could not desert the warfront, nor could he allow himself to fall.

The Empire had many other dependable warriors besides him, but Kafma prided himself on being the bravest when faced with death. He had to prove that his pride was real. For that reason—

Kafma: “I, must not—”

*Fall here*; it happened at the moment he roused himself with those words, about to step forth with his organs still being devoured.

From behind, a large palm grabbed his shoulder.

And, the one to whom that palm belonged was—

???: “Fall back, General Second-Class Kafma! You have fulfilled your duty sufficiently!”

The loud voice seemed to be shouting, however, that was just the usual volume for this person.

Being told thus with a voice akin to being struck by a gust of wind, Kafma stared wide-eyed, looking at the giant in golden armor who stood next to him— Goz Ralfon.

Gripping a mace that only he could handle was Goz, whose arrival at this scene surprised Kafma.

Kafma: “For what reason have you come to the front, General First-Class Goz? A General First-Class should be commanding things from the fortress...”

Goz: “High Countess Dracoy is present there! Even without me shutting myself in the fortress, that woman can handle the troops skillfully! More importantly, I can be of more use to His Excellency on the battlefield!”

Kafma: “—In that case, I will accompany you.”

His heart, on the verge of cracking with determination and earnestness, sought to reinforce itself with Goz's appearance. However, Goz interrupted Kafma's plea with a firm "No".

Then, as Goz extended his thick fingers and pressed them against Kafma's chest,

Goz: "The sound of stirring and devouring echoes from within you. It seems you have lost control of the «insects». If you were to be consumed entirely, it would be a significant loss!"

Kafma: "That may be... But, everything I've built up is for this battle!"

Goz: "Kafma Irulux! Death in itself is not atonement!!"

Kafma: "—Hk."

Getting directly slapped with an angry voice this time, Kafma's entire body began to tremble.

Just at this moment, even the "insects" that were eagerly devouring Kafma's body halted their movements, paralyzed by the fierce aura of Goz standing before them.

Looking down at Kafma, Goz, with his scarred, bearded face, expressed his anger.

Goz: "I understand that you still seek to atone for the rebellion orchestrated by your kin, along with that damned Balleroy! But! Atonement may not be achieved through death! You must live!"

Kafma: "General First-Class Goz..."

Goz: "Even after the Great Disaster is subdued, the Empire will not instantly return to normal! Both you and I can become His Excellency's strength! That is why!"

With a roar filled with loyalty as if about to burst, Goz bashed Kafma's thoughts.

Realizing that this was not a place to sacrifice his life, Kafma, with his innermost feelings laid bare, tightly closed his eyes and deeply bowed his head before Goz.

Goz: "Well, anyhow, it is not so easy a conflict that you can simply step back and be done with it. Your turn will come again soon! Until then, eat, rest, and regain your strength!"

Kafma: "Under... stood. General First-Class Goz, I entrust this place to you..."

Goz: "No need to say it— I too, have pent-up frustrations!"

With a wide grin at Kafma's strained words, Goz aimed the mace he had shouldered towards the enemy lines.

Handling the excessively heavy weapon that no one but him could with ease, Goz's entire body overflowed with tremendous fighting spirit, so immense that it had an illusion of visibility.

Once again, feeling the apprehension of the "insects" within his own body, Kafma fell into deep thought.

Chisha Gold, who had demonstrated an unfathomable strategy to take precautions against the ruin of the Empire, and Goz Ralfon, who frightened the "insects" by merely standing there with his tremendous spirit, were both people who had reached the position of the Vollachian Empire's Generals of the First-Class, all of which were transcendent beings no less competent than another.

Envisioning how he had almost been ranked among them in the past, and how he must be ranked among them in the future—

Kafma: “—The Empire is strong. We won’t be so easily taken by the undead or disaster.”



???: “It is not a matter of being strong or weak, but it is rather a matter of quantity, and one that is difficult to deal with. Fortunately, the supplies and defenses of the Fortified City are abundant, but... we cannot withstand such a siege for long.”

???: “You speak your mind clearly. Well, I certainly have a better impression of you than those who can’t express their opinions for fear of offending others. If only your cunning could be matched by your military strength, then you would be more to my liking.”

???: “High Countess Dracroy, let us not digress any further.”

Berstetz, chiding her, glared at Serena with thin, thread-like eyes. Serena shrugged her shoulders under that gaze, and Otto, who was being flirted with, let out a small sigh.

The setting was the command room of the great fortress, and those facing each other were responsible for leading the full-scale defensive battle of the city.

From the reports of the lookouts, it was confirmed that the Fortified City of Garkla had entered a state of being ready for combat around the great fortress.

The delaying force that had been holding back the enemy’s advance had also joined the city, and staged within a city that boasted the Vollachian Empire’s strongest defenses, the largest siege in the history of the Empire was about to begin.

???: “That bein’ said, ya typically win a siege by waitin’ for reinforcements, but we can’t be countin’ on that this time, y’know. The only way we can be sayin’ we’ve won is...”

???: “—When Natsuki-kun and His Excellency the Emperor splendidly defeat the enemy’s mastermind. Until then, our role is to struggle to ensure that Vollachia does not fall.”

???: “If Vollachia goes down, then Kararagi n’ Lugunica are gonna be in hot water too... What the heck, it’s really a battle for the survival of the world, ain’t it.”

Placing her hand on her white cheek, Anastasia broke into a graceful smile as she spoke, and the fox scarf that chimed in with her let out a sigh of exasperation.

Having quite the peculiar form, the fox scarf brought by Anastasia was supposedly a Spirit. They needed as many capable heads as they could get, as this truly was an all-out war.

Serena: “The first question is how long the city’s defenses will hold... General Second-Class Irulux has been replaced by General First-Class Ralfon. Despite his appearances, he’s a man capable of delicate and skillful work. He should follow the directive of sparing the lives of the *zombies* as much as possible, but...”

Berstetz: “It is unrealistic to consistently expect non-lethality. This goes not just for General First-Class Goz, but for everyone else. If there is any hope for us to hold onto...”

Anastasia: “I’m guessin’ it’d be Natsuki-kun’s group of friends.”

Otto: “I think so, too.”



Anastasia and Otto exchanged glances, aligning their opinions with each other.

The topic the duo raised concerned the strange defensive force for the Fortified City, in whom they held high expectations, the members of the Pleiades Battalion.

The black-haired boy, who had formed a miraculously friendly relationship with Vincent, led this group. They had significantly aided the refugees with their strong solidarity and mysterious combat abilities.

Currently, the boy in question was headed to the Imperial Capital with Vincent and the others, leaving the group under the leadership of Gustav Morello— led by the stern member of the Multi-Arm Tribe, the gladiators were fighting exceptionally well.

Echidna: “Their morale is high, and their ability to prevent casualties is impressive. I often think to myself, Natsuki-kun is a genius at bringing what is needed to where it is needed.”

Otto: “Yes, that seems to be his one redeeming quality. Though, I wish he would just make deliveries or bridge political divisions, instead of recklessly running into the most dangerous of situations.”

Anastasia: “But y’know, ain’t that more of a problem on Emilia-san’s part? If Emilia-san starts runnin’ ahead, Natsuki-kun’s gotta run too, ain’t no way around it.”

Anastasia shook her head with a “good grief” gesture, and Otto dropped his shoulders in agreement.

While watching this exchange and the development of relationships would be interesting, spending too much time on it would draw a stern look from the Prime Minister.

Serena cleared her throat, and after capturing everyone's attention,

Serena: "As per our prior agreement, our combat strategy is strictly to hold a siege, a defensive battle. If defeating one specific opponent could resolve all of this, I'd consider assassination as an option, but..."

Berstetz: "As it stands, let us consider His Excellency and those headed to the Imperial Capital as the arrows of assassination."

Serena: "That's how it is— It's an all-out war."

At Serena's words, there was a palpable tension in the air, and everyone's expression became more intense.

The light-hearted banter from just before had ended, and from that point on, it would be a world where they needed to exert their utmost efforts.

The Imperial Generals, the rebel fighters, the gladiators of the Pleiades Battalion, the People of Shudraq, and even the allies of the Kingdom and the emissaries from the City-States, all part of a battle that utilized everything at their disposal.

And, as the first hurdle—

Serena: "We'll be counting on you, envoys from the City-States."

Anastasia: "Sure thing, leave it to us— As far as I can remember, he ain't ever let me down, not even once."



—Amidst the warfare waged in the Vollachian Empire, what exactly was the aspect that differed most greatly to that of other countries?

If one were to ignore the resolve harbored by the Imperial Soldiers, or their fiery spirit to contend in battle, the answer to that was plain and simple—

the potential for aerial combat.

The technique of flying dragon taming, which was absent from other nations, and the fact that a large number of flying dragons inhabited the Empire exclusively, were aspects of their superiority that were thoroughly demonstrated in warfare.

It was a fact that went without even needing to be thought, but merely being able to fly through the air was something that proved advantageous in war.

In fact, the Fortress City of Guaral, which was said to boast high defensive capabilities among other cities of similar size, had fallen into a state of utter destruction due to a flock of flying dragons commanded by the Flying Dragon General, Madelyn Eschart.

By merely throwing things down from an unreachable position, a battle would become one-sided.

That remained a threat even for the Fortified City of Garkla, a city surrounded by a towering wall. However—

???: “*Fire—!!!*”

Lined up atop the wall, Shudraqian warriors with bows at the ready fired arrows into the air in unison.

The barrage of arrows covered the sky, offering no escape, and directly pierced by those countless attacks was the flock of undead flying dragons that had been ordered to assail the stout city from the skies above, and was soaring through the air as they drew ever closer.

Pierced by the merciless blows, one after another the heads of undead flying dragons shattered before they turned to dust and fell to the ground.

Among them, there were some that continued to fly without paying any mind to the attacks, but—

Shudraqian: “Take them *down!*”

Shudraqian: “It’s best if they fall to the *ground~.*”

Struck by a blow from an arrow incomparable to a normal arrow in terms of length and thickness, one of them was blown to smithereens in midair, and met its end.

In response to aerial combat, the Shudraq boasted unrivaled strength—the experience of the aforementioned crushing defeat in the Fortress City had a great impact on the fighting style of these women.

Had they not suffered that defeat, the Shudraq would likely have not been fighting the undead flying dragons here.

Giving meaning to each and every one of their battles, the People of Shudraq had fought since the start of the Empire’s upheaval, which had begun with Vincent Vollachia’s ousting.

And, in response to the morale of those women—

Shudraqian: “Go get *them!* Guy with the handsome *face!*”

Man: “I shall do my best to meet your expectations— Al Clauseria.”

Weaving an incantation with a fine tone of voice, the tip of the Knight’s sword traced the sky, and following that trajectory a rainbow light was born, thwarting the path of the undead flying dragons.

Despite the beauty of the rainbow aurora, it became a barrier that rejected anything and everything.

Man: “Wholly different from when they were still buds, these girls have blossomed, and this is their glimmer.”

In the blink of an eye, the skies of the Fortified City were engulfed in an aurora of rainbow— however, the size and extent of that rainbow were enough to defend around half of the extensive Fortified City.

The Imperial Soldiers fighting on the front lines, as well as those who were also responsible for protecting the city from atop the wall, were left speechless by that extraordinary combat capability, and they could not help but feel a surge of courage from that reliability.

Sensing that swell of morale, the Knight who had birthed the rainbow— Julius Juukulius, waved the hem of his kimono, and looked up to the sky once again.

With a white scar underneath his left eye, the dauntless young man participated in the battle out of honor, and nevertheless trained his gaze upon what he ought to do without an iota of hesitation. His eyes were fixed upon the sky, upon the vast lands where the undead drew near, believing in the efforts of his friend, who was headed even further beyond—

Julius: “—I shall carry out my own duties. I hope you also do so to the fullest, Subaru.”

# Arc 8 Chapter 44 - How to Respond to Faith

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 1 “How to Fell the Stars”, Part 5, Volume 37, Chapter 5 “Madelyn Eschart”, Part 1

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by DatShazam, Beloved, Kazatashi, Translation checked by Garcar, Senkel, Rageasu) – [Complete](#)

As all the muscles in his body throbbed, his canines were sharpened by a surge of fighting spirit.

The aftershocks from the fighting fissured, upheaved the street, and with his feet firmly plunked down onto it, the vitality flowing in from his soles swelled into his soul; looking straight ahead, at the skies above, he glared at the majestic figure spreading its wings head-on.

The sound of his blood circulating grew faster, the beating of his heart grew louder and more intense, as if it were a large drum invigorating his very existence.

That was to say—

???: “—’S THE BEST I EVER FUCKIN’ FELT!!”

Gnashing his fangs, Garfiel roared as he smashed through the road with his foot, and advanced forth.

As the sky intercepted him, he saw himself reflected by the glint in the eyes of the dignified figure— of the white Cloud Dragon; Garfiel’s blood, flesh, and even his very soul, could not bear the applause.

As an arrow of the rebel army, he had traded fists with one strong individual after the other in the decisive battle for the Imperial Capital.

A man close to the Nine Divine Generals, and an individual ranked among the Nine Divine Generals; through battle against those who were undoubtedly strong, Garfiel truly felt the duty levied on him as a member of his faction.

Being able to clash with the extolled Generals of the Vollachian Empire was truly an honor as a warrior.

However, having recognized that as a valuable experience, this was something he had been waiting for.

Garfiel: “Finally got the chance to throw down against a Dragon!”

For a citizen of the Dragon Kingdom of Lugunica, for any being who lived in this world, it was known just how mighty, how far beyond the realm of human knowledge the beings known as Dragons were.

Of course, that went for Garfiel as well. He knew that Dragons were not beings that could be measured by the logic of the world of men.

However, at both Pleiades Watchtower and at the decisive battle for the Imperial Capital, Emilia had gained the opportunity to clash with a Dragon, and had magnificently survived both of those encounters.

*Emilia: “Dragons? Yeah, Volcanica and Mezoreia were both reaaally strong. Their bodies are big, and their breath is also dangerous... They kept on surprising me!”*

Such had been Emilia’s remark when talking about the threat of Dragons.

Combined with hand gestures, Emilia spoke of how Dragons were monumental beings, but regardless of the issue of her ability to express things, the full extent of that had not been conveyed.



The difference between that and the words Emilia had left unspoken, was something he was to experience first-hand, here and now—

*Mezoreia*: “—!!”

Splitting the ground beneath his feet, Garfiel ferociously closed the distance; facing him, the Cloud Dragon gaped its maw.

Garfiel stood at the ready, anticipating that another equivalent to the breath that had scorched the Imperial Capital just prior would be fired again; with aim locked onto him, Mezoreia unleashed the breath in accordance with his premonition. However—

Garfiel: “Go, ah!?”

Struck by an impact accompanied by peculiar heat, different to that of scorching heat or extreme cold, Garfiel let out a cry of pain.

It happened right after he had leapt to the side in order to evade the firing trajectory of Mezoreia’s breath. Having escaped to the side of the trajectory, Garfiel was assailed by a second firing of the breath.

Without doing anything to obscure its actions, it was obvious what his opponent was doing.

It was not that it had emitted a single breath to mow down the entirety of this block of the Imperial Capital in one go, rather, it had split it up into short bursts. Instead of letting out one long breath, it had released two breaths in quick succession.

—No, not two. Considering it was splitting up one breath, it could do the same thing for a third and fourth time.

Garfiel: “Tch!!”

His left arm being scorched as it basked in the breath, Garfiel used his momentum from jumping to the side to smash through the wall of a private residence on the side of the road, hiding himself from the Cloud Dragon's vision.

But, faced with the Cloud Dragon's breath, even a stone-built structure would not endure. Unlike the pig's house that would not be blown down by the wolf's breath, something Subaru had told him about in the past.

Struck with impacts from the succession of breaths, the walls very quickly flayed off the house; as the furniture and belongings were being destroyed, the damage reached Garfiel, who had plunged inside the house— at least that was what should have happened.

Garfiel: "OOOOOOORAAHHH!!!"

Then, before the house exposed to the breath could be demolished to rubble, the roaring Garfiel had used both his hands to tear out the house from the very ground, and heartily hurled it through the air.

A house-cannonball that furiously gyrated as it scattered through the street— oddly enough, Garfiel was making full use of the same tactic that Natsuki Subaru had employed when evacuating the Imperial Capital. With the ball of mass hurled from those hands approaching it, Mezoreia took an especially large breath.

*Mezoreia: "You're in my friggin' way!"*

Roaring with a childish expression that ran contrary to its colossal and dignified appearance, the Cloud Dragon blew the house to smithereens before it could reach its destination.

However, it would be naïve of Mezoreia to think it could catch its breath as a result of that.

Garfiel: “ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORAAHHH!!”

Since it had defended against the first house-cannonball, Garfiel grabbed them up from the systematically laid out townscape of the Imperial Capital one-by-one, and flung them towards the Cloud Dragon in the sky with tremendous strength.

With the combination of Garfiel’s physical strength, and the fact that the ground of the Imperial Capital had softened through repeated impacts, the aberrant balls of mass were fired in quick succession; witnessing this, Mezoreia widened its golden eyes.

*Mezoreia: “Youuuu’re aaaaaaaa friiiiiigginnnnnnnn’ EYESOOOOOOOOORE!!”*

As the house-cannonballs flew towards it, Mezoreia flapped its wings and intercepted them.

Its arms, furnished with sharp claws, rampaged in the air, blowing away two houses, and swinging its tail straight upwards from below, it destroyed three buildings altogether in one intense strike. And then—

*Mezoreia: “—Friggin’ die already.”*

Garfiel: “—Hk.”

Using the wreckage of the destroyed houses as a foothold, Garfiel dashed up into the air; seeing through the surprise attack, Mezoreia seized him head-on, and slammed its dragon claws into him from both left and right.

Being pinched in a trajectory akin to striking one’s fists together before their chest, the midair Garfiel swung his shield-clad arms in order to parry. Taking the Dragon’s left arm with his right, and the Dragon’s right arm with his left, he received the blows.

An intense impact ran through Garfiel’s entire body, his clenched teeth fissured, and his nose bled.

But, if this were anyone other than Garfiel, they would be smashed into a lump of meat without lasting even a second. Mezoreia's whiskers also quivered at that outcome, its shock at the existence of a human that was not crushed laid bare.

At that shock of Mezoreia, Garfiel's cheeks began to contort into a smile,

Garfiel: "How d'ya like—"

*That*; before he could display his vigor with those words, his body, still held by the two arms, received a direct blow from the tail that slammed into him from straight above— Garfiel was blown away with force such that his body left behind all notions of sound, and while altering the structure of the townscape with each impact, he tumbled over and over and over again, until he crashed into the bulwark of the Imperial Capital, and came to a stop.

???: "O-oi!? Oi, brat!?"

Amidst the dense plume of smoke hanging over the scene, the man who had witnessed the marks left on the street of Garfiel bouncing, scraping, and smashing against ground— Heinkel's voice quavered.

The man who had been unable to do anything but dumbfoundedly watch as Garfiel and the Cloud Dragon clashed against each other, rushed over to Garfiel's side, the latter having received a direct blow that seemed to have enough might to turn one-hundred ordinary people into ground meat.

Heinkel: "Dead... Are you dead? You have to be dead! That sort of thing..."

Garfiel: "...I ain't gonna let it, kill me so easily."

Before the mountain of rubble, a voice reached Heinkel, who had imagined that the fickle life had been lost. In Heinkel's vision as he was taken aback,

the mountain of rubble collapsed, and there was the figure of Garfiel, with both his legs stretched out.

Garfiel turned his back on the ramparts, and languidly hung his head without showing his face. Then, his mouth made a chewing motion, and he spat out his shattered fangs together with blood. And then—

Garfiel: “Ahh, shit... They really are fuckin’ outrageous, these Dragon things. Finally get why Emilia-sama spoke about ‘em so softly.”

Shaking his head, he slowly stood up.

Feeling around with his tongue, he found that a tooth which had been split in two was failing to try and replace itself with new growth, so he thrust his finger inside and ripped it out from its roots. Right away, he knew that the tip of a new tooth had turned up below where the removed one was, and he loudly cracked the joints in his neck with a twist.

Heinkel: “Did that, really do nothing to you...?”

Garfiel: “Ain’t no way it did nothing to me. I got hit with a blow from a Dragon... Nah, even got hit with a second and third blow. Seems like it’s a case of «the miraculous survival of Manfroy».”

Heinkel: “———”

Garfiel: “But ya know, my amazin’ self can keep going— I’m glad that my amazin’ self’s still able to keep going.”

As his entire body grated with appeals of pain both blunt and sharp, Garfiel clenched both his fists, and with shaky breath, he voiced his pride as such.

Even having taken the onslaught of a Dragon that surpassed human knowledge head-on, he stood back up nonetheless.

He was truly glad that he was able to do so.

Heinkel: "...What the hell, what the hell is wrong with you!?"

Hearing Garfiel mutter, Heinkel involuntarily cried out.

With Garfiel reflected in his wide-open blue eyes, the man violently and messily scratched at his head with the hand that was empty, and,

Heinkel: "Why the hell did you come back? I don't understand! It's a Dragon... It's a fucking Dragon!? There's no way you can win. You're an idiot to come here! And yet!"

Garfiel: "Well that goes for you and me both, Pops."

Heinkel: "Ah...?"

Garfiel: "I'm sayin' that if the act of bein' here, n' the act of facin' off against a Dragon's what an idiot'd do, then doesn't that go for ya as well, Pops?"

Left speechless by those words, Heinkel stopped the hand that was scratching his head, and gazed in wonder.

His demeanor was entirely as if to say not to lump them together, but if that were truly the case, he was hopeless. That was because, in Heinkel's hand, opposite to the one that had been scratching his head,

Garfiel: "You're still holdin' onto yer sword, ain't'cha?"

Heinkel: "———"

Garfiel believed that was proof that Heinkel held a faint wish which he had not thrown away.

Perhaps he had just become unable to open his fingers out of fear. —*No. Try to understand.*

Perhaps he had just forgotten about himself, and was just carrying it around. —*No. Try to understand.*

Perhaps he had just been about to sheath it and run away at this moment. —*No. Try to understand.*

The weak thoughts, the crushed spirit, the reasons for being seized with fear, he would try to understand all of it.

After having thought through absolutely all of it, he continued to try to understand, because he believed that the face of a man was only complete if he grit his teeth through the pain, standing up to fight for the wishes of others.

Garfiel: “Captain and Ottobro’re also the same. That also goes for my amazin’ self.”

Heinkel: “I... I’m...”

Trembling, Heinkel looked down at his hand, still gripping the sword as it trembled. With Heinkel in the side of his vision, Garfiel vigorously slammed his back against the bulwark, and straightened his posture.

Then, to Heinkel, who had not straightened himself,

Garfiel: “Ya asked why my amazin’ self came back, didn’t’cha?”

Heinkel: “—Ah?”

Garfiel’s quiet voice caused Heinkel to widen his eyes.

As Heinkel waited for the words that followed, Garfiel delivered not a continuation of his words, but instead a fist to Heinkel’s chest, sending the latter flying.

Heinkel was thrust away, and the street was upheaved on a massive scale.

The next instant, the breath of the Cloud Dragon was unleashed from the midst of the city's air, and it rapidly closed in on Garfiel, his back to the ramparts— leaping up, Garfiel managed to evade it.

Garfiel: “Oh, OHHHHHH...!”

With the wall to his back Garfiel flew directly up, and pursuing him, the heated ray of white breath inclined its trajectory upwards. Scorching the townscape, reducing the bulwark to dust, the breath went higher, higher, and higher as it pursued Garfiel as he escaped into the skies above.

Hot on Garfiel's toes, before it could burn his body entirely—

Garfiel: “It's 'cause Captain told me this.”

As the breath of the Dragon trying to scorch the world grazed the soles of his feet, there was not a hint of irritation that could be heard in his voice. What was present however, was pride in the act of responding to faith.

Curling up in midair, Garfiel planted his feet on part of the wall that still retained its original form— Immediately after, he kicked off the wall with strength that caused a crater to fissure within it, and flew forwards.

Forward, forward, forward, towards the Cloud Dragon that soared in the skies of the Imperial Capital, and with his mouth wide open, closing in as the sharp newly grown fang basked in the wind—

Garfiel: “—He told my amazin' self this! To go n' bring down the loud ass Dragon flyin' in the sky!!”

*Mezoreia*: “—RAHHH!?”

Having flown above the breath, having approached the Cloud Dragon, Garfiel released both his tensed-up arms and let loose simultaneous blows, the destructive power of a cannonball seizing Mezoreia's nose.



A sound as loud as a warehouse stuffed with Magic Stones exploding reverberated through the sky; the Cloud Dragon was knocked back having received a direct hit, and the next moment, blood spurted forth.

Through its broken snout the Dragon spilt blood, and having been slammed back into the ground from the recoil of his own fist, Garfiel basked in the greatness of his action. And as he did so, Garfiel laughed.

Garfiel: “DA-HA-HA-HA! I went n’ gave a Dragon a nosebleed!”

*Mezoreia: “You, little!!”*

Mezoreia raged at the impossible humiliation, and Garfiel laughed even more upon seeing that state.

Seeing that from afar, having been thrust away and saved from the breath, Heinkel sat with his buttocks on the ground, gazing in dumbfoundment,

Heinkel: “...That’s not sane.”

As Heinkel weakly muttered, a battlefield was created by the faceoff between Garfiel and the Dragon— an event coincidental, in timing and scale both, to the changes in atmosphere yielded in various other places within the Imperial Capital.

As if not paying any mind to that, the fight between tiger and Dragon<sup>1</sup> unfolded, and with that scene before him, Heinkel did not move an inch.

Unable to flee, unable to even stand, he did not move an inch.

—But, upon his sword, his right hand yet remained, its hold unending.



—Turning back the clock, to a slight bit before the battle between the Dragon and the tiger was fully assembled.

???: “———”

The feeling of cold water hitting his cheeks and forehead caused Subaru’s consciousness to become fully alert.

It was neither drowsiness, nor bodily fatigue that he was experiencing. And yet, as if with a click, he felt something within him switch and exhaled deeply.

Before him, on the surface of the water that rippled within the trough, his own shaken and distorted visage could be seen. It was a face with sharp eyes that had retained its youthfulness, or rather that could only be described as childish.

He was already accustomed to seeing it, and he did not want to think that he could let his face remain this way. While thinking so, as he delicately squished his face with his fingers——

???: “Subaru, are you okay? By any chance, is there something wrong with you?”

Abruptly, as a voice called out to him from beside him, Subaru looked up from the water trough. In front of his raised face, he saw Emilia looking at him with her beautiful amethyst eyes.

As Subaru’s heart fluttered upon unexpectedly seeing Emilia’s face so close to his own,

Subaru: “I-I’m alrighty, Emilia-tan. Just needed to loosen up my cheeks a little. You see, I always want to show Emilia-tan my best smile.”

Emilia: “I’m not picky though, as long as it’s not a forced smile, I’m happy with any kind of smile Subaru shows me...”

Subaru: “Oooh, my heart is pounding... bum bum.”

Said with a finger held to her lips, Emilia's words that held no hint of pretense left Subaru flustered. As he tried to wipe his face with his sleeve in an attempt to hide his reddened cheeks, a hand towel was offered to him from the side— Two hand towels were offered from his left and right, by Beatrice and Tanza.

The two were shocked at the fact that their own action had been performed by the other, and their usually round eyes became even rounder, to then instantly become narrowed upon becoming aware of each other,

Beatrice: "Deergirl, Subaru wants Betty's towel, in fact. You can take that back, I suppose."

Tanza: "Schwartz-sama did not say anything of the sort. To speak of your own thoughts as if they were Schwartz-sama's, are you not going too far?"

Beatrice: "Agrrh, such an infuriating girl, in fact!"

Subaru: "Waitwaitwaitwait, why are you fighting! See, I'm using both! I'm wiping the left and the right sides of my face with the towels from both of you."

Intervening in the quarrel that had suddenly broken out for some reason, Subaru attempted to diffuse the situation by using both of the hand towels he had received from the pair. However, the two in question simply sighed at his response. He failed to settle the dispute.

At the sight of Subaru who slumped his shoulders, placing her hands on her hips, Emilia said "Seriously",

Emilia: "Beatrice and Tanza-chan, stop causing trouble for Subaru. As it is, with the hardships he's continuously facing, Subaru is about to collapse..."

Subaru: "Ooh, Emilia-tan's thoughtfulness is so touching... That said, I'm not implying that the two of you don't care about me, okay? In fact, the two of

you are always helping me... the more I say it out loud, the more it feels like I'm making excuses, doesn't it!?"

Beatrice: "Good grief, I suppose."

Tanza: "As expected of Schwartz-sama."

Seeing that Subaru was at his wit's end, Beatrice and Tanza had no choice but to soften their attitudes in response.

Unexpectedly being cast as the villain, Subaru tilted his head in protest, but upon receiving Emilia's gentle pats on Subaru's head, he decided to accept his predicament. Anyhow—

Subaru: "But, I'm not putting on a brave front, I really am alright, Emilia-tan. I was able to take a proper rest at the fortress before we set off... Besides, if I were to carelessly collapse from a lack of sleep, the entire Pleiades Battalion would also fall apart."

Held together by strong bonds, the strengths and weaknesses of the Pleiades Battalion were clear.

The united battalion was a group with unstoppable enthusiasm, but what held them together was Subaru's presence— it was nothing that could be boasted about, Subaru's Cor Leonis.

And this effect, it would be cut off if Subaru were to fall asleep or faint, and so from this point onward, he could not allow himself to carelessly doze off.

Subaru: "I know that, so it's alright. Trust me, Emilia-tan."

Emilia: "Is that so? In that case, it's fine, but can you truly promise not to overdo yourself?"

Subaru: "Emilia-tan really doesn't trust me at all..."

Emilia: “If you’re wondering why that is, try properly asking your own conscience.”

*Trust, is the the accumulation of past actions.* That was the implication of Emilia’s remark, and it left Subaru at a loss for words.

However, it was a fact that Subaru’s body and mind were in such good shape that he himself was surprised. In all likelihood, as the excessive tension seemed to be the reason for his mind being so alert, once the present conflict was solved in its entirety, that debt would gush forth all at once and topple everything.

However, if he could make it through on borrowed energy, he was more than willing to take on the debt that followed.

—Presently, having departed from the Fortified City of Garkla and heading towards the Imperial Capital of Lupugana, the Rescue the Vollachian Empire from Destruction Squad was in the process of exchanging dragon carriages in order to ensure their arrival at their destination.

On the route from Garkla to Lupugana, having stopped at one of the many camps scattered along the route, while Abel and the other strategists were reviewing the war situation, the exhausted ground dragons were being exchanged with those in perfect condition, as a part of the preparations for the decisive battle.

Subaru: “Of course, Patrasche will always be with us, though.”

Reaching out his hand, Subaru touched his beloved jet-black dragon who was harnessed to the dragon carriage— Patrasche, whose neck he caressed.

Patrasche, upon safely reuniting with him in the Empire, without any consideration of holding back despite Subaru’s shrinking, delivered a powerful blow to him with her tail in retaliation for causing her to worry.

That one blow that had sent him crashing into the wall with a loud thud, it had been reminiscent of the injuries he had sustained while fighting the Guiltlaw during Sparka at the Gladiator Island, making him glad that it had ended with just one.

Since then, after having accepted Subaru's sincere apology, she had been giving her all to accompany them.

???: “—Heh, this ground dragon young'un, she's one of y'all's, ain't she?”

And then, arriving where Patrasche and Subaru were frolicking was Halibel.

The tall wolfman *shinobi*, holding his *kiseru* between his large teeth, while bobbing it up and down with his lips,

Halibel: “She was doin' a splendid job when I was fightin' that Dragon *zombie*, I thought she was real admirable.”

Subaru: “Ohh! Halibel-san also gets it, our Patrasche is amazing!”

Halibel: “Ain't that the truth. Yer a lucky fella— Lil' Ana n' the others, everyone's worried 'bout'cha.”

Subaru was overjoyed to receive open approval from the strongest and most renowned person from the City-States, Halibel. His eyes opened wide at the words that followed, then he earnestly nodded.

He did not need to be told, but having it mentioned made him think about it again— He, was truly blessed.

Those in the Emilia Camp, along with Julius and Anastasia, had not only broken through various unfavorable obstacles to enter the Empire, but they had also gone along with Subaru's selfish request to see this through to the end.

Just how reliable and reassuring that was, he could not thank them enough.

Subaru: “That’s why, I need to do everything I can to help.”

Emilia: “Subaru? The promise you made to me earlier, do you remember it?”

Subaru: “I remember, I remember, no being reckless! But, if push comes to shove...?”

Emilia: “See, doing that again would be too much to bear.”

With her lips curled into a frown, Emilia pouted at Subaru while he scratched his own cheek.

Chuckling at the sight of that, Halibel seemed to be really enjoying himself. Even though what awaited him might be a battle for the Empire’s— or perhaps, the world’s very existence, he steeled his resolve.

???: “Halibel-dono, I’m suuure~ you don’t want Subaru-kun to heeear~ that.”

Beatrice: “There he is, in fact.”

???: “Of course, since we’re together, why would I not be heeere~. Though I do wish that the Empire would recognize me as an ally, alreeeady~.”

Shrugging his shoulders in disbelief, Roswaal chuckled at Beatrice’s attitude.

As he appeared at the edge of the camp where the dragon carriage was parked, Emilia tilted her head at him while asking “Are you sure?”.

Since Roswaal was currently more or less in charge of intelligence in the Emilia Camp, he was supposed to be accompanying Abel as he was speaking with the representatives of the encampment.

Emilia: “Even though I do consider Roswaal a proper ally, I wonder if other people like Abel share that sentiment...”

Roswaal: “If that’s the case, then I’m in quite the bind since I don’t seem to belong in the Kingdom nooor~ the Empire— Don’t fret, His Excellency

Vincent is currently addressing the soldiers in the vicinity, and they've entered the phase of boosting their morale... If anything, I would only be in the waaaay~."

Emilia: "Yes. That's good to hear. And don't worry, Roswaal's rightful place is at our side. Just so long as Roswaal doesn't try any tricks."

With parted lips, Emilia gave an angelic answer to Roswaal's self-deprecation.

However, Roswaal could only put on a wry smile at those words, not answering whether he would be up to any trouble, which was extremely telling.

Subaru: "But, I'm pissed that things are working out so perfectly for Abel's triumphant return."

As he said so, Subaru glanced toward the center of the camp, able to hear the cheers of a multitude of Imperial Soldiers coming from that direction.

Instead of a morale-boosting shout to prepare for battle, the cheers were those of joy, coming from men who were so moved to be addressed directly by the Emperor whom they served.

It was not surprising that Abel's sour look, which Subaru was not only familiar with but had even grown tired of seeing, was something that most of the citizens of the Empire were not allowed to see up close.

Subaru: "If I were in the same position as those people, knowing nothing but Emilia-tan's face and name, how would I feel... Oh no, I'm going to cry just thinking about that."

Emilia: "What's wrong, Subaru, aren't you supposed to be my Knight? Get a hold of yourself!"



Subaru: “I know, you’re right! This isn’t a dream after all! Man, that was a close call, all because of Abel.”

With a quiet remark that would have made Abel frown if he could hear it, Subaru welcomed the fact that the Emperor-like idea was having the desired effect in itself.

Then again, in an effort to raise the morale of the Imperial Soldiers, after the war ended, Medium was also being shown off as a potential Empress without any consideration for her feelings, so one could not help but hold off with the praise.

Subaru: “With Spica constantly staying by her side, Medium-san can hopefully get her mind off it all a bit... That bastard, what the hell does he think marriage is?”

Emilia: “That’s right. I think Abel is reaaally smart, but that part of his views isn’t that good, I think.”

Subaru: “He should get kicked off the throne for doing this.”

Subaru and Emilia nodded in unison, agreeing that Abel was hopeless in that regard. At the sight of the two of them, as Halibel chuckled again,

Halibel: “Facin’ off against the Vollachian Emperor, them kids sure don’t know fear.”

Beatrice: “No matter who the opponent is, as long as Betty is with Subaru, there’s no reason for him to be afraid, I suppose.”

Tanza: “Having rejected Yorna-sama, it is a well-known fact that His Excellency the Emperor is heartless.”

Roswaal: “Truly, we wouldn’t want the people of the Empire to hear this conversaaation~.”

Within the camp roused with excitement regarding the Emperor's triumphant return, where speaking ill of the Emperor would inevitably lead to bloodshed, Roswaal chuckled amidst the sharp comments being made towards Abel. With a wry smile, Roswaal closed one eye and said, "So",

Roswaal: "Since he hasn't shown up despite all this talk, Garfiel seems to be quite focused— After having been selected by Subaru-kun for a grand task, it seems like he's sufficiently motivated~."

Subaru: "—Right."

With the yellow eye that remained open, Roswaal turned his gaze toward Subaru, who nodded in response to his words.

Garfiel, who was not participating in the conversation with Subaru and the others at the moment, was currently inside the dragon carriage that was tethered to Patrasche, quietly meditating and sharpening his concentration.

It was evidence that he was doing his utmost to meet Subaru's expectations with his entire might— To meet the expectations of Subaru, who had requested him to match up against the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia.

Subaru: "It's got agility, and its destructive power is overwhelming, so I want to do something to contain Mezoreia's movements. Currently, Garfiel's the one most suited to being entrusted with that duty."

Halibel: "Can I ask why that is? Lil' Ana told me ta follow y'all's instructions for the time bein', but... I'm stronger than that tiger cub, y'know?"

In response to Subaru's judgment, Halibel tilted his head as he puffed out smoke.

If he felt angered by the notion that his abilities were being underestimated, there might have been a need for Subaru to come up with an excuse, but Halibel's manner of speech remained flat.

He had purely voiced a question regarding their fighting potential, and as Subaru instinctively nodded,

Subaru: “There’s no doubt that Halibel-san’s the strongest among our current *touin*<sup>2</sup>. But, it’s a matter of putting the right person in the right place... or rather, there’s someone else I’d like Halibel-san to subdue.”

Halibel: “Golly, what a frightenin’ story. Puttin’ off a Dragon ta focus somewhere else... are ya sayin’ there’s somethin’ even more troublesome than a Dragon?”

Subaru: “In a sense, yeah.”

Knowing that there was no use in beating around the bush, Subaru clearly affirmed this.

Upon hearing Subaru’s assertion, Halibel momentarily closed his mouth. But, his large mouth, characteristic of wolfpeople, immediately twisted into a smile,

Halibel: “I see, I see. Well then, I gotta get myself pumped up too.”

With that, he accepted Subaru’s instructions, showing a willingness to comply.

Emilia: “Garfiel and Halibel-san... in addition, there’s also places you want the rest of us to go, and things you want us to do.”

Once Subaru and Halibel’s exchange came to a close, Emilia, with a serious expression, looked at Subaru. As she touched the Magic Crystal at her chest with her fingers, her amethyst eyes pierced through him.

Emilia was not the only one. Beatrice, Tanza, and Roswaal were also looking in his direction.

Subaru: “That’s right. For everyone here... including Abel’s group on the other side, it’ll be an all-out war.”

Beatrice: “—Fortunately, Subaru has a general idea of the enemy’s whereabouts, in fact.”

Emilia: “Indeed. Um, he also used it at the Pleiades Watchtower, that special power called an Authority.”

Subaru: “Yeah. It’s thanks to that.”

In response to Emilia and Beatrice’s words, Subaru pounded his chest with his fist.

The achievements of Cor Leonis that had been displayed at Pleiades Watchtower— grasping the whereabouts of separated companions, which had assisted them in dealing with problems inside the Tower, was what Subaru had made Emilia and the others believe in.

The enemies waiting in the Imperial Capital of Lupugana— in order to oppose those formidable foes, Subaru had made them believe in the “lie” of how he had acquired the knowledge of the best choices regarding where to send each person.

Subaru: “—I will do what I can.”

Emilia, Beatrice, Spica, Tanza, Garfiel, Roswaal, Halibel, Abel, Medium, Jamal, Olbart, he would direct them all.

Making use of every card available in his hand, in order to emerge victorious in this battle for the Imperial Capital—

Subaru: “Of course, I’m counting on you too, Patrasche.”

Reaching out, Subaru once again stroked Patrasche’s neck, who neighed in response.

As everyone's spirits were being heightened at that sound of Patrasche's voice——

Roswaal: “——Subaru-kun, this is the best course of action, correct?”

Firmly, Roswaal trained his gaze on Subaru's face.

To Roswaal's inquiry, Subaru gave a deep nod, and answered.

Subaru: “Yeah, this should be the best—— I've gone and made sure of it.”

This, was merely Natsuki Subaru doing what he was capable of.

Thus, this should not be a breach of his promise with Emilia to “not overdo himself”, so he thought.

# Arc 8 Chapter 45 - How to Fell the Stars

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 1 “How to Fell the Stars”, Parts 4 and 6-7

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Original Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar) – [Complete](#)

—Thus, time returned to the same time as when a battlefield was formed by the fray between tiger and Dragon once more.

Having stormed the southern gate of the Imperial Capital of Lupugana, the first bastion of the star-shaped fortress, Garfiel clashed against the one who ruled the heavenly skies, the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia.

In the distance, the oddly thick collection of clouds in the sky was either proof that the Cloud Dragon was rampaging, or perhaps that it was preparing to exhibit its maximum performance.

Either way, the die had been cast, and the battle for it to roll onto the desired side had begun.

Entrusting Garfiel to spearhead the raid, having him suppress Mezoreia at the onset, was because the mobility and aggression of the Cloud Dragon served as the greatest obstacle in the battle to capture the Imperial Capital.

A single blow from the Dragon, capable of fleeing to high altitudes and attacking over extremely long distances by way of its breath, would be impossible to endure for those who did not possess extraordinary fighting strength.

For that to be fired at them recklessly, being unable to do a single thing about it would be the worst possible outcome for the Rescue the Vollachian Empire from Destruction Squad— Garfiel had been able to crush that possibility.

However, even if Mezoreia was subdued, by no means would the rest be smooth sailing.

If there was a mistake in their response, there were other “formidable enemies” that could unleash catastrophic damage in a single move. Therefore—

???: “ORAHHHHHHH!!”

Twin swords carved out an elegant trajectory, one that ran contrary to that vulgar warcry.

With swordsmanship that covered their front and rear with nimble movement and a dexterous stance, they forcefully parried the tip of the halberd the opponent had thrust forth, and caused the latter’s posture to break.

That instant, a fluttering drawn blade sliced through the wind to fatally sever the opponent’s neck—

???: “You idiot, don’t kill them!”

???: “Uuoooh!?”

As the interjecting voice tried to restrain them, the sword’s trajectory immediately shifted.

The blade that ought to have beheaded the opponent bisected their left arm from their shoulder instead; having suffered the attack, the enemy swiftly jumped back, and handling their halberd with just their right hand, they attempted to trigger their next attack.

But, that halberd would not reach any of their allies.

???: “—The White Cloud Lord, Gaoran Peyshit.”

Gaoran: “———”

The quiet, yet clearly audible, voice of a man spoke both the name and alias of the undead.

At that moment, the movement of this large white-bearded undead that ought to have thrust the halberd forward was stopped. Without overlooking that opportunity, a row of three small figures got right up close to the undead.

Then, they locked eyes with the undead as he looked down at them— They stared into the eyes detached from those of the living, with the white parts stained black, and golden irises looming within.

And then—

???: “Gaoran Peyshit!!”

???: “E ea.”

Stripping that off, that of a being who had once been alive, as if to ascertain it as proof of the time they had been alive, the star known as Spica ate the role that exploited them as an undead.

Passing by him with speed that seemed to whittle the street down, behind Spica who had just touched him with her small hand, having had his role eaten, the undead— no, Gaoran Peyshit’s body was reduced to dust.

Gaoran: “———”

In the end, thrusting his halberd into the ground as he crumbled, he bowed to the man who had called his name.



Though, it was unclear just what sort of emotions had caused the fading undead to do so.

???: “Atlem Nevi, Diphone Trevola, Gaion Talfou, Lescar Bhraïn, Niolf Tradd, Yaren Swoker, Vellum Joytoh——”

The same voice that had called out Gaoran’s name, called out other names one after another.

The speed made it feel like they were just listing every single name that came to mind, but that was not the case. Those were the names of people, each of whom had certainly had their own individual life.

Those were the names of the undead appearing one after the other in order to intercept the Rescue from Destruction Squad moving through the Imperial Capital——

They, whose state and appearance had completely changed from the time they were alive, the black-haired Emperor—— Vincent Vollachia, would say their names without mistaking even a single person, and light the path for Star Eating to devour.

And what was especially aggravating about that was——

???: “Isn’t that a little too cool, dammit!”

???: “In that case, Betty can’t let her Subaru lose, I suppose!”

As Subaru’s cheeks contorted upon seeing Abel imposingly fulfill his duty, Beatrice pulled his hand.

In the midst of the Imperial Capital where the undead roamed—— no, in the midst of Lupugana, now transformed into the Undead Capital, she guided Subaru with her appearance unchanged, and love unchanged; waving the hem of her splendid dress, Beatrice truly was reliable.

Pointing the hand opposite to the one firmly fastened to Subaru's towards the street, she weaved magic with her cute lips and lovely voice towards the deceased individuals blocking the way.

Beatrice: "El Minya!!"

At the same time as the incantation, amethyst crystals were yielded from Beatrice's palm and glided through the air; dispossessing the undead of their arms, legs, and weapons, it reduced their fighting strength.

Beatrice's Yin Magic could attack the undead in a unique way, but fully shattering their opponents went against the goal of their strategy.

That was why they had intentionally tuned it down; borrowing the power of his lovely partner, Subaru leaped forth. Then, on the opposite side of the right hand linked to Beatrice— as he pulled up the left hand linked to Spica with all his might,

Subaru: "Here we go! Atlem Nevi, Diphone Trevola, Gaion Talfou, Lescar Bhrein, Niolf Tradd, Yaren Swoker——"

Spica: "Au! Uu! U~u! Aau! Uau! Uu~uu~!"

The names Abel had called out, accurately listing them in the correct order, while matching them to the faces of each undead who were turning hostility towards them, he made sure Spica reached them without fail.

Spica also understood her own role, and with her outstretched hands as the undead approached, sometimes she touched, sometimes she pierced, sometimes she firmly struck, and sometimes she pushed, but in all cases, she activated the Authority of Star Eating——

Subaru: "*Saigo no hito*<sup>3</sup>! Vellum Joytohhh!!"

Spica: "E ea!"

From the fore came a sword slash aiming to split Subaru's forehead open, and exchanging glances with the pale, wrinkly face of the undead who had unleashed it— Vellum Joytoh, Subaru clenched his molars.

Just before it could reach his forehead, the opponent's blade was stopped by crystallization which extended from their shoulders to their hips, making them unable to move at will.

Grateful to Beatrice for providing covering fire, Subaru urged Spica, and her hand touched Vellum's chest.

Then slowly, the undead turned to dust with a look of satisfaction on its face.

Subaru: "Buh, hah..."

Ascertaining that they had neutralized all the undead in the surroundings, Vellum included, Subaru took a deep sigh.

This close combat similar to crossing a bridge gave Subaru a vivid reminder of the violent days he had spent on the Gladiator Island. With a deep inhale, Subaru was patted on the back by Spica, who looked at him with an "Aau~?", and then he exhaled.

Contrary to Spica, Beatrice placed her hands on her hips and glared at Subaru,

Beatrice: "You're blindly charging in too much, in fact! Betty told you she wants to see you look cool while making great efforts, I suppose. Even if you die in a cool manner, Betty doesn't want to see it, in fact."

Subaru: "I know. Just now was a move that presumed Beako would *sukedachi*<sup>4</sup>. I'm sorry I did such a thing."

Beatrice: "...If you understand, that's fine, I suppose."

As Subaru apologized upfront, Beatrice, who was in scolding mode, pouted her lips.

Though they could not hold a long evaluation meeting on the battlefield, her expression was nevertheless that of disappointment. However, it was not as though he had half-mindedly let it in one ear and out the other. Beatrice's scolding was advice he ought to firmly take.

Even now, he had been just about to have his forehead split open and die. *Had I taken just one step further*, the thought made him shudder— Such a death would have been useless.

Vincent: “You nearly died by rushing out as soon as the battle had commenced. Do not act rashly.”

Subaru: “You...”

Scolded by Beatrice, and appreciated by Spica, Subaru grimaced as he turned around at that statement bereft of any consideration. Standing there with arms folded, Abel did not even pretend to help Subaru and the other two with their intense fight.

Subaru was rather impressed to see the refreshing sight of the Emperor relying on others.

Subaru: “All sorts of things have happened up until now, but I’ve never thought of you as Emperor-like as I do now.”

Vincent: “We have just settled a bit of work. For the sake of the two by your side, I shall overlook that comment.”

Subaru: “You know, it’s best if you properly understand that from an outsider’s point of view, you look like the horrible nobility *yaku*<sup>5</sup> that merely folds their arms and watches as children go to battle.”

An Emperor spectating a battle between children and undead was a sight akin to the unsightly amusement of a post-apocalyptic world after a zombie pandemic. There were limits to how bad one's reputation could get.

But, considering Abel's position, role, and fighting strength, as someone traveling alongside him, Subaru had to be grateful that he did not imprudently go to the front lines, so this was quite the dilemma.

And, thereupon——

???: “Tch, we dealt with the lookout right after entering the Imperial Capital, but... with this method, there's no way around it taking a while.”

Speaking thus, it was Jamal who provokingly spat onto the ground.

Having taken on many undead, he had contributed greatly to the triumphs at the outbreak of the battle; holding onto his twin swords, he adjusted his eyepatch while surveying the surroundings.

Jamal: “Even though this'd be much faster if we just cut down every undead that appeared. Why ain't we doing that?”

Beatrice: “...A man who obstinately refuses to listen, in fact. If we did that, we wouldn't be able to use Spica's Authority to give the undead «*Joubutsu*»<sup>6</sup>.”

Jamal: “Ahh? The fuck's *joubutsu*?”

Beatrice: “It's the way of making sure the undead don't keep getting back up after being defeated repeatedly, in fact! This has supposedly been explained to you so many times by now, I suppose!”

Beatrice stomped her short legs on the ground in frustration, and Jamal made a confused face at her appeal. That reaction only made Beatrice's face get even redder, but unfortunately, it was not worth the effort as

Jamal's head rejected any slightly complicated reasoning, no matter how many times it was explained to him.

For that reason——

Vincent: “Jamal Aurélie, obey these individuals. That is the best course of action, for I have judged it myself.”

Jamal: “If Your Excellency says so, I'll do whatever you want!”

Beatrice: “Grrrr, in fact...!”

In the end, Abel had butted in, presenting a tasty treat, and Jamal responded with money at the ready; seeing that, Beatrice ground her teeth in frustration. How cute.

As that exchange had put Subaru at ease a little, Spica stopped patting his back, and gazed at him.

Spica: “Uau?”

Subaru: “Ah, I'm fine. How about you, Spica, is there anywhere that feels weird or anything?”

Spica: “Uu! Aauu!”

Upon that inquiry, Spica made a face that conveyed her crisp feelings, and in order to give Subaru peace of mind, she puffed out her chest with an appeal of how well she was doing. Since it seemed like there was no lie in her appearance, Subaru tightened his fist at the fact that Star Eating was not causing any harm to Spica, and at the fact that their operation was progressing.

Seeing Subaru's side profile, Abel narrowed his sable eyes, and,

Vincent: “Though resentful, it seems your judgment was right on the mark.”

Subaru: “I don’t get why that would make you resentful, but about what exactly?”

Vincent: “Need I even say? —The main force of the enemy’s army is headed for the Fortified City, where the majority of our military assets remain. What lingers in the Imperial Capital is a portion of the undead, and soldiers unfit for war.”

Subaru: “...Right. They left behind the guys who can’t act cooperatively. I hate how each and every one of them is strong, but that poor Imperial Way thing is advantageous for us.”

Surveying the state of the Imperial Capital, Abel made such a judgment, and Subaru nodded in agreement.

As Abel had said, the main forces of the undead were laying siege to the Fortified City of Garkla as a large army. Those who had stayed behind were confined to the strong city fort, and were drawing the attention of the opponent— if they put in as much effort as they could, there was hope that the numerical disadvantage at the Imperial Capital would be mitigated.

The nature of this strategy was a blitzkrieg to defeat the ringleader in the Imperial Capital while the enemy was distracted by the Fortified City.

However, if the enemies at the Fortified City had an emphasis on “quantity”, then the emphasis in the Imperial Capital was that of “quality”.

Starting with the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, which covered the skies of the Imperial Capital, the rest of the fighters left behind for the city’s defense were each a match for a thousand, all of them transcendent beings possessing stupendous power.

That was precisely why—

Subaru: “—By attacking each bastion at the same time, we have a second-stage diversion.”

As Subaru spoke those words, Abel, Beatrice, and Spica tightened their expressions.

Currently, Subaru and his group were in the northwest of the Imperial Capital— in the vicinity of the fifth bastion. He had heard that it was through Garfiel’s achievements in the battle for the Imperial Capital that the star-shaped wall had been greatly destroyed here.

He could not fathom just how reliable Garfiel had become in such a short period of time, but entering through the gigantic landmark he had made was the combination of Subaru & Beatrice with Spica, along with the rugged lord and retainer duo of Abel and Jamal— generally, it appeared as if their division was unreliable in terms of fighting strength, but this was actually the best possible configuration.

With anything other than this combination, the operation of the Rescue from Destruction Squad would certainly fail.

However, even if they went with this formation, it amounted to nothing more than them simply standing at the starting line.

Subaru: “We’re the arrow of the main objective, and there’s no doubt that our target is that massive Crystal Palace. Even if someone other than us were to quarrel with Sphinx, she could just run away, so there’d be no point.”

Spending many long months and years, this was a being who had rampaged both the Kingdom and the Empire. If they failed to catch the one behind the Great Disaster, Sphinx, what kind of disaster she would plan next was not something they knew.



In order to defeat Sphinx, who had turned into an undead, Spica's Star Eating was the only method. But—

Jamal: "Then, before more needless nuisances get in our way, let's make a mad dash for the Crystal Palace and fucking kill the boss of the enemy. Then with His Excellency's declaration, we'll have retaken the Imperial Capital!"

Spica: "Uu~ uu~!!"

Subaru: "While that would be ideal, it's not that simple."

Jamal: "Ahhn?"

Spica: "Aauu?"

Pointing his sword to the Crystal Palace, considered to be the base of the enemy, Jamal's enthusiasm earned Spica's agreement. Having their vigor discouraged, they turned to the one who had discouraged them, Subaru.

However, Subaru slowly shook his head sideways,

Subaru: "There's not a chance we can head straight for the Crystal Palace. We actually shouldn't even heedlessly get close to it."

Jamal: "Bastard, don't tell me you're chickening out..."

Beatrice: "There is also no chance that weak-heartedness is his reason, I suppose. What awaits there, in fact?"

Subaru: "—A curse. Because of that, merely approaching the Palace will make us unable to move."

Interrupting Jamal as he ground his teeth in anger, Beatrice looked at Subaru and received that response. He firmly placed his hand on his chest, as if he was remembering an unavoidable, unbearable pain.

As long as that obstruction remained, they could not approach the Palace— If anything, nobody in this Imperial Capital would be able to operate in a proper manner.

Jamal: “Why do you say so much about something you haven’t even done yourself? Ahh?”

Of course, there were also some who could not swallow Subaru’s explanations so easily.

Jamal was at the top of that list. Different from Emilia and Beatrice, there was no such trust between them so that he could believe Subaru without asking anything like where Subaru’s ideas came from.

And, the same thing could be said about Abel.

Between Subaru and Abel, too, there was no trust similar to that which he had with Emilia and the others.

Therefore, Abel would—

Vincent: “Within this conduct, which seems reckless and roundabout at first glance, your intentions are present.”

Jamal: “Your Excellency!?”

Vincent: “Restrain yourself, Jamal Aurélie. There shall not be a third time. Obey these individuals— *this* individual.”

Emperor Vincent Vollachia did not have trust in Subaru, but he had judged Subaru’s actions and intentions by his own ingenuity.

At the repeated order from the Emperor, Jamal widened his single eye and fell silent, then he struck the hilts of his twin swords into his forehead. Striking, striking, striking so much that blood spilled from his forehead,

Jamal: “—Understood. I will absolutely not cause you to say it a third time.”

With all hesitation having vanished from his face, he gave a deep bow.

At Jamal’s answer, Vincent nodded, and as Beatrice’s eyes became angered,

Beatrice: “Why would you injure yourself, I suppose!? It needs to be healed right away, in fact!”

Jamal: “Ahh!? Shit, don’t do anything unnecessary pipsqueak! This is part of my Oath...”

Beatrice: “Even though you only have a single eye, what would you do if blood got into that eye, I suppose!? There’s nothing but people who don’t think about the consequences of their actions, so it’s tough on Betty, in fact!”

As they loudly argued, Beatrice quickly healed the wound on Jamal’s forehead.

To the side of that exchange, Abel glanced at Subaru once again with a “Well then”,

Vincent: “If we cannot enter the Palace like this, are we to silently wait for the others to deal with their matters, and create a path for us? That is not what you have in mind, is it?”

Subaru: “You’re speaking like you’re asking me to show you what I’ve got... There’s an important purpose in our fighting as well.”

Responding to the inquisitive gaze, Subaru placed his hand on the head of Spica at his side. As Spica, the keystone of the strategy, stared at him with an “Uu?”, and Subaru gave her a nod.

To thoughtlessly charge into the Crystal Palace was suicide, but having said that, there was no way for Subaru to work against the “curse”. Currently, nobody could get inside the Palace.

Even so, if they wanted to square off against Sphinx, who was inside the Palace, there was only one thing they could do.

Subaru: “And therefore——”

Indeed, as Subaru was about to speak, a sound of destruction suddenly jolted everyone’s eardrums.

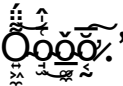
Several buildings collapsed, and as smoke and rubble were scattered about, the structure of the street was being altered. As Subaru’s group all quickly turned to where the sound had come from, Beatrice and Jamal, who had been quarreling, stood to protect Subaru and Abel as they could not fight, and scowled at the eruption of smoke.

Then, at the tip of all their vigilant gazes, appearing from behind the smoke was——

Jamal: “...As expected, being His Excellency’s guard ain’t gonna be easy.”

Seeing the being that had emerged from within the smoke, Jamal’s cheeks contorted as he spilled out that comment.

Subaru and the rest held no objection to Jamal’s words. After all, his feelings were more or less the same as what everyone else was also feeling.

???: “——.

As a sound akin to wind escaping from a deep, eerie cavern was produced, a grotesque figure dragged its body along as it proceeded through the Imperial Capital. It might have originally had the form of a person, but both the number and form of its limbs were far removed from its original state; it was a figure akin to how a young child would paint by freely moving the

brush as they pleased to depict their parent for the very first time, an embodiment of innocence and chaos.

It swung its oddly long right arm, branching at its joints, like a beast's tail, and it used its large but short left arm to grip the ground and drag its torso forward. On the contrary, it seemed to have four meager legs, but they did not function well, so it languidly continued by dragging itself with its arms.

The thickness of the grotesque being's body completely varied at the chest, abdomen, and shoulders, but only the part which seemed to be the head had a single, large golden eye in its center—

Beatrice: “—Subaru.”

Subaru: “Yeah, I know.”

His name having been called out by Beatrice, Subaru nodded to signal she need not speak any further.

The strange, grotesque being, this was not the first time Subaru and his friends had encountered it. A reunion with that which he had thought had surely been finished off with the dust explosion—

???: “—!!”

Without even the time to wipe his cold sweat as that fact was fully conveyed to him, the defective undead opened its mouth which seemed to have been torn open, and gave a loud, loud bellow.

△▼△▼△▼△

—Then, at the same time Subaru & Abel's team squared off against a grotesque being.

Shortly after the battle for the Imperial Capital, the Imperial Capital of Lupugana was transformed into a battlefield once more.

For the battle concerning the Empire, while the ones casting their moves upon the board may have changed, the essence of the conflict remained ever the same. To take the head of the one who ruled over the beautiful palace towering in the innermost core of the Imperial Capital, the Crystal Palace, was the aim of this decisive battle.

That was not just in the case of the victory condition; even the way the battle must progress remained the same— that was to say, the star-shaped fortress that enclosed the Imperial Capital, fighting for control of its five bastions, would determine victory and defeat.

Ergo—

???: “I ain’t done yet! «No winning chance in hell I fluse»’s only just gettin’ started, ya nosebleedin’ Dragon!”

Neglecting the pain with his fighting spirit and morale, trying to respond to an unyielding faith, the boy set his very body and soul alight and challenged a legend.

???: “Bear witness, Observers of the heavens above— Witness the choices the world shall make.”

Reciting a verse while putting on airs, guising himself with a smile, as he danced on the boundary of what was both characteristic and uncharacteristic of himself, the lightning of childish form cut towards a swelling second sun, the personification of refusing to give up accompanying him.

???: “—At last. At long last, I was able to meet you again.”

With a voice unable to conceal her delight, the *kimono*-clad girl with antlers on her head, accompanied by snow, arrived at the predicament of the treasured person whom she had eagerly awaited a reunion with.

???: “Jeez, I won’t let you go off wherever you please anymore. Come and talk to me properly, Ballebro.”

Straining the expression that was typically as bright as the sun, the girl who had settled her resolve for this cruel reunion, receiving help from a magician, locked eyes with the dragon rider soaring across the heavenly skies.

And then——

???: “Golly, guess there really are some casters with darn nasty personalities—— There ain’t an ounce of love in this.”

Clad in a black *kimono* and black fur, the repulsive beast, presented with a curse far more repulsive than his own existence, laid bare irises of golden hue that had previously been concealed by the thread-like thinness at which he usually kept the opening of his eyes.

And thus, on the decisive battle for the Imperial Capital, on the siege of the five bastions, on the battle to fell the very stars, the curtain now truly rose.







# Arc 8 Chapter 46 - The Taste of Wind

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 2 “Tanza”, Parts 1-3

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial  
Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by Beloved,  
Kazatashi, Translation checked by Garcar, Vinicaian) — [Complete](#)

—Projected within a shimmering blue jewel, was a scene of glimmering flames reminiscent of the end of the world.

Locked and confined in a dungeon, before the eyes of the hanging Priscilla, being projected by the deathly pale-skinned Sphinx, was the fierce battle unfolding in one of the vertices of the Imperial Capital.

In one corner, one who had taken in the very core of the Empire for oneself, in the other, those fighting against a formidable foe and standing their ground; the reality of these two extraordinary circumstances coming together was already for the verses of legends.

As such, the many songs and stories that had been passed down from long ago were themselves thought to have been born in this way.

???: “—However, that is only if there remains someone to pass along what they saw and heard.”

???: “Do not force your desires on others, much less upon mineself. When boorishness reaches its zenith, even getting angry is irksome.”

While witnessing the same scene within the jewel, such was Priscilla’s response to her words spoken by her addressee, spoken with scarce enthusiasm.

Scarce. Indeed, it was a voice scarce in passion. Not completely deprived of passion, just scarce in it. Feeling so, with her shapely eyebrows drawn into a frown, Priscilla observed the person beyond the jewel.

The undead confronting her—— Sphinx, who had introduced herself as the ringleader of the Great Disaster, had expressly come down to meet Priscilla, as if to flaunt the tragic situation in which Arakiya, with whom Priscilla held deep ties, was presently in.

What exactly Sphinx had imparted to Arakiya during her captivity and isolation, Priscilla did not know. But the result was reflected in the jewel, and the purpose of doing so was before her eyes.

Arakiya was on the verge of exploding while attempting to take upon herself an existence far too great for her, with Sphinx observing Priscilla while the latter witnessed Arakiya's suffering.

By those golden pupils the black was vanquished, as they hinted at a curiosity that failed to be fully concealed, as well as a tinge of expectation.

Sphinx had an expectation—— That Arakiya's suffering would cause Priscilla's heart to waver.

Without a doubt——

Priscilla: “——You are obsessed with mineself.”

Locking eyes with Priscilla who had spun it in that manner, Sphinx parted her lips without saying a word.

It was a confirmation, an expression of delight. Thus, that the very impetus behind the Great Disaster, Sphinx, held an obsession towards Priscilla, was unquestionable.

Although how that had originated was still unclear, any deed motivated by obsession was something to be despised.

Sphinx: “To have something previously bestowed, forcibly taken away. It is an extremely heart-rending feeling, such is my learning from observation. How will it affect you? Confirmation: Required.”

Priscilla: “Your wishes are being fulfilled. Are you in high spirits?”

Sphinx: “It is true. I affirm it. As you said, I feel a sense of elation. I used to take for granted that everything would proceed according to the plans made in advance, but... my past self should have understood this sense of accomplishment. In that case, the outcome of the Demi-Human War would have been different.”

Priscilla: “———”

Sphinx: “——But, that would mean that I could neither give, nor could I earn anything.”

Taking a glance at Priscilla, Sphinx, who had been speaking with great eloquence, placed a hand over her own chest, and cast her gaze downward as if reflecting upon something.

There, noticing an emotion that was different from both joy and wrath directed towards her, Priscilla understood.

It was a figure that invoked a sense of mournful sorrow—— And, it was also what drove Sphinx to instigate the Great Disaster.

Priscilla: “———”

Setting aside her thoughts about Sphinx’s motivations, Priscilla once again directed her attention to the scene projected in the jewel.

Regardless, the battle that unfolded on the battlefield was one that could completely change the very state of the world, a clash between what could be said to be the embodiment of the Empire itself, against ineluctable lightning.

However, in the midst of it all, Priscilla had not failed to notice the weakness, which seemed to vanish into thin air.

Priscilla: “Weak, fragile, timid, born with nothing and resisting the notion of becoming anything; can one such as that leave traces in the verses of myths?”

Sphinx: “What do——”

Priscilla, who averted her gaze, prompted Sphinx’s consciousness to wonder what she saw in the jewel. However, she did not try to ascertain the true nature of what caught Priscilla’s attention.

The reason was that earlier, tremors that could reach even the underground dungeons had erupted in various parts of the Imperial Capital.

Priscilla: “I presume that must be my elder brother.”

Sphinx: “Emperor Vincent Vollachia?”

Puzzled by the situation, Sphinx furrowed her slender eyebrows at Priscilla’s murmur.

For her, the probability of that was not particularly high. Priscilla in the underground dungeon had no way of knowing what the total number of forces Sphinx had at her disposal was.

The Emperor, who had once abandoned the Imperial Capital, had found a way to break through the hordes of the undead.

Sphinx: “The swordsman who ended my life is in the midst of a one-on-one battle with General First-Class Arakiya... Even if the Emperor of Vollachia is a wise man, there are situations where one cannot overturn a hopeless board——No.”



With a finger running along her lips, Sphinx tried to dispel worrisome possibilities. However, in the midst of that contemplation, she narrowed her black eyes. And—

Sphinx: “—The foreign entity that prevented Valga’s stratagem, was involved?”

Priscilla: “Ho, did something come to your mind?”

Suddenly, as if realizing something, Sphinx blurted that out.

Putting her thoughts into words, she then immediately denied them by shaking her head. At that time, Priscilla deliberately interjected.

The moment Sphinx glanced over, Priscilla, smiling enchantingly,

Priscilla: “Hastening when it does not stand to reason? If that is the case, then mineself shall give you *kanjoku*<sup>7</sup>— Call it intuition, what you have taken a hold of.”

Sphinx: “Intuition...”

Priscilla: “Think of it as the taste of the wind sensed by your heart. It may be ironic for the dead.”

Sphinx fell silent, pondering Priscilla’s word that came with a seeming snort.

Neither dismissing with laughter nor dismissively rejecting was in line with her innate habit— calling it innate was also ironic, but Sphinx continued to contemplate regardless of the concept of life and death.

Eventually, she slowly looked up—

Sphinx: “Let us acknowledge it. There is a foreign entity that could disrupt my plan— Adjustment: Required.”

With Sphinx, standing in front of her, admitting her own change, Priscilla also gazed upward.

What was visible, was the dimly-lit dark ceiling of the underground dungeon, faintly illuminated by the light of the jewel, yet unable to conceal the weight of history.

However, it only served as evidence of the narrowness of the view.

Priscilla did not look up at the sky to inspect the dirty ceiling.

For her heart would not miss the opportunity to sense the taste of the wind.



—Having begun unexpectedly, and concluded pragmatically, the battle started anew sacrilegiously.

As innumerable swordsmen of the same face assailed her from all directions, Iris, after a moment of shock, shattered them head-on.

Iris: “Strange, yet it is nothing more than a paper tiger.”

As the dress-clad Iris swung her arms, the approaching blue-haired swordsmen— the group of Rowan Segmunts had their heads, torsos, hips, and legs mowed down, being blown away like leaves off a tree.

But, there was also a Rowan who had slipped past her initial attack, and made it to a distance at which his blade could reach her. As he threw himself at her with all his might, Iris easily intercepted the attack with two fingers, inclined her body to evade the sword, and swung down her upraised legs to shatter what remained of him.

It was quite literally a total beatdown, for even if he had amassed more numbers, he was not worthy as an opponent.





towards the Rowans in the surroundings, blowing away another ten of them that were approaching.

However, no matter how much she struck and whittled them down, she did not know if the momentum of the reviving Rowans could be halted.

Iris: “I am...!”

Having been on the receiving end of Iris’s attack, the body of the undead Rowan shattered, unable to endure.

Rowan was shattered to pieces like a ceramic bowl, however the next Rowan trampled over him with his *zori* without paying any mind, and was also shattered upon jumping in.

Repeating that so many times, it was the same as being placed in the position of an executioner with no end in sight.

Due to their own nature, there were some who thought nothing of destroying things that took humanoid form.

However, in most cases, the act of destroying the human form, the receptacle of life, was something that took great resolve and determination, or perhaps accustomization or resignation, in order to be possible.

Iris could be said to be the latter case, in extreme form.

Even now, she could not kill a being without feeling any anguish in her heart, even supposing it was an opponent displaying hostility towards her.

For that reason, Iris had manifested the Soul Marriage Technique, a power that could not be mastered without compassion for others.

That was what had propelled Iris to the apex of strength known as the Nine Divine Generals, though its origins lay in the malicious miracle that

fettered her soul to the vast lands of the Empire.

Either way, even in the case of aberrant existences like that of Rowan Segmunt, even in the case of beings that would unceasingly manifest regardless of how many times they were shattered, each time Iris did, her heart would grate.

Tormented by unbearable pain, as it intensely gnawed at her heart, Iris was laid bare.

Each time she plucked a life, each time she destroyed something with form, each time she made the world lose the way it currently was, lose something from how it was, Iris's soul would fissure, she was laid bare.

Iris: “/⁸ am—— Hk.”

And thus, the final destination of her fissured soul.

For Iris, who had unwillingly continued to live on for a long, long time; for Sandra Benedict, who had tragically lost her life giving birth to Prisca; for Yorna Mishigure, who had been shaken by a beloved reunion after hundreds of years, this was an unknown state of mind——

Iris: “——Ah.”

A hoarse breath spilled from her red lips, and the next moment, blood sprayed.

As some of the splatter landed upon the cheek of the blade's wielder, he stretched out his tongue and licked up the blood.

A smile escaped—— The wicked smile of the swordsman, escaped.

Rowan: “——The steps of the Heavenly Sword, the tips of my toes are thus placed upon them.”



A stretched-out arm slipped through, and the naked blade brushed the bare shoulder of the woman.

A beat later, a spray of blood dyed the gray street a vibrant hue, and the finest swordsmanship of Rowan's life — no, now that he was an undead, he was no longer alive, so the finest swordsmanship of Rowan's existence was renewed.

Rowan: "Not there yet, I'm still just getting started."

However, as his heart had ceased to pulsate, that insatiable desire spurred his whole body forth in place of flowing blood, and the being known as Rowan evolved at an accelerated pace.

The beautiful foxperson he faced off against was dreadfully powerful. An unbelievably formidable enemy. The difference in strength that made it impossible for him to do battle with her, easily smashed through the piling-up Rowans.

By all rights, Rowan's attempt to challenge her should have ended back when he had been defeated. However, these strange circumstances threatening the Imperial Capital, the Empire, and the very world, had not put an end to Rowan.

Fastening a blade to his own neck, he gave up on his futile, worthless life.

Believing that there was a territory only reachable by casting away his life, he exerted his blade, knowing that he would rot away and fade to obscurity if he could not reach it, and once he did, Rowan's vision opened up in the truest sense.

Rowan: "Ahh, ahhh, AHHHH! What a plain world I've been seeing until now."

With his widened vision, the domain that Rowan had reached during his lifetime with bloodshot eyes was easily surpassed.

Life truly was useless. Life was not a good thing. Due to it being the first thing one would be granted upon being born, even recluses like Rowan harbored an unwise attachment to it.

Only when he cast all of that away, did Rowan obtain the freedom to head for the Heavenly Sword.

Without a doubt, this lack of attachment was the precise qualification to ascend the steps to reach the Heavenly Sword.

Rowan: “Well now, take a gander, foolish son of mine. This’d be impossible for ya.”

This was a state that those who had lost their lives could finally reach.

That was to say, it was scenery that even Cecilus Segmunt, unable to conquer death, would never lay his eyes upon.

To think it could only be reached through dying, what a sadistic place for the Sword God to have placed the Heavenly Sword.

He had won his gamble— Hence, he would receive his inflated winnings.

Rowan: “HahahahaHAhaHAHAhaHAHAHAHA!”

As Rowan roared with laughter, his swordsmanship began to reach heights that had once been so distant.

No matter how much the approaching Rowan swung his sword, he was felled time after time by the opposing Iris. Unable to reach her as she kicked the ground, he had become unable to stand up just from a blow by her slender arm.

Such an overwhelming disparity, began to be closed at an unbelievable pace.

—Here, the misfortune of the man known as Rowan Segmunt shall be narrated once more.

Rowan Segmunt held a long-cherished desire. Something he kept pursuing. A prayer he continued to long for.

However, he had never come across an opportunity to fulfill it; he had never come across a worthy opponent.

That had been the tragedy of Rowan Segmunt, a man who had been plagued by misfortune until his life came to an end.

—Here, the miracle of the man known as Rowan Segmunt shall be narrated.

Rowan Segmunt held a long-cherished desire. Something he kept pursuing. A prayer he continued to long for.

And, he had finally come across an opportunity necessary to fulfill it; he had finally come across a worthy opponent.

Without having lost his deluded obsession towards the Heavenly Sword even after death, Rowan Segmunt was reborn as an undead; no matter how many times he was shattered or not, he produced beings that shared the same soul one after the other, transforming him into a monster incomparable to the man he was during his lifetime.

There were cases of people facing off against a formidable opponent, bearing witness to abilities far and above those of their own, who would utilize the battle on which their life was staked as a source of nourishment, experiencing rapid growth.

Rowan was trying to invoke that same phenomenon as a miracle within himself.

Facing off against the formidable enemy Iris, bearing witness to abilities far and above those of his own multiple times, and using the battle as a source of nourishment as he quite literally was shattered over and over; that was his current environment.

Were Natsuki Subaru present, he would likely even dub that act of learning through death as “Learn by Death”.

The undead’s unusual obsession, combined with his desire to learn, resulted in Rowan’s sword being honed.

Having left behind the sword of his lifetime, the undead sword technique designed for killing—the work of the Undead Swordmaster, Rowan Segmunt, was hot on the heels of Iris’s life.

Iris: “Uh, ah...”

Besieged from every conceivable direction, Iris could not deal with all the inbound sword attacks; her arms and sides were sliced by the blades, and she gave a slight groan as her blood spilled.

Hearing that frail breath, Rowan shook his head in disgust.

He did not want to hear it. He did not want to hear it. He did not want to hear the weakness of the strong.

Rowan was grateful to Iris. It was thanks to her that he had become strong. Dying itself was nothing more than an impetus. It was something that had been necessary for him, who was to eventually reach the Heavenly Sword. There was absolutely no need for Iris to worry over that.

After all, he did not want to hear it; after all, it was grating on his ears; after all, even though the one who was inferior was surpassing the one who

was superior, what he wanted to hear was not weeping, but cheers. Therefore—

Rowan: “Don’t be crying now, young lady. You’re making a mess of yer lovely visage.”

Iris promptly hoisted her *kiseru* to block the sword being swung down from overhead, and with her opposite hand, she bore a hole right through the center of Rowan’s torso.

That was the end of this Rowan. But, it mattered not. Another Rowan subsequently leaped out, and approached Iris as her hand was still stuck in the pierced Rowan until he fully crumbled.

Her leg sprang up and smashed that Rowan. She thus had one arm and one leg occupied. Then, as a Rowan thrust his sword from behind her, she quickly slammed her tail into him, but blood spurted from the base of her tail. The slashing attack had connected. Iris’s expression contorted in pain. Not good. This was truly not good.

Rowan: “Won’t’cha also die and resurrect, to keep me company forever?”

That would truly be an exhilarating future, however it was likely a future that would not come to pass.

Iris: “———”

Rowan’s gaze collided into Iris as he stepped forward, but her eyes were turned to another place, irrelevant to the life or death before her.

Her perspective was not that of the victory or defeat, the life or death in front of her, but something different, as if she were looking at the past, so to speak.

To those who looked not towards the future, but towards the past, glory would not come.

That alone, from the very bottom of his empty, hollowed heart, Rowan regretted—

Rowan: “—Your life, is mine.”

A silver flash was sprung at full speed, and as the finest swordsmanship of his existence was renewed, it bolted towards the woman's slender neck.

Then, an artistically brilliant beheading was enacted— or, it should have been.

Rowan: “Wha...”

Hindered by a firm, solid, stiff, and hard sensation, the sword technique was stopped from reaping life.

The woman who was a formidable enemy, who was the finest worthy opponent, who could even be called his teacher of sorts, as his brandishing of gratitude towards her was stopped, Rowan widened his black-stained golden eyes, and was struck with wonder.

It was regrettable that his attack had been stopped, but the person who had stopped his attack was another matter.

It had not been Iris, whom he had recognized as a tough, formidable, and worthy opponent. It was not a latent strength that she had shown while in the grips of death, but rather an undoubtable interference.

???: “—Yorna-sama.”

Indeed, calling out the name of a nobody, the young voice had obstructed Rowan's sword.

Through sheer force, a whole body had wedged itself between them to stop the strong sword, but even so, from Rowan's perspective, that was something that should have been impossible.



Even if the entirety of that slender body had been employed to try and get in the way, the slashing attack ought to have had enough power put into it to completely bisect the body. And yet——

???: “You all have the same face, but everyone get out of the way!”

Subsequently, a voice akin to the sound of bells courageously resounded, and the sound of the atmosphere tensing rended the world.

That instant, flowers of ice blooming on the surface engulfed the surrounding scene in one fell swoop; Getting caught up within that, Rowan, Rowan, and the rest of the Rowans were converted into nourishment for the flowers.

Seeing his selves being frozen still in his peripheral vision, as Rowan jumped back and readied his *katana*, he gazed over what had occurred. And there——

???: “——At last. At long last, I was able to meet you again.”

In a quiet, yet deeply emotional voice, an antler-wielding girl muttered as she held Iris in a tight embrace.

Shedding blood and having fallen to her knees, Iris was embraced in the thin chest of the short girl, and while her blue eyes widened in surprise, she accepted the embrace.

Then, the young girl who had hugged Iris turned her dark eyes to Rowan, and,

???: “Scoundrel who turns a blade to Yorna-sama, though I may be unworthy, I shall serve as your opponent.”

With that, the antlered girl had made a clear declaration.

# Arc 8 Chapter 47 - Tanza

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 2 “Tanza”, Parts 4-6

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Original Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar) — [Complete](#)

—This was a complex feeling, but just like Natsuki Schwartz, Tanza hated the Vollachian Empire.

The people of the Empire must be strong, such a way of thinking was given wondrous praise, and in accordance with it, those who lacked strength were oppressed, and even were they to lose their lives, it would be declared that their weakness was at fault.

The weak were unqualified to be people of the Empire— If that were the case, she would like to be excused.

None could choose where they were born.

Therefore, neither Tanza nor anybody else had been born into the Vollachian Empire of their own volition.

Tanza hated the Vollachian Empire.

She hated the Empire that had taken her mother and father; the Empire that, for some incomprehensible reason such as the Imperial Way, had tortured her sister to death; the sister who had assiduously raised Tanza; the sister who had been relieved upon finally finding a place where they could live in peace; the sister whom Tanza should have been able to finally repay for everything she had done for her.

She was sure that had been why.

???: “Do you happen to hate this country?”

Upon being posed that question, her expression which seldom showed emotion became stiff, and she held her breath.

Something which must not be noticed, a thought which must not be known, an ideology which one would naturally have from being ostracized; she thought it had been found out.

However, upon seeing Tanza cast down her eyes as she trembled, the beautiful woman who had seen through her heart smiled, and tenderly stroked Tanza’s stiffened cheek.

The warmth of those fingers felt similar to that of her sister, whom she had already lost.

It felt similar to that of her sister, who had devoted herself to Tanza without consideration for herself, who had died without knowing any happiness that seemed to be her own.

Woman: “I do, too.”

For a moment, not understanding what exactly that meant, Tanza was perplexed.

After that confusion, she comprehended what the woman’s words were expressing feelings about, and she gulped.

If a child like Tanza, unknowing of how things worked, were to say that, it would merely end with them being scolded and punished. However, this person was unlike them.

She was not merely an adult, for she was a person with status.

Within this Empire, that believed in strength, she was one of the nine people who were a symbol of strength—

Woman: “—I, too, despise the ways of this country.”

Indeed, while giving a tender, affectionate smile, that person confided her true feelings in Tanza.



Tanza: “Please, send me to Yorna-sama. I wish to be by her side.”

In the battle on which the survival of the Empire was staked, she was aware that what she was asking was selfish.

That was why she had been prepared to endure all sorts of verbal abuse. Thinking that being spoken to in such a manner was unavoidable, that even if she were to be showered with cursing and scolding, she still needed to be honest with her feelings.

And even though she had thought that.

???: “—Yeah, that’s what I intend to do. Let her see your face well, and go have a proper talk with her.”

Despite always selfishly putting Tanza’s feelings on the backburner, only at a time like this did he speak to Tanza’s feelings directly, almost like he was giving her an order.

That was an aspect she disliked about this black-haired boy.

Tanza: “—Yorna-sama.”

And right after she had called that out, Tanza stretched out her small body as much as she could, and receiving the flash of silver head-on, she saved the precious woman who was about to be decapitated.

The shock ran through the entirety of her being, sending a tingling and numbing sensation to the tips of her limbs.

But, in order to hide the fact that she felt pain, she bit down on her molars. Not for the opponent who had unleashed the sword attack, but in order to hide it from the precious woman she had protected.

Tanza: “—Hk.”

Firmly stifling her cries of pain and her expression, she endured.

She usually found it frustrating, but at this time she was grateful for her cold face. It must have appeared like she had withstood it with a face as if to say that it was not a big deal.

Even though in truth, without the shield of ice concealed inside her *kimono*, she would have undoubtedly been split right in two.

???: “You all have the same face, but everyone get out of the way!”

Following Tanza’s bluff, a courageous voice with a tone akin to silver bells could be heard.

The reason why Tanza had not been cleaved in twain, the one who had hidden an ice shield for her, the silver-haired half-elf— Emilia gallantly swooped down on the Imperial Capital, and pointed her hands at the rows of undead who bore the same face.

Right after, a high-pitched sound like that of cracking glass enveloped the area; clear ice had shot out of the ground, entrapping the undead one after another in glacial prisons.

The undead immediately either tried to jump away and escape, or tried to evade by ducking low, or tried to cut off the freezing with their swords— But, those who had selected the correct answer were few.

Those who jumped, those who ducked, and those who drew their blades, were made part of the blooming ice flowers in the sky, on the ground, and

with their drawn swords respectively, and were quite literally frozen in ice wherever they were.

Engulfing nearly twenty of the undead in their entirety, there were merely a few who had escaped.

She wished to exhaust her vocabulary in praise of that, but right now——

Tanza: “——At last. At long last, I was able to meet you again.”

The severed shield of ice fell from her *kimono*, and diffused into Mana before it could hit the ground.

Then, with the chest from which the hard sensation had been removed, Tanza embraced the head of the woman who had fallen to her knees. Even though Tanza had been held like this by her before, since she was a tall woman, it was the first time Tanza was embracing her in such a manner.

To be frank, she had thought it embarrassing to have this kind of thing done to her.

She had thought it would not set a good example, and it was frustrating being treated like a child. But, she had never disliked it, and her thoughts on being treated like a child had also changed.

Was it not the case that Schwartz and Cecilus could do as they pleased, regardless of being small or being children.

Even if being a child became an obstacle when trying to do something, it was by no means a reason to give up. Tanza tried to return that to this person with her whole body.

Shedding blood, the woman whose blue eyes were widened in surprise——while embracing Yorna, Tanza turned her dark eyes to the enemy, to the nuisance who was getting in the way.

And then——

Tanza: “Scoundrel who turns a blade to Yorna-sama, though I may be unworthy, I shall serve as your opponent.”

With that clear declaration, she asserted her own standpoint.

Undead: “———”

Accepting Tanza’s proclamation, neither the undead men, nor Yorna, embraced in her chest, made a sound.

Were they perhaps shocked by the foolish action, or was it Tanza’s sudden arrival that was the reason for their shock? It mattered not either way, and Tanza readied herself while still holding Yorna.

Thereupon——

Emilia: “Teiryaa!”

Undead: “Uuooou!?”

Emilia’s sprinting attack was even faster than Tanza’s movements.

Stepping forth with her long legs, Emilia swung the ice mallets that she had created in both of her hands down on the motionless undead. The undead man who had been focused on Tanza was taken aback as he swept those aside, and faced off against Emilia.

Emilia: “I’m the opponent of all of you!”

Undead: “Tho’, that lass over there just said she’d be my opponent?”

Emilia: “Right now, Tanza-chan has finally encountered Yorna-san, who she’s been longing to meet. You... you guys? You all have the same face, but... I won’t let you guys get in the way!”

Undead: “It might be difficult to understand, but even if there’s more, I’m me... Rowan Segmunt, the individual. Ain’t no need for ya to get confused over that.”

Emilia: “I won’t let you get in the way!”

As she corrected herself, Emilia produced twin swords of ice in her hands, and the callously-smiling undead— all of the multiple Rowans, took the same stance as they faced off against Emilia.

From behind, as Tanza tried to back her up with an “Emilia-sama!”,

Emilia: “It’s okay, you can talk to Yorna-san first— Subaru requested this of me.”

Tanza: “———”

As Schwartz’s name came up, Tanza hesitated to speak.

During that time, Emilia left behind a smile as her expression shifted to a stiff one, and taking a step towards the Rowans who were readied with their *katanas* in their sheaths,

Emilia: “—Icicle Line.”

After Emilia’s lips spun those words, the surrounding scene was dyed even further white.

Every color was mixed with a silvery white, and trying to counter the twin swords of the snow-clad Emilia, Rowan smiled in satisfaction— thereupon, an icicle storm assailed.

Rowan: “OHHHHH—!?”

Rowan: “OHHHHH—!?”

Emilia: “Here I come!”



Rowan, who seemed to have thought that a contest of swordsmanship was starting, while stupefied at the bombardment of ice, fought against Emilia's incoming attacks.

The light ice weapons clashed with the undead's *katana*, and the sword dance commenced.

In the background of that sword dance, Tanza depended upon Emilia's consideration, and looked to Yorna once again. Still, her expression appeared as if she had not caught up with the situation.

Tanza: "This is the first time I have witnessed Yorna-sama make such a face."

Yorna: "—Tanza, is that you?"

Tanza slightly lowered the corners of her eyes in happiness, and while staring at that face, Yorna spoke words with meaning for the first time since their reunion. At that question, Tanza nodded. Since their parting at Chaosflame, she had been separated from Yorna for nearly two months.

Since there had been no correspondence, it would have been natural for Yorna to have assumed that Tanza was dead.

Tanza: "However, I have remained safe and sound. For the sake of returning to Yorna-sama."

Gazing back into Yorna's eyes, she reassuringly spoke those words.

The words that had hit Yorna as her eyes quivered at this reality, for being something she had spoken herself, there was an unthinkable reassurance to it.

Maybe this had been due to the influence of the people who could say things without any pretensions.

It was proof that Tanza had been through all sorts of things in the two months she had been separated from Yorna— but, Tanza was not the only one who had changed, as so had Yorna.

Yorna was wearing a beautiful, blue dress. Without the *kimono* that Tanza was used to seeing, she was wearing her hair down; more so than giving excitement over the novelty, that appearance gave Tanza some misgivings.

It was not that she was skeptical of a change in tastes. Yorna's ornaments— the articles presented to her by the inhabitants of Chaosflame, the fact that she was not wearing them was suspicious.

The inhabitants who dwelled in the Demon City of Chaosflame, they all loved and respected Yorna very much.

In order to convey their heart of hearts, they would take parts of their unique features as demi-humans, something that served as the primary reason for them being ostracized, put them to good use, and design them as ornaments to present to Yorna.

Everything from hairpins to earrings, to *obidome* to pins or threads for her *kimono*, Yorna clad herself in the affection of Chaosflame's inhabitants, and had come to present herself in a majestic manner.

Among those were combs carved out from a part of Tanza's, and of Tanza's sister's horns.

Yorna: "Tanza..."

Her name called out by trembling lips, Tanza waited for Yorna's discomposure to subside.

She also wanted to assist Emilia as she fought Rowan, but right now before her eyes, she wanted to put all her energy towards sorting out Yorna's

emotions. Nervously, Yorna's fingers reached out towards Tanza's cheek; after ascertaining that feeling, Tanza would exchange words with her.

However, Yorna's fingers did not come into contact with Tanza's cheek.

Tanza: "Yorna-sama?"

Just as they were about to touch, Yorna held back her fingers and tightly shut her eyes; instead, she pushed Tanza's chest, which had been embracing her, and sent her a step backwards.

Tanza and Yorna, after having finally embraced, the two of them were separated once again, and Tanza blinked her eyes. As Tanza could not decipher the intention behind that action, Yorna opened her mouth,

Yorna: "For what reason, have you come to a place such as this?"

Tanza: "———"

Yorna: "At present, this Imperial Capital has become the Capital of the undead... this place that was abandoned not just by the soldiers of the Empire, but even by the Nine Divine Generals and the Emperor, what business does a girl like you have doing here?"

Getting up from her knees, Yorna glared at Tanza in a stern manner. Being stared down by those almond-shaped eyes, Tanza's slender shoulders slightly shrunk.

For a moment, she did not know what she had been told. But, she immediately understood that those were words of rejection.

Yorna, the compassionate woman who accepted all things, had rejected Tanza.

Yorna: "This place is far too harsh and savage for the living to be present. It would be wise to leave at once. If you cannot, shall I send you off by my

own hand?”

Tanza: “...If you are distinguishing between the living and the dead, then for Yorna-sama too, that condition is...”

Yorna: “The same? —You believe that you and I are the same?”

Though she had been struck with shock, Tanza had tried to protest, and Yorna reached her hand towards her. However, that was not for the sake of stroking Tanza’s cheek, but to seize her by the collar.

Five of Yorna’s slender fingers grabbed the overlap of the *kimono*, and the legs of Tanza’s small body were suspended.

She had been held up before. But, it had never been done to her in this kind of violent manner.

Yorna: “You and I do not stand on the same side. I have... someone whose side I wish to remain by. At long last, I can be with that person again. That is why...”

Tanza: “*Yor...na-sama...* Hk.”

Yorna: “I no longer have any need for you or the other children.”

At a distance close enough that their breaths could reach each other, Yorna looked into Tanza’s face. That which Yorna had spoken, was the reason she had remained in the Imperial Capital, filled with undead as it was.

The reality was not that she had been held captive, but that she had remained here of her own volition.

Tanza: “———”

Just as Yorna was looking at her, Tanza had also been looking into Yorna’s blue eyes.

Deep within those irises, while Yorna was passing the days in the Demon City, while she was gently attending to Tanza and the inhabitants of the city, fragments of a longing that never disappeared could be seen.

Yorna Mishigure had always been searching for something.

That was certainly something that was unfathomably large and distant to Tanza, something that even Yorna was unable to reach; to Tanza, it seemed like searching for something akin to a star.

Something that was known to be bright, shimmering, and to have a dazzling gleam, but could not be reached.

Yorna had always been searching for that.

That she was someone who sought such a thing was known to Tanza, and to everybody else. She prayed that Yorna's wish would come true, and if it would not, then she desired to offer something in its place.

It was not just Tanza, everybody had thought that way.

And now, she had finally found it, Yorna's wish had reached the stars.

If that was the reason why she was grabbing Tanza's collar like this—

Tanza: “—Please be happier as you reject me, Yorna-sama.”

Indeed, Tanza gripped the other's wrists, and told that to the poor liar whom she treasured dearly.



—Ah, *I have become a bad child.*

Gripping the slender white wrist, Tanza deplored her utterly changed self in such a way.

It was not supposed to be this way. For Tanza, Tanza's ideal self—that was, the idealized image of wanting to be like her dead older sister, Zoey.

—Zoey had been a very strong-willed, and kind-hearted woman.

The reason Tanza's birthplace had been destroyed was because of the prevalence of a superstition that boiling the antlers of the deerpeople tribe would create a panacea, causing them to be attacked by bandits who aimed to sell the antlers at a high price.

With both her mother and father killed, the still-young Tanza had been pulled by the hand of her sister, and they were able to barely escape with their lives.

But, the sufferings of the two sisters did not end there. Many times, the evil clutches of those hunting their antlers had caught up to them, and even ignoring that, it was customary in the Vollachian Empire to prey on the weak.

Many a time, their lives had been in danger, and the extent to which her sister had gone through harsh experiences in order to obtain one plateful of soup, was something Tanza could only conceive of after a few years had passed. At the same time, she had detested being entirely dependent on her sister, unable to do anything, so much so that she had wanted to kill herself.

*Zoey: "Tanza, you must not curse anyone. People who can easily curse others, will also be easily cursed in a similar manner."*

While emaciated and clad in tattered clothes, Tanza's sister would tell this to her on nights when they shared a single plate of soup.

Without anybody treating them kindly, everybody was cold towards Tanza and Zoey. Whenever she spoke ill of that world, Tanza's kind sister would, without fail, scold her by saying that.

Not out of frustration, but out of parental love, Tanza's sister would scold her— Despite being her older sister, and at an age where one would still depend on their parents, it was far too early for her to become a parent.

The superstition regarding the antlers of deerpeople did not peter out, so the sisters never settled in one place.

They were always fleeing, fleeing, continuing to flee, and when they had become fatigued from all the fleeing, what caught the ears of the two sisters, was a rumor of the Demon City of Chaosflame.

It was told that in that place, many demi-human tribes lived together, that it was a paradise for the ostracized.

The mistress who ruled there was said to be strong, filled with compassion, and a wonderful person who did not tolerate the weak being oppressed— Such a prospect was ridiculous, Tanza thought with her childish heart.

There was no way such a person existed. It was impossible for such a convenient person to exist.

Even if such a person did exist, then why had her mother and father died? Why was her sister, so emaciated and ragged as she was, leading Tanza by the hand like this?

Therefore—

???: “—*You have done well, Zoey, Tanza.*”

Finally, having reached the paradise that should not have existed, when the woman in the beautiful *kimono* brought the two ragged, dirty sisters up to the castle and embraced them as they clumsily introduced themselves, Tanza heard her sister raise her voice and cry for the first time.

Even on the day their mother and father died, even on the days that a spectacle was made of her for a plate of soup, even on the days when an

unreasonable Tanza would curse at her with inconsiderate words, Zoey had never cried.

Seeing Zoey shed tears and sob as she clung to the woman's chest, Tanza also raised her voice and cried, and as she did so, she had a thought from the bottom of her heart.

She thought that she would never lose the paradise created by this woman— no, that she would absolutely never lose this woman, Yorna Mishigure; her childish heart firmly believed so.

—They were provided with meals and a bedroom, and the *kimono*-clad Zoey was beautiful. She was Tanza's pride.

There were many who adored Yorna and earnestly wished to serve her. Among them, Zoey was the most serious and hardworking, and Yorna came to appoint her to a responsible post.

Tanza was proud that Zoey was serving the amazing Yorna and doing important work.

She had thought that she would be like her sister one day, wholeheartedly serving Yorna, and wanting the existence of the paradise known as Chaosflame to be known to many more of the weak who suffered.

Her sister died. Two years after that life had begun.

Outside of the Demon City, there had been a group of demi-human tribes that sought the protection of Chaosflame.

While passing by a fortress of Imperial Soldiers conducting a military campaign, her sister had been in contact with the group as Yorna's representative, and was in the middle of guiding them to the Demon City.

The Imperial Soldiers had attacked the group of demi-humans under the guise that they were potential enemies, and her sister was abruptly killed.



Tortured to death for a reason unrelated to the antlers of deerpeople, her corpse was subjected to disgrace.

*Zoey: “Tanza, you must not curse anyone. People who can easily curse others, will also be easily cursed in a similar manner.”*

The words of her older sister flashed through her mind, and in the midst of sorrow, Tanza’s heart was ripped to shreds.

Even after this, was it something she must not do? Even after this, was she not to curse anyone? After her older sister, who was finally supposed to be happy, was killed, was she still not to curse anyone?

*Yorna: “Do you happen to hate this country?”*

Tormented by despair, as Tanza suffered as if her own antlers had been broken, a voice called out to her.

She had put on a *kimono* to imitate her sister, but with her scant knowledge of being an attendant, it was impossible for her to imitate her sister, and her weak, brittle heart could not hide what she truly felt.

As Tanza lamented that those feelings of hers had been found out, the woman’s hand stroked her cheek.

*Yorna: “I do, too.”*

While stroking it, the woman affirmed Tanza’s rage, affirmed her cursing.

And, in place of Tanza, who did not have the power or means to give that curse form, she acted. Even if that meant she would need to face off against the mighty, mighty Empire, she cared not.

*Yorna: “—I, too, despise the ways of this country.”*

Whenever the Flamboyant, Yorna Mishigure, rose in rebellion against the Empire, it had always been for the sake of another.

Since Tanza knew she was a woman who would do so, she did not want to be the cause.

She wanted to remain a child who did not cause Yorna to face danger.

She wanted to remain a child who did not cause Yorna to face sorrow.

Like her sister Zoey, she wanted to be a good attendant, one who did not trouble Yorna.

—And yet, Tanza had become a bad child.

Tanza: “Yorna-sama saved my older sister.”

Tightly squeezing the wrist grabbing her by the collar, Tanza’s lips spoke.

Perhaps because Tanza’s reaction, conduct, and words had all been unexpected, Yorna’s blue eyes widened, and her lips faintly quivered.

The fact that those trembling lips mouthed the name of her older sister, “Zoey”, would not go overlooked by Tanza.

Tanza: “Yorna-sama acceded to my selfish request.”

After the rebellion that clashed directly against the Imperial Capital when Zoey lost her life, Yorna had gotten revenge for Tanza’s older sister, and Tanza had requested to serve in her sister’s place.

It was a request akin to the height of impudence, and she was extremely insufficient for the role, but Yorna had accepted it with pleasure.

And, Tanza had served her wholeheartedly. She had been permitted to do so.

Tanza: “Yorna-sama has brought about happiness, for a great deal of people.”

Outside of herself and her sister, just how many people had Yorna supported?

Just how many people had been saved and protected by their connection to Yorna? Tanza's words and actions were nothing more than a small fragment of that cluster of gratitude.

If Yorna was leaving all of that behind and proceeding without reserve, that would be fine.

If Yorna thought of them as a heavy burden, and wanted to become light in order to fly up and reach the stars, that would be fine too.

If Yorna was unhappy, they would not want her to stay with them. If they were to say they wanted Yorna to stay with them even if she was unhappy, that would be as selfish as a curse.

That was why, if she was going to shake free from the hands holding onto her, Tanza wanted her to at least smile, wishing for happiness.

If she could not do so—

Tanza: “—Yorna-sama, you still love us.”

Without letting go of those emotions still present even now, Tanza clearly declared so in a tense that was not past tense.

In front of her, Yorna's eyes were widened past their limit, and she fell into a state of astonishment. Her face was as if it were completely inconceivable that Tanza would ever talk back to her.

In reality, that must have been so. Tanza had wanted to serve Yorna well. Like Zoey, she had quietly obeyed Yorna's words, and put in the utmost effort to make them come true.

But, a glimpse of her ineptitude for that should have become apparent at the time she had separated from Yorna.

The Emperor and the fake Emperor who visited Chaosflame; in order to prevent them from dragging Yorna into their war, Tanza had acted independently from Yorna, and ended up unnecessarily amplifying the disorder.

As a result, Tanza was separated from Yorna during the events that followed, and she experienced many things.

And now, having finally reunited, Tanza was directly objecting to Yorna.

She was a bad child. She had become a bad child.

The person she wanted to be happy, she did not want that person to compromise in the act of becoming happy. For that purpose, Tanza would even overcome that person's words and prayers.

What a bad child she had become.

Yorna: “—Ah.”

Eyes wide open in astonishment, a feeble breath spilled from Yorna's lips.

That was Yorna's reaction to the pain from her wrist being firmly gripped. As Tanza's collar was being held up by Yorna's wrist, she firmly gripped the wrist in return.

Supposing it was as Yorna had said, that she did not care about Tanza or the others, and that she was freely doing what she desired, then this ought to never have happened.

Yorna's Soul Marriage Technique distributed power to those she loved.

The effects would also apply to Yorna herself, due to the logic of self-love— the feelings of affirmation towards oneself, which could even be

called a manifestation of the belief that one's actions were right.

As long as she sincerely believed that she was correct, extraordinary power would surge within Yorna Mishigure.

But, if she did not believe that was the case, what would happen then?

Though she was one of the Nine Divine Generals, an apex of the Vollachian Empire's military, if Yorna could not affirm her own deeds, she would rapidly lose strength.

And unmistakably, that very phenomenon had occurred, to the extent that the sword of the Undead Swordmaster, who had parted ways with life, had surpassed her in strength.

Yorna could not support those whom she could not love, those whom she could not affirm.

That was why, she could not support her current self.

That was why—

Tanza: “—Yorna-sama, those feelings of love are the only thing you cannot feign.”

A blue flame alight in her left eye, Tanza believed in Yorna's love without a single shred of doubt.

Yorna: “———”

As the suspended legs returned to the ground, and Tanza looked at her while her eye flamed, Yorna was at a loss for words.

Pressing down on the wrist that had been gripped so tightly, Yorna looked at Tanza's face in front of her; there was no proof of “love” as great as the flame housed therein, and she stared at it as if it were unbelievable.

It was as if she was under the impression that she could completely deceive her own heart.

Tanza: “Yorna-sama, you are not a very skilled person—— To tie up your hair and get dressed up in your *kimono*, were you not always relying on the strength of me, my sister, or of everyone else who loves you?”

Saying that, Tanza stood up on her tiptoes and stretched out her back, and with her stretched-out hand, she stroked Yorna’s cheek.

Just as it had once been done to her, and just as she would one day do to somebody she wanted to lovingly cherish. At the sensation of those fingers, Yorna’s blue eyes greatly wavered. They wavered.

Just like when her older sister had raised her voice and cried for the first time, it was as if a stout heart was fissuring.

Thereupon——

???: “——Hk! You can’t! Tanza-chan!”

Behind Tanza as she faced Yorna, the voice of a cornered Emilia, and the sound of *zori* firmly stepping on the ground, seized her eardrums.

At the same time, the sound of a blade being unsheathed—— she could conceive that a single Rowan had slipped past Emilia’s interference, and was trying to approach in this direction.

Rowan: “Outta the way, missy. This over here’s the stage I’ve yearned for in my dreams!”

Along with a selfish remark, the enemy ran like a strong wind.

Yorna had likely seen him from over her shoulder. Right away, she reached her hand out to Tanza’s shoulder, and tried to push her body out of the way to protect her.

As if to return the favor from earlier, this time she would try and serve as Tanza's shield.

Tanza: "However, I cannot allow that."

Yorna: "Tanza... Hk?"

Standing firm and enduring the hand that had tried to push her out of the way, Tanza rejected that action. Instead, she turned around to protect Yorna behind her, and faced off against the hideous golden irises heading in her direction.

The unleashed sword aimed to slash through Tanza's neck, and to slice Yorna in half behind her. The stroke of the blade was enough to scorch the chilled atmosphere, and as it approached Tanza's neck—

Rowan: "—Hk."

Tanza: "The stage of your dreams, was it?"

Stifling the shock in the back of his throat, Rowan widened his golden eyes.

That must have been so. There was no doubt that he had not expected for the attack he had unleashed with all of his strength to be caught by such a small child.

With her raised hand, Tanza had caught and intercepted the flash of silver that scorched the atmosphere.

—Yorna's Soul Marriage Technique distributed power to those she loved.

If one believed that they were correct, and there was no doubt that they were loved, if they selfishly believed that from the bottom of their heart, its effects would be tremendous.

???: *"Tanza's also mine, so it's like she's basically on our side, right?"*

*Ahh, how irritating.* She was confident that she was loved, she had been infected with being a bad child.

That was far too irritating and unbearable. She was truly glad that it was in her nature not to show it on her face.

Tanza: “Apologies. I am quite busy, so I do not have the time to be watching happy dreams unfold.”

Putting strength into her hand and crushing the *katana* grasped within, with an astonished reaction to her front and rear, Tanza aimed at the face of the nuisance before her, and drove the fist that had shattered the *katana* right into it.

Giving a strike that went through his nose, and caved it into the inside of his head, Tanza made a declaration.

Her days of merely dreaming of paradise, and continuing to pray for the sake of her precious person, were over.

Without taking action herself, she would never be able to grasp paradise or her precious wishes.

Having been saved by her older sister, having been aided by Yorna, having met Natsuki Schwartz and other comrades in the Pleiades Battalion, and having finally arrived here, Tanza’s answer was—

Tanza: “—Because there is a harsh, cruel, but lovely reality that awaits.”

After all, in order to reach the stars, she did not have time to stop in her tracks.





Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.ll2o ([source](#))

# Arc 8 Chapter 48 - The Curse of Thorns

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 3 “Eugard Vollachia”,  
Part 1

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial  
Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by Goldkills,  
DatShazam, Bruhseph, Translation checked by Garcar, Vinicaian)– [Complete](#)

—The name Eugard Vollachia, Emperor of the Briar, was known not just within the Vollachian Empire, but also far and wide across the rest of the world.

The reason for that lay in the tale of tragic love engraved into the history of the Empire, “Iris and the King of Thorns”.

The tale that depicted the meeting and parting of the kind-hearted girl named Iris, and the Vollachian Emperor feared as the King of Thorns, along with the tragic nature of its ending, struck a chord within the hearts of many readers.

The fated meeting between the two and their first parting. Thereafter, betrayed by his vassals, the King of Thorns was ousted from the throne and reunited with Iris, and hand-in-hand the two of them began their rebellion— since then, a long, long time had passed, and though the way of reciting the tale may have deviated from historical fact, the most important, core aspect, that of two people who were deeply in love with each other, remained completely unaltered as the story continued to be told.

Such was the extent to which the story of immutable love known as “Iris and the King of Thorns” continued to be beloved.

However, as a result, the story, being told as a tragic love tale which lit a fire within the hearts of people, ignored and concealed a part of the original historical truth.

Iris and the King of Thorns, the two of them peacefully spending their time cultivating their love, had not been the case.

During those tumultuous times, in an Empire where treachery and lamentation intertwined, they spent their days together risking their lives, fighting day and night for the sake of their desired future as they engaged in a burning love.

And indeed, Iris and the King of Thorns turned the entirety of the Vollachian Empire upside down, and finally succeeded in taking back the Empire— Of course, the tragedy which followed needed not be stated.

But, before that tragedy had come to pass, the two had certainly achieved their goal.

With her compassionate heart and her devoted way of being, Iris had won many allies over to their cause. With that Iris by his side, the King of Thorns had achieved results in warfare befitting an Emperor of Vollachia.

Results in warfare befitting an Emperor of Vollachia— remaining unchanged from times of yore, that was the embodiment of the Vollachian Empire’s law of iron and blood. In other words, that was proof of power.

—The Emperor of the Briar, Eugard Vollachia, was the strongest Emperor in the history of the Empire.

???: “Go FUCK yourseeelf!!”

As a bursting roar thunderously boomed out of his throat, Groovy Gumlet leapt high into the air, and discarded the *kusarigama* which had had its handle cut in half.

A moment later, the *kusarigama* which had left his hand burst into deep-red flames midair.

Had he hesitated for even a moment, those flames would have likely consumed him; his fur instinctually stood on end as he realized he had nearly been burned to death. But, he did not have time to feel relief.

Eugard: “Thou doth dance well, pup. However, when it cometh to dancing, Mine Star is far more of an impressive sight to behold.”

While speaking fondly of his lover in a detached, emotionless tone, his onslaught of red streaks was relentless, as if blooming in profusion.

The weapon he wielded, which had received a blow from the *kusarigama* and had made it instantly burst into flame without even permitting an exchange of blows, was truly the worst— as one would expect from the treasured sword which bore the name of the Empire, it was not just its sharpness, but even its special characteristic that was exceedingly troublesome. If it were possible, he would have very much liked to produce an article rivaling its excellent quality with his own hands.

Groovy: “If only His Fucking Excellency had let me a get a nice close look at it!”

Given that no one apart from the rightful owner could possess the treasured sword, opportunities to see the genuine article were extremely few and far between.

While expressing dissatisfaction at how he had been treated as a General First-Class, Groovy made full use of his small stature, which had been made



fun of by his opponent, and evading the crimson strikes with his nimble body, he dodged, dodged, and dodged once more.

He evaded because getting hit was not an option; albeit primitive, it was the optimal solution to use against such an enemy. Were Goz or Moguro the ones present, they would have received the blow without evading, meeting their ends in a fiery blaze.

As the aftermath of the slashes incinerated the cityscape, Groovy's nose took in the burning smell as he successfully managed to dodge the gale of the crimson sword. However, he was still unable to catch his breath.

Even if he did dodge the Yang Sword, which scorched the world as it cut through, the subsequent flash of blackness would bisect the world.

Groovy: “—Hk.”

Not even his habitual cursing was able to escape his mouth.

As the barrage of powerful swings came from the Yang Sword, Eugard twisted his body and unleashed a brandish of the Fiend Sword, causing Groovy's fur to stand on end as he ducked while the blade scythed just a centimeter above his head.

The result of this slash did not end with just his relief at his head not flying off.

Along the trajectory which the blade had traced, a few dozen meters in front of where the stroke had cut, the cityscape of the Imperial Capital slanted diagonally, a series of severed buildings crumbling in its wake.

Its cutting edge was so plainly absurd that even making a dedicated sheath for the blade had been rife with difficulties, such was the might of the blade known as the Fiend Sword Murasame.

This Fiend Sword, which manifested such impossible power, naturally required suitable compensation in order to be wielded. If the wielder were an ordinary person, it would be an area untread, one which could cost them their very life—

Groovy: “Going whoosh whoosh whoosh with it, you got some nerve swinging it around so fucking casually...!”

Eugard: “Dost thou hold concern for I whilst we face off against each other? If such is the case, thy fears art unwarranted. Diminutive beings such as thee need only worry over thyself. In regards to worrying over mineself, Mine Star alone is sufficient.”

Groovy: “You don’t make any fucking sense!”

In his right hand, the Yang Sword Vollachia, and in his left hand, the Fiend Sword Murasame.

Though the foe who dual-wielded the worst possible combination of two swords that Groovy could possibly imagine had not given his name, so long as he held the Yang Sword without bursting into flames, it showed that he possessed the due qualifications to wield it.

Additionally, green hair with a crown of thorns, plus this situation in which the dead were revived as the undead— in regards to the identity of the person dual-wielding the two worst blades, a terrible possibility rose to the surface in Groovy’s mind as he spat out an endless string of curses.

Hence—

Groovy: “Eugard Vollachia...”

Eugard: “Even if thou dost not call out to mineself, I am aware of mine own personage. However, for recognizing mineself even though we art separated by time, I bestow mine praise unto thy discernment.”

Bearing blades of instant death in both hands, he stated this in a crushing voice to his foe who had opened up some distance between them.

And then from the front, the undead, standing atop the burning wreckage of the buildings, drew back his chin solemnly at Groovy's call.

Hearing the undead's— Eugard's reply, Groovy snorted his nose with a bad attitude, and,

Groovy: "Even so, I'm still somebody who actually reads books among the fucking Generals of the First-Class. And I may as well just fucking say this while I'm at it, I'm one of the Nine Divine Generals."

Eugard: "Nine Divine Generals... Ah, so it yet remaineth in existence, that position."

Groovy: "Though it seems like it completely fucking vanished in your era."

In front of Eugard, whose inflectionless speech did not indicate whether he was interested or not, Groovy put his arms behind his waist, drawing two hatchets from it and holding them at the ready.

He still had plenty of Curse Tools. The problem was not Groovy's remaining number of Curse Tools, but rather his remaining amount of lifeforce.

Groovy: "———"

While interlocking gazes with Eugard, he glanced down at his own chest at the edge of his vision. Like before, his chest, in which his heart was stored, was being stabbed by sharp, transparent thorns as they writhed.

It was good that he had hastily prepared to deal with the Curse of Thorns that gnawed at his heart by running poison through himself, but this daredevil strategy was not designed for the long haul.

The Curse of Thorns was, by how it had looked, a powerful curse that indiscriminately engulfed a wide area centered on the caster. Therefore, he had anticipated that the user would be the type to hide while focusing on operating and maintaining the curse.

That had been naive. Very naive. His guess had been completely off-the-mark, and far from being in hiding, the enemy was imposingly wielding powerful weapons— no, the weapons were indeed powerful, but the weapons alone were not the reason for this tough fight.

It was because the wielder of the weapons was a person of extraordinary power.

In the current Vollachian Empire, the status of General First-Class indicated the position of the Nine Divine Generals.

That system had been restored by the current Emperor, Vincent Vollachia, and though it had been repeatedly revived and erased several times throughout history, it was during the reign of none other than Eugard Vollachia that the system of the Nine Divine Generals had first been lost.

For what reason had the system of the Nine Divine Generals been eradicated during Eugard's reign?

That was—

Eugard: “—Naught else could hath been done. For those weaker than mineself hadst made an attempt on the life of Mine Star.”

—That was the reason why the Emperor of the Briar himself had executed all the Nine Divine Generals of his time with his own hands, not sparing even a single one.

Of course, Groovy had not been a part of the Nine Divine Generals at that time, nor had transcendent figures such as Cecilus or Arakiya existed. But



even so, he did not think that the powerful individuals who bore the title of Divine General had been so weak that they could not hold a candle to Groovy and the rest of the current Divine Generals. In short—

Groovy: “—Gonna be a fucking short-term decisive battle!”

Eugard: “Cease from piling on more impure utterances. ‘Tis irreverent.”

Kicking off the streets where slash marks had been etched, Groovy’s body flew toward Eugard.

Groovy was readied with two hatchets, and while pointing out his manner of speech rather than those weapons, Eugard was calmly poised to intercept with the Yang Sword. To his opponent who stood ready to intercept him, Groovy furiously bared his fangs, and he struck with his hatchets in a vertical attack.

Naturally, the strike was blocked by the Yang Sword, which had been raised overhead, but that was just what he wanted.

Eugard: “Hm.”

At the moment the Yang Sword collided with the hatchets, cracks formed in Eugard’s face. Literally.

The crack on the cheek of his pale, prim face was proof that Groovy’s blow had permeated through his opponent.

Groovy: “It worked, but fuck off!”

At the puzzled Eugard, Groovy laughed with a sidelong glance as the hatchets were blown away in a blaze of flame.

To avoid the spread of fire, he had let go of the hatchets the moment they hit the Yang Sword, but the effect of those Curse Tools— not cutting them, but forcing an impact through them, was activated.

Originally, it had been a Curse Tool created to kill opponents donning thick armor and steel helmets even while still clad in said equipment. The blade of the hatchet vibrated immensely at such a minute scale that it could not be seen; even the slightest contact would cause the vibrations to be sent throughout the opponent's body, pulverizing their bones and viscera.

Though it would be lethal damage for a living person, he was not sure how effective it would be against an undead—

Eugard: “Enthralling. But if thou art incapable of continuing onward—”

Groovy: “Who ever said anything like that? I’ve got a fuckton of Curse Tools left!”

As if one or two axes were not enough, Groovy pulled out two more hatchets and readied them in both hands. Upon hearing Groovy’s answer, Eugard slightly raised the eyebrows of his cracked face.

A hatchet was thrown, Eugard gyrated his body to avoid being hit, and then fired off a slash. Groovy also avoided the slash by jumping, and continued to throw hatchets one after the other.

Groovy: “Ora ora ora ora ora oraahhh!”

Eugard: “———”

Between the barking Groovy and the silent Eugard, a momentary combat between the two turned into a fierce struggle.

As Groovy threw his Curse Tools as he pleased, Eugard continued to fire blows from his combination of the Yang Sword and the Fiend Sword in return.

At a glance, the battle appeared to be evenly matched with only one move from either side needed to tilt the odds in their favor, but in reality, Groovy was at a major disadvantage.

His remaining strength, his number of remaining Curse Tools, and the lethality of each of their weapons, were all unfavorable to him.

The deadly poison that coursed through his veins was draining his life, and the Curse Tools that he kept using would eventually run out. While these Curse Tools would probably cause great damage upon contact, the opponent's swords would spell certain death if they were to hit.

Even to an untrained eye, it was obvious which side had the advantage, and even more so for the two parties involved in the fight.

That was why Groovy capitalized on being at a disadvantage.

Groovy: "I'll fucking show you something."

Groovy did not consider himself to be particularly strong among the Nine Divine Generals.

He had once prided himself on being the strongest in Vollachia. However, after being recruited by Vincent and seeing others who had been given the same rank of General, those illusions vanished.

He desired to be strong, but he did not want to step out of line, and he was not qualified to do so.

He was no match for Cecilus with his strength, Arakiya with her explosive power, Olbart with his versatility, Chisha with his intellect, Goz with his caliber as a General, Moguro with their survivability, Yorna with her unorthodoxy, Madelyn with her anti-army capabilities, and Balleroy with his anti-unit efficiency.

That was Groovy's self-assessment and the point he'd arrived at as a General.

However, aside from that, Groovy had strengths that the other Generals did not possess.

—Groovy excelled in his relentless dedication and method of killing his opponents.

Groovy: “Blargh.”

Amidst all those throws, a large amount of blood had poured out of Groovy’s mouth, his eyes looking bloodshot.

This was the result of the poison circulating throughout his body, causing blood vessels to be destroyed, blood then overflowing as they burst all over his body. At the sight of Groovy vomiting blood, Eugard’s expression did not waver.

He, too, was a master martial artist, and he must have known that Groovy was approaching him with some means of resisting the Curse of Thorns. But also that this was placing a burden on Groovy’s body that he would not be able to endure for long.

The blood Groovy vomited only confirmed this belief.

Even if Eugard’s blades did not reach him, Groovy would die of exhaustion on his own. Indeed, Eugard must have discerned this with his insight.

Because of this, he would not be able to fully avoid Groovy’s mist of blood, as the latter’s mouth spewed all of the blood that had accumulated therein.

Eugard: “———”

A slight frown, and Eugard evaporated the mist of blood with the flames of the Yang Sword as he stepped rearward.

The blood contained the poison that Groovy had taken in, but even if one were exposed to it, the damage would be negligible. The goal, however, had not been to poison his opponent.

It had been to apply Groovy's blood— It was successfully applied to his sleeve, which he could not shake off.

Groovy: "Like fish in a fucking barrel."

Immediately after, Groovy smiled, his bloody fangs showing. Around Eugard— the countless hatchets he had dodged so far drew close to him, as if pulled by a string.

Using Groovy's blood as a medium to acquire its target, it was a guided tomahawk application of Curse Tool known as "Blood Hatchets".

Eugard: "This is..."

The incoming Blood Hatchet was dodged, only for Eugard's eyes to widen as he saw it circle around and come back again.

With his incredible physical prowess, Eugard dodged, dodged, dodged, and continued to dodge the storm of Blood Hatchets coming at him from all directions, but unless he were to shoot them down, they would eventually catch up to him as they came flying at him endlessly.

However, Groovy was not so well-behaved as to wait for that eventuality.

Groovy: "You're probably wondering when it's gonna fucking end, aren't you? I'll give you the answer!"

As he declared thus, Groovy was not holding an additional Blood Hatchet, but rather the severed weighted chain from the *kusarigama* that had been burned by the Yang Sword in the initial attack.

A specially engineered chain weight, it was briefly spun, and was then thrown with arrow-like speed at Eugard's feet as he struggled to evade the blood hatchets.

Eugard: "—!"

To catch the chain weight with the middle of the Yang Sword, Eugard turned his wrist.

Immediately noticing the difference between it and the Blood Hatchets, it had been a brilliant move on his part, deciding that it would be safe to defend against it. However, in the arsenal of the Master of Curse Tools, Groovy Gumlet, there was nothing one could safely touch.

At the moment of impact, the chain weight glowed red, and a tremendous explosion enveloped Eugard.

Eugard: “Ohhh—”

Tossed by the blast and flames, Eugard finally let out a distressed cry and was blown away. Nevertheless, Eugard straightened up his limp body, and he immediately tried to prepare for a follow-up attack.

Aiming toward Eugard, the Blood Hatchets swarmed the motionless target.

One Blood Hatchet could shatter bones, two could crush internal organs, and three or more could end a life.

With ten or twenty of them pouring down, not even Eugard could withstand it.

Therefore, Groovy felt sure that he had killed him—

Eugard: “—Stand tall. Thou art stronger than all the Nine Divine Generals of mine era.”

A moment later, Eugard’s fearless face appeared before Groovy’s eyes.

A slash from the Fiend Sword sliced off Groovy’s right ear as he leaned forward, and a kick from his leaping opponent hit him in the midsection, sending his small body flying backward.

But, as he was being sent flying, Groovy undid his waistband, swung his snakewhip sword, put together and fashioned from the fangs of snakepeople, and began to cleave at the head of the pursuing Eugard.

Eugard: “If thou hadst been among the insurrectionists, the life of Mine Star may hath even been in danger.”

As it unwinded, the snakewhip sword unleashed a long, undulating blow akin to the body of a serpent.

Unsparingly dismantling it with the Fiend Sword as it approached him, Eugard appraised Groovy’s fighting strength by comparing it to his own experiences.

And as proof of his honor at that evaluation from the strongest Emperor in all of history, Groovy aligned his feet, and fired two grappling hooks from the cuffs of his trousers in an attempt to shatter both shoulders of his opponent.

Eugard: “Even under such circumstances, thou art as sumptuous as ever.”

As the heels of his feet were whittled down by those grappling hooks, Eugard delivered a kick to Groovy; coughing up blood as a result of that kick, Groovy ripped off the cloth wrapped around his neck, and unfurled it into the air.

For a moment, the line of sight between Groovy and Eugard was obstructed.

Groovy: “Go, fuck, yourSELLLLLL—!!”

From the one side of that unfurled cloth, Groovy flicked the Magic Crystal embedded in his throat, and hit Eugard with a surging roar that rumbled the very atmosphere.

From an unseeable position, with an onslaught equivalent to sound itself, it was a surprise attack that was impossible to dodge.

But, against that sound, Eugard displayed the true ability of the Fiend Sword.

—“To get to the point”, there existed such a saying.

It meant to get down to the heart of a matter, but in all things there was an appropriate “point”. No matter the object or phenomenon, or even concept, there existed a “point” that signified its essence.

The Fiend Sword Murasame, was an Enchanted Sword that bisected that perceived “point”.

Murasame hated Groovy, who had melted it down, and reforged it in the past, so in order to prevent his outstanding sense of smell from sniffing it out, it had cut the point of its “scent”.

Since then, it had become impossible for anybody to pursue the Fiend Sword Murasame by scent.

And here, Murasame had cut the surging roar that Groovy had unleashed.

Groovy’s eardrums heard the sound of the Magic Crystal embedded in his throat shattering, and the moment he realized that, the slash of the sword was about to cleave Groovy in twain—

Groovy: “———”

A sudden gust of wind had saved the life that should have been severed.

???: “Deary me, that was a real close call. I was just takin’ a stroll and happened ta save yer life, fella.”

With the Curse Tools he had sent forth for an emergency evacuation having all been made powerless, Groovy’s life had been on the verge of



eradication; carrying him, the tall figure who had unexpectedly appeared spoke in a laid-back tone.

Groovy was surprised by that sudden interloper, but Eugard could not conceal his shock either.

Not only had he interrupted this fierce battle, but his presence drawing closer had not even been felt until this moment.

Groovy: “*Bashturd....*”

???: “Ah, pushin’ yerself ain’t no good. It was the technique that got cut, but the effect’s goin’ all the way ta yer voice. If ya try force yerself ta speak, you’ll never speak again.”

Responding to Groovy’s voice, which sounded like it was clotted with blood, the person who had perfectly ascertained what had happened—the wolfman with black fur, let Groovy down.

Then, with his eyes that were as thin as threads, he looked over towards Eugard, who was glaring at him,

Wolfman: “I see. A Curse Tool that can chase ya down ta the ends of the world sure’s useful, and yet it was made powerless with a single arm. However...”

Pausing his words there, the wolfman watched as Eugard’s missing right arm grew back.

As the wolfman had said, the moment the storm of Blood Hatchets had exploded, Eugard had pruned off the entirety of the right arm with blood on its sleeve, and had managed to avoid it.

It was not as though that method of evasion had been outside of Groovy’s consideration, but if one lost an arm, their actions would dull accordingly.

Even when keeping the fact that they were an undead in mind, that should not have changed.

Despite all that, Eugard had displayed immutable movements before and after losing his arm.

That had been beyond Groovy's expectations, and if not for the wolfman's interference, it would have led a fatal opening that would cause him to lose his life— But, the significance of that was.

Groovy: "*Oi, fuhgger.*"

Wolfman: "...Just now, did ya call me a fucker?"

Groovy: "*Moar impohrtuntlee... Hk.*"

Wolfman: "I know, I know. I'd be fully aware even if ya didn't tell me."

Nodding at the appeal, the wolfman put his golden *kiseru* in his mouth, and set the tip alight.

Then, while puffing out smoke, he slightly lowered the pitch of his voice and continued.

Wolfman: "Golly, guess there really are some casters who got nasty personalities— There ain't an ounce of love in this."

Seeing the same thing as the wolfman as he spoke those words, Groovy harbored a similar impression.

Eugard ascertained the feeling of his regrown right arm; holding the Fiend Sword in his left hand, the powerful Emperor of yore threw off the garment that had been singed by the explosion.

—Just like Groovy, the Curse of Thorns had also been planted upon Eugard's chest.

# Arc 8 Chapter 49 - The King of Thorns

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 3 “Eugard Vollachia”,  
Parts 2-5

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial  
Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by Goldkills,  
Bruhseph, Kiln, Translation checked by Garcar, Vinicaian, Rageasu) —  
[Complete](#)

—As the one known as the Admirer, Halibel made full use of his title as the Kararagi City-States’ strongest individual.

Even if one surveyed the entirety of the Four Great Countries, they would have no choice but to say that there were no *shinobi* who surpassed him. Even the Empire’s strongest *shinobi*, Olbart, would have to make a bitter expression and admit he was the most powerful. Evaluated as an equal to the Sword Saint, the Mad Prince, and the Blue Lightning, alongside the strongest of each nation he had a track record which one could not be ashamed of.

There was only one difference between Halibel and the other three. He did not belong to any nation, proclaiming himself a masterless *ronin*<sup>9</sup>.

The Sword Saint who was bound by treaty to the Kingdom, the Mad Prince who had been branded a national traitor and confined in the northernmost tower, even the Blue Lightning whose selfishness was renowned around the world held a position.

Only the Admirer Halibel was a free man who held no official position.

Of course, Halibel himself held a sense of gratitude and belonging to his homeland and would sometimes be asked to investigate and resolve serious problems in Kararagi. But, as far as the idea of his existence being owned by someone else was concerned, being used as a bargaining chip in negotiations and transactions was something he was extremely averse to.

—He would side with those he wanted to help, and he would turn his nose up at those things which did not interest him.

That was Halibel's motto as one of the strongest, and the owner of such a whimsical nature would naturally cause the assessments of those who knew him to be divided into two extremes.

On one hand, there were those who were rejected with a "Without me y'all'd be just fine, just fine, yer remarkable."

On the other hand, there were others who were accepted with an "It's amazin' that yer able ta move someone like me, yer remarkable."

Either way he always relaxedly spoke of his praise for others, and so he had always been called the Admirer.

Naturally, this was not the only reason for his nickname; no matter what opponent or action he was faced with, it was Halibel's way of being to give an objective evaluation. And so—

Halibel: "Golly, guess there really are some casters who got nasty personalities— There ain't an ounce of love in this."

Puffing smoke from his *kiseru*, there was no admiration in the words that escaped Halibel's mouth.

The tone of his voice was slightly lower, making him sound irritated, something that those who knew him would be surprised by as he was rarely ever displeased.

Halibel did not have a favorable impression of the undead, but there had been a moment when the scope and result of the technique made him feel some admiration for the opponent caster.

But, for the state of the opponent right in front of him, not a single shred of admiration could be found.

Halibel: “———”

Slightly opening his eyes which were as thin as threads, Halibel looked at the opponent in question with his golden irises—— throwing away his tattered garments and wielding an incredibly famed sword was Eugard.

Just moments ago, one of the Nine Divine Generals, Groovy, had been facing off against this formidable enemy, but now he was unable to stand due to the burden of a technique that had become intertwined with his soul.

Seeing that same thing, Groovy, who was beside him, wiped up the blood coming from his mouth.

Groovy: “*Oi, dat’s....*”

Halibel: “I said, don’t force yerself ta talk. I can see it too—— That kid, he said that he wanted ta leave this ta an expert on curses.”

Stroking his beard with one hand, Halibel recalled the boy that had assigned him to the fourth bastion.

Vincent had acknowledged the boy, who had gathered immense trust for his judgment of his surroundings, enough that even Anastasia held high hopes for him and told Halibel to respect his opinion as much as possible.

Due to his deep knowledge of curse techniques, that boy had assigned him to deal with this opponent who had been said to be a decisive factor in the

battle for the Imperial Capital. With all of Anastasia's boasting, he was eager to fully display the true strength of Kararagi's strongest.

Halibel: "Really didn't see this comin'..."

The unenthusiastic Halibel, and Groovy who was at his side, both looked at the same thing.

They were both aware of the left side of Eugard's chest, where the human heart would be and where a semi-transparent venomous-looking thorn now appeared—the very same Curse of Thorns that had been indiscriminately disseminated across a large portion of the Imperial Capital was also eating into Eugard.

From this mysterious fact, two possibilities emerged.

The first was that the Curse of Thorns had even engulfed the caster, Eugard, and was an indiscriminate curse in the truest sense of the word.

However, Halibel evaluated that the second possibility had a higher likelihood of being true.

That was to say—

Eugard: "—Demi-human, answer mine query."

After he had finished ascertaining that his right hand had regenerated, Eugard cast his voice towards them.

Naturally, the one who had been spoken to, being pierced through by his gaze, was the sudden intruder, Halibel. To that statement Halibel asked "Me?" and pointed to himself with his finger, to which Eugard nodded.

Eugard: "If mine judgment does not err, thou art a wolfman, yes?"

Halibel: "Ahh, that'd be right. I'm a wolfman... since Vollachia went to the extremes, we're in a position where we gotta feel ashamed of ourselves

throughout the world. Seems like we're gonna die out soon."

Eugard: "I see— I see."

It was a joke made about complete eradication, but Eugard nodded quietly, as if to confirm it. Halibel was suspicious of this situation, meanwhile Groovy raised his hoarse voice to say "Oi!",

Halibel: "I told ya, don't force yerself..."

Groovy: *"Dat's naut impoartunt, FUHG! Dah Emprouhr of duh Braiyer ish...!."*

Eugard: "—I bear no grudge against thee personally."

Before Groovy could finish speaking with blood running through his voice, that declaration was made along with a physical form.

The casually wielded Fiend Sword flashed with black, and disregarding Groovy's presence, it cleaved through Halibel, splitting him in two from his groin to the top of his head.

In just a blink of an eye, Halibel had been split vertically in twain.

Groovy: "—Hk!"

At the terrible scene, Groovy, who hadn't been able to speak in time, was at a loss for words while Eugard, the one who had cut through Halibel, remained in a posture with the Fiend Sword raised overhead,

Eugard: "However, thy race was once complicit in causing the death of Mine Star. Therefore, akin to the molepeople who bear the same sin, I shall eradicate all of thy kind as an example."

Halibel: "...Ahh, I finally managed ta remember. Ancient Emperor-san, ya were the original cause of us goin' extinct."

Eugard: “Hm?”

After speaking words to the opponent he had slain, Eugard scowled upon being given a response.

In front of Eugard, the person who answered was Halibel, whose body had been severed into left and right parts right down the middle. Eugard blinked slowly at Halibel’s body, as each half gradually parted from the other.

Eugard: “That is a surprise. That thou hath yet to perish even in that state, is it perhaps beyond the final destination for those who train themselves to the extreme?”

Halibel: “That’s quite the amusing evaluation. But that ain’t it— It just ain’t my real body.”

Just as Halibel laughed playfully, the left and right parts of his body instantly collapsed, and a large amount of black fur fell on the spot.

Drawing attention to such an unrealistic scene, behind Eugard—

Eugard: “Do not heedlessly sneak upon mine back. It shall not be pardoned for any other than Mine Star.”

Halibel: “Heh, now ain’t that quite the big deal.”

On the opposite side of his collapsed clone, Halibel’s body was cut in half by a slash from Eugard’s right arm— by the Yang Sword that was held there once again.

However, the bisected upper and lower body that immediately burst into flames were not the main body either.

Having just dealt with the sudden attack to his back, Eugard exclaimed “Ngh” in surprise as his body abruptly sank down.



The cause was a third Halibel, who had grabbed him by both of his legs and dragged him down into the street. Halibel slipped out of the ground, and swapped positions with Eugard who was thus buried up to his waist. It would have been ideal to bury him up to his neck to restrict his movements, but,

Halibel: “It ain’t gonna go so swimmingly, as expected.”

The third Halibel grumbled and was torn to shreds above the burning remains of the second Halibel.

With vertical, horizontal, and diagonal slashes, he made cuts in a grid pattern and blew the pieces of the body apart; having also cut the ground into pieces with those slashes, Eugard jumped out.

Yang Sword in his right hand, Fiend Sword in his left, he had recovered his fighting stance.

While dual wielding two Enchanted Swords that surpassed human knowledge, Eugard readied himself and was assailed by two new Halibels from left and right. It was a sort of revenge against the inexhaustible attack of the undead, but the increase in Halibels was something different to that of the common undead.

Eugard: “Thou art a devoted menace.”

Accepting the fact of Halibel’s clones with equanimity, Eugard swung the two Enchanted Swords simultaneously.

Against the Halibels as they came from the left and the right, each Enchanted Sword was readied to unleash a deadly attack— but, a third Halibel who had appeared behind Eugard, grabbed his arms, and stopped him.

Halibel: “Sorry ‘bout this, but I can actually go up ta three.”

Having detained both his arms, the two Halibels belatedly used their hands to pierce the immobilized Eugard's head and torso.

As a master of the Flow Method, the sharpness of Halibel's spear hand was more akin to that of a famed sword rather than a mediocre cutting tool.

Without missing their aim, they pierced Eugard's right eye and solar plexus, demonstrating their might which was enough to cause an instant death. However—

Eugard: "Do not attempt to scheme against mineself. For any other than Mine Star it is irreverent."

Stating this, his unpierced left eye met Halibel's and immediately afterwards, the radiance of the Yang Sword shone more brilliantly. The next moment, the red glow burst into flames, and the entire area was instantly engulfed in an inferno, Eugard within it still.

The explosive spread of the fire engulfed three Halibels who were in contact with Eugard, and burnt them to a crisp.

Then, a beat later, the flames disappeared like an illusion, and the three Halibels were all reduced to cinders. Eugard, who had also been scorched, regenerated the burnt surface, and stepped forth unperturbed.

Then, looking around with his golden eyes— he noticed that Groovy, who had been there just a moment ago, had disappeared.

Eugard: "I had not thought him so courteous as to back down— What is thine aim?"



???: "—I ain't likin' this. I hate it when someone figures out my tricks."

Having left Eugard far behind on the battlefield, Halibel shook his head and sighed at how troublesome he was, not just because of his swordsmanship.

Eugard had masterfully handled the powerful magic swords without being overpowered by them.

In addition to his considerable strength, he was virtually immortal due to being an undead, plus being the possessor of a high level of insight. He had also seen through the deception that there was a limit of three clones, and had skillfully responded to deadly situations.

Halibel: “That’s what I’d expect of a man who almost turned the tide of a losin’ war single-handedly. Do ya think he’s prideful?”

???: “If you’re asking me that, *fuhg...*”

Halibel asked this while holding him, and Groovy thrashed about in his arms as he was being carried away from the battlefield.

Had they remained there, they would have been caught in Eugard’s final burst of flames, making their situation even more unbearable, but there was no cause for him to be so grateful.

After all, as a warrior himself, he could understand why he would not want to be kept back from the battle.

Halibel: “But, ain’t there a chance you’ll die from this? Ta begin with, ya forced yerself ta move yer body with poison... that’s quite the reckless thing ta do.”

Groovy: “———”

Groovy was slightly surprised that he had pointed that out, and Halibel flicked his own nose with his finger.

As a *shinobi* who was familiar with all kinds of poisons, he could surmise what the faint strange odor mixed with Groovy's blood was. As for its use, Halibel would never have imagined or attempted it, and the thought of it caused him to shudder.

Halibel: "Honestly, the people of Vollachia sure are determined n' scary. Olbart-san, who's still grinnin' even tho' he's missin' his right hand, doesn't even need a mention. Despite bein' an old man, I ain't no match for him."

Groovy: "And, what *abouht youh*..."

Halibel: "Hmm?"

Groovy: "It's gonna *fuhgging* get worse, that's how it usually is, clumsy curse...!"

Halibel: "—That's a problem, ain't it?"

Responding with a hint of confusion in his voice, Halibel replied to Groovy, who slurred as he dealt with his bloody throat that was rapidly getting worse.

This was why he was taking Groovy away from the battlefield, not to abandon his duties and flee the Imperial Capital, but as part of the strategy for victory.

Recklessly challenging an opponent without knowing anything about them was a fool's errand. Halibel's strength was such that it could defeat most opponents by sheer force alone, but this opponent was no such case.

That was not to say that his opponent was not superbly talented.

Halibel: "Well, if I were ta keep fightin' with him like we were, I'm sure I'd be stronger than him. That's the truth, but—"

Merely defeating Eugard was not enough to fulfill the task that had been given to Halibel.

Halibel had been tasked with dealing with the “curse” that would determine the outcome of the decisive battle for Imperial Capital, and simply defeating Eugard would not solve that problem.

That fact was the biggest problem.

Groovy: “*Yhour, thornshh* are...”

Halibel: “They’re all gone. That’s the second clue.”

Groovy: “...The first one, is that Emperor’s fucking thorns.”

Groovy, who was being held by Halibel as he ran and kicked the ground agilely, peeked at Halibel’s chest. Beneath his *wasou*, the Curse of Thorns that should have been on Halibel’s chest was gone.

It emitted an oozing pain, so it was no wonder that it was expected to be the biggest obstacle to be eliminated in the fight against the undead. However, Halibel had yet to take any proactive action to remove it.

The thorns had disappeared despite nothing having been done. On the other hand, it was not Halibel that had made the thorns disappear.

What that meant was——

Groovy: “That fucking bastard...”

Halibel: “From the sound of it, it looks like you n’ I are havin’ the same thoughts. It’s reassurin’ ta hear that the Master of Curse Tools’s sharin’ the same opinion as me.”

Groovy: “It’s a fucking mishmash of shit all *mixshhhed togetterh*. That fucking bastard, the solution is fucking annoying...!”

Groovy cursed out his undirected anger as if spitting.

In the same frame of mind as Groovy, Halibel once again regained his initial misgivings and was convinced that the second possibility, which had come to mind upon sighting the thorns on Eugard's chest, was the correct one.

The Curse of Thorns, the logical reason why they were entangled in Eugard's chest was simple.

Halibel: "Them thorns weren't the Emperor cursin' the people 'round him, but..."

Groovy: "His Excellency Eugard was cursed by some bastard, and now the curse is being amplified like a motherfucker."



—Eugard Vollachia, Emperor of the Briar, had received a curse as part of sabotage concerning the Imperial Selection Ceremony, a rite of succession for the Imperial Throne that had persisted for a long time within the Vollachian Empire.

After all this time, which of his opposing imperial siblings had been responsible, and how distinguished of a Curse Arts User they had been involved with, were unclear still.

Only that, with the forthcoming Imperial Selection Ceremony in mind, the brutal strategy which had intended to diminish the competing opponents had greatly distorted the fate of the young Imperial who went on to become Eugard Vollachia.

—The Curse of Thorns placed upon Eugard, was a terribly cruel yet simple thing.

That was to say, through the binding of thorns, an unbearable agony that gnawed at his heart had been bestowed upon him.

And, that was also something that applied to those in Eugard's surroundings.

If the young Eugard were to cry and scream at the pain of the curse, his family members and servants would try to save him from it. But, when attempting to get close to him, they would all be caught up in the curse, and would thus refuse to approach.

Within such solitude, the curse aimed to kill Eugard amidst the pain—that was the true form of the Curse of Thorns placed upon Eugard.

Due to the dreadfully ruthless Curse of Thorns, Eugard should have been unable to even reach the Imperial Selection Ceremony, and should have been a tragic Imperial whose life came to a quick close.

That would have been the synopsis that the person who had ordered for the curse to be placed upon Eugard had in mind; but here, a huge, huge, so huge that it would go on to change the destiny of the Empire, coincidence had arisen.

By birth, Eugard had analgesia, the inability to feel pain.

Therefore, the Curse of Thorns, constantly active as it was, bestowed not pain upon Eugard himself, but granted it, continuously, to those around him only; as a result, he was left completely alone.

Even his family and servants did not approach him, and living by himself in the mansion which had been bestowed to him, Eugard spent his childhood without any opportunities to make contact with others; he thought that this was the reason why his expression was always so stiff, but it was fifty-fifty between that and his natural disposition being the reason.

In any case, Eugard and the Curse of Thorns had miraculously continued to coexist.

His contact with others had been limited to an absolute minimum, but even so, there were times where he had no choice but to make contact. During each of those times, the people who got caught up in the Curse of Thorns would naturally report that “Eugard was the one who placed the curse”, and Eugard had never denied it.

In reality, regarding the true form of the Curse of Thorns, Eugard did not know whether it was something placed on him by somebody else, or if he was the one invoking it for some unknown reason.

Furthermore, the Curse Arts User who had placed the curse, and would thus have the answer, never appeared in Eugard’s life afterwards, and the one who had ordered it remained unknown.

Therefore, with the true form of the thorns that haunted his every step unbeknownst to him, the King of Thorns continued his walk for a long, long time.

Supposing the curse had never been placed upon him, then those steps would have been interrupted somewhere during the Imperial Selection Ceremony, bringing them to a permanent halt.

The thorns isolated Eugard, and the goal of the one who had placed the curse upon him had been fulfilled, albeit not in its original form.

???: “Would it not be more comforting to count the stars in the sky than to look out into the darkness?”

—That was, save for his encounter with the girl, who had stepped into Eugard’s thorns, and had approached him.





???: “I assumed thou hadst fled, wolfman.”

Halibel: “Well, it ain’t like I didn’t think ‘bout it... Sorry, that’s a lie. I didn’t think ‘bout it at all.”

???: “For what reason hast thou made an attempt to deceive mineself?”

Halibel: “It’s a habit of mine ta be ramblin’ on with loose lips. I’d be delighted if ya could forgive me without takin’ it too seriously.”

???: “The act of deceit against the Emperor is irreverent. Yet, judging how thou hast confessed thy mistake, I shall disregard thy lie from a moment prior.”

Greeting Halibel as he returned to the stage, Eugard drew back his chin in a composed manner.

Without being disagreeable regarding Halibel, who had at one point left the battlefield and then returned, Eugard’s imposing stance had the dignity of an Emperor to it as he spoke.

Even without his strength, his caliber was undoubtedly worthy of being called Emperor.

Halibel: “Ta go n’ make such a person as angry as lava, just what kinda things did ya do, my ancestors?”

At his undetachable connection with Eugard, Emperor of the Briar, Halibel scratched his cheek.

From Halibel’s perspective as a wolfman, Eugard could be called the archenemy of his entire race.

Needing to feel ashamed of their race throughout the entire world, the Vollachian Empire was still to this day an environment in which wolfpeople, and half-wolfpeople of mixed blood— werewolves, would be unable to

escape the death penalty if they were to be discovered. The one who had cemented that as law to last forevermore within the Empire, was none other than this very Eugard.

The two races of wolfpeople and molepeople were established as the sworn enemies who had betrayed the Vollachian Empire, and amidst a long history, many of their brethren had lost their lives, and they were massacred to the verge of extinction.

In the future, that trend was unlikely to be completely lost.

Therefore, from Halibel's perspective, it was natural for him to harbor an equal amount of hatred towards this opponent, but—

Eugard: “—Turning such a gaze upon mineself shan't be pardoned.”

Halibel: “What kinda eyes does it look like I'm makin'?”

Eugard: “Eyes Mine Star would make on occasion. Anyone but Mine Star who turns such eyes upon mineself, I shall not pardon... Nay, 'tis not to mine fondness.”

Hearing Eugard's answer, in which there was likely no lie or falsehood, Halibel took a deep breath, and placed his hand over his left breast.

Thereupon, the Curse of Thorns was not present. Upon him, who ought to have been an abominable, detestable wolfman to Eugard, the curse was not being invoked— That was something that more so ruffled Halibel's feelings.

Halibel: “Supposin' that kid went n' sent me here predictin' that I'd get these feelin's, then, lil' Ana, ya really gotta watch out.”

Behind his closed eyelids, envisioning the girl whom he had known since the latter's childhood, whom who had not ended up growing to be very tall, Halibel held the *kiseru* in his mouth as he said those words.

Then, setting the tip alight, he got a good whiff of the smoke before puffing it out.

Breathing out, he made up his mind.

Halibel: “It’s fine if ya don’t forgive me, Emperor-san. That’s the kinda relationship between us, ain’t it?”

Eugard: “That sort of relation would be?”

Halibel: “Between wolfpeople, n’ the Emperor of the Briar.”

They each had a reason to hate the other, and a reason to destroy the other.

Pointing at himself and his opponent, Halibel spoke thus, to which Eugard’s expression did not change. He did not know just how many things were locked on the other side of that invariant expression.

And though he did not know, Halibel had made up his mind.

By merely defeating Eugard, the duty he had been entrusted with, and his own determination, would not be fulfilled. Therefore—

Halibel: “I’ll set ya free from that darn disgustin’ curse, n’ make ya nothin’ more than just a king, O King of Thorns.”

# Arc 8 Chapter 50 - Eugard Vollachia

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 3 “Eugard Vollachia”,  
Parts 6-8

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial  
Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by  
Kazatashi, DatShazam, Translation checked by Garcar, Vinicaian, Rageasu)  
– [Complete](#)

—Eugard Vollachia was a King who had been forced into solitude.

Having been afflicted with the Curse of Thorns prior to even gaining awareness, he was forced to grow up in a terribly unbalanced environment, with even his family and servants unable to approach him.

With his analgesia, Eugard was able to avoid experiencing the suffering of the Curse of Thorns, of which he was the source, but he did come to understand, from the expressions of pain and screams from those around him, that his existence was a source of torment to people; henceforth, he accepted his life of isolation.

As for the Imperial Selection Ceremony, his chances of winning it were doubtful as well.

Common sense dictated that since he had been afflicted with the Curse of Thorns, it would be very much inadvisable for him to assume the Imperial Throne and be in charge of the national government of the Vollachian Empire.

Even if he could become Emperor, he thought that an Emperor who could never appear in person to meet with important state officials or to negotiate with the leaders of other countries must not exist.

Therefore, once he decided that he should not win the Imperial Selection Ceremony, Eugard had settled that his life would end at his age as of the Ceremony's beginning.

Until that age, Eugard would gather all the knowledge he could and serve the Imperial Family— namely, for the improvement and peace of life of the people of the Empire.

With the Curse of Thorns gnawing at him, Eugard had been forced into solitude.

However, despite his circumstances, Eugard did not consider himself unhappy. He did not feel that he was cursed, and as there was a rational answer to the “why”, he did not resent the person who had done it.

Some people were born blind, some were crippled. He thought that his inability to live side-by-side with others was just one of those things.

And, in a world where people constantly lost their lives due to blindness or crippled limbs, he considered himself lucky to have survived thanks to his position as a member of the Imperial Family.

Thanks to his origins from the Imperial Family, Eugard had been able to continue living without family or anyone close to him, as well as never knowing of starvation. Because of that, he would fulfill his duties as a member of the Imperial Family.

While he was sorry for his mother and for the people of his house, he would never be able to seize the throne of the Emperor— Then, at the very least, he would use the not-so-long years of his remaining life for the sake of the world that encompassed him.

—Hence, meeting her had been the biggest mistake of Eugard's life.

It was not because he came to wish for the Imperial Throne, which he had ought to have given up on. Nor had he abandoned the mission of the Imperial Family.

Only, he had ended up with the desire to live— To live with Iris, he had ended up desiring so.



The Curse of Thorns was something that had been cast upon Eugard Vollachia, its effects designed to force Eugard into solitude.

To achieve that objective, what might be the conditions under which it would manifest its maximum effectiveness?

The opposite of isolation could be said to be love. That was to say, the Curse of Thorns was a curse that kept the people one loved at a distance. In other words—

???: “The thorns went ahead n’ disappeared from my chest, n’ the fact that they haven’t disappeared for anyone else’s gotta be the answer.”

Biting lightly on the mouthpiece of his *kiseru*, Halibel murmured while patting his own chest.

Having betrayed the King of Thorns, wolfpeople and molepeople had ended up being labeled as traitors in even the fairy tales that had been passed down for a long time; being one of the former himself, the reason that the thorns had disappeared from his chest, was that Eugard had recognized Halibel as a wolfman, and thus he had fallen outside of the conditions for the Curse of Thorns.

The Curse of Thorns would not be activated unless directed at something one loved.

Halibel: “Bein’ someone with immense affection, I can’t help but wonder who that was bad for.”

Mixing his frustration with the purple smoke, Halibel took a deep drag from his *kiseru*.

The special tobacco dropped onto the bowl burned out in a single puff, filling Halibel’s unusually large lungs with smoke. In the subsequent instant, biting down on his teeth and tossing the *kiseru upwards*, Halibel in his black *kimono* tilted his upper body, and the black hair on his back was slashed by the Fiend Sword being swung diagonally.

Behind him, as the cityscape of the Imperial Capital tilted diagonally in the aftermath of that slash, Halibel’s towering stature stepped forward, along with another three tall figures doing so simultaneously.

Those tall figures were Halibel, each one an exact duplicate of the others. However—

Eugard: “That acrobatics feat of thine, I have witnessed erstwhile.”

The Yang Sword wielded in his raised right hand descended, and flames covered the path of the four Halibels.

The hue of the scorching flames was too intense, creating a curtain of flames on the street that even appeared white, forcing Halibel and his duplicates to make a choice. Namely, the options were to leap over the flames or to take a detour— however, Halibel took neither of these two choices, and instead went for a third.

Halibel: “It’s a lil’ bit different from the trick I showed ya earlier.”

Two of the four Halibels took the lead, thrusting their palms into the rising curtain of flames.

Halibel's palms, released in conjunction with a step that caused the cobblestones to explode, moved like battering rams that could blow away a shoddily-constructed castle gate in a single strike. However, these two strikes were stopped just short of the flames simultaneously, and the generated wind turned into a storm, blowing away the fire.

Eugard's expressionless brows moved slightly at the strike, but it was still too early to be surprised.

The two who had lagged behind surpassed the two who had advanced earlier, forcefully slamming the same battering ram palms into Eugard's torso.

Eugard: "—Hk."

Suppressing the groan in the depths of his throat, Eugard was blown directly backwards by the impact. However, it was shallow. In an instant, Halibel's palms were caught by the flat side of the Yang Sword, and he himself was propelled backwards.

Even so, though Halibel's attack could not be completely nullified, Eugard was forced to recognize the former's extraordinary martial skills despite his position as Emperor.

Without assuming the position of an Emperor, he would have felt as if he had lost face, as his opponent was solely a *shinobi*.

But, it could not be helped.

Given Eugard's constitution, he could not rely on subordinates to protect himself. The Emperor had no choice but to protect himself.

Halibel: "I ain't gonna hold back."



Disregarding the circumstances, the pursuit did not ease for Eugard, who had been blown away.

To kill the inertia of flying backward, Eugard slid his toes on the ground and turned towards the voice of Halibel that had sounded nearby, and he attempted to deliver a slash with a twist of his body.

However, the Halibel who was there received the diagonal slash, and promptly disappeared in a scattering of fur. From directly below, another Halibel kicked up, catching Eugard with widened eyes.

Eugard: “Muggh...”

Kicked in the back, Eugard floated in the air and was pounced upon by Halibel from all directions. Present at the frontal, posterior, sinistral and dextral all, were mirror images of wolfmen who swung their hands in karate chops. Eugard, however, was not about to let himself be defeated, and exercised the Yang Sword’s pulverizing ability against them.

In essence, with the atmosphere exploding caused by super-rapid heating, their movement would be disrupted.

The bright, red-hot Yang Sword spun in the explosion, and Eugard’s slash drew a circle in the air as it cleaved all four Halibels in half.

Instantly, the four Halibels erupted in flames—— all of them turning into fur.

Instead, from directly above, an elbow strike as powerful as a battle-axe smashed Eugard in the head, and the Emperor crashed into the streets of Imperial Capital as he spun vertically, creating a circular crater accompanied by the sound of an explosion.

Landing beside the crater, Halibel quickly reached out, catching the *kiseru* that he had tossed with his mouth just before the collision.

And then——

Halibel: “That’s somethin’ that’d usually kill ya, but I’m guessin’ things won’t go that easy?”

Eugard: “—Indeed.”

Amidst the dispersing smoke, Halibel’s voice as he looked down into the center of the cavity was met with a calm response.

Though it was quite harsh to not have inflicted any damage despite everything he had done, the outcome had been as expected, so the emotional toll was kept to a minimum. With this current confrontation, Halibel revised his evaluation of the Yang Sword and the Fiend Sword. He had initially considered the Fiend Sword to be more dangerous, but the Yang Sword was proving to be more than formidable.

And more than that—

Eugard: “Art thou employing both clones with substance and clones that are hollow?”

While raising his body within the crater, Eugard analyzed their combat from just moments prior.

Neither confirming nor denying the observation as correct or incorrect, Halibel licked the blood dripping from the cut that had emerged on his left cheek with his tongue, offering silence as his response.

Eugard: “Such technique would require a blood-curdling ordeal to master. ‘Tis worthy of commendation.”

Halibel: “Well, thanks for that.”

His responses were kept minimal to avoid giving up information unnecessarily, but Eugard’s observation was correct.

Halibel's "clones" could be divided into two types, those that were merely illusions made of fur, and genuine clones with substance on par with Halibel's real body.

With this combination, the essence of Halibel's fighting style evolved around toying with his opponents, and even just the illusory clones were equipped with the ability to completely subdue any average opponent.

The problem was that Eugard was not any average opponent, and furthermore, Halibel's signature tactic of Curse Arts would not work against him.

Techniques designed to kill would not be effective against an opponent who was already dead.

Not to mention that Eugard's soul had already been inflicted with a curse so strong that no others could surpass it in that regard. However—

Halibel: "If I don't follow through on the things I've decided ta do, I'll be in for a scoldin' by lil' Ana."

Spinning the *kiseru* around in his hand, he placed the next piece of tobacco into the bowl and lit it.

Same as before, he filled his lungs with smoke in one go, and deceived his brain with the illusion that his limbs were coursing with strength. Then, towards Eugard, who was in the center of the cavity, his next attack would—

Eugard: "This shan't do, as thou art too formidable. I have no choice but to display mine true strength."

In the next instant, Eugard leapt out of the crater and raised the Yang Sword before him.

As the Yang Sword descended, Halibel promptly intervened, not with a sword, but by catching Eugard's right arm which held the weapon to block the attack.

Immediately after, the released shockwave passed behind Halibel, reducing the mangled and incinerated remains of the Imperial Capital's buildings to scattered embers.

At this moment, Eugard only held the lone Yang Sword in his hand. The Fiend Sword he had wielded in his left hand until then had been thrust into the cavity, abandoned.

That was not a decision to relinquish a powerful weapon.

Eugard: "Rather than dual wielding a combination of twain swords I have yet to grow accustomed to, I shall face you with the single blade in which mine mastery doth reside."

Halibel: "Really now, yer a darn unpleasant person, Yer Excellency the Emperor."

In all cases, choosing the opponent's least favored option was originally the style of a *shinobi*.

Against Eugard, who implemented that with insight and determination, Halibel kept Eugard's arm restrained, and had his clones step forward from three other directions.

A palm blow and a kick, together with one of them delivering a scatter shot of flying debris by striking a stone they had scooped out from the ground—Eugard, with his arm held, deflected them away with his overwhelming swordsmanship.

The Yang Sword in his right hand had instantly vanished, then reappeared in his left hand, and through that he was able to blow the three approaching

Halibels away whilst scorching them.

Two among them were clones made of fur, but the one to perform the scatter shot had been the actual body.

Sensing the burnt smell of his own fur being scorched, Halibel delivered a karate chop, boring into the cheek of the Eugard as it grazed past, and a few seconds of ultra-high grade combat had begun.



—Herein, there lay an irony that ought to be called a twist of fate.

The Curse of Thorns had forced Eugard into solitude, but the curse itself brought no pain whatsoever to Eugard, who had congenital analgesia. However, even if Eugard was divorced from pain, it was a fact that the curse still ate into his body, and that he continued to receive its effects.

In truth, though the young Eugard had not felt pain either, he did experience a suffocating sensation due to the oppressive nature of the curse, and his actions had thus been limited. But, that influence had determined the amount of time he had left, and was rather inconvenient for Eugard, who had already made up his mind concerning the things he wanted to do.

The level of concord between his body and mind was uncertain.

But, at some point, the effects of the Curse of Thorns had stopped having any disturbance whatsoever on Eugard's body, and Eugard became fully capable of taking action for the sake of fulfilling his own objectives.

That was to say, Eugard's body had grown to be able to deal with the danger that constantly threatened his life— The details of how the

strongest Emperor in the history of the Empire had been born lay within that irony.

Having optimized itself in order to simply live, Eugard's body worked incredibly as a foundation for nurturing his mechanical diligence.

In a position where no guards could be assigned to him, Eugard had trained himself in order to protect himself; having been granted talent, as well as a body that could fully utilize that talent, he continued to grow stronger beyond compare.

Since the Curse of Thorns had made Eugard stronger, this was a meaningless supposition, but his strength and ability with the sword were such that even if the Curse of Thorns had been absent, he still would have been able to wipe out the Nine Divine Generals of that era.

Of course, Eugard's battles, in reality, almost always consisted of him beheading an opponent suffering from the effects of the Curse of Thorns, and his battles against the Nine Divine Generals had gone mostly the same.

For Eugard, battles were not a contest of strength, but rather a situation in which he must perform the duty of executioner.

Eugard: "I bestow mine praise."

This was not a widely known fact, but among the Vollachian Emperors throughout history, Eugard Vollachia was the Emperor who spoke those words the most.

Precisely because they stood not on the same base, precisely because he understood he had been granted a position that differed to that of others, Eugard was generous in his praise towards others.

Therefore, this was quite the ironic encounter.

The ironic fact that the Emperor of the Briar, who had given the most praise to others in the history of the Empire, and the wolfman who took that way of being upon himself in the modern day, naming himself the Admirer, were clashing here like this, separated by life and death.

But within this chance encounter, there yet remained another irony that ought to be called a twist of fate.

As mentioned previously, battles had always been a one-sided affair for Eugard.

As the Curse of Thorns ate into his target, Eugard would face off against enemies that could by no means be said to be in perfect or usual condition, and he would behead them; by no other means had he ever attained victory.

That general conception Eugard Vollachia held of “battles”, began to change.

Through his fierce clash against the Admirer, Halibel, a wolfman to whom the curse was not applied, that change was yielded.

Eugard: “Hah—”

As a breath leaked out from his slightly opened mouth, a flash of Eugard’s blade dyed the world in crimson.

The fiery flash of the sword diagonally cut through the air, yet within the path it carved, the figure of the tall wolfman was nowhere to be found. His opponent had ceased producing clones at random, and had altered his movements towards a thorough evasive maneuver.

His objective was not to buy time, but rather to ascertain Eugard’s swordsmanship.

Eugard: “A fine decision.”

Honest praise, complimenting that the correct choice had been made, filled Eugard's heart.

This resurrected body was in great shape despite the poor quality of its skin, and Eugard even harbored the misapprehension that he could move inexhaustibly.

Of course, that was not the case in reality. This body was not something that could surpass his strength in life, and he ought not to desire anything more excessive than the restoration capabilities whenever the body was broken.

Even the bodies of the undead still felt pain all the same.

Ergo, Eugard stood here alone as the guardian of this location. Even if the others were undead, so long as they entered the range of the curse, they would still be tormented by the binding.

For even if they were undead, Eugard had no intention of indiscriminately inflicting pain upon the peoples of his country. And above all—

Eugard: "I do not wish to allow any personage to disturb mine battle against thee."

A battle, this was indeed a battle.

Contesting his skills against Halibel's, while altering the very form of the Imperial Capital, Eugard funneled all his might into the arm wielding the Yang Sword, and absorbed himself in his rendezvous with an enemy who refused to die.

Since his birth, since his death, this was the very first time he felt his spirits surge within himself while swinging his sword at another.

The first time Eugard had fatally wounded a person was when an assassin, having broken into the mansion where he lived in isolation from his family,



writhed in agony in the courtyard as they held their chest, begging for Eugard to kill them.

Ever since taking his first life at the age of seven, as far as Eugard was concerned, drawing a sword was tantamount to performing an execution.

Though, how was that?

The sensation of wielding his trained swordsmanship to the fullest, yet still only pursuing a life it could not reach, oh what a luscious and esteemed sensation it was.

Eugard: “———”

His thrust-out arm was caught from above and below by his opponent’s karate chop and knee, pulverizing his elbow. The Yang Sword which had parted from his hand vanished into the air, and transferring it to his intact right hand, it flashed with a horizontal strike.

His opponent evaded it by slipping into the ground, and brushing Eugard’s left hip with his fingertips as he slipped through, a hole around the size of a fist was gouged into his hips.

As he turned around, he made an attempt to reach the distant back with the Yang Sword, but he was thwarted by the outstretched arm of a clone from another direction; simultaneously unleashing kicks at the chest of the other, he was furiously blown away. Blown away. Away.

Eugard: “Half a step.”

Next time, he would take half a step further.

Even though Eugard’s swordsmanship had failed to do so just ten-odd seconds prior, he was confident that he would be able to do so the next time around. It was a feat he had never performed during his lifetime or

after his death, however, he could envision innumerable derivative techniques.

That was the growth of an undead, greedy to the point of desperation.

—Forced into solitude by the Curse of Thorns, and with his notion of battles having been altered to that of executions, Eugard Vollachia had never had the opportunity to improve his strength as a warrior.

For the purpose of self-defense, his sword could be trained as much as was necessary due to his unique circumstance, but naught more than that had been required.

That swordsmanship of Eugard's was now rapidly gaining a vast amount of experience, becoming greatly polished.

Eugard was completely unaware that the being he was facing off against was the strongest being of the Kararagi City-States— namely, a being among the top-five most powerful individuals within the current world.

But, absorbing such enormous amounts of combat experience through this confrontation of which he was ignorant, as an undead, Eugard was allowed to grow into a being that greedily became stronger, to an extent much greater than he had been during his lifetime.

Eugard: "I bestow praise... Nay, I thank thee."

Therefore, what spilled from Eugard's mouth was not commendation, but rather gratitude.

A descendent of the abhorrent wolfpeople, had brought about a powerful emotion which Eugard had never felt during his lifetime. Since that was not a displeasing sensation, there ought to have been an appropriate evaluation of the one who had presented it.

That was something that had come from the bottom of Eugard's heart.

Halibel: “Ya don’t gotta thank me. ‘Cause after all, I’m gonna win.”

As ever, Halibel’s quick comebacks were irreverent, but even that irreverence was refreshing.

When he thought back on it, Eugard had scarcely experienced being talked back to, perhaps because people did not want to oppose the Curse of Thorns. Aside from those who had chosen to betray him, it was essentially only Iris who had ever expressed her opinions to Eugard—

Eugard: “—O Star of Mine.”

In front of Eugard as he muttered so, the figure of the wolfman faded like mist.

Combining a peculiar walking technique with an unbelievable movement speed, an optical illusion occurred in a form differing from that of the clones. At the sensation of afterimages being left in his consciousness, Eugard could not help but admire that versatility.

However, there was no need for him to be deluded by such a cheap trick. The approaching presences were from directly above, and from his left and right; at the signs that lethal strikes were furiously closing in, Eugard turned the other way, utterly undaunted.

Then, going half a step further than last time, he stepped towards the rear.

Eugard: “Thou plainly scatterest thy presence— Ergo, the direction bereft of any presence is where thou truly residest.”

Halibel: “Guh.”

His angle of turning around had been insufficient, but still the bottom of the Yang Sword’s hilt sunk into Halibel’s side. The moment he received the sensation of his opponent’s bone shattering, Eugard immediately channeled

heat into the Yang Sword's blade—— the yielded explosion allowed the bottom of the hilt to bury itself even deeper, crushing Halibel's insides.

Eugard: "OHHHHHH——!!!"

With an impact so powerful that it broke his own wrist, Eugard blew Halibel away.

Realizing that he had involuntarily roared as he blew his opponent away, Eugard gained a slight shock. Within Eugard's vision, the blown-away Halibel crashed into the rampart, and the wall violently fissured; the tall wolfman threw out his legs, and lowered his head.

That had been all of Eugard's might. He had unleashed a tremendous blow, the most polished blow he had ever fired off in all his time both alive and posthumously.

That sensation was being updated again and again during his fight against Halibel. Half a step, he had taken half a step further. Next time, he might even go half a step further, and then half a step further again.

Or even further, further beyond, to where scenery, the likes of which Eugard had never before seen, was stretched out.

If Halibel stood back up, if he continued to fight, he might be able to grasp that. *Henceforth, rise, rise, rise and do battle*; as Eugard recognized that he was thinking this from the bottom of his heart——

Eugard: "——I must hasten to the side of Mine Star. I am finished with thee."

Taking the upsurge of spirits approaching their peak and his strong emotions as a warrior, he twisted them into love towards Iris.

Halibel: "———"

He shall admit to it. His battle against Halibel had indeed raised his spirits.

In every conceivable meaning, this had been a stimulus which he had never experienced in either his lifetime or his time after death. He had gained the perspective that upon that path of enhancing himself, which he had not gone down before in his life, such scenery existed.

He did not know whether he would ever be able to have an experience as significant as this in the future.

However, even so, no matter what.

Eugard: “It doth not compare to having Mine Star within mine sight, even if that is for but a blink of an eye.”

That was Eugard’s sense of values, something that had never changed in both his lifetime, or after his death.

No matter the unknown stimuli or elevation of spirits, they would not be able to reach Eugard, who knew Iris.

Despite having understood that he ought to relinquish it, that he ought to give up on it, the reason Eugard had desired the Imperial Throne was because he understood that without it, he would not be able to keep the time he had with Iris for even a second longer.

Since he had obtained the Imperial Throne in exchange for that selfishness, even though the time after he had lost Iris was far longer than the time he had spent with her, he continued to fulfill his duties as Emperor.

Eugard Vollachia was the Emperor who had spent the least amount of time in the Crystal Palace of the Imperial Capital during his reign.

After losing Iris, Eugard had spent most of his life as Emperor by his lonesome. He had even concluded the objective of producing successors with a minimal amount of contact, dedicating his life to the Empire.

Everything else in his life, he used for the sake of Iris. Therefore—

Eugard: “—I shall slay thee, O sable wolfman.”

Declaring that any further time was unnecessary, Eugard took the Yang Sword in his hand, and turned his feet towards the rampart.

Then, he aimed to burn the collapsed Halibel to a crisp with a flash of the sword— he had been unable to do so. Having just attempted to swing the Yang Sword, Eugard’s right arm burst open at the shoulder.

Eugard: “What?”

At the impact that gave him no sensation of being pierced, Eugard raised his eyebrows. But, the pinnacle of his shock lay at what occurred right after— The arm of the undead did not begin to regenerate.

Having been shattered like ceramic, fragments of his right arm scattered, and the Yang Sword was thrust into the ground. And then—

Halibel: “—Finally found the deadspot.”

Akin to an exhale, Halibel spoke in a low voice as he stood up from the rampart. The wolfman, leaning his back against the fissured wall as he stood up, placed his *kiseru* in his mouth once again.

Slowly, he placed tobacco into the bowl, snapped his fingers to set it alight, and breathed the smoke into his lungs. While beholding that action, Eugard placed his hand over the injury of his right arm which was not recovering.

The arm that had disappeared from his right shoulder onwards showed no signs of starting to regenerate.

He clearly understood. Eugard’s right arm had been the first part of his resurrected body to die anew.

The one who had done that was Halibel who stood before his eyes, and it seemed to be the result of the “deadspot” of which he had spoken.

Eugard: “There yet remaineth an abundance of things of which I am unaware.”

Halibel: “Ain’t that right. It’s fantastic that I was able ta teach ya that. The wolfpeople were ‘bout ta be wiped out just before I could do so.”

Clearing his throat with a laugh, Halibel nodded as smoke escaped his nostrils.

The versatility of this wolfman had impressed him repeatedly, but this was the highest grade. To think he was even equipped with a technique to kill the undead, his skills and expertise were terrifying.

Eugard: “In the same manner as thou hadst rended mine arm, shalt thou take even mine life?”

Halibel: “That was my intention for observin’ ya after all. Seems like it’ll be a lil’ tough, but... Well, I think I’mma be able ta do it, don’t’cha agree?”

Eugard: “Thy boasting is irreverent. However, as it is refreshing, I shall forgive it.”

Drawing the Yang Sword out of the ground with his remaining left hand, he faced Halibel. Though he could not read the expression of Halibel, who stood with a loose posture, that statement and demeanor were audacious, and they were no bluff.

Eugard’s opponent had also made preparations to slay him. As the bugging passion within his chest, something he had become aware of for the first time, surged once again, he immediately trampled it.

Feeling an unknown avarice within himself, he could clearly state this.

There existed no radiance in this world that could satisfy Eugard more than Iris.

That was why—

Eugard: “—Sixty-First Emperor, Eugard Vollachia.”

Halibel: “—Admirer, Halibel.”

They gave their introductions, and in the next moment, the figures of both Eugard and Halibel disappeared, as time itself vanished.

Eugard: “———”

Behind each of them as they plunged forth, the kicked ground exploded, and clouds of smoke immediately erupted. Using those explosions as a propelling force, the dozens of meters between Eugard and Halibel had disappeared.

With such extreme speed that it appeared as if the world had shrunk, Eugard's blade sliced through the air in anticipation. The unleashed slash of red dyed its diagonal path a deep crimson, and releasing heat a moment belated, a scorching temperature capable of melting even stone and turn it to liquid was produced.

However, Halibel slightly inclined his body to evade that slash, and only suffering the flesh of his back being slightly singed red at his right shoulder, he pressed forth.

Then, towards Eugard, who lacked an arm, Halibel sprang his front leg up and kicked; Eugard raised up his knee and caught the blow, and a shockwave exploded between the two of them.

The shockwave blew the flames and rubble around them away, and at a distance where they could feel each other's breaths, they furiously traded blows. Between karate chops and the treasured sword of crimson, between kicks and elbows, ramming and grappling techniques interlaced, and the blink of close combat chipped away at Eugard's body, piece-by-piece.

But, his opponent had also sustained damage.



Strangely enough, despite having an arm missing, the degree of wear and tear on both sides was around the same.

Therefore, in order to secure victory, Eugard took half a step further mentally.

Eugard: “—The Yang Sword Vollachia.”

In the midst of their rally, the treasured sword, its name having been called out, vanished from Eugard’s hand.

Sheathed into the sky, it was a supreme treasured sword that could be freely drawn again. Having relinquished it, the left hand that had become empty caught Halibel’s knee, and he crossed gazes with his opponent’s thread-like eyes.

As irony would have it, the eyes of the wolfman and the undead were both of golden hue; just what did those eyes see? Putting strength into his jaw, enough to bite through the mouthpiece of his *kiseru*, Halibel’s body greatly bent backwards.

Above his head, the Yang Sword, having been unsheathed from the sky, nearly grazed him.

The Yang Sword that had been sheathed in the sky, was drawn again from the sheath that was the sky. By utilizing that mechanism of sheathing and unsheathing the sword, Eugard performed a deadly strike— though it was the first time he had used it, it had been magnificently dodged.

However, with his stance broken, Halibel used his momentum from bending backwards to place his hands on the ground, and furiously performed backwards somersaults to avoid, avoid, and avoid the successive slashes.

As Halibel escaped from him, Eugard took a moment to charge up his next sword slash— he noticed something.

Eugard: “———”

Beyond Halibel as he somersaulted rearwards, the crater in the ground which Eugard had made.

And towards that cavity, a small figure from outside the battlefield leapt—it was Groovy. Groovy Gumlet, who ought to have withdrawn from the warfront, leapt whilst coughing up blood.

At the end of his trajectory, the Fiend Sword was lodged within the crater, and reaching his hand towards it—

Eugard: “Magnificent coordination— However...”

He did not call the sudden intrusion an act of cowardice.

He had been aware of Groovy’s existence from the outset. For Groovy to assist Halibel in the eleventh hour was only natural, since they were allies, or rather, anything else would not have made sense.

But, he would not allow that action. Overcoming even that, Eugard would be victorious.

Eugard: “—I shan’t allow thee to take the Fiend Sword.”

Holding the Yang Sword aloft, Eugard threw it at Groovy as the latter leapt towards the cavity.

That instant, the speed of the treasured sword accelerated as it spewed fire, and becoming a ray of crimson light, it went past Halibel’s flank, and made a mad dash towards Groovy.

Even if he had let go of it, the forte of the Yang Sword was such that he could return it to his hand at any given moment.

After the treasured sword skewered Groovy, he would recall the Yang Sword to his hand and challenge Halibel. Rather, at this moment, it was a

delightful miscalculation that his body was now lighter without the Yang Sword as he pursued Halibel.

Of course, he had also considered the possibility that Halibel had aimed for this, and would counterattack, so he readied himself, and—

Groovy: “—Hk.”

The thrown Yang Sword flew in a straight path and skewered Groovy’s small body.

Even though Groovy had twisted his body, the treasured sword of crimson yet pierced his right side. As the blade bore deep into his body, Groovy widened his eyes and coughed up a blood clot at that impact, and then, an ear-splitting screech—

Groovy: “—We got you, fuckface.”

Had not been let out.

Instead, Groovy’s bloodstained mouth smiled, and he stretched out his finger to point at Eugard. There was disrespect, but surpassing even that, there was a shock that occurred within Eugard’s vision.

With just one more step to go ahead of him, Groovy’s hand did not reach the Fiend Sword, but even though he had not touched it, it snapped out of the crater as if to escape from his hand, and flew away.

Groovy: “Just so you know, this bitch-ass *katana* fucking loathes me...”

It was reasoning beyond his comprehension, however, such strange idiosyncrasies were an unavoidable part of Enchanted and Treasured Swords.

Snapping out, the Fiend Sword fled from the cavity while revolving, and caught by a hand covered in black fur, the bewitching luster of the blade

flickered.

—With Fiend Sword in hand, Halibel readied himself before Eugard.

Eugard: “———”

For a brief moment of combat, Eugard immediately recalled the Yang Sword; with the treasured sword no longer inside of him, Groovy’s abdomen spilled a vast amount of blood.

But, Eugard had certainly taken up a weapon, and brandished it towards Halibel, who shouldered the Fiend Sword.

Then, as the flash of crimson swung down from overhead, it was unleashed as a blow that updated the most supreme swordsmanship in all Eugard’s time both alive and after death—

Halibel: “Really now, that’s just so darn praiseworthy— If it weren’t me, that woulda completely destroyed anyone on the receivin’ end.”

Eugard: “What an arrogant manner of speech. However, taking that preeminent feat into consideration, I shall forgive it.”

As Halibel made that statement at such a close distance, Eugard drew his chin back without altering his expression.

Suffering a conclusive blow from the Fiend Sword that surpassed even the finest brandish of Eugard Vollachia, Eugard’s body was severed obliquely.

Halibel had been the one to perform that feat, and around the left side of his chest, the Curse of Thorns was coiled.

The fact that Eugard Vollachia truly felt admiration from the bottom of his heart in regards to the Admirer, Halibel, was something that, without a single word needing to be said, was exceedingly obvious between the two who had crossed swords.



Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.ll2o ([source](#))

# Arc 8 Chapter 51 - *Tennozan*

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 4 “Medium O’Connell”,  
Parts 1-2

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Original Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar) – [Complete](#)

—Through the strategy devised by Natsuki Subaru, the Rescue the Vollachian Empire from Destruction Squad had dispersed to various places in the Imperial Capital.

It was a strategy that aimed to have them all coordinated and so that they would not interfere with each other as they each accomplished their respective roles, but the most important part of it was not actually any of the faces fighting in the Imperial Capital.

The key to this strategy was, decisively, all the strength of the Empire that had been left behind in the Fortified City of Garkla.

With military forces deployed throughout at a massive scale, large city carried personnel equivalent to the brains and heart of Vollachia.

For how long would they have to hold back the hosts of undead marching on the city in order to seize it? That was undoubtedly the time limit imposed on the ultimate decisive battle on which the survival of the Vollachian Empire was staked; not only that, but in addition to the Empire, the destiny of the entire world would be divined by this important point.

By gathering as many of the undead to the Fortified City as they could, it would become easier for the Rescue from Destruction Squad to take action in the Imperial Capital. But at the same time, if the Fortified City were to



fall, even supposing the Imperial Capital side were to succeed, it would likely be impossible for the Empire to rebuild in the aftermath.

That was to say—

???: “—Undoubtedly, this shall be as decisive as «*Tennozan*»<sup>10</sup>.”

Wielding a Knight’s sword, while speaking words that were not very familiar to his ears, Julius Juukulius ran across a rampart of the Fortified City with his tall stature, gallantly fluttering through the air.

The elegant Knight directed the tip of his sword towards a horde of undead clinging to the rampart, trying to invade the city. Thrusting their weapons into the wall, the enemies climbed upwards while making improvised footholds; spinning as he swooped down upon them, Julius’s sword flashed unrelentingly.

Julius: “I will not allow it!”

The arms and backs of the undead clinging to the wall were showered in slashes as they were felled to the ground.

And, as Julius jumped upon one of the blades they had been using as a foothold, he turned his eyes to the countless weapons that had been thrust into the wall, and,

Julius: “Aro! I wish to borrow your wind!”

After calling that out, a green wind burst forth, and as if coiling around them, it pulled all the weapons out from the wall they had been lodged into, and the toils of the undead that had been building up those footholds, were reduced to naught in a single stroke.

Finally, breaking the sword he stood upon with a jump, Julius returned to the top of the rampart.

While tickling the green light of his contracted Spirit, Julius took a slight breather.

He had succeeded in hindering the enemies that had been clinging to this wall, but he could not afford to be careless.

Even if they broke past the city's utmost outer wall, there was still a second-most, and third-most outer bulwark, and even more sturdy fortresses, but nevertheless—

???: "It is faster than we had expected for them to have already gotten this *close*."

Julius: "—Miss Taritta."

Standing atop the rampart, calling out to Julius as he caught his breath, was a dark-skinned woman with part of her black hair dyed blue— the female warrior who commanded the People of Shudraq, Taritta.

Since every member of the tribe wielded bows, the Shudraquian warriors could attack the undead from afar, and they were one of the primary forces in holding the Fortified City against the siege. Taritta, whose skill with the bow stood out in particular, even among the excellent archery of the Shudraq, was one of the cornerstones of the current defensive battle.

In fact, just like Julius, who had just removed the weapons that had been thrust into the rampart, she was obstructing the undead from surmounting the wall by firing arrows from atop the rampart.

He admired how truly reliable her skills were, but her words were a cruel reality that could not be ignored.

Julius: "—In such a short period of time, the front line has been pushed back to this extent."



As he said that, Julius turned his gaze to the outside of the ramparts and stroked the scar underneath his left eye.

Ahead of Julius's intrepid gaze, the heads of the advancing hosts of undead could be seen swaying all the way to the horizon, so it was visually apparent that an extraordinarily large army was approaching.

The line of defense that had originally been deployed outside the ramparts had been broken through, and the Imperial Soldiers fighting on the outside had been forced to draw the warfront back and downsize. Though of course, when considering the enormous number of enemies, there was no doubt that they had foreseen that this would happen eventually.

Taritta: "The occasional formidable undead among them are quite difficult to deal *with*, aren't *they*?"

Julius: "I concur. As soon as they are found, there is no choice but to have a capable individual in close vicinity deal with them, but..."

Indeed, it happened right as Julius uttered those words.

???: "—Hk!!"

On the battlefield below them, the group that had been fighting together as one single mass were blown away all in one go.

Looking down, what had flown through the air whilst raising thick screams, were members of the Pleiades Battalion, whom Subaru had hastened to the Imperial Capital with as reinforcements.

Through some perplexing strategy, it was a battalion composed of individuals who each boasted bizarre strength; having blown away its members, scattering them, was someone holding large swords in both of their arms— no, with both of her arms entirely transformed into large swords, was a female undead of a dreadful, heinous appearance.

???: “Fuck... now you’ve really gone and done it...!”

???: “Waitwaitwaitwait! Don’t go rushin’ in without a plan! Bro’ll need to shoulder the burden!”

???: “Fall back! We’ll have everyone surround her and then take her down!”

Before the heinous undead, the group that should have been done for stoutly stood back up.

Without incurring any casualties, their undeterred fighting spirit was worthy of praise, but even from Julius’s perspective, the strength of that female warrior was unmistakably first-class.

Thinking that he must rush there at once, Julius was about to leave the rampart to Taritta, and jump down below——

???: “——Nah, Lion Knight-kun is already there.”

Striking upon Julius’s eardrums, was a voice disproportionately cheerful for the battlefield. The information brought about by that voice, did in fact give rise to change on the battlefield beneath them.

Having rushed over to the warrior who dual-wielded large swords, golden mace in hand, was Goz.

Goz: “I have never had the opportunity to face you, but neither is there a chance that I could mistake you! So you have been resurrected, Gladiator Empress!!”

As Goz roared, his mace and the female warrior’s large swords collided, and a shockwave blew violently across the battlefield.

Between the two of them, extremely heavyweight weaponry which an ordinary person would never be able to lift traded blows, and the ensuing

violence scattered the surrounding Imperial Soldiers and undead, tossing them around like a storm.

It was a skirmish where one must stand their ground, but he had ceased advancing towards it. It was best to entrust that place to Goz.

Julius: “I thank you for stopping me, Flop-dono.”

Flop: “Ha-ha-ha, no problem! It’s just because I had to let Finest-kun and Taritta-san focus on the battle right in front of them! This is about all that my powerless self can do to be useful!”

Smiling without getting worked up was Flop, whose bright attitude remained unchanged even on the battlefield.

As a non-combatant, and brother to a candidate for Empress Consort, he should have been ordered to be on stand-by within the fortress. He had shown up on a rampart which could have even been called the front line, so Taritta was shocked.

Taritta: “Flop!? Why are you *here*...?”

Flop: “Huh, it’s because the situation appears to be one of all-out war. Providing aid to the wounded, repairing equipment, there’s tons of stuff like that for people who can’t fight to do. Naturally, I’m also one of those people.”

Patting his slim chest, Flop held out a quiver to Taritta.

Taritta accepted it without a second thought; she already carried a quiver on her back, but the remaining number of arrows was not an amount she could depend on, so Flop’s resupply was just what she needed.

So then, he had probably also walked along the rampart distributing quivers to the other Shudraqians.

Including the non-combatants, everybody was taking part in this battle. His attitude embodied those words.

Flop: “How’s the situation?”

Taritta: “—Everybody is fighting *hard*. If we keep up the defensive *battle*, we will be able to defend the wall for some *time*. But *also...*”

Julius: “It would be a different story if a flying dragon rider were to appear among our opponents.”

Taritta responded to Flop’s question, and as she hesitated to continue, Julius provided the conclusion in her stead. At that reply, Flop’s expression earnestly stiffened.

Given that he was a young man who was always cheerfully smiling, that slight action was strangely impactful. But, it was only natural for his expression to become severe.

The people of the Vollachian Empire were more than aware of how incredible flying dragon riders were.

Flop: “———”

Right after the battle had begun, through a simultaneous attack by Julius and the People of Shudraq, the deceased flying dragons that had closed in as the first wave— the undead flying dragons had been deterred. Thereafter, all the threats from the sky that sporadically came flying in were reliably dealt with by the Shudraqians, who had been granted the duty of undead flying dragon hunting.

However, that was only possible because there were no undead serving as flying dragon riders among their opponents.

The ability of untamed flying dragons was incomparable to that of flying dragons that were united with a flying dragon rider.

Just a single pair of flying dragon and rider would likely be able to overpower even a flock of one hundred flying dragons in a clash. That was how exceptional flying dragon riders, who tactically utilized the sky, were.

—In the past, Julius had once crossed blades with a flying dragon rider.

Back then, he had miraculously seized victory thanks to the assistance of Ferris, who had been traveling with him, but had Julius been by himself, the positions of winner and loser would have surely been flipped.

There would likely never be another flying dragon rider to that caliber within the Empire, but, if rather than just undead flying dragons appearing on this warfront against the undead, there were to appear an undead flying dragon rider mounted upon one, the situation would completely change.

Flop: “Of course, a deceased flying dragon rider and their beloved dragon being revived together... because the precedent of that is extremely rare, it’s conceivable that the city’s skies have still yet to be taken.”

That opinion of Flop’s was likely correct when inspecting the current siege situation.

Flying dragon riders were a threat, but it took a long time for riders and their flying dragons to build trust, and without man and dragon undoubtedly becoming one, their true value could not be displayed.

That rule was something that could not be ignored, even supposing they were dead people being resurrected via principles beyond the realm of reason.

Without an undead rider and undead flying dragon that had been together since they were alive, the phenomenon of “undead flying dragon riding” could not be actualized.

At present, that was likely the reason why there were no undead flying dragon riders seen in the skies of the Fortified City.

Julius: “...But, it is ironic that the one rare instance of it occurring happened to be the most formidable flying dragon rider.”

Denying that faint relief, was the existence of the undead flying dragon rider which Julius had ascertained with his own eyes.

The undead who had appeared in the midst of the battle on the coupled dragon carriages— Balleroy Temeglyph, sitting astride the deceased beloved dragon with whom he had been together while alive, had plunged into the midst of the enemy with his overwhelming mobility.

If he were to participate in this battlefield, it was quite likely that he would destroy the Fortified City’s warfront as a single rider.

Even if he had not yet shown up at this moment, that possibility could not be excluded.

Flop: “—I don’t think you need to worry about that.”

Julius: “Flop-dono?”

Flop: “It’d be different if there were other flying dragon riders who were being resurrected, but I don’t think you need to worry about Balleroy showing up.”

With a tone and expression of extreme conviction, Flop denied Julius’s vigilance.

Julius knit his brows at that statement, and while firing arrows at the undead clinging to the wall, ascertaining that she had hit the opponent’s knee, Taritta spoke,

Taritta: “How can you say that *definitively*?”

Flop: “Because Balleroy knows that Medium and I were on the coupled dragon carriages. Naturally, he’d also be thinking that we’re in this Fortified City. It’d be hard for him to come and lay waste to this place, right?”

Taritta: “*That’s...*”

Flop replied with a single eye closed, to which Taritta was at a loss for words.

Julius was in agreement with Taritta’s reaction. It was impossible to say that Flop’s point had any persuasive power to it. If he had hopes for the undead Balleroy’s emotions and compassion, then—

Julius: “Unfortunately, there is likely no hope for the humanity that they possessed during their lifetimes. The thoughts of the *zombies...* of the undead are being twisted. If not for that, it would be impossible for so many of the dead to participate in the ruin of their own country.”

In fact, there was such an enormous number of undead mobilizing that they had blanketed the plains all the way to the horizon.

It was difficult to imagine that all of these undead had truly resented the Vollachian Empire during their lifetimes, and were all trying to carry out their long-cherished desire as soon as they were revived.

It was natural to think that the caster who had resurrected them, was manipulating the undead for their own benefit.

As Julius pointed that out, Flop scratched his cheek with a “Yeah” as he nodded.

Flop: “I have the same opinion as Finest-kun. In the first place, the thoughts of all the dead people are being changed. But still, I’ve seen that there are parts that haven’t changed.”

Julius: “So, are you saying that only Balleroy-dono still retains his emotions and compassion?”

Flop: “That would be a great shock to my feelings! But, that’s not it, Finest-kun. Though, I think that you and Taritta-san would have an easier time noticing it than I did.”

Taritta: “*We would?*”

Without having any idea, Julius and Taritta exchanged glances.

Something that not Flop, who had shared a relationship with Balleroy during his lifetime, but rather Julius, whose blade had clashed with his spear, and Taritta, who had never even seen his face, could notice, that was—

Flop: “—It’s their fighting style.”

Julius: “———”

Flop: “Even if their thoughts have changed from when they were alive, to dispossess them of their fighting style would make it meaningless to resurrect the person in question. That’s why, all of the dead people have the same fighting style as they did during their lives. Am I mistaken?”

Julius: “...I cannot say anything for certain, but that possibility seems high.”

It was not as if he was deeply aware of the forms that the undead he fought took during their lifetimes, but Flop’s conjecture should have been right on the mark.

At Julius and Taritta’s affirmative reaction, Flop smiled.

With some traces of nostalgia and sorrow, it was a terribly melancholic smile.

Flop: “Supposing Balleroy were to come here, he would’ve come here at the outset before anybody else, shooting out the vital points of this city.



The Magical Sharpshooter, Balleroy Temeglyph, didn't serve as the vanguard. That's my basis for thinking that Balleroy isn't coming to this battlefield."



—Balleroy Temeglyph was a man of principle who hated letting his subordinates recklessly die in vain.

However, that did not mean he hated the “law of iron and blood” employed by Vollachia, nor did that mean he was a philanthropist who stood in opposition to imperialism.

The Imperial Way of thinking, which esteemed the strong and oppressed the weak, was something rather convenient for Balleroy, who had been born into a humble commoner household. It would not make sense for one to use that construction of society to rise in the world, and then flip-flop upon gaining status.

But then again, Balleroy himself had not thought so deeply about it, and he was not particularly committed to imperialism. He had just been lucky that what was already there was compatible with his nature and talents.

Ergo, Balleroy's hatred for his soldiers dying in vain was ultimately unrelated to imperialism.

This was a way of thinking that Balleroy had acquired from teachings given to him by others.

—In the formation of Balleroy's character, there had been two primary individuals who had imparted a great influence.

The first had found promise in his talents and picked him out, granting him opportunities such as receiving education and meeting his beloved dragon;

his benefactor, Serena Dracroy.

The other had used an undiscerning Balleroy, still a young boy, to successfully deal with the pursuers who were after him for stealing; having met the embodiment of mischief itself, he was someone like a big brother to him, Miles.

Through his encounters and days spent with those two people, who possessed a mix of qualities that were both befitting and unbecoming of the Empire, the character of the individual known as Balleroy Temeglyph was constructed.

And, having been constructed, Balleroy's humanity very much hated for his subordinates to die in vain.

Subordinates were individuals who were within his reach, they were his people— He hated for his people to be sacrificed.

That was why, with the odds of victory having been decided beforehand, when taking part in the rebellion devised for the Emperor's convenience, Balleroy had not taken any of his subordinates with him, and instead joined by his lonesome.

In the end, he had lost his life because of that, so Balleroy's decision had been mistakenly correct.

—If one were to fight, the deaths of enemies and allies alike would be unavoidable.

He would also take the lives of others. He could not say that he wanted for that rule to only not apply for his people. But if he was to try to have things go that way, he could not rely on outside help, for it could only be fulfilled by his own strength.

Therefore, the conclusion Balleroy Temeglyph had arrived at, was that of the fastest sniper.

As the wings of his beloved dragon raced through the sky, he would create an ideal opening, and would shoot out the beings that were the vitals and heart of the opposing side—— that was the best method for his desires to be granted.

Balleroy was a man of the Empire. No matter how many of his enemies died, his chest would not ache in the slightest.

But, he did not want his own people to die. That was why, Balleroy's sniping desired the fastest conclusion. Without regard to enemies or allies, he was confident that this was the best method of preventing casualties among his people. Hence——

Balleroy: “——I gotcha, Carillon.”

Responding to the call of his deceased beloved dragon, Balleroy stood up from the side of the bed.

In the bed before them, an unconscious Madelyn was silently asleep—— Currently, her consciousness was back inside the dragonhusk, Mezoreia.

Needless to say, the violent force of a Dragon was far too dangerous an excessive force to wield in the Imperial Capital.

But, it was frightening that when considering the enemies that could potentially face off against it, “excessive” was not a term that could be employed with certainty.

Balleroy: “I know I'm someone who once served, but you guys are absolutely nuts, you Empire folk.”

A Dragon was supposedly the toughest lifeform in this world, so it was a strange notion to have an idea of monsters that could not only compete

with, but surpass one.

With his title, he had also been ranked among those individuals, but Balleroy himself did not think that his skills were on par with those who towered above all else like that.

Only, it was just that there was absolutely no correlation between being strong and seizing victory.

Stroking the sky-blue hair on Madelyn's forehead, Balleroy began to head towards the balcony where his beloved dragon awaited. Midway through, he grabbed the spear that was leaning against the wall, and Carillon directed its back toward him, wings folded as it stood on the white balcony.

As he stroked the base of one of its wings, his beloved dragon nuzzled against Balleroy's shoulder with its long neck.

That was exactly the relationship they had shared ever since Carillon had hatched from its egg. Carillon's habits had not changed from the time it was still small and weak, a baby flying dragon.

Balleroy: "Habits and preferences won't change even if you die... Though, I guess I can't speak for others."

Saying that in a self-deriding tone, he flicked up the hand that had been stroking and gave a firm pat to the back. As Carillon lowered its posture at that signal, Balleroy gallantly jumped upon its back, and faced to the fore.

Taking in a sweeping view of the vast Imperial Capital just outside of the Crystal Palace's balcony, the beautifully organized cityscape was devastated, destroyed, and engulfed in the air of a battlefield all throughout.

This atmosphere was not just present in the Imperial Capital, but throughout the entire Empire—it was especially potent around the

Fortified City of Garkla, where great hosts of undead were being sent.

The Fortified City had received the refugees and Imperial Soldiers who had evacuated from the Imperial Capital, and a vehement battle was now unfolding there. Originally, Balleroy also should have been an attacker in the siege of that city. However—

???: “—*The sensation of losing your nerve, I am also in the process of understanding it. Since there is fear that you may be unable to perform to your usual ability, it cannot be said to be appropriate. Command: Required.*”

The caster who had revived Balleroy— the Witch who called herself Sphinx, spoke thus as she decided to keep Balleroy in the Imperial Capital. Rather than concern for Balleroy, it felt more like she wanted to ascertain the unknown flavor of the sensation that was budding within herself for the first time.

Of course, there was also no doubt that there were expectations for Balleroy to control Madelyn, who had defected to this side, in order to secure the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, as an ally.

He had several reservations about the duty that was expected from him, but even without that, it was convenient for Balleroy to remain in the Imperial Capital.

Because, then things would end without him needing to encounter his siblings who had likely entered the Fortified City— was not the reason.

This was something Sphinx had judged, and it was also something Balleroy himself had intuited, but,

Balleroy: “If it were His Excellency, he’d come for sure, wouldn’t he?”

The Vincent Vollachia that Balleroy knew was a cool-headed, stern Emperor.

Even if the castle lord would never move during times of peace, they would always try to stand with their own legs in the location of the ultimate conclusion. That was not just limited to Vincent, as it was customary for all Vollachian Emperors.

This could also be said to be the influence of the “law of iron and blood” which was considered to be the Imperial Way.

Thus, while he hated the Vollachian Empire more than anybody else, Vincent would try to faithfully fulfill the duty of Vollachian Emperor, so he would be coming to the Imperial Capital no matter what.

In order to destroy the ringleader of the Great Disaster, Sphinx, he would come with Yang Sword in hand.

Balleroy: “—I sure got completely fooled by Chisha.”

At the genesis of the Great Disaster, in a situation where he had not yet grasped the existence of the undead or of himself, despite there being no opportunity more ideal than that, Balleroy’s surprise attack had not reached Vincent.

Chisha’s meddling had saved Vincent, and the Great Disaster’s fastest victory had been deterred.

However—

Balleroy: “Next time, nobody’s gonna serve as His Excellency’s shield.”

He would absolutely not miss his next opportunity.

If Vincent himself was coming to the Imperial Capital, Balleroy would shoot him through the heart with certainty. Once he accomplished that, the hope of the Vollachian Empire would be severed.

And then, the threat of the Great Disaster would head north, and then even the Kingdom of Lugunica would—

Carillon: “—Kiryarahhh.”

That instant, the neighing of his beloved dragon drew Balleroy’s attention towards “that”.

Balleroy: “———”

Looking up as he felt a tingle on his neck, Balleroy doubted his own eyes.

Riding on Carillon’s back, Balleroy had been seeking his target, the figure of Vincent, with a bird’s-eye view over the battlefield-turned Imperial Capital, so he had been straining his eyes to see every detail and to not miss any changes on the battlefield.

From somewhere outside of Balleroy’s vigilance, something had boldly taken aim for the Crystal Palace.

—Directly above the most beautiful palace in the world, blazing balls of flame rained down one after the other.

Balleroy: “Carillon!”

At his sharp call, his beloved dragon instantly spread its wings, and with the lift generated from their flapping, its large body soared up into the skies of the Imperial Capital. With each powerful flap of its wings, its speed and altitude swiftly climbed, and taking Balleroy up along with it, the undead flying dragon ascended to the sky.

As if to obstruct the ascending Balleroy’s flight path, the flaming spheres, around the size of a human, relentlessly fell towards them— And towards them, he aimed his spear.

Balleroy: “Ain’t gonna letcha!”

The tip of the spear within Balleroy's hand contained a faint light as he pointed it towards the sky, and in that instant, the fired bullet of light collided with the descending blaze, and as an explosion occurred midair, the sky was dyed red.

It was not a single shot. Two shots, three shots, firing successively until thirteenth total light orbs shot down the flaming spheres; with a thunderous sound enveloping the skies of the Imperial Capital, Balleroy and Carillon pushed through the swelling flames of the explosion.

Balleroy: "What kinda stuff d'ya think you're doing, passing above the clouds like that?"

He had swept away the fiery rain, yet Balleroy was amazed by the skill of his opponent.

If the balls of flame had come straight for the Palace, or if they had flown in a parabola like an arrow or a stone, they would have easily been detected from the Crystal Palace. The reason why Balleroy's eyes had been unable to do so was obvious: the flaming spheres had come from far away, flying above the thick clouds in the sky of the Imperial Capital, and then went straight downwards when they were directly above the Crystal Palace.

When putting it into words, what had been done was plain and simple. But, when compared to actually performing it, there was a difference between heaven and earth—the divine feat of throwing a stone above the clouds and hitting a target from a place several kilometers away, this was a deed more dreadfully difficult than accomplishing that without even using one's hands.

But, Balleroy was in a position that, while seldom seen within the Empire, was capable of using magic, even if it was only specialized to one trick.

Balleroy: "I'm gonna have to return the favor!"



Having finished dealing with the flaming spheres that had pierced the clouds and fallen from the sky, Carillon soared to the heavens. Firmly holding onto its back, Balleroy's attention shifted to the far south of the Imperial Capital.

Due south of the Crystal Palace, the area around the gate of the Imperial Capital was being safeguarded by Mezoreia. From the distance and angle of the unleashed balls of flame, he judged that the enemy in question was a little to the west from there—— Balleroy's undead left eye, dyed black with a golden iris looming within, the vicinity around it subtly wavered.

That was not due to any change yielded in Balleroy's face, but due to a change yielded in the atmosphere surrounding his left eye.

Using magic to bend light, Balleroy created a scope in order to see far into the distance. Looking through it with his left eye, he imposingly aimed his spearhead in that direction.

Securing the sniping angle and distance from his flying dragon's speed, he specialized in the one trick of firing bullets of light to achieve ultra-long-range sniping, and in combination with a scope of light that prevented him from losing sight of his target, Balleroy would fight.

Supposing it was an open plain with no obstacles, Balleroy's light orbs could hit a moving target from several kilometers away.

Balleroy: “———”

This time, too, Balleroy closed his right eye with the intention of doing so, and focused his attention to his left eye.

The non-existent scope created from the bending of light leapt across the cityscape of the Imperial Capital, and going even further beyond, grasped the figure of the enemy who had thrown those flaming spheres towards the Crystal Palace——

Balleroy: “—Medi.”

Muttering out in a husky breath, Balleroy Temeglyph’s scope clearly projected that figure.

Golden hair glistening in a manner akin to the rays of the sun fluttered, and having risen to the sky while being held in the arms of a man in a long cloak, the girl’s blue eyes were trained on Balleroy, whom she should not have been able to see.

And then, clearly perceiving the inaudible words spoken by those lips, a chord was struck within Balleroy’s heart.

Medium: “Jeez, I won’t let you go off wherever you please anymore. Come and talk to me properly, Ballebro.”

# Arc 8 Chapter 52 - Medium O'Connell

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 4 “Medium O'Connell”,  
Parts 3-5

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Original Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar) – [Complete](#)

???: “—Such unskillful command.”

Standing by the window of the command center within the Fortified City of Garkla, Serena Dracroy muttered so whilst gazing through the sole gap in the towering walls that defended the city.

Among the soldiers of the Vollachian Empire, there were none who did not grasp the importance of controlling the skies.

It was to the extent that, even in this besiegement, the greatest concern was the allocation of air defenses. The People of Shudraq, powerful masters of archery, had exceptionally numerous opportunities to play an active role.

The reason why so many of those women were being instructed to keep watch on the sky was because the opposition's potential aerial assets required that level of vigilance.

And yet, with sporadic attacks from the deployed undead flying dragons which could hardly be called successful, the Scorching Lady herself, owner of the foremost flying dragon squadron in all of Vollachia, even felt a sense of irritation towards the enemy.

Serena: “Though if I was the enemy's commanding officer, I'd be able to bring down this city far more efficiently.”

???: "...At the height of this decisive battle, could you please not say such frightening things?"

Serena had clicked her tongue with dissatisfaction towards the opponent's tactics, and interjecting upon having heard that was a delicate man occupying the same command center, Otto.

He was a man who had guts despite his gentle appearance, and Serena also had a high evaluation of his character, but regrettably he had a tendency to not let others take risks.

Serena: "You only let yourself take risks... That'd be fine for a subordinate, but you'd be a boring man to have as a lover."

Otto: "If you were to say that you have taken a fancy to me, Countess Dracroy, I would feel as if I was being told there was a flaw in my personality, so I do not object to your assessment, but..."

Serena: "Hmph, I see. So you don't like a woman with a scar on her face?"

Otto: "I can say with confidence that my attitude does not change based on one's appearance. It is far more important to be able to converse and come to a mutual understanding with each other. And even with your scar, I do find you to be quite beautiful, High Countess."

???: "Whatcha two talkin' 'bout? Get yer acts together."

Serena folded her arms as she stood near the window, and Otto had responded to her with a look of dumbfoundment. And having been dumbfounded by his response, was the emissary from Kararagi, Anastasia.

Opposite to the dumbfounded Anastasia, Berstetz, paying no concern to what the rest of them were going on about, looked over a laid-out map as he restlessly exchanged words with a soldier who served the role of dispatching orders.

For some time now, the war situation had been being reported without interruption, with orders being shouted back and forth loudly. The hectically changing situation and the bursting of blood and lives—— it was the fragrant scent of the battlefield.

Serena: “This is precisely what it means to be in the Empire. My sense of smell for battle has grown dull under the reign of His Excellency. I, of all people, had forgotten that war is a part of everyday life.”

Anastasia: “If ya try n’ say that’s what the Empire is, y’ain’t properly repayin’ the Emperor-san who tried to rule in peace.”

Serena: “What, I’m a poor loser. If I was truly discontent with His Excellency’s rule, I ought to have done something about it through my own strength. Since I have not done so, the likes of my words are nothing more than jest. He attempted to impose a reign that was contrary to imperialism, and the method he used to implement it was imperialism... Sadly, His Excellency is symbolic of the Empire.”

While the person in question would likely not desire sympathy, she could not help but pity how he walked a path of solitude.

Though it was true that Vincent shunned battle, if he twisted the tenets of others for that purpose, then that would fall into the realm of the “law of iron and blood”.

——Only in the midst of conflict and struggle, could precious things be born.

Regardless of whether the Vollachian “law of iron and blood” declared so or not, that was Serena’s own interpretation of the Imperial Way, and she had accepted those values. She understood that it was ephemeral to love things that could only be born amidst that, but it was in her nature.

Therefore——

Serena: “—So you haven’t come, Balleroy?”

Staring at the vast, desolate sky, Serena muttered as if she still had one final regret.

The battle had been ongoing for quite some time, and the armies of both sides had suffered no small number of casualties. The first wave and vanguard of this battlefield had been completely finished off— that was to say, the Magical Sharpshooter, who followed the principle of concluding battles with minimal casualties, was not flying in the skies of this battlefield.

If he had come, Serena’s heart would have been shot out a long time ago.

Serena: “———”

Tracing the vertical scar that ran across the left side of her face, Serena closed her eyes for a few seconds.

Emerging on the back of her eyelids, was the slightly dirty boy she had found during her younger days. The figure of him growing up, losing his life, and in the end, being revived as an undead, pointing his spear towards her—

Serena: “That last one is merely my own delusion.”

With pallid skin and lifeless golden eyes, the undead form of Balleroy was something that Serena had never seen.

In the battle for the Imperial Capital he had aimed for Vincent in the Crystal Palace, and at the coupled dragon carriages he had carried Lamia away with her shattered soul. However, during both of those opportunities, Serena had been unable to meet Balleroy.

And, Balleroy was not here at the Fortified City either. That was reality.

Serena: "...It'd probably be fine for you to hate me."

Muttering so, Serena stood by the window while picturing the undead Balleroy who had not appeared. While standing there, she had no choice but to admit to her unforeseen state of mind.

She would not have minded being killed if it was by Balleroy's hand. That was why she had gone out of her way to expose herself via the window, and had been awaiting the sniping of the Magical Sharpshooter.

Anastasia: "I thought you'd already settled yer feelin's?"

Serena: "———"

Closing one eye, Anastasia was examining Serena's expression from the side.

As Anastasia looked at Serena with her round turquoise eye, it seemed as if that gaze was seeing through her inner thoughts; along with Otto, merchants proved to be quite shrewd.

It must have been under unthinkable fortune that Flop and Medium had been able to survive in the cunning world of commerce.

Thus, to the extent that she was mentally dodging it with useless thoughts, the strike upon the bulleyes had been no shallow one whatsoever.

Anastasia: "If the enemy's aimin' for the commandin' officer first, that'd be the same as targettin' the people in this command center. So, you've gone n' put yerself right in the firin' line... Couldn't'cha at least consult with us first before doin' that?"

Serena: "Sorry. I had thought it would've been easier to deal with a situation in which it was obvious who was going to be targeted, instead of a situation where it was unknown who would be shot. With all the wise

people present here, you guys would be able to calmly deal with things if my head was suddenly blown apart, wouldn't you?"

???: "Even supposing that were the case, I think it would be best to search for a route in which it is not blown apart, and I am not confident that Ana or I could remain so composed. We are not like Otto-kun."

Otto: "Though even I would jump bolt upright if you were to suddenly die!?"

Upon receiving an unexpected evaluation Otto raised his voice, but Anastasia exchanged glances with the Spirit accompanying her— Echidna, and shrugged her shoulders.

Serena would generally be in agreement with them, but in any case, Serena's expectations had been off the mark.

Serena: "With Balleroy's absence, considering that no flying dragon squadron composed of undead has emerged, the value in retaining my living flying dragon squadron has fallen. If there are any fronts of the battle with unfavorable prospects, have them be deployed there. They'll overturn any disadvantage in the blink of an eye."

Anastasia: "That's right. It's a foolish plan to deploy assets one-by-one, but it's just sloppy gamblin' to be pushed back while keepin' the units with high offensive capability in reserve. I agree that it's fine to use 'em. Only..."

Otto: "—It is concerning that it seems as if the opponent does not have a flying dragon squadron."

Anastasia furrowed her thin eyebrows in concern, and Otto muttered the following words in her stead. In response to their concern, Serena slightly exhaled a "Hmm", and,

Serena: "There's not a high probability that any undead flying dragon riders have successfully paired up with their deceased flying dragon... Be that as it



may, it's certainly unnatural that there have been absolutely none. In that case——”

Otto: “——Rather than the usual application of a flying dragon squadron, there is a high possibility that one is being used in an unorthodox manner, correct?”

Serena: “Unorthodox... that's...”

And, it happened right as she was about to reach the heart of the matter——  
With such force as if to break the door of the command center, somebody had come rushing in with a report.

Out of breath, the messenger made an urgent expression as they shouted “Excuse me!” in a shaky voice. Receiving that, Berstetz, who had been looking down at the map, raised his head,

Berstetz: “To the point.”

Messenger: “Yessir! A target requiring caution has appeared! Enemy flying dragon squadron, confirmed!”

Serena: “——Have they come?”

Hearing the messenger's report, Serena's expression grew severe, as if to say that someone who ought to have come had finally arrived. Then, Serena looked closely out the window, searching for signs of the enemy in the sky.

But she could not find the enemy flying dragon squadron. Behind Serena harboring suspicions, the messenger proceeded with the continuation of the report. That was——

Messenger: “——An enemy flying dragon squadron has passed over the large mountain behind the great fortress, and has invaded the airspace above the

fortifications! They are deploying enemy soldiers, the undead have breached the city!”



—Medium O’Connell possessed the Divine Protection of Morale.

To speak plainly, the Divine Protection of Morale was something that would boost the physical capabilities of one’s body in concert with how roused their spirits and determination were.

Medium was unaware of her own Divine Protection, and even her older brother Flop was unknowing that his younger sister was the possessor of a Divine Protection. Only, at times when she had to persevere, power would surge within her as she thought “I gotta do my best!”, and as her brother would tell her “Do your best!”, she felt the sensation of power surging within her.

Hence, with the specifics unknown to them, the siblings’ relationship of supporting each other had always remained the optimal solution, and that rare precedent was also the secret behind the strength of the O’Connell siblings.

But, the troublesome aspect of the Divine Protection of Morale was undoubtedly that fluctuations in one’s mood influenced their ability; while the elevation of one’s feelings would enhance their abilities, it was a double-edged sword, to the extent that if their feelings were down, they would become unable to display their capabilities.

Ergo, it could be called the most suitable Divine Protection for the bright, positive Medium, but it had backfired when events sorrowful to the greatest degree had occurred within her life.

There were three times in the past when Medium, who was like the personification of a positive attitude, had been depressed.

The first was when a member of her family, Miles, had died.

The second was when another member of her family, Balleroy, had died.

And the third, was when she found out that Balleroy, who should have been dead, had been turned into an undead.

During the first and second times, she thoroughly wept and cried, and it took her several days to recover.

The impact from the third time was not something inferior to those past two times, but there had been no time for her to spend a few days crying due to the grievous event.

If so, did Medium participate in the battle with a face stained with tears, disheartened as it was?

—Certainly, that had not been the case.

Medium O'Connell had stopped crying in a true sense.

It was not as if the sorrowful event of the third time had not resonated as much as the first and second times. As an impact of the greatest degree in her life until now, it ripped her chest, her mind, and surely her heart to shreds.

However, as Medium hugged her knees and cowered, Flop did not leave her alone.

Flop: “Dear sister, I’m sorry I hadn’t said anything. It was a situation in which people who had died were being resurrected one after another. It was not as if I hadn’t considered the possibility that Balleroy would be revived.”

The coupled dragon carriages had arrived at the Fortified City, and Medium continued to shut herself away in the room allocated to her; having come to her side, Flop spoke so regarding their encounter with the undead Balleroy.

Upon hearing her brother's words, Medium felt the sentiment, "As expected of big bro!", but she had been unable to say it aloud like usual.

Contrary to having feelings of wanting to condemn her brother for having not told her, she questioned why she had been unable to notice, and hated her own stupidity for never thinking about anything.

By nature, she was not very good at thinking. That was why she had always left that duty up to Flop.

That was why, in exchange, it was her job to rampage, she was happy with it being divided up that way. And yet, it was weird for her to now lament her own slow brain.

No, that was not it.

Medium: "I really love you, big bro."

Flop: "Ahh, thank you, that makes me happy. I love you too of course."

Medium: "I also really love Sisrena, and I really love Big Bro Miles too."

Flop: "I know. I've never doubted that. Of course, I also love those two."

Medium: "...I really love Ballebro as well."

Flop: "Yeah."

While burying her head into her knees, Medium sniffled as she falteringly spoke. Kneeling down on one knee, Flop listened to her with a calm look on his face. She was grateful that for the last one, when she had spoken about Balleroy, he had just responded with a short nod of his head.

She was grateful, but she was also frustrated.

Medium: “Even though I really love them, I haven’t been thinking about the people I love.”

The possibility that the deceased Balleroy would be resurrected as an undead.

Flop had said that he had been unable to say it, but he had still thought about it. On the other hand, Medium had not even considered it.

That was not because Medium was slow in the head, but because she had been averting her eyes.

Even though she loved her family, even though it was the family she loved, she had not realized it because she had been averting her eyes— Even though Medium had once regretted that very act to the point of death once before.

Medium: “When Big Bro Miles died, and then after that, Ballebro went and did that thing and also died, I was so frustrated with myself.”

She thought it would have been better if she had been by his side back then, even if he would have hated her or kept her away.

It would have been better for his sibling to make a noisy, loud, annoying racket by his side, and make it so Balleroy could not polish his plan to swoop down on Abel.

Because she had not done that, she had ended up letting Balleroy die.

Even though Medium should have been aware.

She should have been aware that after Miles died, Balleroy would start to worry himself with those sorts of thoughts.

After all, Balleroy was—

Flop: “—Medium, I won’t be going to the Imperial Capital. My wounds haven’t finished healing, and I don’t have any fighting ability. I’d certainly be a burden. But, you’re different.”

Medium: “Big bro...”

Flop: “I think Balleroy will be in the Imperial Capital. Being this backed into a corner, the only chance our side has to turn the tables is to defeat the opposition’s leader, who’s likely in the Imperial Capital. If the opposition can predict that His Excellency the Emperor-kun will be going there, then...”

Medium: “Mm, yeah.”

She knew what Flop was trying to say, even if he did not say everything.

When fighting, Balleroy would always choose the method with the fastest conclusion. That did not change when he became a soldier, and it did not change when he became a Divine General; it was a fundamental part of Balleroy’s personality.

Balleroy would undoubtedly target Abel. Therefore, he would be in the Imperial Capital.

Therefore, if she went to the Imperial Capital, she would meet him.

Flop: “It seems like you’ve cheered up a little, haven’t you?”

Medium: “...As expected of big bro, you really know me well.”

Flop: “Ha-ha-ha, that’s because I’ve been Medium’s big brother for a long time now! Well then, as a brother who can’t go to the Imperial Capital, I’ll exhaust all means necessary for the sake of my sister!”

Medium: “Means?”

Wiping her teary face, Medium tilted her head with bloodshot eyes. Seeing his sister’s state, Flop placed his hands on his hip, and while smiling,

Flop: “You know, even if you say you want to go, we don’t know if His Excellency the Emperor-kun will accept. So in order to make him accept, we should think hard about the flow of persuasion, right? You don’t need to worry. I know His Excellency the Emperor-kun’s weak point.”

Medium: “Incredible! As expected of big bro! What’s Abel-chin’s weak point?”

Flop: “—Decidedly, it’s love.”

Raising a single finger, Flop spoke with full confidence.

If the one hearing that was anyone other than Medium, they would have all tilted their heads, not understanding what those words meant, and may have made a peculiar face.

But, no matter what Medium was told by Flop, she would give a broad smile and answer.

Medium: “As expected of big bro! I’m counting on you!”



—Thus, Medium O’Connell had obtained the qualification to participate in the ultimate decisive battle for the Imperial Capital.

Thinking back on it, it seemed like a miracle that so many coincidences had piled up for her to finally reach this point.

The first was at the Fortress City of Guaral. Ever since she and Flop had noticed Subaru, Rem, and Spica trying to enter that city, this strange course of events had begun.

Medium: “Thank you for meeting me and big bro back then, Subaru-chin.”

Along the way, as the dragon carriage headed for the Imperial Capital, Medium had expressed her gratitude, to which Subaru was surprised.

With his body still in a smaller state, Subaru's profile looked like he was thinking about something with the utmost effort and a frightfully sharp look in his eyes, but only when he was told this did his eyes widen.

At once, Subaru became gentle, and with the tender face he would always face Rem and Spica with,

Subaru: "What are you talking about, Medium-san? If we're giving thanks, then I'm the one who should be grateful to you. Thinking about what things would be like if I hadn't met Medium-san and Flop-san back there, it makes me shudder."

And amid his bashfulness, he had provided the opportunity for Medium's selfishness to be granted.

A settlement with the undead-turned Magical Sharpshooter, Balleroy Temeglyph— For that purpose, he had sent a tremendously reliable backer with her.

Medium: "Thank you for supporting me, Ros-chin."

Feeling her hair sway in the wind, Medium spoke these words of gratitude in the midst of the air.

The person she spoke them to, was a being who was carrying her horizontally while floating in the sky— a companion of Subaru and Emilia, the person lending Medium strength in her battle, Roswaal.

At Medium's thanks, he smiled with a "Nooo~ no",

Roswaal: "I am the one who ought to show gratitude to you for letting me accompany youuu~. As a matter of fact, the person you desire to face off



against is an exceedingly formidable enemy. I wish to have as many cards in my hand as possible, even if only by a single card more.”

Medium: “—? I’m not a card, I’m a woman, you know?”

Roswaal: “I’ve blundered. You’re the same *tagui*<sup>11</sup> as Emilia-saaama~.”

As Roswaal spoke that with a soft, wry smile, a question mark floated over Medium’s head.

Perhaps he had meant it in the sense that she was not as heavy as she looked. In reality, Medium was quite tall for a woman, and she stood at around the same height as the tall Roswaal. Even so, he was easily carrying her.

But, Roswaal’s specialty did not seem to lay in his physical strength, but rather in his aptitude for magic. That was also the truth of how he was carrying Medium and flying in the sky like this.

When Medium had been at Serena’s place, she had experienced flight many times, but all of those occasions had involved riding on flying dragons. This was her first time flying while being carried by a person. However—

Medium: “The trick to flying in the sky is to believe in the person lending you flight, and to entrust everything to them!”

The experience she had once learned from a flying dragon rider she trusted, would now support Medium in this moment.

Whether that partner was a flying dragon or Roswaal, the method to gain wings was to believe.

Roswaal: “I’d like to tell Otto-kun and Petra-kun about your courage and trick, as they aren’t quite accustomed to fliiight~.”

Medium: “Is that so? Well then Ros-chin, wouldn’t it be better for you to get along with the two of them more?”

Roswaal: “Ahhh~ hahaha, that’s painful to my eaaars~.”

Deepening his smile at her straightforward opinion, Roswaal slowly shook his head.

Seeing that reaction, Medium sensed that Roswaal was not really smiling deep down, and that it was a smile that attempted to deceive. He was probably not very good at getting along with people.

Medium had recently come to the realization that such people existed. Abel was also like that.

She did not understand why they would go out of their way to distance themselves from others— no, she was beginning to understand it a little now. By doing so, one could try to ensure that they would not be hurt.

Medium: “But, if you always do that, you’ll end up regretting it.”

Roswaal: “———”

Medium: “That’s why, I’ll make myself a role model for Ros-chin and Abel-chin.”

Right after Medium spoke, a fierce, thundering roar echoed beyond the flying duo.

It was to the east of Medium and Roswaal— in that place where thick clouds were accumulating one-by-one, there was present the form of a Dragon so fearsome that it caused the very world to tremble.

In accordance with what had been decided beforehand, Garfiel was the one who would fight the Dragon.

And while Garfiel was subduing the Dragon, everyone else would begin to move.

One grouping among them, was the combination of Medium and Roswaal.

Medium: “———”

She deeply inhaled, and deeply exhaled.

Once it began, there would be no going back. But, she was fine with that.

Medium: “Ros-chin.”

Roswaal: “Shall we get started? There’s no need to get worked up—— After all, I’m the strongest magician in the woorld~.”

Right after Roswaal declared so, for a moment, Medium felt goosebumps over her entire body.

That was at the moment Roswaal had suddenly unleashed magic that was supernatural beyond anything Medium was capable of imagining, causing flames to be sent above the thick clouds that blanketed the Imperial Capital, targeting the Crystal Palace from directly above.

While using such an ultra-high-class magic technique, Roswaal progressed his flying magic with Medium still in his arms.

It was an intricate feat akin to one using their right arm to draw and their left arm to compose a song, while also using their mouth to recite verses of poetry and using their eyes and brain to decipher an unknown language.

But, for Medium, who did not understand its value, she had no valid reason to praise it as being amazing.

Therefore, Medium did not voice praise with her mouth, but instead demonstrated it through her actions.

Medium: “———”

Staring into the distant sky, a chain of bright-red flames exploding could be seen above the Crystal Palace within the deepest part of the Imperial Capital; cutting past the blossoming crimson balls of flame one after the other, a flying dragon soared at a high altitude.

Far, far away, many kilometers in the distance, as a small speck in the sky, it had been clearly seen by the current Medium as somebody whom she wished to see, with whom she wished to converse, and whom she wished to touch.

—Medium O’Connell possessed the Divine Protection of Morale.

The Divine Protection of Morale boosted one’s physical abilities in concert with how roused their spirits were, and it was the most suitable Divine Protection for the bright, positive Medium.

And now that Medium was before a person whom she had wanted to meet to an absolutely unbearable extent, the performance of her Divine Protection was manifesting its greatest, most powerful effects in all the time since she had been born.

The thing she wanted to do and the thing she must do coincided, and smashing through her regrets of the past, she clutched what her older brother had entrusted to her within her chest; together with a reliable ally, she would challenge a beloved visage.

Ergo, Medium spoke to Balleroy, who had likely seen her from far off in the distance.

Medium: “Jeez, I won’t let you go off wherever you please anymore. Come and talk to me properly, Ballebro.”

—The next moment, a bullet of light was fired after a beat had passed, and Medium cut it down with her unsheathed barbarian sword.

Medium: “———”

Though the impact tore through her entire body, both Medium, and Roswaal who was carrying her, were uninjured.

And thus, separated by an ultra-long distance, the curtain rose on the fiercest bout of aerial combat in the history of the Empire.



Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.ll2o ([source](#))

# Arc 8 Chapter 53 - The Magical Sharpshooter<sup>12</sup>

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 4 “Medium O’Connell”,  
Parts 6-11

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Original Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar) — [Complete](#)

—Roswaal L. Mathers was the premier magician in the Kingdom, and in the world.

If one were to inquire about this to said person, he would mix in a fearless smile and a certain confidence, and affirm the notion with the condition that “For the present day, I guess that’s the caaase~”.

As Roswaal would note that it was the case in the current era, there would be no chagrin harbored in his expression. Instead, what would dwell within his heterochromatic eyes, would be a deep love and a feeling of loneliness which would appear to be yearning for something.

When he spoke of matters regarding magic, that was the ephemeral longing that would never disappear from inside of Roswaal, of which none were aware, save for Ram and Beatrice; even he himself was not aware of it.

Based on that, Roswaal’s position as the current greatest magician would not waver.

Declaring that to Medium O’Connell as she challenged the decisive battle, he soared through the sky with her in his arms, and confronted the Magical Sharpshooter who had ascended to high altitudes far in the distance—



considering that Roswaal had confidence and pride in his own magic, he estimated the chances of victory here to be low.

Roswaal: “———”

Having infiltrated the skies of the Imperial Capital from the southwest of the city, Roswaal’s vision beheld the sight of the sky above the northernmost Crystal Palace being dyed a bright-red, and many explosions of flame bloomed. Roswaal was the one who had sent in that fiery rain, but it was a pair of flying dragon and rider, flying up from the Palace, that had transformed it into flaming explosions— or so it seemed.

The reason for the phrasing of “seemed” was because Roswaal’s eyes were incapable of locking on to a target moving at rapid speeds from a position several kilometers away.

That was not an issue of Roswaal’s eyesight. It was simply a matter of the human eye being unable to do so.

However, Medium and the opposing Magical Sharpshooter were both overcoming that limitation through the power of a Divine Protection and through some sort of other technique respectively, and had visually identified each other.

As proof of that—

Medium: “—Uu, kyaan!”

Together with an adorable war cry, Medium swung her barbarian sword while being carried in his arms.

She was flying in a state where she was completely dependent on another. By no means could her balance have been good, but Medium’s barbarian sword still caught the approaching bullet of light, and with a sound akin to a splash of water, she cut it down.



Stuck by the impact, and feeling the severed light bullet pass behind them and dissipate to Mana, Roswaal could not help but shudder at the speed and precision of that attack.

—That was a magical technique designed to kill, perfected to an unbelievable extent at the very height of expertise.

He could surmise that the fired light bullet was a kind of Yang Magic, but it was of a different lineage to that of Jiwald, which fired a heated ray of light; the technique of shooting such a bullet of light could not be classified into any category, and was an original creation.

He could not say anything for certain after only a brief moment of combat, but it likely involved preparing light in a form and nature similar to that of the icicles that Emilia would shoot out, which would then pierce the opponent's vitals. One thing that ought to have been noted, was how instead of a bullet of ice or earth, which retained a physical form, it was being done with light.

By ensuring that physical bullets would not remain in the wound, it would be difficult for an opponent to discern the true nature of the attack, and furthermore, the area around the wound would be scorched by the light, easily causing a serious wound to be sustained.

Roswaal: "Superb magic."

Roswaal praised it as an attack undoubtedly worthy of being called Magical Bullets.

Had his opponent devised this by themselves, then they should have the talents to become a first-class magician. But then again, at this point, the person in question likely would not desire such prestige. From the viewpoint of an imperial, they had already received the highest possible evaluation by being a Divine General.

Not to mention that it was difficult to imagine someone who was not living, but rather dead, to be wishing for such glory.

Roswaal: “To begin with, even during their lifetime, they were not a person who clung to fame or prestige~. I’ve heard about that from those who were close to them, and from the one who witnessed their final moments.”

For information about the Magical Sharpshooter— Balleroy Temeglyph, there was an unexpectedly large number of people who had known him during his lifetime, so Roswaal’s ears had gained more chances than he had initially been hoping for to learn about him.

However, what he had heard from the O’Connell siblings was largely testimonials regarding his personality, and Serena had choked up with feelings of guilt that were uncharacteristic of her. So, Roswaal had been unable to obtain the tactical information he had desired from them, but— there had been an unforeseen competitor.

That was—

Roswaal: “—I would have never thought that Julius-kun was the talented individual who had defeated this Divine General.”

Taking care so that Medium, who was boosting her concentration within his arms, would not hear, Roswaal organized his thoughts as he recalled Julius, who had looked as if he was worrying himself with thought.

As Anastasia’s one and only Knight, he possessed a strong sense of duty, so he had supported his Lord all the way to the Vollachian Empire. The Finest of Knights had brought quite the valuable information regarding the formidable enemy whom Roswaal and Medium were challenging together.

—From the start, regardless of whether the battlefield was to be the Imperial Capital or the Fortified City, it was established that Roswaal would be the matchup for Balleroy Temeglyph.

That it was because Roswaal was an old acquaintance of Serena Dracroy, and that he had been entrusted with the duty of performing the last rites over Balleroy, whom she had looked after since he was a child, was not the case.

Roswaal also had emotions, but he always eliminated decisions that were based on emotion.

Naturally, the decision to have Roswaal be Balleroy's opponent was a strategic one.

Perhaps somewhat late to bring it up, but the Vollachian Empire and the Kingdom of Lugunica had been enemies for a long time.

There were treacherous relations between all of the Four Great Countries, but the fact that they all mutually recognized which among those relations required the most vigilance could not be altered.

Therefore, albeit there had been remarkable historical achievement in the signing of a non-aggression treaty with the Empire lasting the duration of the Royal Selection held by the Kingdom, that did not mean that the chilly relationship between the two countries had warmed up.

To make a long story short, the Kingdom of Lugunica had persisted with its vigilance of the potential enemy that was the Vollachian Empire, and it was always refining its countermeasures against the primary force encompassed by the Nine Divine Generals, and the lookout force that was the flying dragon squadron.

Within those strategy meetings, it had been decided— The Kingdom's magic regiment would oppose the Empire's flying dragon squadron, and its apex, Roswaal, would clash with the most powerful flying dragon rider.

Roswaal: "Be that as it may, I had never thought that I'd be facing off against targets requiring such caution like the Vicious Old Man and the

Magical Sharpshooter within the Empiire~.”

When the counter-Empire discussions were being held, those two individuals were recognized as the greatest threats.

Of course, when it came to individual military assets, the Blue Lightning and the Spirit Eater were the big two, but concerning them, the Kingdom also had a Sword Saint who would not lose out.

But, when it came to war, the presence of leadership was vital.

The best way to end a war would be to end the lives of the enemy’s leaders— And for that, what was feared more than the First and the Second, was the Vicious Old Man and the Magical Sharpshooter.

Ergo, Roswaal had also surmised the techniques and capabilities of the Magical Sharpshooter from rumors.

Roswaal had heard that in the end, he had risen in rebellion and lost his life without them ever having the chance to face off against each other, so his simulations had ended up becoming meaningless, but by some hapless twist of fate, this situation had been brought to fruition.

And then, upon ascertaining the skills of the real, not imagined, Balleroy Temeglyph, the strongest magician in the world, Roswaal, was convinced.

Roswaal: “—As expected, I caaan’t~ win this on my own.”

That was not in jest or sarcasm, nor was it that he had lost his nerve; Roswaal merely recognized that as the plain truth.

This was not a matter of his magic being inferior to military techniques, but that there was a difference in the playing field.

First of all, there was a difference in their mobility.

Able to use flying magic, Roswaal was one of the world's leading individuals who was capable of solo flight, but his speed and maneuverability could not match that of flying dragons, experts in the field. If one were to challenge Balleroy head-on in an air battle, the best they would be able to do would be to get thrown off by his speed, and get shot down while being tossed about by his three-dimensional movements.

Secondly, there was a difference in the precision and objective of their respective methods of attack.

The Magical Bullets, mastered by Balleroy, were undoubtedly something that had been trained for the purpose of killing others, and it would be acceptable to say that their power and accuracy had been perfected.

In order to become a magician that his Teacher would not be ashamed of, Roswaal aimed to master every possible magic, but he was still far-off from the deep mysteries of magic, and even if his diversity overwhelmingly surpassed that of Balleroy, he could declare that he had nothing on the same level as this enemy who specialized in the field of killing a target.

And thirdly, there was a difference in their combat conditions.

It was a vexing matter, but that was the greatest obstacle in this matchup.

If one were to think about it, they would likely come to this conclusion; were it possible to do battle from a distant location and one-sidedly attack the opponent, it would be impossible to lose. That was naturally Roswaal's fighting style, and fighting from the greatest range that was possible for himself could be said to be the fundamental tactic for certain victory as a magician.

The problem was that even with his greatest attack range, it would still be a situation in which his opponent would have the upper hand.

Naturally, his opponent would thus not permit the one-sided attacks he had come to use until now. In order to avoid that situation, he would need to close to distance so as to not lose out in range, and then in the situation where the range advantage had been eliminated, he would need to turn it into a contest of their individual abilities.

But, the combat conditions imposed upon Roswaal would not allow for that prerequisite.

*Subaru: "To be honest, having our allies taken out one-by-one from far away would be the most troubling thing. In order to not let the opponent perform that kind of rapid fire on us, do something to suppress him!"*

For their assault on the Imperial Capital, when dividing up the members of the Rescue from Destruction Squad, that was the duty Subaru had entrusted to Roswaal.

In truth, that had been a logical decision. Disregarding Halibel and Olbart, Roswaal did not intend to claim that he was the most powerful asset, but there was no doubt that he was the one who possessed the greatest range.

Emilia was also on the right track, but she lacked precision in her attacks, and she had no method of ascending to the sky where their opponent made their battlefield. It was a matter of course that this would be up to Roswaal.

As a result, in order to prevent the other allies from being targeted, Roswaal was forced to attack from a distance that was overwhelmingly favorable for his opponent, declaring war while attracting his opponent's attention to himself.

Roswaal: "As I had feared, even at this distance the opponent's attacks are delivered with precision. I've attracted his attention, but... I'll have to close the distance from here. This act really could result in my deaaath~."

The three aforementioned disadvantages should suffice to show just how troublesome that would be.

Against such a formidable enemy, he would have no choice but to fight with tactics and at a distance where the opponent would triumph. Furthermore, recognizing the difference in strength between them, Roswaal was convinced that his opponent was above him.

But, there was neither lamentation nor despair dwelling within his heterochromatic eyes.

That was because——

Medium: “Diyahh!”

Immediately after he thought he had seen a flash, the sound of water splashing and an impact jolted both Roswaal and Medium.

That was proof that Medium had succeeded in defending against the impact of the second bullet. While admiring Medium’s skill in managing such a feat, Roswaal deepened his smile.

The reason for that smile was——

Roswaal: “Medium-kun, does it seem feasible?”

Medium: “Yeah! We can do it! It’s like Ros-chin said... it seems like Ballebro is only aiming for my arms and shoulders!”



???: “Tsk——”

Witnessing the second bullet he had fired being cut down by the barbarian sword in the magnified vision of his left eye, Balleroy bit down on his

molars at the improvement in skill of the girl he recognized, and at the viciousness of his opponent's objective.

Within the scope he had created by bending light, he could grasp for certain that Medium, her face brimming with motivation, and the man flying in the sky while carrying her, were gradually getting closer.

Their aim was obvious, it was a standard tactic in warfare to close the distance on an opponent who specialized in long-distance attacks.

The surprise attack of the flaming spheres from above the clouds, once that had failed, they had immediately shifted gears— that was not the case.

If there was anybody who thought that such a bland attack would hit before being noticed, there was truly something wrong with them. The intention of that attack was for it to be taken down. Though he understood that, it was an attack that he had no choice but to shoot down.

Since his opponent had fired the opening attack of this battle like that, he would commence an ultra-long-range battle in his own overwhelming favor— upon seeing Medium, Balleroy's fighting spirit was paralyzed.

The reason why they had let the surprise attack be defended against, and had commenced with a battle in which he was the one with the advantageous range, was because their strategy built on the fact that Balleroy would have to choose whom to shoot with his Magical Bullets.

Balleroy: "Medi...!!"

Medium had defended against both of the Magical Bullets, the first and second shot alike, that Balleroy had fired.

She had always been that way. When Medium was feeling down, she could be overpowered by even the unathletic Flop, and yet when she was filled with motivation, she would become an obstreperously rambunctious kid.



Neither Flop nor Miles could do anything about it, and despite being her favorite, Balleroy also had difficulty in dealing with her. Serena was not one to rebuke, so Medium's liveliness knew no bounds.

Be that as it may, he had never expected for her to be able to deflect his Magical Bullets.

Carillon: “—Kiryararahhh!”

Balleroy: “—I gotcha, Carillon.”

As Balleroy clenched his teeth, his beloved dragon flapped its wings and neighed in appeal to him.

Through the art of flying dragon taming, Balleroy and Carillon were tied to each other's existences through their souls— through the merging of Od with Od. Subjugating the innately ferocious flying dragons through that process, was the secretive technique of flying dragon taming.

Given that relationship, any wavering in Balleroy's thoughts and feelings was directly transmitted to Carillon. The inverse also held true, so Balleroy had also sensed Carillon's thoughts.

He understood. Medium's skill was not the only reason why the Magical Bullets had been defended against.

Balleroy had laid eyes upon the figure of someone who was essentially a younger sister to him making such an earnest expression, and that had been the reason why he had not shot through her with the ruthlessness of a warrior.

Balleroy: “Her limbs...”

If he could just shoot one of them off, Medium would certainly withdraw from the warfront.

The magician whom she was accompanying would also judge that there would be no benefit in flying with her if she were to suffer a serious injury. If possible, it would be better for it to be an arm instead of a leg. If it was an arm, there would be less difficulty in her life hereafter than there would be if it was a leg.

It would be best if he caused Medium to withdraw with a wound, shot down the magician, and then requested Sphinx to spare her life. If he did so, his anguish would disappear.

Anguish. Would. Disappear.

Balleroy: “—Let’s go get ‘em.”

With the face of an undead that had lost all complexion, there was a definite fighting spirit dwelling within Balleroy’s golden eyes.

It was not the expression of hesitating to attack Medium, which he had worn until a moment earlier, but rather that of finding the consensus between his disposition and his objective, and bringing it to fruition; it was the expression of the Magical Sharpshooter.

Balleroy: “———”

While harboring a fighting spirit within his golden irises, the heat from Balleroy’s body completely subsided.

Closing his right eye, concentrating all of his attention into the scope with his left eye, he got up on his knees upon the back of his beloved dragon, fixed his spear in place, and created a sharply pointed bullet of light at its tip.

Balleroy was an unorthodox magician, and he had not refined anything except this one technique.

A single one of these shots consumed very little Mana, and since it maximized the effect with a minimal number of required processes, it had a good affinity with his nature— To settle things reliably, it was the embodiment of that approach.

Balleroy: “———”

While Balleroy was concentrating in that manner, Carillon similarly boosted its own concentration.

The moment he peered through his scope, and carefully observed the conduct of his target, he would have to neglect maintaining vigilance over the rest of his surroundings, so in Balleroy’s stead when he did so, Carillon would maintain a field of vision over their environs.

His beloved dragon, who kept a lookout over their surroundings with the eyesight and instinctive alertness of a flying dragon, was absolutely indispensable to Balleroy as he established this tactic.

Balleroy: “If you’re looking to throw down against me, then you’re gonna have to close the distance. But, did ya really think I’d let’cha do that so easily while knowing that?”

He was surprised that something like flying magic existed, but the speed of their approach could not possibly be compared to that of a flying dragon rider. If he fell back by the same amount that his opponent was approaching, the distance between them would not close.

Of course, since there was a limit to how much he could fall back, the method of maintaining distance was not just falling back, but also making full use of maneuvering and elevation. But, that was not a problem.

There existed no boundaries in the vast sky. Hence, the battle technique of the Magical Sharpshooter had been established.

Balleroy: “—Hit.”

Weaving a word with lips devoid of moisture, the tip of his spear suddenly shone with an intense brightness.

The moment the Magical Bullet was fired, there was no recoil or emotion whatsoever on Balleroy’s part. There was only a quick flash of light, and the result brought about the sniping in less than a second.

Within his vision magnified by the scope, Medium had defended against the third Magical Bullet with her barbarian sword.

Her movements suggested that she had realized that Balleroy was aiming for her limbs. Whether that was her natural intuition, or advice whispered into her ear by the magician behind her, was unclear.

While admiring that as quite the impressive feat, Balleroy spilled out a long breath,

Balleroy: “—Hit, hit, hit, hit, hit.”

With that, he consecutively fired from the fourth shot to the eighth shot in a single breath.

Balleroy: “———”

Balleroy’s Magical Bullets had no recoil. Therefore, there was no impediment to shooting in rapid succession.

If there was a limitation, it would be the speed at which the bullets of light were created to be fired, but Balleroy had poured all of his talents for magic into mastering this Magical Bullet attack.

Five shots per second, light bullets that were fired at the same accuracy without the slightest bit of deviation— that was the basis for Balleroy

Temeglyph being called the Magical Sharpshooter, and the reason he had attained the position of General First-Class.

Balleroy: “Hit, hit, hit, hit, hit.”

Fiercely swinging the barbarian swords in both of her hands, Medium frantically continued to repel the Magical Bullets.

That in itself was worthy of praise, but Balleroy’s remaining strength had not decreased in the slightest. The time that had passed was ten seconds at most, and if they continued for another ten or twenty seconds, Medium would definitely use up all of her strength.

If Balleroy indifferently approached that moment while firing his Magical Bullets——

Balleroy: “———”

For a moment, suspicion was yielded in the composed Balleroy’s thoughts.

All the while, he still continued creating bullets of light and engaging in a ceaseless chain of sniper fire via his Magical Bullets, but it was this very situation that Balleroy harbored suspicion about.

Bringing Medium along with him for the surprise attack, this was the opponent who had imposed a considerable limitation on Balleroy’s Magical Bullets.

Naturally, it was an enemy who had thrown down the gauntlet with the intention of facing Balleroy, so would they really implement such a half-hearted strategy like letting him break through simply by persisting with his signature move?

He could not help but find it strange and peculiar. That was, this very situation in which he could fully display his true nature.

Indeed, it happened right after Balleroy had finished contemplating.

Carillon: “—Kiryarahhh!”

In Balleroy’s stead as he looked through his scope, Carillon gave a loud neigh as it kept vigilance over their surroundings.

While flying at high speeds through the sky above the Crystal Palace, his beloved dragon who had been maintaining a constant distance with the opponent made an appeal, and Balleroy turned his attention to the cause of Carillon’s neigh.

From even higher than Balleroy and Carillon, who were high in the skies above, something was falling towards them.

Balleroy: “—Hk, you’re really giving it to us, ain’t’cha!”

As Balleroy grit his teeth and howled, what pierced the thick clouds and fell towards them, was a threat even more direct than the balls of flame that had targeted the Crystal Palace earlier.

—An enormous mass of ice, akin to the size of a small mountain, ferociously hurtled down from the sky towards the Imperial Capital.



???: *“Fighting against Balleroy-dono in a location with no cover will prove to be fatal. After all, he is the greatest flying dragon rider of the Empire... An astounding master of his craft, with range in every conceivable direction.”*

Following the advice that Julius had provided whilst he bore a grave look on his face, the aerial battle that Roswaal had been challenged to was the poorest choice of battlefield against the Empire’s finest flying dragon rider.

After all, there was nothing in the sky that could serve as cover. Forwards, backwards, left, and right went without saying, but his opponent was even able to guarantee range on the vertical plane, allowing for every direction in three dimensions; altogether, it was the worst possible environment.

It was normal for a warrior to prepare the most disadvantageous situation for their opponent, so if one were to go out of their way to meet their opponent's conditions, and choose to fight with a disadvantageous situation for themselves, then they would merely be an insane person.

So then, although there was nothing that could have been done regarding the conditions, would that make Roswaal an insane deviant who chose to allow his opponent to fight on a battlefield on which they excelled, at a range at which they triumphed, and with tactics which were their forte?

—Certainly, that was not the case.

Roswaal would not say that he was normal, but he understood that he was not one to burn with a longing for victory, nor was he one to eccentrically enjoy the disadvantages of a war situation.

He recognized his own abnormalities, but those abnormalities were not things he displayed in combat.

Therefore, Roswaal had not done anything so foolish as facing a battlefield on which he had no chance of winning.

???: “Ha! Ha! Haaaah!!”

Within Roswaal's arms, Medium panted as steam rose from her body.

The high level of heat being transmitted into his palms was proof that the performance of her body was rising in response to her fighting spirit. At the same time, it was also proof that she had surpassed her limits several times in just ten seconds.

The dreadful rapid-fire ability of the Magical Bullets, even if it was clear that they were flying towards her in a manner that would avert a fatal wound, he was deeply impressed that Medium had successfully repelled fifty of the approaching bullets.

But, they did not have another ten seconds. Hence, Roswaal progressed the battle to the next stage.

—Breaking through the clouds that hung over the Imperial Capital, an enormous mass of ice was plummeting from the heavens towards the city's surface.

A mass of ice so mighty that one could have easily mistaken it for a mountain, Roswaal was naturally the one who had made it fall. However, if he produced a block of ice of that size, no matter how much pride Roswaal had as being the world's greatest magician, he would barely have any Mana remaining after the fact.

Therefore, he had gotten Emilia, who possessed excessive amounts of Mana, to create the block of ice.

Roswaal: "She still had so much energy after creating something to that extent. Truly, it is an absurd notion."

Having performed a marvel equivalent to creating an iceberg, Emilia calmly followed Subaru's orders and confronted a different battlefield. As reliable as that was, when he considered the possibility that he might have to confront her as adversaries one day, it gave him quite the headache.

However, in this moment, he would depend on that reliability, and would proceed with the stratagem of bringing down the iceberg.

It had been uncertain if all of Roswaal's Mana could be used to produce such an enormous iceberg, but it would not have been too much if he were to simply maintain that which Emilia had created, and keep it afloat.



He had been keeping it on standby since the balls of flame had been brought down, and now, in this moment, he released it from its yoke.

Roswaal: “———”

The attack had equivalent mass to that of a mountain falling from the sky, but its aim was not to flatten Balleroy from overhead as he flew around in the air. It would be a briefer story if such a thing could be done, but it would likely not be very difficult for Balleroy to escape from the area of damage that the iceberg would inflict.

Hence, the reason for bringing the iceberg down was not to attack Balleroy— It was to serve as an obstacle.

Roswaal: “If there’s no cover, then I had better create some.”

Right after he muttered this, Roswaal narrowed his eyes, and then cracks immediately began to form throughout the entirety of the iceberg.

That moment, a high-pitched noise pierced the sky, just as if glass that filled the air had all shattered at once, and the subsequent phenomenon that occurred might have even appeared as if the sky was crumbling.

The iceberg shattered, and as fragments scattered about, chunks of ice chaotically fell towards the ground.

Though the phrasing of shattered had been used, they were fragments of a mountain. Each individual fragment was around the size of a building or a dragon carriage, so it was identical to an avalanche of icebergs tumbling down from the sky.

It was a sight akin to taking a box filled with small pebbles and sand, and turning it upside down over a flowerbed—

Roswaal: “This, is the true ability of a magician.”

If one could engage in a one-sided attack from a distance at which they excelled, it would be impossible to lose.

That such was the fundamental tactic for certain victory for a magician, had been mentioned earlier. Therefore, Roswaal preferred a fighting style that conformed to that fundamental, and thus he put it into practice.

In order to perform one-sided attacks, it was crucial to reduce the opponent's "options".

A proficiency at a certain range, was nothing more than an easily decipherable indicator to help in doing so. By reducing his opponent's "options", he could pull the situation towards one that was advantageous for himself.

That, was the fighting style of the world's strongest magician, Roswaal.

Medium: "Teryaaah!!"

A light passed through the incessant rain of shards and chunks of ice, and Medium cut down the Magical Bullet that had approached.

Medium had been ordered to not be phased no matter what happened, but he was as grateful as he could have been that she was moving in accordance with that order. The Magical Sharpshooter should have also been adequately astounded, but it was commendable that he had magnificently shifted back to attacking right away.

However, his rapid-fire capability and mobility had been reduced beyond compare.

And, above all else—

Roswaal: "If you're the kind of person I've heard you were, you won't target me directly with your Magical Bullets— After all, if I were to fall from this altitude, there would be no way of saving Medium-kun."



Making an extraordinary war situation into a reality, was an enemy akin to the devil.

Faced with a magician who used Medium as a shield in order to prevent his tactics, Balleroy recognized his opponent as such by means of a clear enmity.

In the Vollachian Empire, so-called magicians were exceedingly valuable.

That was because fundamentally and ethnically, a propensity to be unskilled in handling magic had been passed down, so ultimately the principles of the people of the Empire did not align with magic.

At the roots of the Empire's people, there was a reverence towards the strong, and that could also be expressed as an adoration for the talents and skills of outstanding warriors. An ideal warrior of the Vollachian Empire would wield their own weapon and overcome their opponent in an exchange of blows, and battles that did not take such a form were shunned.

There were deep-rooted preconceptions and biases regarding other types of fighting styles, and though it had improved under Vincent's reign, it would still take some time for such things to completely disappear.

The fighting style of Balleroy, known as the Magical Sharpshooter, and the killing methods of the Vicious Old Man, Olbart, the *shinobi* head honcho, could not be said to be that highly regarded, contrary to the vigilance other nations had of them.

Though, since Balleroy and Olbart did not fight for the sake of fame, neither of them really cared.

Because he had possessed such rationale, Balleroy, unlike other people from the Empire, did not particularly detest magicians— He wished to overturn

that evaluation from when he had been alive.

Balleroy: “I don’t like your way of doing things one bit, Mister Magician—!”

He admired their skill of using absolutely everything at their disposal to produce their own battlefield, but with their poisonous fangs pointed towards him, going as far as facing him with a member of his own family of all things, fury surged within him.

He truly wished to shoot through that person’s head and heart, but—

Balleroy: “Carillon—!”

Carillon: “—Kiryararahhh!”

Spurring on his beloved dragon with a pat on the back, the flying dragon picked up speed with a flap of its wings as it neighed.

As Balleroy and Carillon danced through the dark sky, soaring through the hailstorm of unbelievable scale, they focused on conquering the labyrinth of ice that had suddenly been created, attempting to break through.

In the past, there had been instances where people had tried to avoid Balleroy’s Magical Bullets by escaping to a forest, dense with trees, or by hiding away in a sturdy fortress.

When those had happened, Balleroy had cleared the trees with a rapid hail of Magical Bullets to secure a line of sight, and in the second case, he had identified where the opponent was hiding, and then shot a Magical Bullet through the wall to kill the enemy.

But, he had never once attempted to conquer a method as absurd as this until now.

And thus, naturally, he had never once overturned a strategy as absurd as this, either.

Balleroy: “So that means if I get past this, it’ll be my win, ain’t that right?”

While evading the fragments of the shattered iceberg, which would quite likely be able to end one’s life with just a mere graze, Balleroy imagined the figures of Medium and the magician who had set this up.

Aside from those two, there were no others who had ascended to the Imperial Capital’s sky. That was to say, the cards that would be played in the aerial battle against Balleroy, consisted entirely of those two.

It seemed like Serena had not sent out her Flying Dragon Squadron, her pride and joy, to face Balleroy.

Balleroy: “As I’d expect, the High Countess is fully aware.”

Even in aerial combat that utilized flying dragons, there existed a clear hierarchy.

For example, wild flying dragons without a partner would never be able to contend with flying dragons that had a flying dragon rider. A single outstanding pair of flying dragon and rider could exterminate a flock of one-hundred flying dragons.

And thus, if a flying dragon rider were to clash with another flying dragon rider, the superior party would always be victorious. With no relation to the advantage or disadvantage of numbers, the side with the superior flying dragon rider would win.

If there existed no flying dragon riders more capable than Balleroy, then no matter how many flying dragon squadrons were sent in, the only possible outcome would be for mountains of the corpses of valuable flying dragons and their riders alike to pile up.

That was how valuable a superior flying dragon rider was; they were outstanding personnel.

That was why Balleroy did not detest Serena. Her act of authorizing Miles to go on a secret mission to the Kingdom of Lugunica, had been necessary— Nothing could have been done about it.

Balleroy: “Even so, I’m gonna——”

As he grit his teeth, the latter half of his mutter was something that even Balleroy himself had been unable to hear.

That was because underneath Balleroy and Carillon, shards of the shattered iceberg crashed into the Imperial Capital one after the other, and a thunderous sound reverberated as a tremendous amount of dust began to rise; the shards destroyed the cityscape, altering its very form.

The miserable amount of damage to the Imperial Capital that had been brought about by magic, the havoc which ought to have been called the Magic Disaster, continued.

It was a city that he had protected during his lifetime, and had grown accustomed to seeing. It was not as if he did not have reservations about it being destroyed, but Balleroy’s attention was more-so focused on his enemy rather than the city that was falling into ruin.

Balleroy: “———”

Amidst the shattered ice that was fluttering down like dust, there was an illusory sight caused by the light being diffused, and he became able to more clearly see the figure of Medium, who ought to have been further beyond.

However, there was still distance between them. Having brought down an iceberg from above the clouds, and producing damage that heavily demolished the cityscape of the Imperial Capital, the distance they had gained was a negligible amount.

Balleroy: “Hit, hit, hit.”

In order to force back the distance they had gained, Balleroy shortened the amount of time it took for his fired Magical Bullets to reach their target.

And thus, Medium would need an accordingly instantaneous reaction speed. Just how many more shots would the exhausted Medium be able to obstruct?

Even if Balleroy were to reduce his mobility, restricting his line and angle of fire, he would still have the advantage.

That was to say, the next move was coming.

Balleroy: “—? The same bundles of flame from earlier... no.”

There were signs of a change above the clouds, and knocking away an ice shard with his spear, clearing the line of fire with a bullet of light, Balleroy looked up, furrowing his brow.

Hurtling through the large hole in the thick clouds that had been created by the mountain of ice, were numerous flaming spheres and icebergs; though they were not as huge as the mountain of ice from earlier, they were still quite enormous. At the sight of those plummeting down, Balleroy thought that their purpose might have been to add to the obstacles in the sky— he then perceived his opponent’s true intention.

They were falling down somewhere largely off the mark from the position in which Balleroy and Carillon were— they were drawing a trajectory headed for a direct hit to the Crystal Palace.

Balleroy: “What the hell d’ya think you’re doing, deviant—!!!”

He was witnessing ice and flame in descent without him as their aim; however, Balleroy shouted as if it was an attack directed towards none other than himself.

They would not bring any direct damage to Balleroy. Instead, they would relentlessly crush Madelyn's body, which remained in the Palace, and the rest of the people residing within its walls.

He could not afford to let that happen— He could not afford to let Sphinx die.

Balleroy: “OHHHHHHH—!!!”

Spreading its wings and making a sharp turn, Carillon made a sudden brake in a position where no chunks of ice would hit. Raising his body as if being flicked off of that very back, Balleroy pointed his spearhead towards the sky above the Crystal Palace, and fired his Magical Bullets.

Since the rate of production of five shots per second would not be able to stop the attack, in this moment, he surpassed a limit that he had never surpassed in his lifetime, and a barrage of Balleroy's Magical Bullets covered the sky.

The rampaging bullets of light completely shot down the descending flaming spheres and chunks of ice, and he had successfully protected the Crystal Palace from the large-scale damage which would have caused it to come crumbling down.

But at this moment, it was a self-evident truth that Balleroy's opponent would aim at him while his back was turned—

Balleroy: “—Hit.”

Hence, while Balleroy was aiming his spearhead at the objects falling towards the Crystal Palace, he aimed the back of his spear at the enemy drawing near, and responded by firing Magical Bullets both forwards and backwards at the same time.

Balleroy: “———”



He had fired only one Magical Bullet to his rear, but that had been enough.

With his back turned, Balleroy had made it seem like he was presenting an opening, and a flame of magic had been directly approaching him—pierced head-on by the Magical Bullet, it too exploded midair.

The light bullet that had pierced the opponent's magic continued in its trajectory, heading right for Medium and the magician who had thought that they had taken advantage of an opening, only to be met by a barbarian sword.

Balleroy: "Medi, I'm a man who was once a Divine General."

When it came to the art of warfare, he would not fall behind his younger sister, regardless of her overflowing motivation.

In order to take her by surprise, the Magical Bullet which Balleroy had fired backwards was a little bit larger than the bullets of light he had fired up until now, and thus its power excelled.

Medium: "—Uwah!"

With a sound of water splashing, both barbarian swords were ripped from Medium's hands.

Having immediately noticed something different instinctually, it was magnificent that she had intercepted it with two swords instead of one. Though he had intended to blow off everything beneath her left elbow with that shot, it was thanks to that reaction that she had kept both her arms.

However, the outcome would still be the same, now that she had lost her means of defense. With the next shot, he would blow off that arm of hers and put an end to this.

Balleroy: "Hit."

His spearhead flickered in tandem with his determination, and he finished dealing with the ice and flame that were about to flatten the Crystal Palace.

Then, he immediately ascended with Carillon, and while reopening the distance that had previously been closed, he would create a Magical Bullet that would force Medium to withdraw—

Balleroy: “Wha...”

—That instant, as if to fully obstruct Balleroy’s field of view, the brilliance of a rainbow blanketed the sky.



—In order to defeat Balleroy Temeglyph, Julius’s advice had truly been useful.

It was advice from a person who had already defeated him once.

Not even Subaru could have provided information quite this useful. After all, Subaru was not a warrior, and he tended to give rather vague suggestions when it came to fighting styles.

In any case—

*Julius: “In my fight against Balleroy-dono, I managed to defeat him. Of course, it was not a victory I could have attained without Ferris’s assistance... Why a personage of Balleroy-dono’s caliber had participated in such a rebellion, and had aimed for the venerable life of His Excellency Vincent, even in the future the reason for that will remain...”*

*Roswaal: “You saw his Book of the Dead, diiidn’t~ you? Truly a hapless coincidence. Julius-kun, if possible, I’d like you to go over what you saw in great detail...”*

*Julius: “—Margrave Mathers, the only information I shall be reporting is that of Balleroy-dono’s fighting style, and the manner in which I fought against him. I want you to understand that the things I had witnessed without his permission, the feelings that Balleroy-dono had harbored, are things I shall never disclose for the rest of my life.”*

Identifying Julius’s attitude, whilst he spoke with a serious expression, as an action that served the interests of the enemy, Roswaal had some methods at his disposal of prying into the information that had been gained from the Book of the Dead. But, Roswaal did not choose to do so, and opted to listen to the only information Julius had decided to report.

Even he himself found that choice surprising.

By nature, if Roswaal had the means of obtaining information from someone, he would deem it acceptable to gain all of the knowledge he could and formulate a plan, and then use it to confront a battle.

And yet, why had he sympathized with Julius’s emotions, and respected his intentions?

He had no definite answer concerning the reason for his change of heart, but— that mattered not.

Even if he did not know everything about Balleroy Temeglyph, Julius had given a valuable answer. From Roswaal’s perspective, that alone had been sufficient.

Roswaal: “The fact that it was Julius-kun who killed you, is a fact indeed— I wonder, do you not even remember the reason behind your own death, Balleroy Temeglyph-kun?”

Through the Authority of Gluttony, Julius’s Name had been eaten.

As a result, the people around Julius, save for the exemption of Subaru, had all forgotten about him. Roswaal was no exception, and it was likely that the deceased were no exception either.

Even Balleroy, who had been felled by the hand of none other than Julius, did not remember what it was that had caused his death.

In other words——

Roswaal: “——With the same method that caused you to die the first time, I will kill you.”

It was truly a hapless coincidence, and a miraculous happenstance.

This was what Julius had employed to kill Balleroy, and it was a chance of seizing victory that could only be grasped because Julius's Name had been eaten.

It would be presumptuous of him to even try to imagine the anguish of Julius and Balleroy, who were directly involved, but as an outsider, Roswaal was truly grateful for that happenstance from the bottom of his heart.

——The expansion of the rainbow barrier blocked the path of Balleroy and his flying dragon as they tried to ascend.

A barrier brought about by an aurora, he had heard that such magic had been the decisive blow in Julius's defeat of Balleroy.

It was an original magic that had been devised by Julius and his Spirits, and reproducing it required an abnormally large amount of Mana to be consumed, even for Roswaal.

Roswaal was capable of using several types of magic at the same time, but utilizing all six types simultaneously was an act devoid of sanity.

While hearing the sound of his own Gate screaming from within him, Roswaal still recreated Julius's victory condition in order to raise his own chances of winning.

The objective of this was not to be some sort of ridicule or harassment, rather, it was a strategic choice.

Of course, if his goal had simply been to block Balleroy's escape path, Roswaal could have accomplished the same thing by making use of the flames and wind in which he was proficient. But, the magic he was accustomed to using would have been detected as dangerous with a single glance.

It was necessary to employ magic that Balleroy would be seeing for the very first time, robbing him of his discernment, even if for only a moment.

Therefore, surmising that this aurora of rainbow was also a part of what he had forgotten due to the Authority of Gluttony, Roswaal purposely brought this situation to its final phase with the resolve to shoulder the burden.

Medium: “—Hk.”

As Medium grit her teeth, though both of her barbarian swords had been ripped out of her hands, she still maintained her fighting spirit and clenched her fists.

One or two shots of the Magical Bullets perhaps could have been blocked by sacrificing both of her hands, but he had no intention of engaging in a fight that demanded such a high price.

In the sense that the opponent had been robbed of his options, Medium had already done more than enough work.

On the way to the Imperial Capital, Medium had voiced gratitude towards Subaru, and then Subaru had also conveyed his own gratitude to Medium,

but Roswaal felt the exact same way.

*Subaru: “What are you talking about, Medium-san? If we’re giving thanks, then I’m the one who should be grateful to you. Thinking about what things would be like if I hadn’t met Medium-san and Flop-san back there, it makes me shudder.”*

The way Subaru had put on a bashful performance had made Roswaal want to applaud him.

Certainly, without the assistance of the O’Connell siblings, this assault would not have been successful.

Roswaal: “But——”

Thwarted by the rainbow, they would begin to fall.

Since that was the conclusion that approached the pinnacle of flying dragon riders within the Empire, Roswaal narrowed his eyes——

Roswaal: “———”

——That instant, an impact pierced him diagonally from behind, and his consciousness was greatly rocked.



The moment the rainbow light stretched out before him, chills ran down Balleroy’s entire body.

Despite being an undead body, it was ironic that the fighting intuition known as survival instincts continued to work away.

Following the appeals of those dead survival instincts, Balleroy faced the barrier that had been created by the aurora, and fired the “hidden bullet”

which had been quite literally kept hidden, which became the foundation for overcoming this obstacle.

—As Roswaal had guessed, Balleroy could not remember the cause of his own death.

Why had he ended up losing his life? Even though he could remember the commotion that had served as its impetus, as well as his incentive and reason for participating, the cause of his death was the only thing that remained a blur.

If possible, he thought that it would have been better if he had forgotten things other than the reason behind his death.

But, if he were to forget those things, he would definitely no longer remain himself.

In any case, Balleroy could not recall the moment of his death.

However, upon hearing accounts from the other undead, excluding the people who had died without understanding what was going on, he could not find anybody else who had forgotten the details that had led up to their death.

Because of that, Balleroy thought. He thought about why he had died, about why he could not think of an answer.

And, he had thought about how he must have died, considering as many options as possible.

The possibility that his affiliation with the rebellion had been exposed, and someone like Cecilus had lopped off his head, or his fellow Generals of the First-Class like Groovy and Moguro had purged him.

But, he had his reasons for carrying out that rebellion— Thinking that it might have been related to the people who had come from the Kingdom of

Lugunica, he had pondered what sort of battle it might have been.

—The method of being defeated by having his path obstructed mid-flight, was the final candidate that he had considered.

Balleroy had arrived at that idea after the battle of the coupled dragon carriages, where he had retrieved the body of Lamia Godwin, and had identified the presence of Flop and Medium.

Back then, when Balleroy had fired a Magical Bullet to restrain the enemy, he had witnessed somebody inside the coupled dragon carriage defend against it by putting up a barrier of rainbow— It was after he had seen that rainbow.

He could not be sure. But, he had felt that it was a troublesome technique.

That was why, no matter what sort of corner he was forced into, he had kept it in mind to prepare one spare Magical Bullet, such that he could instantaneously fire it at any moment.

That had been useful in tearing through this rainbow barrier.

Carillon: “—Kiryarahhh!”

Carillon roared as it pierced through the rainbow, and while sustaining wounds over its entire body, they escaped the enclosure.

Maximizing the advantages of having become an undead flying dragon, his beloved dragon flew in a path towards survival as its painful wounds began to regenerate; grateful for that, Balleroy charged his spear with a Magical Bullet, and as he readied it diagonally,

Balleroy: “Hit.”

The bullet that had been fired flew straight in a direction that was off the mark from the enemy. However, in the line of fire of the bullet of light was



some falling debris from the chunks of ice, and the light bullet slid diagonally across the surface of the ice.

With that momentum, the light bullet bounced around the surrounding debris, bouncing around, bouncing around— then, it pierced the back of the enemy who had unleashed the rainbow upon him.

Having been born, having died, he had succeeded in the ricocheting of light for the first time.

Having quite literally flown over the boundary of death, Balleroy had evolved his magical technique even further.

—Unfortunately for Roswaal, by attempting to select magic that was supposed to have been seen for the first time by Balleroy in order to delay his response, he had actually allowed for an instinctive reaction to the rainbow he was seeing for the second time.

???: “Ros-chin—!!”

Struck by a ricochet from an unexpected angle, the magician’s flight had been hindered, and a scream called out for him.

From within the arms of the magician, Medium had been unable to do anything about an attack from a position she could not defend, and that scream sounded from her grievous voice.

If he had aimed directly for the magician and shot them down, they would have fallen from quite a high elevation, and there was the danger that he would not have been able to save Medium.

That had resulted in Balleroy being restricted to only targeting Medium, but the descent of the iceberg and the attack on the Crystal Palace had actually backfired on his opponent.

Balleroy: “At this distance, I can catch ya before ya fall.”

The long-distance battle of several kilometers between the southwest and northernmost point of the Imperial Capital had lost that distance in the midst of battle; it was now a distance such that he would be able to catch Medium before his opponent crashed into the ground.

Balleroy patted Carillon's neck, and slipping past the chunks of ice, it faced its wings in that direction in order to retrieve Medium.

While preparing himself to endure all the verbal abuse that Medium would throw at him——

Medium: “Ros-chin?”

Suddenly, the audible voice was one of innocence, completely dissimilar to the shriek from just before.

If something were to be said, then it had been a tone bereft of what was characteristic for Medium, but the strangeness of hearing that in the midst of this battle, and the subsequent development, stole Balleroy's attention.

Balleroy: “Wha...”

An undead with black eyeballs and golden irises looming within; with those eyes opened wide, Balleroy was left speechless.

Within Balleroy's vision, Medium parted from the arms of the magician who had been flying in the sky, and began to fall towards the ground below——no, she was not falling. She had been thrown.

Vigor having been applied to Medium's body, she had been thrown towards the surface with utmost strength.

With a speed much faster than that of a free fall, she plummeted towards the ground. If he did not move to catch her right away, he would not make it in time.

Right after he had thought that, Balleroy understood what that devil had been thinking.

Balleroy: “———”

The moment before he chose to fly to Medium, Balleroy’s gaze crossed with the magician’s.

At a distance where he could finally see his opponent’s face clearly, even without the scope, it was a man with an exceedingly aggravating face.

His back having been struck, while blood spilled from his mouth, the opponent was still smiling.

Shooting a Magical Bullet at that smile, he immediately soared towards Medium. He would not let things go in accordance with his opponent’s intentions——

Carillon: “——Kiryarahhh!”

At that moment, Carillon’s neigh pulled Balleroy’s attention towards Medium.

Having been thrown away, Medium was plummeting towards the ground. The speed at which she fell was high, but it was likely that Balleroy and Carillon would be able to reach her in time—— No, it would have been likely.

What awaited Medium at the end of her fall, were spikes of ice from the wreckage of the shattered ice chunks.

Balleroy: “———”

He hallucinated the vision of Medium’s body being torn to shreds by the blades of ice.

From his opponent's perspective, Medium should have been an ally. His reasoning cried out that such an obvious fact would not serve as insurance before an opponent like this.

This opponent was a magician. A magician who would make full use of absolutely everything at his disposal as his own property—

Balleroy: “———”

He had only a moment to think, and the result would appear immediately afterwards.

There was a single Magical Bullet stored in Balleroy's spearhead, and he only had one chance to make his decision. That was, whether he would shoot this Magical Bullet at the magician, or at the ice spikes.

—Balleroy hated the deaths of his own people more than anything else.

Balleroy: “—Ain't that right, Big Bro Miles?”

Carillon: “—Kiryararahhh!”

As he whispered in appeal, his beloved dragon neighed as if to express its approval.

That instant, the fired Magical Bullet flew straight, thoroughly destroying the ice spikes that were threatening to pierce the falling Medium. And then—

Roswaal: “—The cause of your defeat, was that you wavered when it came to what was most important.”

Together with the unfeeling voice of the man, a Magical Bullet fired by his opponent pierced Balleroy's chest, along with the wing of his beloved dragon, bringing this battle of sky to its conclusion.

# Arc 8 Chapter 54 - *Soumatou*<sup>13</sup>

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 5 “Madelyn Eschart”,  
Parts 3-5

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial  
Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by  
Kazatashi, DatShazam, Beloved, Bruhseph, Translation checked by Garcar,  
Ice, Senkel, Rageasu) — [Complete](#)

—Before he could even notice it, Garfiel Tinsel found himself sitting in a dark place.

Garfiel: “Ah?”

With his sharp eyes widened, Garfiel glanced around.

There was no familiarity to the place. In the dimly-lit area, Garfiel was sunk deep into a chair, elbows on his knees and chin resting on his hands.

What in the world could have brought him to be in such a place?

Garfiel: “Where the fuck am I...”

Wrinkling his nose in suspicion, Garfiel sniffed.

Garfiel’s excellent sense of smell, though not as acute as that of a hyenaperson, was useful for assessing situations. Picking up information about his surroundings was more of an instinctive action— yet, his sense of smell was not working well.

It was not as if he could not sense any smell, but rather that it seemed elusive.

Speaking of elusiveness, it was not just the smell. The surrounding situation was likewise.

As previously mentioned, he found himself in a dimly-lit area. The ceiling was high, and the chair Garfiel was seated upon was not the only one, as there were rows of chairs arranged on both sides. Moreover, there seemed to be multiple rows of chairs both before and behind Garfiel, with him occupying a seat in the middle of the space.

Just as he was contemplating this, Garfiel recalled something similar to this scene.

Garfiel: “This must be some kinda theater where they do plays or somethin’.”

Once the idea of a theater was spoken, the image solidified in his mind, and it seemed clear-cut.

Indeed. Garfiel was in a theater, sitting in the middle of the auditorium. The dim lighting and high ceiling were all essential elements for theater performances.

Just as Garfiel came to this understanding of his situation, as if on cue, a loud, resonant bell chimed throughout the theater— A signal for the beginning of the performance.

Garfiel: “———”

With widened eyes, Garfiel froze in place, leaving his inner thoughts behind, as a change occurred in front of the audience’s seating— the curtain rose, unveiling the previously hidden stage.

And, on that stage, bathed in the audience’s gaze, was——

Garfiel: “...A cat?”

Garfiel’s muttered words, accompanied by a frown, succinctly captured the scene on the stage.

In truth, awaiting the start of the performance, now that the curtain had been raised, was a small cat. A tiny gray cat standing on two legs, its arms outstretched.

Its small size, even more reductive than that of the kitten-people Garfiel was aware of, Mimi being one such case, was truly akin to that of a palm.

One such small cat, then two, then three, began the start of their performance on the stage.

Each cat looked identical. And before Garfiel, swept along by the situation, the three cats began to move—— Each was adorned with different props.

One wore a golden wig, another a red wig, and the last one a white cotton tuft on its head.

Then, before Garfiel’s blinking eyes, the three cats moved to their respective positions on the stage, where they began to perform spectacular movements.

The golden-haired cat and the cotton-tufted cat collided, while the red-haired cat stood still, watching.

Quite the literal scuffle had broken out.

Garfiel: “What the fuck’s this...”

Stunned, Garfiel watched as the cats became entangled on the stage.

The props on the stage were quite elaborate, with a backdrop depicting a stone-hewn cityscape. The houses and *kabuki*<sup>14</sup> paintings on the walls

started to become broken, destroyed, and thrown around as the cats fought with each other.

It was quite the flashy, intricate horseplay, such that one would think it to be almost charming.

Garfiel: “—? That cat, now that I think ’bout it, ain’t I seen it somewhere before?”

Suddenly, as he focused on the performing kittens, Garfiel felt a tug in his memory. Scratching at the nearly-closed lid of his memories, he gradually opened it, and understanding began to emerge.

Those kittens, they looked just like the pictures that Subaru would draw at Emilia and Beatrice’s insistence, depicting the Great Spirit who was contracted to Emilia.

Garfiel: “Nah, I said what the hell’s up with that!”

Despite having an idea come to mind, Garfiel was indignant because he could not grasp what it meant. He inadvertently raised his voice, causing the kittens on stage to stop their movements in surprise.

Catching a glimpse of the three kittens peeking at him, Garfiel felt mortified.

He did not feel like there was a reason to apologize, nor did he want to insist that there was not one, but—

???: “—Truly a fool. Sit down, Garf.”

Garfiel: “Oh...”

???: “Watching quietly is the etiquette of theater. Are you trying to disrupt the performance?”



Having been abruptly reprimanded, Garfiel turned to the side with his eyes peeled.

To his left, where there had been no one just moments before, sat a girl with pink hair— Ram. She pulled Garfiel back by his waistband and sat him down, and then to the kittens who were looking at her with glazed-over eyes, she arrogantly said “Continue”.

Following Ram’s instructions, the kittens resumed their onstage banter. However, Garfiel found Ram’s presence more significant than the stage performance.

Garfiel: “Ram, the fuck’re ya doin’ here? ‘N who the hell are those guys?”

Ram: “Garf.”

Garfiel: “No, this ain’t the time to be talkin’. Anyway, we gotta get outta here! I don’t care where we are, I’ll make sure to keep ya safe.”

Ram: “Garf.”

Garfiel: “Right, lemme know yer thoughts, Ram. Honestly, it’s prolly better to think ’bout things the two of us together than for my amazin’ self to think alone—”

Ram: “—Garf, haven’t you realized?”

Driven by impatience, Garfiel’s tone of voice became more and more agitated, choking up at Ram’s words.

In front of the blinking Garfiel, Ram kept her usual cool demeanor, fixing her eyes on the stage.

Feeling frustrated by the one he loved not reciprocating the attention he was giving her, Garfiel also glanced up at the stage to see what had caught her attention, and he saw the unchanged playful antics of the kittens.

However, he soon realized that there was a hidden meaning beneath their continued playful interactions.

The golden-haired kitten, the red-haired kitten, and the cotton-tufted kitten faced each other and flailed about, wreaking havoc on the cityscape backdrop— until finally, the cotton-tufted kitten shoved the golden-haired kitten, causing it to tumble.

The fallen golden-haired kitten ended up trapped beneath a fallen prop.

What could this performance be about—

Ram: “Garf.”

Once again, called by Ram’s quiet voice, Garfiel turned around. And then, the light-crimson eyes that had been watching the stage up until now met his own, and their gazes collided head-on.

He looked at Ram’s face, which normally made his heart pound when seeing it up close; however, at this moment, what was throbbing inside Garfiel was not love, but an instinctive warning bell.

Sensing Garfiel’s realization, Ram let out a small sigh,

Ram: “You, are dying.”

And so, she declared that the theater he was witnessing was merely a fleeting dream.



—A kitten wearing a golden wig rolling onto the stage, which was his own appearance.

Once he did understand that in a certain way, this entire program appeared to be like nothing but a bad joke.

While confronting the enemy, the cotton-tufted kitten, he had been the one protecting the red-haired kitten behind him. As he pondered upon it, little-by-little, his memory became clearer.

Garfiel: “That’s right, right now my amazin’ self’s in the middle of fightin’ the Dragon that Captain asked me to... So that cotton-tufted one’s the Dragon!? ‘N the red-haired one’s the old man!?”

Ram: “That one has become rather cute.”

Garfiel: “As much as I wanna hear which one, this ain’t the time for that. I gotta get back soon...!”

Ram: “Wait.”

Garfiel: “Gooaah!”

Having understood the situation, Garfiel promptly attempted to jump into action, but he could only cry out in pain as the string of his necklace was pulled tight. Ram had forcibly stopped Garfiel and hastily turned him around to face her, and as Garfiel bore his fangs and was about to yell at her,

???: “Wait, wait, Garfiel. Stay right here like Nee-sama said. Let’s call a timeout.”

Saying so, Natsuki Subaru, who occupied the other seat next to Ram, stopped Garfiel.

The appearance of this Subaru, was one that had not been seen in a while, with long arms and legs— long in comparison to the present state, but not actually all that long, such was his appearance.

Subaru: “Hey, right now, didn’t you just think of something really hurtful?”

Garfiel: “Don’t’cha fret ‘bout it, Captain. Ain’t’cha always sayin’ that ya got short legs n’ a long torso?”

Subaru: “Saying it yourself versus having it said to you are entirely different kinds of damage! That’s how it’s supposed to be! Am I right, Beako? Emilia-tan?”

Beatrice: “Subaru, right now, it’s Bubby’s moment to shine in the play, so stop interrupting, in fact.”

Emilia: “Sorry, Subaru. I’ll make sure to listen to what you have to say later...”

Subaru, who was finally back to his previous size, was altogether brushed aside by both Beatrice, who was sitting on his lap, and Emilia, who was seated next to him. The girls were way too absorbed in each and every move of the kittens on stage to give Subaru even the slightest attention.

Listening to the conversation between the disappointedly slump-shouldered Subaru and the others, Garfiel meanwhile recalled that the actual name of the kitten, whom he did not know personally, was Puck.

Furthermore, this kind of interaction of Subaru with the rest of the group felt similar to ones he had witnessed in the past.

???: “You are correct, this is a memory of the original theater that this space is based upon. You see, it looks just like the theater we were invited to when we all went to see the play about the Subjugation of the White Whale.”

???: “Garf-san was totally in love with that play. I had a lot of fun too, so I know how you feel.”

Garfiel: “Ottobro, Petra...”

This time, the voices came from behind him, and he turned around, where his gaze was met with Petra, who was waving her hands in the air, and Otto, who was seated next to her and was shrugging his shoulders.

Furthermore, besides Otto, he saw a woman with long, golden hair—

Garfiel: “Gaoh...”

???: “That is quite the pathetic face you are making, Garf. Besides, Ram raises an unusually valid point this time. So sit, and calm down.”

Garfiel: “Oh, even if ya tell me to calm down...”

???: “Now now. Won’t’cha lend an ear ta what all these people ‘round ya are sayin’? Good grief, one’d expect some growth after not seein’ ya for so long, but yer still wet behind the ears, aren’t’cha, Gar-bo.”

Garfiel: “Geh! Nann... Granny!?”

Ryuzu: “...Why’d ya have ta correct yerrself ta make it worse<sup>15</sup>?”

Within the eyes of the astonished Garfiel, the figures of his grandmother, Ryuzu, together with his elder sister were reflected.

At that unexpected lineup, Garfiel was left flabbergasted, and Ram, who was right next to him, once again pulled him by the waistband, forcing him to sit down.

Ram: “So? Have you calmed down a little?”

Garfiel: “Just like «Dagraham’s encirclement», this ain’t a situation to calm down...! I just sat down ‘cause my knees felt a bit weak... What the hell’s goin’ on?”

Ram: “For the time being, it seems like you’re inclined to listen to what Ram has to say. Good.”

???: “As expected of you, Nee-sama.”

Garfiel: “Whoa!?”

Ram nodded with her usually cold expression, when suddenly an audience member seated in front of them turned around and interjected. Realizing that it was Rem, Ram’s light blue-haired younger sister, Garfiel blinked.

However, Rem essentially ignored Garfiel and had turned back around to face forward again.

Garfiel: “Huh, what the...?”

Subaru: “That’s how it is. Garfiel, you don’t have much of a mental image of Rem yet, so she’s only going to react nebulously. It’s completely within the scope of how I impersonated her.”

Garfiel: “At the rate people’re poppin’ up, ain’t it gonna get hella crowded in here, dammit.”

At Rem’s vapidness, with Beatrice seated on his lap, Subaru responded while playing with her hair.

While this reasoning was somewhat convincing, if the person in question could not be recreated properly, then what was the point in keeping them in this theater in the first place; such was his impression.

Frederica: “You have it all wrong, Garf. It is true that you do not know much about Rem yet, but that does not mean you do not care about her. That is the reason why she is here.”

???: “I agree. A person you are concerned about will continue to remain strongly in your heart. Familiarity with the person in question is not all that important, I think that’s the crucial matter in this case.”

Garfiel: “This ain’t good for my heart.”

Somehow, as he was beginning to understand the rules of the theater, the explanation that came from Frederica and Reinhard, who had somehow come to be sitting in the rows behind, lacked a sense of reality.

Since none of this was real, it seemed like lacking that sense of reality was apt. In all likelihood, Frederica and Reinhard being in the same place, and having a conversation like this, had never happened before.

However—

Garfiel: “My impatience from earlier’s startin’ to calm down. That bein’ said, should I just stay quiet like Ram said? I’m somehow startin’ to feel sleepy...”

Ram: “Ha! What is this idiocy I am hearing? If you fall asleep, you’ll die.”

Garfiel: “So this place really is dangerous after all!”

Beatrice, Emilia & Petra: “Shhh.”

As soon as he raised his voice, Beatrice and Emilia put their fingers to their lips, and Petra admonished him. Being singled out made his lips quiver, and Garfiel clicked his fangs and fell silent.

He was told not to rush back, but then he was told not to be too calm, or else he would die; just what did they want Garfiel to do?

???: “It’s about not returning empty-haaanded~. Just do not try to overthink too much.”

Garfiel: “Urggh, even inside my amazin’ self’s head you piss me off...”

???: “Oya oya, I am so haaated~. Although, blaming me would be absurd, so expressing my regret and apologizing would be an oddity.”

Seated one row behind with his long legs crossed, Roswaal fanned the flames. Looking towards him in frustration, as Garfiel was about to

complain, he was suddenly at a loss for words.

He was aware that Reinhard, who had spoken out earlier, was seated next to Roswaal. However, the problem was the other person sitting next to him.

When the woman clad in black noticed Garfiel's gaze, she smiled sweetly with an "Ara",

???: "You're looking at me with quite the burning gaze. Although it's in a place like this, will you join me in slicing each other to our heart's content?"

Garfiel: "...Doin' that wouldn't be any fun. I'd also feel bad for Meili. So I ain't gonna do it."

???: "Oh, how disappointing. But, I don't feel that bad, knowing that you have a place for me inside of you."

???: "Since it's you Elsa, it's because of your nasty personaaality."

As a blood-colored smile appeared on Elsa's face, Meili took over the conversation from her, who was flanking Garfiel by sitting in the row in front of him, right next to Rem.

Somehow, he was beginning to understand the significance of the seating arrangements. If he was right, then naturally next to Elsa, a giant blue-skinned man with eight arms should have been present.

???: "———"

The giant man kept a rock-like expression on his face, and glancing at Garfiel, he remained silent.

Exposed to that silent pressure, Garfiel took a short breath, clenching his fist tighter and tighter. And then, that was when Garfiel's clenched fist was



enveloped by the hand of a small shadow that had leaned over from the seat in front.

???: “Garf, are you okaaay~? Can you do it? Mimi’s super worried.”

Garfiel: “Mimi...”

Ram: “That’s right. Garf is a coward at heart.”

The round-eyed Mimi took hold of his right hand, and his left hand was taken by Ram who was next to him.

Garfiel looked up, glanced around at their faces, and then let out a long, long sigh.

This was not a scene out of reality, Garfiel himself was about to die.

Despite that, the companions within his mind stopped him from going back immediately, and them taking turns talking to him like this, was like the “*soumatou*”<sup>16</sup> that he had once heard about from Subaru.

Subaru: “But you know, Garfiel. Normally, in a *soumatou*, all of your memories from birth till the current moment flash before your eyes in a jiffy, it’s not something where you get summoned to a theater.”

Garfiel: “...So then, the fuck’s this supposed to be, Captain?”

Subaru: “For that, you’re gonna have to find the answer yourself.”

Rem: “As expected of Subaru-kun. I’m impressed.”

Garfiel: “——By myself.”

For a moment, despite the extra interjection in between, Garfiel went deep into rumination.

If this was not a *soumatou*, and the answer was instead to be found by himself, then was it not just a momentary respite until the dying Garfiel

could stand back up?

If he did not stand up right away, he would fail to fulfill the role he had been entrusted with——

Beatrice: “Uu, I hope each of the Bubbys do their best, I suppose...!”

Emilia: “That’s right. No matter the outcome, let’s properly see it through to the end...!”

Indifferent to the anxious Garfiel, Beatrice and Emilia, who were watching the play, seemed to be getting more excited as the climax of the performance approached.

In suspense, and experiencing a whirlwind of emotions from what was occurring on the stage, the two held hands as the peculiar portrayal of Puck and Puck clashing with each other swayed their emotions tempestuously.

On stage, the golden-haired Puck had fallen over, and the red-haired Puck was restraining the cotton-tufted Puck as he tried to move in the direction of the golden-haired Puck, an undoubtedly perilous predicament——

Garfiel: “——The red-haired one...”

The red-haired Puck, while protecting the golden-haired Puck, was facing the cotton-tufted Puck.

The situation on the stage had changed while Garfiel had not been looking, and fearing that it was a reflection of reality, Garfiel’s expression changed as he gnashed his fangs. As expected, he needed to get back right away——

Ram: “——Truly a fool.”

It was a familiar affront, but unlike the usual tone imbued with a bit of gentleness, the voice carried within it a more definite rebuke.

Garfiel's eyes widened at Ram's words, and she pointed to the stage with the hand opposite the one she had placed over Garfiel's. Looking at the stage that had been directed to, he found that the situation had continued to progress.

The collapsed, golden-haired Puck had arisen, and had pushed aside the red-haired Puck. It immediately began to head for the cotton-tufted Puck— with a single blow from the cotton-tufted Puck, the golden-haired Puck turned into light.

Subaru: “One out. However, in life, you don't get three outs. One out is how it ends<sup>17</sup>.”

Having turned the golden-haired Puck into light, the cotton-tufted Puck chased after the red-haired Puck, as the latter turned around in an attempt to run away, also being turned into light by the former. Thus, the cotton-tufted Puck alone remained on stage, and the play reached its curtain's close.

Amid sparse applause, the stage curtain descended, with the cotton-tufted Puck bowing deeply, and as the stage signaled the end of the performance—

Mimi: “Ehhh~! That wasn't enjoyable at all! Mimi isn't satisfieeed~!”

And so, Mimi, who like Ram was also holding Garfiel's hand, stretched out her tail and started to throw a tantrum like a misbehaving child.

However, for a play that had already reached its conclusion, speaking out like that was pointless— but that had not been so.

In the next moment, the opening bell resounded within the theater, and the curtain that had been lowered began to rise once more.

And on the other side of the curtain, the golden-haired Puck and the red-haired Puck, who ought to have disappeared, along with the cotton-tufted Puck, who ought to have made them disappear, were facing off; protecting the collapsed golden-haired, the climactic scene where red-haired confronted cotton-tufted was being reenacted.

Garfiel: “The hell...”

Unsure of what in the world was unfolding, Garfiel’s throat quivered.

And then, to Garfiel, whose thoughts had gone blank,

Ram: “Just recklessly standing back up didn’t work, now did it? If so, then what will you do?”

So asked Ram, calmly with one eye closed.

To that question from Ram, Garfiel gulped, and he looked upon the stage once again.

Rem: “Nee-sama is wonderful.”

Truly, that was so; with the younger sister whom he was not yet too familiar with, Garfiel wholeheartedly agreed.



Onstage, the golden-haired Puck evaporated into light again and again.

It seemed that a great deal of improvisation was allowed in this play, and the content was influenced to a great extent by the audience’s opinions. However—

Reinhard: “How about a serious kick to turn the entire Imperial Capital upside down?”

Elsa: “How about pretending just once to be gravely injured, and aiming at your opponent when they think you’re dead?”

Roswaal: “Even Dragons seem to have some sort of attachment. For example, hooow~ about using a friend of the Dragon who may be in the Imperial Capital as a shield?”

Garfiel: “If all ya can think of is impossible crap or cowardly plans, then shut up!”

Opinions that were not even adopted to the stage were shared one after another, and as Garfiel barked back furiously at the people behind him they all shut their mouths in unison.

Simply, since it was their words and actions as perceived by Garfiel, he could not help but feel unproductive because he felt as if he was angry with himself.

Otto: “At the very least, he needs to take advantage of the terrain. The difference between a large and small body can be fatal, but on the other hand, there must be a gap that can be used by being small.”

Petra: “Yeah, that’s right. Garf-san’s body is smaller than the Dragon’s, and he might lose in a contest of strength but... that’s why we should talk about what contest he can win in.”

Subaru: “In theory, yes, but in practice, how can we do it? Garfiel aside, if it were me, I wouldn’t be able to win a fight against a Dragon even if it was doing a handstand.”

Otto: “The thought of Natsuki-san exterminating a Dragon, I would not expect that from anyone but Garfiel.”

On the other hand, he felt that his comrades beside him who were speaking constructively were speaking more wisely than Garfiel, even though they

were Garfiel's perception of them.

Of course, the real people would have conversations like this, but—

Subaru: "Emilia-tan, do you have any *kangoku*<sup>18</sup> for Garfiel?"

Emilia: "Me? Well... I think that the part where he couldn't catch Mezoreia's tail before they hit him like that, that part wasn't good. He may have been in a difficult position, but instead of trying to catch it, couldn't he have dodged it?"

Subaru: "You really responded better than I thought!"

Rem: "As expected of Emilia-san."

While she watched the Pucks prance on stage, Emilia made an accurate point and Subaru and Rem both responded to her. He did not know if Rem's response was correct, but perhaps her statement was a direct reflection of Garfiel's feelings.

At any rate, he felt that things were gradually coming into view.

However, when one piled something up and piled it up and piled it up, and then brought it back to reality, how likely was it that it would actually be useful?

Ryuzu: "Yer worried, aren't'cha, Gar-bo?"

Garfiel: "Honestly, my amazin' self feels more shameful than worried. My amazin' self was the one entrusted with the duty of dealin' with that Dragon."

Ryuzu looked at his face and Garfiel expressed his loathsome feelings.

He had jumped in with gusto, nearly died in the heat of battle, and once that had been lacking, Garfiel had built a theater in his head with a large

group of his friends— well, some were not his friends, but by all of them he was comforted.

Ryuzu: “And, what’s so shameful ‘bout that?”

Garfiel: “———”

Upon being asked that, Garfiel furrowed his brow and raised his head. Lined up next to Ryuzu was Frederica, who was staring at Garfiel.

With the same emerald eyes as Garfiel, she squinted.

Frederica: “What is shameful about this, Garf?”

She piled on the same question.

Garfiel: “It’s... shameful, ain’t it. Everyone else’s fightin’ by themselves, n’ yet, only my amazin’ self... Hk.”

Ryuzu: “If ya can’t fight by yerself then that’s shameful. Is that what yer sayin’?”

Garfiel: “Yeah! Wait, no, that ain’t right. I ain’t sayin’ it’s shameful to work together in a fight. *This*, meaning, havin’ my friends bustlin’ together in my head.”

Frederica: “—Seriously, that is impossible, Garf.”

Having been driven ragged, all he could do was rely on the companions in his own mind.

Towards Garfiel who was vigorously trying to break away from that attitude, Frederica spoke clearly.

With her emerald-green eyes narrowed, Frederica sighed at the stiffening Garfiel and,

Frederica: “You really are quite dumb, Garf. Please take a look at your surroundings.”

Garfiel: “My surroundings...”

Being told this, Garfiel looked around the inside of the theater.

His companions were lined up in the seats next to him, his enemies were in the seats behind, those who he was hesitant to call his allies were in front of him, and— before he knew it, there were no empty seats left in the theater, all of them were filled with faces that Garfiel was familiar with.

Garfiel: “———”

Ram, Subaru and some others were naturally there, and so were Roswaal, Reinhard, Mimi, Rem and the others, and there were even more people beyond that.

There were also the people of the Mathers Domain, and there were also those that he had come to know over the course of his journey in the Empire.

There were the companions he was fond of and other people who he could not get close with, but every single one of them had come into contact with Garfiel’s life in some way, and each had secured themselves a seat.

Ryuzu: “My oh my, the theater’s jam-packed. Soon we won’t all be able to fit in here no more.”

Seeing the same thing as Garfiel, Ryuzu let out a good humored chuckle.

As his grandmother had stated, the theater was so full that some people had to stand. Everyone looked at the scene of the Pucks atop the stage, watching how the Puck that played the role of Garfiel was losing.



At that reality, his face began to heat up. What a pathetic, disgraceful manner of losing.

Everyone was surely fed up with him——

Ram: “——Truly a fool.”

Mimi: “You know, Garf. All of this is inside Garf’s head, right? But, Garf’s head isn’t very smart. Just like Mimi! So, that also goes for what everyone is saying, right?”

Being spoken to from both his left and right in quick succession, Garfiel blinked his eyes.

Then when he looked around again, everyone who had previously been looking at the stage had turned to face Garfiel himself. Looking at each of their faces one-by-one, he thought back on the type of people they were.

Everyone had spoken as much as they pleased, throwing their complaints towards the Puck playing the role of Garfiel that kept losing, but——

Garfiel: “Nobody’s tellin’ my amazin’ self anythin’ that’s convenient for me, or anythin’ that I don’t think they’d say.”

Ram’s words were direct, and Mimi’s were vague, but they were both saying the same thing.

If this theater was in Garfiel’s head, and for the sake of comforting his beaten and dying self, he had gathered his family, friends, acquaintances, and even enemies, then that would be beyond pathetic.

But, Garfiel was not smart.

Getting people to think and say things that they would not normally say, or having them line up convenient words to comfort his heart like he was

playing with puppets, were the sort of complicated things he was unable to do.

Subaru: “As you’ve thought, you can’t put what we’ve discussed here to good use in the outside world. This is just consolation, a temporary peace of mind. But, there’s nothing wrong with resting, even if it’s just your mind.”

Beatrice: “Even though it was Subaru who requested him to stop the Dragon, that is quite the manner of speaking, in fact.”

Subaru: “That’s because I’m the me inside Garfiel’s head...!”

Emilia: “Wait, so that means, when it feels like you’re about to say reaaally difficult things, it’s just because that’s how it seems to Garfiel? Is that so?”

Emilia, with a puzzled look on her face, asked this, making Garfiel let out an “Ah”.

He looked overhead, taking a moment to think before lowering his gaze.

Garfiel: “Maybe since I’m fine with however much the Captain asks of me, the Captain in my amazin’ self’s head can say things like that.”

Otto: “Even supposing that were the case, you should know that the people around you are giving you their honest advice. Really, I have no clue where you learnt to think like this...”

Frederica: “...Otto-sama would say that, now wouldn’t he?”

As Otto pointed at himself with a disappointed expression, Frederica gave a wry smile. Seeing this, Petra placed a hand over her mouth, letting out an “Aha”, a laughter which began to spread throughout her surroundings.

Before Garfiel realized it, he had joined in the laughter, in spite of himself.

Garfiel: “Well, like, maybe I was bein’ a bit stubborn.”

Ryuzu: “Oh, Gar-bo?”

Garfiel: “‘Cause Captain asked me to do it, n’ also ‘cause the Empire was at risk. Sure, my opponent’s a Dragon, n’ like always we can’t afford to lose, but what the hell.”

Slowly, Garfiel moved his hands apart from their interlocking and raised them up. Then, he brought them together with force before his chest, letting out a thunk.

With that pose, with the reverberating sound of his gnashing fangs, with his rising fighting spirit,

Garfiel: “This here, is a job entrusted to my amazin’ self, but my amazin’ self ain’t gonna be fightin’ alone.”

???: “—Magnificent.”

Inspired by Garfiel’s rising spirits, a low, solemn commendation hung over the room.

It had come from a seat behind him, and Garfiel did not need to confirm that this single word had been spoken by a giant with four pairs of crossed arms. Now, there was just one thing that he wanted to ascertain.

Garfiel: “I told’cha, Captain! I’ll make that flyin’, bellyachin’ Dragon drop to the ground!”

Subaru: “—Yeah! Like you said! Go and get ‘em!”

Garfiel: “Hyooo!”

With an energetic reply, Garfiel stood up with verve.

And, unlike the other times when he stood up where she had pulled him back, Ram did not move. Garfiel glanced at her, and as she looked at the stage while embracing her elbows,

Ram: “What?”

Garfiel: “Ha! It’s nothin’. Seems like in my amazin’ self’s head, you ain’t that unswayable of a woman.”

Ram: “There’s no need to go out of the way to say what’s already obvious. That’s what Garf is for.”

Garfiel flashed a wry smile at Ram as she shrugged her dainty shoulders, not even turning her gaze over his way. In her place, Mimi nimbly jumped on top of her seat,

Mimi: “Then, Mimi speaks! Garf, it’d be so cool if you won this!”

Laughing at his declaration, Mimi slapped Garfiel’s back with all the strength she could muster.

Then, a beat later, just like Mimi had, Subaru, Beatrice, Emilia, Petra, Frederica, and Ryuzu all clapped Garfiel on the back.

As he was being pushed out, Garfiel was clapped on the back, and he faced towards the exit of the theater.

Garfiel: “Ottobro! Give me some *kangoku*.”

Otto: “Let me see... When it comes to dangerous behavior like risking your life, I would not allow that for anyone other than for myself.”

Garfiel: “I don’t wanna just be told that by you, Ottobro!”

His joking older brother gave him a slap on the back, forcing Garfiel towards the exit of the theater.

As he was forced towards the doorway, he saw his younger siblings, who he had thought could not be found in any of the seats, and towards them and his mother who held them by their shoulders, he directed a thumbs up.

An encounter that had filled the entirety of the theater, it had been a good *soumatou*.

And so, in those final moments, he pointed his finger towards the Pucks onstage, and,

Garfiel: “—My amazin’ self ain’t a cat! I’m the Gorgeous Tiger!”



???: “———”

Dragons were beings that were often likened to natural disasters and cataclysms, but the way the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, was rampaging about left that judgment no room for objection whatsoever.

It was an incarnation of destruction, one which had completely changed the scenery of the Imperial Capital from what it had been just a few minutes, its fierce rampage a sight utterly inconceivable for this world; witnessing that, Heinkel’s legs could not stop shaking as his heart shattered.

There had also been someone who had altered Heinkel’s destiny in a mere instant.

However, they had suffered a crushing defeat in an exchange of blows against the Dragon, and had been blown away by a roar which split the very ground asunder. Debris had rained down upon them, and had buried them underneath.

That was why there was no point, even though he had told them.

Senselessly, mercilessly, the golden-haired boy had lost his life.

And Heinkel had been unable to do anything but silently watch—

???: “—I’M THE GORGEOUS TIGER!!”

The next moment, an explosion occurred from within the mountain of rubble, and an angry roar reverberated.

At the event that had been far too abrupt, Heinkel's throat clogged up in shock, astonished by the person who had thrust their fist upwards and blown away the mountain of rubble— Garfiel.

Garfiel: "Ahh, shit... How long's my amazin' self been sleepin' for...?"

Staggeringly shaking his head, Garfiel ripped off his tattered vest, and enquired so. At that question, Heinkel blinked his eyes in surprise,

Heinkel: "...Since you were buried under the rubble, it's been about five seconds."

Garfiel: "—Five seconds, huh? Almost got killed ten times over, that was a fuckin' close one."

Taking a long, deep breath, Garfiel cracked the joints in his neck.

Seeing that unthinkable figure right after he had thought that the attack had undoubtedly killed Garfiel, Heinkel was at a loss for words. But, there was also someone even more shocked than Heinkel, and could not conceal their surprise.

*Mezoreia: "What... Hk."*

Garfiel, who had been bustling about with no cease to his motion, delivering unthinkable blows as if there were no difference in size between them, should have finally been defeated.

He had certainly been killed. For that belief to have been shattered in merely five seconds, Heinkel sympathized— What did it matter if he sympathized? Against that ultimate lifeform, against the Cloud Dragon?

*Mezoreia: "You, why... why won't you friggin' die...?"*

Garfiel: “Ahh? Don’t be an idiot, I really would’ve died. That is, if Pops didn’t go n’ make those five seconds for me.”

Heinkel: “I-I didn’t do any...”

Garfiel bared his teeth at the words of the astonished Dragon, but Heinkel could only shake his head.

It was true that right after Garfiel had been blown away and buried in the rubble, Heinkel had kept on holding his sword and had exchanged glances with Mezoreia. But, that had been nothing more than him gazing at it while understanding that had Garfiel been defeated, he would become the next prey.

*Mezoreia: “—Hk! DIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!”*

Ignoring Heinkel’s self-awareness, Mezoreia’s patience had reached its limit.

The Cloud Dragon furiously closed in on the bolt-upright Garfiel, and raising up its thick, long tail, it brought it down like a flash of lightning.

The wind generated from the flap of its wings, which it had used to approach, was enough to make it feel as if the likes of Heinkel were about to be blown away. The extraordinary blow from the Dragon aimed directly for Garfiel—

Heinkel: “—Ah?”

That instant, the Cloud Dragon’s body blurred midair, and its entirety was slammed into the protective wall of the Imperial Capital.

*Mezoreia: “—Urahwahdah!?”*

Turned upside down, Mezoreia’s back crashed into the wall, and it let out a disheveled exhale without understanding what had just happened; sharing

that lack of understanding, Heinkel's jaw was left agape.

It was not clear how it had been done. But, it was clear who had done what.

—Garfiel had parried the blow from Mezoreia's tail, and had thrown the Dragon.

Garfiel: "Ahh, shit... Now I've done it."

Looking down at his hands, for some reason, Garfiel muttered so in discontent.

Making an expression as if he was digging up an unpleasant memory, he repeatedly opened and closed the hands that had thrown the Dragon, then turned around.

Those emerald-green eyes directly clashed with the eyes of the upside down Cloud Dragon.

And then—

Garfiel: "Well, never mind. Let's fuckin' do this, round two— Sorry 'bout this, but my amazin' self's the only one who's got a mountain load of support!"

Indeed, using incomprehensible reasoning as fuel for his fighting spirit, Garfiel's clash with the Cloud Dragon, after a momentary stoppage, began anew— the verse of a legend, headed for its coda.



# Arc 8 Chapter 55 - Madelyn Eschart

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 5 “Madelyn Eschart”,  
Parts 2 and 6-10

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Original Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar) – [Complete](#)

—Madelyn Eschart, was the youngest dragonkin in existence.

By nature, due to the mechanisms behind the dragonkin’s genesis, they possessed origins distinct from every other race. In order to precisely explain their ecology, the relationship between dragonkin and Dragons must first be known.

Nowadays, the number of individual Dragons that could be identified on the surface had decreased considerably, but that was influenced in no small manner by the fact that in times of yore, the favorite food of the Stick Swinger, Reid Astrea, had been Dragon meat.

Reid killed Dragons as he pleased, and killed the Dragons that had challenged him for retribution because of that; by doing that for several years, the already small number of Dragons had decreased even more in the blink of an eye, and they had been brought to the verge of extinction.

And, in the background behind the downfall of the Dragons, the ecology of Dragons played a big part.

First of all, Dragons did not require copulation or mating in order to multiply. Even without a male and female pairing up, they were creatures capable of asexual reproduction. Their bodies were constructed of a large

quantity of Mana, and thus were fundamentally different from other races; if a comparison had to be made, the closest thing would probably be Spirits.

Only, unlike Spirits, which had levels such as Micro, Quasi, and Great, Dragons were Dragons by birth, and there was no doubt that their unparalleled might existed at the apex of all living things.

Therefore, Dragons possessed almost no sense of protecting other individuals of their race, or of preserving the species.

Since they were capable of parthenogenesis, they inevitably harbored little interest in other Dragons. The ones that challenged Reid in the name of retribution for their species did not do so for the sake of the killed Dragons, but because their pride deemed it unacceptable for the Dragon race to be disdained.

As a result, by the time the Dragons had come to realize how bad their situation was, they were already standing on the verge of extinction—even the mighty Dragon that led one flock came to fill Reid's stomach, and in another land, their confrontation with the Witch of Sloth had proved to be fatal, so the time had come for them to make a decision.

That decision was, namely, whether to follow the pride of a Dragon or not.

The Dragons that followed their pride abandoned the land, and while not approving of the attacks led by individual specimens hostile against Reid or the Witch of Sloth, they had chosen to fly away over yonder.

The Dragons that did not follow their pride remained in the land, and without severing relations with those who arrogantly opposed Dragons superior to themselves, they had made the unusual choice to continue feuding.

From a human's intuition, it might seem like the explanations of the ones that had and had not followed their pride were reversed, but this was

correct when considering the perception of the Dragons.

In the first place, Dragons were the ultimate existence that could not possibly be compared with other races. There was no reason for them to go through the trouble of clashing with other species to prove that point. For Dragons, doing battle was defined as vying for survival, so if one wished to compete for victory, they would do so through the act of surviving. Therefore, those who were capable of doing so would be known as superior specimens.

The line of thinking went that the Dragons who could not reach that thought, instead doing battle with humans to prove an unnecessary point, clinging to the land and risking their lives, were causing Dragons as a whole to be disdained, and thus were in the wrong.

Therefore, the majority of the Dragons departed from the land, and the Dragons that yet remained were eccentrics—to put it more directly, they were treated as deviants among the Dragons.

At the top of that list would be the Divine Dragon, Volcanica, who was the most proactively friendly towards humans of the ones that had stayed behind, but the topic of that well-known Dragon deviates from the matter at hand, and thus will be omitted.

Thus, at last, we return to the subject of dragonkin.

Going against the intentions of the Dragon race, the Dragons that remained in the land all acted independently.

Some Dragons died challenging Reid or the Witch of Sloth, other Dragons lived as hermits in regions that they had grown familiar with, and another portion of Dragons had become humans— The decision of this final portion of Dragons had served as the basis for the dragonkin.

It was ironic, but the existence of Reid Astrea had played a large part in the creation of dragonkin.

Whether the Dragons followed their pride or not, there was a level of audacity in the man who had driven them to that decision, but it was his strength that had left a stronger impression on the pride of the Dragons.

As mentioned previously, Dragons boasted that they were the apex of all living things, and they were well-aware that they were the ultimate existence. Just as they knew how to move their limbs, how to look at things, and how to hear sounds without the need to learn, that was an intuitive understanding.

Therefore, being the ultimate existence was important to Dragons, and if they indeed were, then there would be no need to fuss over the original form of a Dragon— If they were superior, then even the form of a human would be fine.

It was mentioned that the construction of the Dragons' bodies was close to that of Spirits, and that ecology would come into use here.

Originally, the reason Dragons took on the majestic form of large bodies that sprouted wings, with sharp fangs and claws, and tough scales, was none other than because it easily displayed their abilities as the ultimate existence. Dragons had retained the same form for so long because there had never appeared a form that could display the power of a Dragon more aptly.

But, with the trend of times and changes in the world, were a need to alter themselves into a more suitable form indeed present, the Dragons would not shun the notion of discarding their majestic appearances, and would instead take the same forms as humans.

That was the origin of the dragonkin, their relationship with Dragons— That was to say, the dragonkin were the evolved form of Dragons, the next generation spawned through parthenogenesis.

While they were equipped with the same physical traits as humans, that was the reason why every dragonkin was capable of movements incomparable to those of humans, and why they possessed extraordinary power as living things.

However, in the long history of Dragons, this was the first time there had been such a sudden and drastic evolution in form, and the birth of dragonkin caused many problems.

Among those, the most serious flaw was that critical damage would be yielded in the soul of the Dragon that served as a parent to a dragonkin, followed by them becoming an empty shell stripped of their mind, the phenomenon of the dragonhusk.

A Dragon that had become a dragonhusk was practically in the state of a living corpse, and save for the instinctual act of self-defense, they were transformed into a puppet that obeyed the will of their descended dragonkin with whom they bore a deep connection.

Even so, the extraordinary power possessed by a Dragon remained, and to an average human, they would be more than enough of a threat, but it was definitely not a desired state.

The Dragons that remained in the land with their own bodies were few, and the Dragons that had evolved into dragonkin were even fewer. From various perspectives, the Dragons that had evolved into dragonkin were considered a disgusting example of failure.

But, while being aware of the failures of other Dragons, the dragonkin continued to exist with a small overall population.

And while understanding that their species would scorn it as the foolish struggles of deviants who had abandoned their pride as Dragons and remained in the land, unable to recognize the error in their decision.

—Dragonkin still continued to be born, and as one of them, Madelyn Eschart had come into this world.



An impact beyond comprehension beat Madelyn down, who was occupying the dragonhusk of the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia.

In her original body, that of a young girl in human form, Madelyn knew what it felt like to be hurled.

That was certainly infuriating, but at least she could comprehend it. But, for this huge build of the Cloud Dragon to be tossed about by a being as small as the tip of its tail, was an event completely detached from reason.

How utterly nonsensical. It should have never come to pass. This sort of thing was entirely beyond the realm of imagination.

*Madelyn: “—HUMAN!!”*

With its back slammed against the wall, what was reflected in her upside-down vision, was a bloodied boy beckoning to her from atop the smashed stone pavement.

Golden hair and sharp fangs, she could tell he was a beast demi-human from his ferocious, ghastly aura, but there was no doubt that he was human. There was no reason for Madelyn’s flame of indignation to disappear.

In the first place, for him to suffer a direct hit from a Dragon’s breath, and live to tell the tale, was no laughing matter.

—Storing her own mind within the dragonhusk of Mezoreia, she controlled its movements as if it were her own.

This was Madelyn's privilege as a dragonkin, and with the number of years since she had come into this world as a dragonkin still few, it was a powerful technique she was able to employ because there remained a strong connection between her and Mezoreia, the specimen that was her parent.

The destructive impulses and power that were usually too much for that small body, she could now wield to her heart's content with this large body. She would proclaim in a loud voice that it was this mighty power that was the true Madelyn.

She had not wished to be born into such a small, frail, easily crushable, helpless body.

If that had not been so, if it had not been that kind of body, Balleroy would not have left Madelyn behind when he went to challenge his final battle.

If Madelyn had been a Dragon with a scary face and a big, powerful body—even though she was.

???: “—Shield of Sanctuary, Garfiel Tinsel.”

Gnashing his sharp fangs, and firmly planting his feet on the smashed-up street, the boy— Garfiel, gave his name.

That held the significance of a warrior giving their introduction as they threw down the gauntlet, but unbeknownst to that, the dragonkin sharpened the glint in the Cloud Dragon's eyes, and greatly swung its tail.

Using that vigor to tear its upside-down body from the wall, she placed all four of its limbs on the ground and glared at the boy.

She would not lose. Even if her opponent was a being who had endured a breath she thought had certainly killed him, who had jumped out from under the rubble after a mere few seconds, Madelyn would not lose.

It was this very dragonhusk of the Cloud Dragon that Madelyn had desired as a bridal gown for Balleroy's sake.

*Madelyn: "Someone like you, isn't friggin' special...!"*

Its long white whiskers shaking, a shout arose from the Cloud Dragon's throat. Despite being right before the Dragon's roar as it struck fear in the world, the half-dead, half-alive Garfiel did not waver.

His appearance almost looked as if he was being accompanied by a mountainous number of reliable allies.

Garfiel: "—Ahh, I know."

*Madelyn: "———"*

Garfiel: "'Cause in order to make sure my amazin' self didn't get any mistaken ideas, the woman I've fallen for went n' stopped me from rushin' ahead by sayin' I was truly a fool!!"

Joining his fists before his chest, his silver gauntlets powerfully clanged out, and Garfiel roared.

In front of a creature that was supposed to be fragile, yet did not show a hint of weakness, Madelyn felt anger, in addition to something else. That something she had felt, she denied that which a Dragon must never harbor towards a human.

*Madelyn: "—FRIGGIN' DISAPPEEEEEAR!!"*

That next moment, responding to Madelyn's outburst, the Cloud Dragon's roar shook the Imperial Capital once more.



Until just before, Garfiel had kept Madelyn positioned inside the city, and he put in hard work to ensure that the direction in which she unleashed the breaths would be towards the outside of the city. With that, he had fought while maintaining vigilance over the length and width of the attack range of the Dragon's breath, but here, those hard efforts would be reduced to naught.

Unleashed from the uttermost south of the city, the Crystal Palace that was directly at the city's northernmost point was captured within its range. The rays of destruction that had been charged up within the Dragon's body scorched the street, reducing buildings to dust, destroying everything in its line of fire, and it was about to penetrate the north— if Garfiel had not been there.

Garfiel: “Oh, OHHHHHHHHHHHHH—!!!”

He firmly planted both his feet on the ground as if to pierce it, and raising both arms that were clad in silver gauntlets in front of himself, Garfiel caught the Cloud Dragon's breath head on.

Even though putting up even a little bit of a fight against that would be considered a miracle, the boy was not blown away, he was not blasted away, and he managed to endure as he protected the Imperial Capital from destruction.

The mechanism that allowed for this extraordinary strife to be realized, lay in his two feet that were thrust into the ground.

The eyes of the Cloud Dragon, retaining the form of a dragonhusk constructed with a large volume of Mana, perceived that Mana was flowing from the ground into Garfiel with abnormal vigor.

Garfiel's abnormal recovery ability and stamina until now had likely been from absorbing power from the ground like that, but its scale and vigor had

immediately skyrocketed.

As proof of that, Garfiel was not simply holding his ground, but while basking in the Cloud Dragon's breath, he advanced one step forward, of all things.

One step, and then another, he steadily advanced, closing the distance on Madelyn.

Garfiel: "To make sure my amazin' self doesn't chicken out, I got a fuckton of guys pattin' me on my back tellin' me to keep on goin'!!"

As Madelyn doubted her vision, a voice could be heard amidst the destruction where even sound had been scorched to naught.

Impossible. But, Garfiel had declared so. Declaring so, he continued to advance. Against this Cloud Dragon's breath, amidst destruction that would likely cause the maps to be redrawn, he advanced.

One step, and then another, taking steps which ought to have never been possible—

*Madelyn: "—Rahhfwahh!!"*

Witnessing his advance, Madelyn's exhale was greatly disheveled.

The roar and the breath, to phrase it another way, were none other than the destructive war cry of the Dragon. Having her mind thrown into disarray, if the breath ran out, the destruction would cease.

Garfiel's advance and resistance had been enough to conquer the Cloud Dragon's breath.

Garfiel: "GaaaRAHHHHHH!!"

With the sound of a crash as he broke through, Garfiel swung both his arms up.

By doing that, the final stretch of the Cloud Dragon's breath shot up into the sky. The Dragon was motionless, and as white steam emitted from all over its body, with eyes wide-open, it witnessed Garfiel's body, seared a deep red to the extent that it would make one want to avert their eyes, rapidly healing.

Behind him, was the cityscape of the Imperial Capital that he had protected with his two slender arms, and the figure of the red-haired man who had fallen down on his backside within that cityscape.

*Madelyn: "-----"*

Having been fully defended against, Madelyn was struck by an impact.

However, more so than the fact that the Dragon's breath had not worked, the true shock that hit Madelyn had done so in a more horrifying form.

Making a loud gulping sound, the red-haired human looked at the cityscape that had not been blown away by the breath, and spoke thus.

Red-Haired Man: "You're not, sane... That breath was about to blast away the entire Palace, and you just stopped it...!"

*Madelyn: "-----Ah."*

In regards to the reality before his eyes, those had been the words of the red-haired man as he trembled with fear. There had even been some fear towards Garfiel, who had resisted the Dragon's breath, and endured, but that was different for Madelyn.

For Madelyn, malevolent blades stabbed into her as she reflected on her own actions.

It was as the red-haired man had said. If Garfiel had not stopped her, her roar would have erased the Imperial Capital.

Even though the Crystal Palace within the line of fire would have contained Madelyn's body, as well as Balleroy and Carillon.

*Madelyn: "T-that's friggin' wrong... Hk."*

Slowly, weakly shaking her head, she denied her own actions with gestures unbecoming of a Dragon.

With blood rushing to her head, her thoughts stained white, she became frantic to do something about the enemy in front of her, and as a result, Madelyn had almost blown away anything and everything.

To think that she had been saved by a small, weak, fragile, helpless human.

*Madelyn: "That's wrong, that's wrong, wrong wrong wrong wrong WRONG WRONG WRONG WRONG WROOOOOOONG...!!"*

Garfiel: "Ahh? Oi, what's with you..."

*Madelyn: "This dragon! For the sake of Balleroy! Everything, everything everything, was for the friggin' sake of Balleroy!!"*

At her wit's end, Madelyn piled on words of denial, to which Garfiel made a face filled with doubt. As if painting over Garfiel's, over the voice she did not want to hear the most, Madelyn shouted.

Raising a scream that even she herself did not fully comprehend, the Cloud Dragon thrashed its wings.

Garfiel: "—Hk!"

As a violent gale was spurred forth, Garfiel immediately crouched down as his hair intensely flapped; the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, ascended in one go, and flew up into the heavenly skies.

Thereupon existed thick, dark clouds that were covering the entirety of the Imperial Capital of Lupugana.

*Madelyn: “Someone like you, isn’t friggin’ special...!”*

Following the beck and call of the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, clouds had gathered from across the entire Empire— with the Mana that Mezoreia could not keep stored within itself sealed within them, they were a destructive impulse of white.

She had brought them together in a single swoop— By no means, were they something Madelyn would be able to handle. Even so, she would be able to bring them down to the surface as a bundle of absurd power.

*Madelyn: “This dragon, isn’t friggin’ special...!”*

Once Madelyn brought the clouds down to the surface, she would blast away Garfiel and the red-haired human, and then she would kill anyone who knew about what she had done.

By doing that, Madelyn would—

*Madelyn: “The only one who’s friggin’ special, is Balleroy...!!”*

As the weeping voice of the Dragon rained down from the heavens above, the puny humans below her looked up at the sky.

While looking up, the boy, small, yet not weak or fragile, gnashed his fangs,

Garfiel: “—This massive, goddamn idiot.”



—Madelyn Eschart was born at the summit of Mount Palzoa, the mountain where the Cloud Sea City of Mezoreia was located.

That city, crowned with the name of the Cloud Dragon that had inhabited the Empire for a long time, was a land where many who aspired to utilize

the Empire's original technique of flying dragon riding would make their way.

Through the power of the Dragon that had settled there, large clouds wound around the tall mountain's surface all year round without ever disappearing, and the city had been built at a high elevation upon it.

The mountain was the residence for wild, violent flying dragons, and the elevation of the Cloud Sea City was a place where humans could just barely survive—those aiming to go even higher, would either end up with a flying dragon's fangs gnawing into them, or return with a flying dragon egg, and embark on the path of being a flying dragon rider.

The likes of the mountain's summit, concealed by the thickest clouds, had never once been seen by anybody.

The untrodden summit of Mount Palzoa, that was Madelyn's birthplace.

Wrapped in clouds of white, in a place where, despite the presence of the sky, one could not hope to behold its azure hue, Madelyn had been born as one of the rarest beings in this world, a dragonkin. The new generation of Dragons, the ultimate existence, and while she was acquiring an instinctual understanding, there was a tragedy that had awaited her. That was—

???: “—I, am Mezoreia. In accordance with the voice of mine dear child, I shalt become the wind from the heavenly skies.”

Her biological parent, the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, had become a dragonhusk upon birthing a dragonkin, and had welcomed Madelyn's birth in a state where communication had become difficult.

Hardly exchanging any words, yet only understanding that that which was close to her was a Dragon, the newborn Madelyn was not taught even a single thing, and she had earnestly spent her time in futility.

Why the Cloud Dragon, who ought to have lived for a long time, being fully aware of the severe and absurd nature of the world, had chosen to engage in this cruel generational shift, was something that even now Madelyn failed to understand.

The one thing that could be said was that, despite not being alone, Madelyn had spent her days amidst the clouds in eternal solitude.

And the one who had put an end to that solitude, was somebody who had accomplished something that nobody in the history of the Empire had ever done before, reaching the summit of the mountain engulfed by the Cloud Sea. Balleroy Temeglyph.

Balleroy: “Really now, it’s all fine and dandy that I went in wanting to challenge my own abilities, but... I never woulda expected that there’d be a lovely young lass and a frightening Dragon waiting for me at the top.”

???: “—Kiryarahhh!”

Within what was a world of dense clouds rather than dense fog, finding Madelyn— the very young dragonkin who had yet to bear that name, Balleroy scratched his cheek in a troubled manner.

The flying dragon next to him, Carillon, was overwhelmed by the presence of the Cloud Dragon and the very young dragonkin, but still stood in a way to protect its companion, Balleroy.

*Mezoreia: “—I, am Mezoreia. In accordance with the voice of mine dear child, I shalt become the wind from the heavenly skies.”*

The Cloud Dragon, unable to say anything but those words, and only providing clouds bundled with Mana as meals, had likely not rejected the sudden visitor only due to the fact that he harbored no enmity.

Before Balleroy and Carillon, the Cloud Dragon had instinctively rejected flying dragons that had carelessly strayed from the pack and got lost in the clouds, making them disappear before they could enter the vision of its young child.

Therefore, this was the first time the young child was encountering life other than herself or the Cloud Dragon.

Child: “———”

The young child kept silent. Or rather, she did not know any words to speak.

At the pairing of human and flying dragon that had appeared without warning, all she could do was shrink her body. The Cloud Dragon did not say anything at times like this, and kept its consciousness submerged in the depths of ambiguity.

Of course, depending on the person’s next action, the Cloud Dragon could forcibly remove Balleroy and Carillon in the same way it had done so for all the flying dragons that had peered at the summit until now.

However, before the overwhelming presence of a Dragon and a dragonkin, Balleroy, without getting especially worked up, took off the coat he was wearing, and,

Balleroy: “For now, put this on, lil’ miss. It ain’t good for a maiden to recklessly expose her skin like that.”

With that said, the young child—— the girl whom Balleroy would later go on to name Madelyn, was given the first semblance of kindness and warmth she had ever experienced in her life.





—Madelyn’s peculiar meetings with Balleroy always took place within the Cloud Sea.

Balleroy: “Madelyn, I’ve come again. Have you been a good girl?”

Madelyn: “Balleroy!”

Balleroy: “Uwatahh!?”

Tearing through the thick, white clouds, Balleroy had showed up, and towards him, the young child— Madelyn came running.

Catching the body of the girl jumping towards him, that impact and vigor caused him to tumble down backwards together with Carillon after having just landed, and despite his dizziness, Balleroy stroked Madelyn’s head.

Since their first meeting, Balleroy had made frequent appearances at the summit of Mount Palzoa.

It was a summit that many flying dragon riders had risked their lives to challenge, yet nobody had ever reached before. Back then, she had no idea how much hardship Balleroy had gone through to reach her, and how valuable an action it was.

Only, by frequently visiting the mountain, and bringing Madelyn a connection to the unknown outside world, Balleroy became an irreplaceable existence to her.

The name Madelyn, was also something Balleroy had given to her.

At a loss for what to call her, he asked for her name, and when the young child replied that she had no name, he earnestly wracked his brain, and decided on that name to give her.

Balleroy: “Back when I was a kid around your age, that was the name of a person who treated me real well. She was the one who gave me my name...

I'm much obliged to her."

Madelyn: "Balleroy, that human, was she friggin' precious to you...?"

Balleroy: "We parted ways before I could actually think that. And yet, to still remain within me after all these years, I guess that'd hafta be the case."

He gave a broad grin, yet he seemed somewhat lonely, so Madelyn gently nuzzled her cheek against his chest.

The name of someone precious to him, he had bestowed it upon Madelyn in this manner. In other words, it was evidence that Madelyn was precious to Balleroy.

Being thought of like that by Balleroy, caused Madelyn to feel a deep, warm emotion.

Wishing for more of that, much, much more of that, she eagerly anticipated her time together with Balleroy.

Wanting to converse more with Balleroy, she diligently remembered the words of humans.

In this regard, Balleroy was also surprised by Madelyn's high learning ability, but that was, in all likelihood, a trait of the dragonkin that had been inherited from the nature of Dragons.

For some reason, her dialect<sup>19</sup> would not disappear no matter what, but that did not get in the way of her conversations with Balleroy.

Balleroy: "Hehe, looks like my judgment wasn't mistaken. Suits you well, Madelyn."

Madelyn: "I-is that friggin' so? Fufu..."

Placing his hand on his chin, Balleroy nodded in a satisfied manner, and as she did a twirl before him, Madelyn ascertained the feeling of the fluttering cloth— no, of the clothes he had presented to her.

The gentle color of the clothes seemed to be “sky-blue”, from what Balleroy had said. It was the same color as Madelyn’s hair, and it was something that Balleroy had gone out of his way to prepare for her.

In all honesty, as a dragonkin, Madelyn felt annoyed by wearing clothes like this since they impeded her movement, but that feeling vanished when she looked at Balleroy.

Giving her a name, giving her words, and giving her clothes, he had granted her happiness.

Madelyn counted the things Balleroy had granted her, and remembered them all. It was in the nature of Dragons. Dragons would absolutely never forget the treasures they had hoarded.

The items and emotions Balleroy had brought her, were all treasures to Madelyn.

Balleroy: “Well then, I’ll come again before the moon is half-full, Madelyn.”

As the precious, fragile time they spent together heartrendingly came to a close, Balleroy mounted Carillon, and flew away from the Cloud Dragon’s nest.

With the promise of their next meeting in her heart, Madelyn endured the sad feelings and saw him off.

—Leaving Madelyn behind at the summit, just who could call Balleroy heartless as he flew away?

In the Dragon’s nest, enveloped in white clouds, it was not as if Balleroy had never attempted to take Madelyn out, who had yet to see even the sky

that was of the same hue as her hair.

Only, he had been unable to do so. Even if the Cloud Dragon, who existed in a vague world, had overlooked Balleroy and Carillon entering its nest, it would not allow them to attempt to take Madelyn outside.

*Mezoreia: “—I, am Mezoreia. In accordance with the voice of mine dear child, I shalt become the wind from the heavenly skies.”*

Mezoreia had accepted Balleroy and Carillon as they bore no enmity; however, as soon as they tried to take Madelyn out, it would follow its instincts, baring its fangs.

In a Dragon’s nest, under the eye of the Dragon that was its lord, there was no chance for a human to win.

Therefore, Balleroy did not take Madelyn out. Madelyn, too, did not wish for Balleroy to die. That was why Madelyn had never once said that she wanted him to take her outside.

Instead, just once, she had made him an entreaty.

Madelyn: “Balleroy, won’t you friggin’ stay here... together with this dragon, forever?”

Balleroy: “———”

Seeing Balleroy’s cheeks stiffen in response as she made that entreaty, Madelyn regretted it.

The moment of silence that was created, served as a faithful representation of Balleroy’s answer in response to Madelyn’s entreaty. Balleroy would not stay here at the summit.

Outside of this world clouded in white, Balleroy still had many things that were precious to him.

Just like how Madelyn had nothing but this white world, Balleroy had nothing but the outside world. This was a world uninhabitable for Balleroy, for humans.

Balleroy: “—I’m real sorry, Madelyn.”

Apologizing to Madelyn as she comprehended that, Balleroy tried to stroke her head like he usually did. For the first time, Madelyn rejected Balleroy’s palm, and sent him away.

As tears welled up in her eyes, she threw a tantrum and raised her voice, and chasing Balleroy and Carillon away from the summit as if blaming them, Madelyn sobbed.

Sobbing for three days and three nights, Madelyn regretted her own actions.

During that time, she succumbed to her emotions, wondering what she would do if Balleroy never showed up again, she lamented from the bottom of her heart. To think that the last time she would ever have seen Balleroy was with him bearing a saddened expression, Madelyn absolutely hated that. She lamented with all her being.

However, Madelyn was young, and her thoughts and imagination were naively shallow.

The greatest regret of Madelyn’s life came after her three days and nights of sobbing.

—That day, when the Cloud Dragon Mezoreia had left her side, Madelyn had not been especially worried.

Even though it had left her side, the Cloud Dragon’s wings would not fly far beyond this mountain engulfed in clouds. At most, the range it would go was such that its thunderous roar could still be fully heard.

Whether that was to hunt flying dragons that had carelessly entered the Cloud Dragon's nest, or if it was a reckless challenger who had set foot on the mountain path aiming for the summit, she had thought it was either one of those.

Whatever the case, she had no doubt that, with time, Mezoreia would return.

More importantly, it was her regret that would not disappear no matter how many days passed, as well the method to control her emotions as she continued to weep her eyes out, that had been much more of a problem.

That was why she did not care about the fact that the Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, had returned bearing many wounds on its scales for the first time, nor did she care about what sort of challenger had inflicted those wounds.

???: “—I'm real sorry, Madelyn.”

Madelyn came to discover that answer when she witnessed Balleroy, who had arrived at the summit again a few days after that worst-possible parting, bearing wounds that would make one wish to avert their eyes all over his body.

Balleroy's apology to the speechless Madelyn, that was neither an apology for not showing up for a while, nor was it an apology for being unable to meet Madelyn's request.

Balleroy: “...I wanted to defeat the Cloud Dragon, and bring ya outta here, though.”

Saying that with wounds that seemed to put him on the verge of death, while stroking the back of his equally battered beloved dragon, Balleroy gave a pathetic smile, and tears streamed down Madelyn's face.

She had regretted it. In all of Madelyn's dragon life, that was the greatest regret that could not be erased.

—Dragons would cling to their treasure. It was in the nature of Dragons.

Thus, for the Cloud Dragon, having been submerged in a vague world after becoming a dragonhusk, that was a part of its nature it would not forget even in such a state, and so, Madelyn was the treasure it could not bear to lose.

Balleroy had tried to steal that away, risking his life in the process.

Madelyn: "Friggin', idiot..."

Balleroy: "I'd thought I'd be able to do it, but... really, even I myself was quite shocked."

Madelyn: "Wrong! Friggin' wrong! It's not Balleroy, it's this dragon who's the friggin' idiot...!"

Denying Balleroy as he engaged in pathetic self-deprecation, Madelyn firmly bit down on her molars.

Until today, until this very moment, she had cursed herself for only ever receiving things from Balleroy, and now, without anybody telling her, she had finally figured out what she ought to do.

These thick, white clouds where Madelyn had existed from birth, were walls that Madelyn needed to tear down with her own claws.

Depending on Balleroy's kindness, Madelyn had continued to let him breach through, and until he finally braved danger to the verge of death, she had not even made an attempt to realize that.

Just how shameless was she? Was that uncouth way of being really befitting of a dragonkin, an ultimate existence?

Madelyn: “I, the dragon, will friggin’ do it myself.”

Balleroy: “Madelyn?”

Madelyn: “This dragon, will friggin’ go outside on her own. Not being brought out, but on my own... This time, this dragon will friggin’ go to meet Balleroy by herself. If I do that...”

Firmly gripping the hem of the clothes she had been gifted by Balleroy, with the words she had learned from Balleroy, she took the emotions she had been granted by Balleroy, and would convey them to Balleroy, who had given her everything.

As an ultimate existence, as a dragonkin, she would convey those emotions to the special human who had captivated her.

Madelyn: “If I do that, will you make this dragon your bride?”

Balleroy: “———”

At Madelyn’s question, a moment of silence similar to the one from earlier was born.

Balleroy’s silence this time, however, was different from that which tormented the foolish, ignorant Madelyn, who had ended up sobbing for three days and nights, and she knew that there was something concealed therein.

At that time, Madelyn could only see what she wanted to see.

Even though she called out to Balleroy, all she wanted was for him to see her. That was why——

Balleroy: “——I guess that’d be so. If you did that, I suppose it’d be a wonderful thing for both Madelyn and myself.”



With Balleroy showing kindness to the utmost of his ability, he had made Madelyn fully aware that she was not his number one, and thus, a promise was exchanged.



—There were likely some who would argue that these feelings of Madelyn's were not real love.

There would likely be some who would analyze it as something akin to a chick hatched from an egg, imprinting on the first thing they saw to use it as support.

That it was only that she wanted to believe that the first person she had come into contact with outside of the beings deeply close to her, the first being to show her kindness, the relationship that had given her so many firsts, was special.

There would likely be some who would laugh off Balleroy's reply, as he made a fleeting smile in response to Madelyn's courting, as the kindhearted lie of a father designed not to hurt the feelings of a daughter who said that she would marry him in the future.



There would likely be some who would sympathize with Balleroy, who had feelings for somebody else, as merely being very considerate of Madelyn, since they were both in a similar situation of being unable to speak of their hidden feelings.

But, each and every one of those, was nothing more than the measure of humans.

Dragonkin, or even Dragons, had different values and ways of thinking to that of humans. Supposing one were to deny that dragonkin and Dragons were different, then it would be Madelyn's values that were unique from the rest.

From her heart, truly from the deepest depths of her heart, Madelyn desired Balleroy Temeglyph.

If that was not romance or love, then Madelyn would spend the rest of eternity never knowing what that was. To the extent of thinking that, her soul was burning with an ardor willing to put her life on the line.

Vowing to Balleroy, who had almost died for her sake, Madelyn tore through the white clouds.

Challenging the Cloud Dragon that stood in her way as she tried to leave, as it used its power as a Dragon to try to entirely discourage her wishes, she thrust her fangs into it and, in the end, subdued it.

For the first time, she thrust herself out under the sky that shared the same color as her hair; for the first time, she accomplished something she had decided to do by herself; for the first time, she tried to head to the side of her beloved person of her own accord, and that, was when she learned.

—Balleroy Temeglyph had fought against the Empire, and lost his life.

Madelyn: “—What am I supposed to friggin’ do?”

At that moment, Madelyn knew not the answer to that.

Confronted with something too large to swallow, Madelyn’s feelings of love had lost their destination.

And with a love bereaved of destination being too much for her to handle, she even lost sight of her meaning to live, so, not knowing what to do, Madelyn even thought about becoming one of the Blight Dragons that would be left in the history of the Empire; the one to find her then was Berstetz, who had been searching for somebody to fill the empty seat in the Nine Divine Generals.

The location was Balleroy's residence that remained in the Imperial Capital, which she had discovered by pursuing his scent.

Balleroy had gone down in the records as a rebel, and the reason why Berstetz, who had been entrusted with the disposal of his residence, had not been killed by Madelyn, who happened to be present there, was because within Berstetz's thread-like eyes was housed the same light of having lost something that was also in Madelyn's eyes.

Berstetz patiently listened as Madelyn divulged her story with difficulty; upon hearing that Madelyn's identity was that of a dragonkin, and that she had possessed a relationship with Balleroy, he made two suggestions.

The first, was to act impulsively with her unmanageable emotions, and follow the same path as Balleroy, who had been defeated as an enemy of the Empire.

The other, was to accept the endorsement of Berstetz, whom she had just met here, become a member of the Nine Divine Generals like Balleroy once had been, and while tracing back his footsteps, wait for an opportunity for retribution.

She did not struggle long to make a decision. Why it had not taken her long, Madelyn herself was unsure.

Only, it might have been that she wanted to find what Balleroy had left behind, even if only by a little bit more.

Berstetz: “—Madelyn Eschart. It is an old family name of Vollachia that is no longer around, but it shall be passed down to you. Prestige is quite important, after all.”

Madelyn: “Prestige?”

Berstetz: “The reason it is no longer around, is because they fought against the Empire and disappeared. This may just be the intuition of my old bones, but I sense that it is quite the match for your dearest wish.”

Following the advice Berstetz gave in a low voice, Madelyn Eschart was born.

Afterwards, she accepted Berstetz’s endorsement, and progressed the situation in accordance with his intentions; taking the position that had once been occupied by Balleroy, Madelyn set out on a journey to discover the him she did not know.

It was a journey on which she was unsure of the destination she ought to be aiming for.

Even at the time she stepped forth from that mountaintop, out from that narrow world enveloped by clouds, and into the world Balleroy had told her about, Madelyn’s heart remained stuck on that day, captured by the man who had come together with his flying dragon.

Even so, she carried out the duties required of a Divine General. In Balleroy’s stead.

Even so, she demonstrated the prestige required of the Empire’s Generals. In Balleroy’s stead.

Even so, she wielded the power required to defeat the Empire’s enemies. In Balleroy’s stead.

Berstetz had likely harbored good intentions when advising Madelyn to take her current position.

Or perhaps Berstetz had a wish that still remained as he grew old, and in order to fulfill his wish, he calculated what pawns would be required, and used Madelyn.

Either way, Madelyn did not bear a grudge against Berstetz.

That was not limited to just Berstetz— She simply did not have that kind of space in her heart.

Acquiring the position of Divine General, she spent her time as General tracing back Balleroy's footsteps. For Madelyn, those were days of unfathomable terror.

Every time she fought hard, every time she thought of Balleroy, every time she tried to fill the hole of Balleroy, Madelyn herself felt like she was killing Balleroy.

Every time she compensated for Balleroy's absence, she was stealing his place in the world, the traces he had left behind.

In that case, should she hand it over to somebody else? Madelyn would likely feel that the person to received it would be killing Balleroy, and she would surely kill that person with her own hands.

She could at least understand that Balleroy would not want that, so Madelyn continued to exhaust herself.

Since she would not let anybody else do it, she would continue to kill Balleroy herself. And, when she finally killed Balleroy, would her own heart also die?

If so, she felt like that would be the best way to do it.

That which Balleroy had given her, this heart, these emotions. When Balleroy had died, at a time when she had not been at his side, in his most important moment, they ought to have perished. And yet—

Madelyn: "Why is a dragon's fang... Why is Carillon's fang friggin' hanging from your neck!?"

At the height of the disturbance shaking the Empire, she encountered a man carrying the fang of the flying dragon who had died together with Balleroy.

From the man who knew the Balleroy unknown to her, Madelyn heard stories of a Balleroy from the time when he would not be at her side, when he had not been a General, and a sense of love blossomed in her heart once again.

And then, as tremors beckoned further tremors, at the end of the successive tremors, it had happened.

—The Great Disaster had, without a doubt, resurrected what Madelyn had lost.

Complimenting her sky-blue hair, saying that it was his favorite color, he stroked her head.

He gave a gentle, soft smile that caused her chest to tighten upon seeing it, her unfilled promise with him— she had wanted to embrace him under a clear sky, in a place with no clouds in the way.

Madelyn had finally come into contact with Balleroy somewhere outside of that mountaintop.

Even so, thick clouds yet hung over the sky, the world was yet covered in darkness.

Madelyn: “—What am I supposed to friggin’ do?”

Madelyn had no idea what she should do anymore.

She felt so, so much love, but for anything outside of that, she knew nothing at all.

She did not want to know, either.



A vortex of dusky clouds gathered in the sky with the Cloud Dragon as its nexus.

While looking up at that from the ground, all the hair on Garfiel's body stood on end, and the blood flowing through his body boiled; an impulse from his instincts struck his brain.

Having endured the Dragon's breath, his body was in the process of rapidly healing from the heatwave that had scorched him.

But, the destructive black clouds acted to entirely veil the heavens, and within them was concealed such excess power that Garfiel's regeneration, and even the waning cityscape of the Imperial Capital that he had desperately protected, would all be reduced to naught.

Garfiel: "Them huge clouds, the whole fuckin' lot of it's made outta the Dragon's Mana...!!!"

It was a concealed trick that had not been detected until Mezoreia stirred them about, causing them to change their nature.

The trump card of the Cloud Dragon that had been audaciously hidden, was currently baring its fangs against him like this; however, what was causing Garfiel's heart to tremble was not the destruction that would be brought about by that cluster of mighty power, but rather the state of the Cloud Dragon controlling it.

The Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia— no, he more-or-less understood that there was a different being inside of it.

For a Dragon that had lived for however many centuries, soaring through the skies of this world over its long life, its words and actions were far too lacking in dignity.



That was an intuition of a completely different type to that of strength, and it was something that Garfiel understood since he knew Ryuzu, who, contrary to her youthful appearance, was of a personality that had lived for a very long time.

At the same time, Garfiel really felt how truly incredible Subaru's order had been.

Garfiel: "Captain, ya really told my amazin' self to go ahead n' fell the Dragon flyin' in the sky..."

Being pushed on the back to go and fight head-on against a Dragon, a being that was the strongest lifeform in the world, the fact that he was seen as reliable enough to be entrusted with that duty was absolutely tremendous.

The power he was granted by that had provided enough energy for Garfiel to return to reality from the incomprehensible theater he had seen while on the verge of death.

But, in a true sense, there was another meaning in Garfiel being sent here.

He did not know whether Subaru had aimed for that or not.

Either way, it mattered not. This Cloud Dragon, Mezoreia, needed to be faced by Garfiel, that was the sort of enemy it was. The reason was—

Garfiel: "—You're strainin' yerself n' cryin' out, beggin' for someone to protect yer world."

As Mezoreia cried out, recklessly scrambling power together, it brought about a terribly unpleasant feeling of shame within Garfiel.

In the past, Garfiel had erupted on his surroundings with the same rage and anguish that Mezoreia currently harbored.

Back then, his friends had stopped him through sheer force, so now Garfiel had his current position and resolve, as well as a strong body with two legs to firmly stand upon.

Naturally, Garfiel and Mezoreia were of different positions, circumstances, and even races. That was why, Garfiel could not necessarily use the same solution on Mezoreia.

But, however, there was no reason as to why he could not use it.

In order to ascertain that, Garfiel had no choice but to make it lower its fangs and talk, much like what had been done for him. For that purpose—

Garfiel: “—Hk.”

Looking towards his hectic surroundings, Garfiel forcefully gnashed his fangs.

The protective wall was on the verge of collapse, and the previous breath of the Dragon had scorched the Imperial Capital, bringing it to a state of partial destruction.

Even if he wanted to reach Mezoreia, Garfiel could not reach all the way to the height of the clouds.

That was why, Garfiel gave up on the idea of doing things by himself.

Garfiel: “Pops!!”

Heinkel: “—Ah?”

Garfiel looked back with an altered expression on his face, and in his vision, he saw Heinkel dumbfoundedly looking up at the sky, his backside having fallen down smack on the ground.

The blue eyes quivered, their focal point blurred, and as Garfiel saw himself reflected within them, he grabbed both of Heinkel’s shoulders.

Garfiel: “Lend me a hand! I need ya to do somethin’ to send me flyin’ all the way up there!”

Heinkel: “Fly... flying? Flying, you say? What the hell, what the hell are you saying!? There’s no way we could ever do something like that! Just how fucking high up do you think that is!”

As Garfiel yelled a request at him, Heinkel widened his eyes, and also yelled back a reply.

While trying to shake free from the hands grabbing his shoulders, Heinkel pointed overhead.

The thunderously stirring clouds shifted in hue, as if swallowing the color of the sky that lay beyond the black clouds, the color of the heavens was transformed into a purple, tinged with azure.

While Heinkel pointed at what could only be described as a natural disaster, with his face pale,

Heinkel: “It’s already over!”

Garfiel: “I ain’t gonna let it be over!”

Heinkel: “—Hk.”

Garfiel: “I ain’t gonna let anything end here! Both my amazin’ self n’ Pops, we can’t lose!”

Firmly grasping his shoulders so that he could not shake the hands off, Garfiel made a powerful appeal to Heinkel.

Gulping down a breath, Heinkel’s cheeks stiffened. As his trembling finger pointed to the sky, the man’s opposite hand nonetheless remained gripped to his sword, and Garfiel had decided to believe in him.

Garfiel: “There ain’t no sense of reality right now. I know that, Pops— It’s just like it’s the end of the world.”

Narrowing his eyes as he muttered, with the ruin that had taken the form of a vortex of clouds high above him, Garfiel stared at the skies of the different battlefields in the distance, and nodded.

It truly seemed that every single location was a “*Tennozan*” that Subaru had spoken of.

Piercing the clouds in the north of the Imperial Capital, an iceberg plummeted downwards; in the northeast, there were flashes of a sword severing the very world itself, reaching the ramparts, and even the mountains beyond them. The eastern heavens and earth were composed of over one hundred shades of red; each and every battlefield was trying to bring about a different doom to the Empire.

But, Garfiel would not despair.

Garfiel: “Ain’t that right, Captain.”

Making a variety of faces, Subaru had chosen their method of battle against the impending doom.

And thus, in order to deal with doom at this location, Subaru had selected none other than Garfiel Tinsel as the strongest card to play.

Not Emilia, not Beatrice, not Roswaal, not Spica, not Halibel, not Olbart, not Tanza, not Medium, not Jamal. He had chosen Garfiel.

Garfiel: “—«Facing the Dragon, Sword Saint Reid laughs and draws blade».”

Heinkel: “...Don’t lump me in with that crazy ancestor of mine.”

Garfiel: “—«There’s no runnin’ from Reinhard».”

Heinkel: “Don’t bring up that name! I’m! I’m...!”

Garfiel: “———”

Heinkel: “I’m...”

At that place where heaven and earth were about to meet their doom, Heinkel covered his face with the hand that had been pointed to the heavens, and spilled that out in a feeble voice.

The words that lay beyond, Garfiel did not know. By some chance, perhaps Heinkel himself had yet to discover what lay beyond those words. In that case——

Garfiel: “——Pops, together with my amazin’ self, let’s go n’ unlock the followin’ words that ya can’t seem to get out.”



Would imagining it even be possible?

The vast sky extended endlessly in all directions, and the clouds that blanketed it completely were all reduced into a hail of bullets and a forest of blades; the sight of that pouring down would be as if it were the end of the world.

Even now, that was what was on the verge of occurring.

However, different from the impression given by the phrasing of “a hail of bullets and a forest of blades”, the clouds of destruction bringing doom upon the world were not widely raining down across all the vast lands of the Empire, but rather, having been centralized in one swoop, they were about to all pierce one concentrated area.

—The vortex of black clouds twisted into a helix, forming an enormous cone that weaved into the heavenly skies.

That mighty shape was warped and ominous; however, in the one aspect that it was intended for destruction, there indeed lay beauty.

Spreading its white wings in the heavenly skies, the Cloud Dragon held its arms aloft, bringing about that structure of demise; contrary to its large build, the Dragon cried out like an infant as it unleashed that from its hands.

*Cloud Dragon: “—Friggin’ disappear.”*

That teary voice, whether it was directed to somebody on the surface, where destruction rained down, or if it was directed to the surface itself, which would likely be unable to withstand it and be blown apart, or if it was not aimed at anybody or the surface at all, and was instead a punishment it was imposing upon itself, was unclear.

No matter the case, the result would be the same.

There were no means of defending against a trump card that had been prepared over a long period of time by a Dragon, the ultimate existence; nearly the entirety of the southern half of the Imperial Capital would be blown away, incurring many casualties, and carrying out the intentions of the Great Disaster.

The fall of the Imperial Capital, in regards to the disaster, would signify the total defeat of the Empire, and the unhalting hosts of undead would engulf the ruined land, heading for the remaining countries with their fervent vigor.

Thus, the world would be drawn into a chain of calamity that knew no bounds.

That, would be the unshakable conclusion for a world fallen into demise.

It was an ending that none save for some Witch, a manifestation of curiosity, would be pleased with, and the only ones able to negate it would be the undersized, yet courageous warriors that plunged towards their imminent demise—

???: “———”

Feeling the presence of the vast lands within his soul before he took off, the courageous warrior gathered as much strength as he could, and coursed it all throughout his body.

His legs, having been firmly outstretched, rode atop a sword that remained in its sheath, and right after a moment of power equilibrium, it ferociously swung upward at full strength.

That had been an outstanding blow.

It was not wielded against the dreadfully mighty Dragon as an opponent, neither was it something that cut deep into the cone attempting to bring ruination to the world, nor did it utilize any of the skills that it had been used to train.

Eye contact had not even been made with the enemy; however, it had been an outstanding blow.

At the very least, that was the judgment of the courageous warrior, who had received that blow with the soles of his feet.

Whether that outstanding blow would go unrecorded, unremembered by anyone, was entirely up to him to prove, as he had been entrusted with the conclusion.

*Cloud Dragon:* “———”

Beyond the incoming demise, he locked eyes with the Dragon as he ascended to the heavens.

Seeing those eyes tremble in a terribly frightened manner, a smile emerged on his face.

That smile was out of place, troublingly so.

That was immediately painted over by the smile of a belligerent, powerful, savage, ferocious tiger.





Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.112o ([source](#))

???: “Have a taste of these fists.”

Using all of his strength, without holding back, he pummeled his fist into it.

He pummeled it, and then—

???: “Let my amazin’ self hear yer story— Just like how Captain n’ the others once listened to mine.”

As stout arms of silver shot up, they crashed into the dark, cone-shaped clouds of ruin.

That instant, the folded layers of the sky and the spiraling black clouds erupted in an explosion bereft of sound, engulfing the world.

???: “———”

The result of the collision, was brought about to a world in which sound had vanished.

Just what sort of conclusion had been incurred, was likely to only take shape after a flicker of light.

Only, the sky that had been birthed beyond the collision, the sky from which the enshrouding black clouds had vanished, was blue.

In the past, a flying dragon rider had bestowed a name upon a lonely dragonkin; and, same as the color of the hair he had lovingly, cherishingly stroked many a time, sky-blue stretched out above, and that was all.

# Arc 8 Chapter 56 - Arakiya

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Intermission “Arakiya”

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by Kazatashi, Goldkills, Translation checked by Garcar, Ice, Tanaka) — [Complete](#)

—Without being told by anyone. Arakiya swallowed it down.

Arakiya: “———”

With great throbbing, the sound of flowing blood surged forth in the form of pain.

That heartbeat pounded faster than it had during the midst of battle, with each thump of the heart becoming a shock akin to a nail being driven directly into her soul, a shock which surged throughout her entire body. Yet, it eased Arakiya’s mind.

Knowing that the heart still pumped blood, signified that she still retained her human form.

Even if that were just a minor comfort akin to margin of error, it was necessary for Arakiya to keep herself from becoming stirred, to keep her soul from scattering.

—For the unique beings known as Spirit Eaters, none other than Arakiya existed in this world.

Born from the extreme delusions of individuals who could not be called researchers, but rather deviants; the taboo existence that was the Spirit Eater— named Arakiya, had been kept alive as a sole being under a destiny shared with no one else in this world.

Her ego daringly diluted, Arakiya, who had clung only to the existence of the pillar that she deemed important to herself, had devoured Spirits, acted as a formidable being, and fulfilled her role.

She had thought that that would be enough.

However, it was not as she had realized, upon losing said pillar.

By the time she had realized it, it would have already been too late, as she would have likely invited the supposed end of a Spirit Eater; quick collapse of one's ego, being consumed by the Spirits that had been taken in, soul being painted over.

However, Arakiya did not meet that fate. For that, two factors could be considered.

One was that the individual Arakiya had deemed as her pillar was like a dazzling sun, shining so brightly that, even when separated, she could not lose sight of them.

The other reason, and one that Arakiya would never want to admit— in the days after being separated from her pillar, the Thunder that reminded Arakiya of the fact that she was herself shook her soul incessantly, evoking feelings of inferiority and stimulating her individuality.

Bathed in the light of the dazzling sun, accompanied by the incessant Thunder, Arakiya had preserved her own soul.

???: “—And, that is the conclusion I have come to, but I would like to hear if you have any awareness of it.”

Arakiya: “...No.”

The year, was of the time when Arakiya surpassed Olbart in rank, being promoted to Second.

Chisha’s opinion, based on his search relating to the remaining literature on the Spirit Eater, had etched a stern expression on Arakiya’s face; the first time ever in their long acquaintance.

That was understandable. Chisha was intelligent, and his explanations were clear, but his perspective had been difficult for Arakiya to accept.

Arakiya herself only understood her existence as a Spirit Eater on a sensory level, yet she had wanted to believe that her entirety was made solely of Prisca.

She did not want that hopeful wish to be diluted by the least desirable components of all.

To begin with——

Arakiya: “...Why did you bring that up?”

As she questioned, it was surprising in itself that Chisha had broached such a topic.

Arakiya’s pillar, Prisca—— the fact that she had exceptionally escaped from the Imperial Selection Ceremony, having been allowed to leave the country alive, was a closely guarded secret even within the Vollachian Empire.

At the time, it was natural for Arakiya and Chisha, who had been involved in her exile, to know, but it had been a topic they had not spoken of for years, and something not to be mentioned to anyone else.

So why, at this moment, had Chisha chosen to bring it up?

Chisha: “I want to know whether you are a fragile, ephemeral, and vanishing existence or not. Whether I ought to count you among the numbers for the impending great battle.”

Arakiya: “...It makes no sense. I’m one of the Nine Divine Generals.”

It was only natural that they would be sent to put down the rebellion or whatever that Chisha and Vincent were predicting.

However, at Arakiya’s response, Chisha’s eye twitched downwards, forming an unusual expression on his face. It was a smile seldom seen from Chisha, who had almost always worn an expression of either blankness or bewilderment.

With that smile, striking Arakiya in a moment of vulnerability, Chisha continued.

Chisha: “It seems like this battle will end up being a little bigger than the battle you are thinking ooof. I am well-aware that you do not truly serve His Excellency from the depths of your heart, nor do you consider me an ally.”

Arakiya: “———”

Chisha: “Even though I know it to be true, it still stings a bit to not be denieeed.”

Arakiya: “...For the Princess’s sake, I won’t disappear.”

Without acknowledging Chisha’s reaction as he touched his forehead, Arakiya ran her hand over her eyepatch.

For the reason as to why she was herself, the soul known as Arakiya had a proper answer. The concerns Chisha had would not come to pass. So although it was not to reassure Chisha, she declared.



Arakiya: “Also, that has nothing to do with Cecilus.”

Chisha: “Hm. Those are merely my deductiooons. If you really want to have me recognize that such is not the case, I would like for you to defeat Cecilus at least once.”

???: “Huuuuuh? Weren’t you talking about me just now? What’s this what’s this, it’s rather unkind for Anya and Chisha to treat me like I’m an outsider so I’d like you to stop with that please? Could it be you’re on about *that*? About the slim chances of winning for Anya, who keeps extending her losing streak without learning her lesson?”

Arakiya: “Cecilus, die.”

In the end, a clash with Cecilus began right after, and Chisha, who had wanted to avoid being involved, fled, so the conversation did not progress further.

Afterwards, she had no recollection of ever continuing the conversation with Chisha.

Arakiya: “———”

Just a vague thought crossed her mind.

Just when would the impending great battle that Chisha was concerned about come? And when it did, would she be counted among his forces?

If the opportunity ever arose, she would like to ask about it.

Arakiya had been acquainted with Chisha for a long time now.

Due to their relationship, which stemmed from the Imperial Selection Ceremony where she had been separated from Prisca; Arakiya harbored unforgiveness towards Chisha, who had been deeply involved in the reasons behind her separation with Prisca.



However, Chisha had taught Arakiya how to read and write. She owed him a debt. For that favor, she was willing to participate in battles Chisha desired her to.

—Or perhaps, was this too going to end up being attributed to reasons other than Prisca?

She hated Cecilus. Vincent was complicated, but she leaned towards not forgiving him due to what had happened to Prisca. Olbart was amusing with his jokes. Goz had a comical face. Groovy had a foul mouth but was actually very helpful, while Moguro would always listen to what she had to say without making unpleasant faces. Yorna was not her cup of tea, yet for some reason she was unable to hate her. Balleroy would occasionally take her for a ride on his flying dragon, and she felt like Madelyn and herself mutually tried to avoid seeing each other. To Todd, she was grateful.

—Would all of these also end up being attributed to reasons other than Prisca?

Arakiya: “———”

Feeling as though she was about to fall apart, like she was about to be torn to shreds, as if losing every last part of herself that she could remember, Arakiya gathered up the fragments of “Arakiya”.

If she did not do so, the existence known as herself would disappear— that was not the case.

Arakiya: “...necess.”

Without doing so, she would be unable to restrain what was ramping up within, on the verge of bursting out of her.

It was tremendously colossal. Unbelievably heavy. Intolerably twisted. If left unchecked, it would destroy the Empire.

If she could not keep it under control, her pillar— Prisca, would not be protected.

That was why Arakiya, without being told by anyone, swallowed it down. Into her own incomparably thin and small body, she took the Stone, Muspel.

The Empire must not be destroyed by the monster who called herself a Witch, utilizing this Great Spirit.

For that purpose—

???: “I guess she probably ate something bad— You really are a handful.”

The noisy Thunder felt like a hallucination, piecing together a torn-apart soul.

While being tormented by loss and pain akin to a thundercloud, Arakiya continued to scramble together, scramble together, scramble together the fragments of “Arakiya”, resisting against the dispersion of her turbulent existence.

She continued to resist, and endured— Clinging to her soul on the verge of destruction, she awaited the one and only hope.



The counting was growing tiresome, but it was their habit to do so.

Daring to go into the details of numbers could trivialize the reality one faced— not to say that it would be a clever thing to do. Without such a mentality, it really was just a habit.

The habit of counting continued— This was the one hundred and ninety-first time.

???: “It’s getting tiresome being way too ordinary of a dude...”

Al muttered to himself as he felt the heat build up inside his helmet, sweat soaking the inside.

On the stage of the melted second bastion, the vain struggles of the out-of-place actor with a minor role continued. The atmosphere wobbled unsteadily due to the effects of the heat wave that engulfed the surrounding area, clearly transforming the space into something from a different dimension.

Humans would not be able to adapt to a world being remade into hell with every passing moment.

Trees and buildings were set ablaze, grit and pieces of the street had begun to melt. His palm gripping the *dao* made a sizzling sound, and he was unsure if even his clothing would ignite at any moment.

The circumstances they found themselves in were such, that it would not at all be strange for them to be turned into a ball of flames the next moment due to just standing there. In fact, more than once or twice, that had been the case.

And yet, in spite of these incredibly harsh circumstances—

???: “Ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta—!!”

The leading actor furiously ran over the bubbling, boiling magma, maneuvering at a speed such that he could have been mistaken for a lightning bolt.

With his disheveled, deep-dark-blue hair dancing, running with his bright pink *kimono* fluttering was Cecilus Segmunt, the flamboyant, self-proclaimed leading actor of the world.

His speed as he sprinted over the magma, his incredible leg strength that one would not expect from a slender child’s legs, his seemingly

inexhaustible stamina, and his courage to cross paths with an enemy that could remake the world in the blink of an eye, and the power of fate, were all first-class.

Declaring the world to be his stage, and placing himself in the role of leading actor, Cecilus was conscious of his appearance to an unseen audience and fulfilled himself in a way that did not shy away from those grandiose claims.

Who else could possibly mount a fight against such a powerful, extraordinary opponent?

Cecilus: “—Toh!”

With a high-pitched shout characteristic of a child, Cecilus’s body flew at an angle.

A moment after he leapt, the ground where he had been just before swelled up and exploded from within. Taking advantage of the blast, Cecilus twisted in midair as he was propelled.

With that, a lightning kick that could blow away even a stone pillar as thick as a giant tree trunk flew toward the silver-haired dogperson— Arakiya, who floated in midair.

Arakiya: “—Ah, uh.”

With her exposed brown skin, Arakiya’s jewel-like red eyes shed tears of blood.

The soles of Cecilus’s charred *zori* flew straight at her torso as she let out a cry, looming, looming ever closer— at the moment of impact, a loud sound detonated in the sky.

Cecilus: “~~Hk!!”

Immediately afterward, slamming down faster than when he had jumped up, Cecilus plunged to the ground and bounced violently on the street, squelching a cry of pain as he raised his head.

A moment later, blood gushed from his pale forehead, turning the small child's face red.

Cecilus: "You've finally gotten to the point where you're matching me perfectly, huh."

Licking the blood that trickled down the well-shaped bridge of his nose, Cecilus commented on the fact that he had been successfully parried.

There was no hint of surprise in that. Because, this was not the first time she had parried him.

Already a dozen or so times, Cecilus's lightning-swift attacks had been countered, and continued to be shot down. As a result, the situation was rapidly becoming severely unfavorable.

Al: "Lil' Miss Arakiya is in quite a sorry state."

Looking for an opening to intervene, Al saw Arakiya floating in the air, distorting the space around her.

Arakiya's appearance, it was even more bizarre than it had been just a few moments earlier, with Magic Crystals growing out of the thin girl's body as if piercing from within.

From a distance, the growths on Arakiya's arms and back resembled the wings of an angel.

However, in reality, Arakiya had absorbed an exceedingly large entity, and it was attempting to devour through and spill out from the body of the girl in which it had been trapped.

Al: “Fuck.”

As Arakiya’s choice gradually eroded her power and made her deviate from her human form, Al could do nothing but curse and vent his uncontrollable anger.



Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.ll2o ([source](#))



He knew what it was like wanting to compensate for a lack of power, falling short of achieving one's own desires.

Al could imagine that Arakiya had the potential to reach much greater heights than himself, and that there were numerous possibilities within her reach.

Nevertheless, by taking in something that did not mesh with her own capacity, Arakiya's own brilliance would instead turn against herself, her surroundings, and the things she wanted to cherish.

And so, the simple answer that came in reciprocation was the current situation.

—Initially, Cecilus was the one who had possessed the upper hand in the fight against Arakiya.

In order to hold back Arakiya, who had turned into something dangerous that could blow away the second bastion and erase the entire Imperial Capital in its entirety, Cecilus fanned his stinging hostility against her, setting the stage by continuing to provoke her intuitive sense of danger.

To put it plainly, this was a battle of two transcendent beings who were not just one or two steps above as warriors, but rather ten.

Al had stayed behind, but he retained little capacity to intervene; still, out of close to two-hundred attempts, he had been able to prevent Cecilus's limbs from being blown off on two occasions.

All the while, Arakiya was like a glass of water being endlessly overfilled, overflowing and spewing water at random, greatly endangering the lives of both Al and Cecilus.

But, even if this all were to repeat itself, which would of course happen by Al using the cheat of his territory, it would never be possible to capture



Cecilus as he jumped around as a being outside of reason.

However, the situation had changed.

This was due to the aforementioned increasing deformity of Arakiya, which had immediately changed her fighting style.

Cecilus: “—Come to me!”

Raising a vigorous cry, full of belligerence, Cecilus’s eyes gleamed as he wiped away some blood.

A moment later, the area around Cecilus distorted, and twisted pillars of stone burst forth from all directions like giant serpents and attacked the boy. Cecilus crouched down, jumped away, and twisted to avoid the stone pillars that were furiously trying to snap at him, and the speed at which he leaped out of the way surged up to his top speed.

But, while shedding tears of blood, Arakiya’s onslaught did not let the lightning escape.

As he kicked the earth, the ground following Cecilus’s path swelled as he accelerated, creating a series of huge arms of stone and earth that grabbed at the boy as if to crush him.

Cecilus: “Unfortunately, touching the actors on the stage is strictly prohibited!”

Saying so wittily, Cecilus used the constructed arms that swung down like flyswatters as a foothold to break through, running up into the sky like they were a staircase; he reversed direction once he had secured altitude, and using the stone fists that were trying to strike him, he jumped toward Arakiya again. But—

Cecilus: “I messed up—!”

He received a strike from a huge stone fist that would have turned a normal person into a plume of blood with the soles of his *zori*, killing the fatal impact by using his whole body as a spring, and Cecilus screamed as he flew away using only the momentum he had received.

As Cecilus surged toward Arakiya with the force of a ballistic missile, a white light was created in his path of attack, and Cecilus, with nowhere to escape in the sky, dove toward Arakiya himself—

Al: “Ooooooh!”

With a howl, Al raised the *dao*, and he slammed the blade forth before Cecilus could jump into the light.

Instantly, after receiving a direct hit from the *dao*, the light flashed strongly for a moment, engulfing and obliterating the bodies of the approaching Al and Cecilus—

×   ×   ×

Cecilus: “I messed up—!”

Receiving the giant fist of rock with the bottom of his *zori*, Cecilus, stealing only the momentum, shouted as he flew like a ballistic missile.

Before his shout could be uttered, Al pointed the tip of his *dao* into the empty air, and,

Al: “DONAAA!!”

Compared to Arakiya, the difference in their magic was like the difference between the moon and snot, but the stone shards that he produced ran through the sky, crushing the jutting light of destruction that was about to be born.

For a moment, a strong flash burned Al's eyes even through his helmet, but it was not powerful enough to end Al's life, much less Cecilus's speed.

Cecilus: "Al-san, let's do this!!"

The burst of light was instantly recognizable as to whose work it was, and Cecilus, relieved that his life had been saved, instantly swallowed down his emotion and charged toward Arakiya.

He raised his right hand in the form of a karate chop, with a sharpness that surpassed even that of a semi-famous sword. It flashed through the air, striking Arakiya, who had grown wings of magical crystals, at an angle—

Al: "—Hk!"

At that moment, Al had a vision of, without exaggeration, a thunderclap and the sky being torn asunder.

In fact, it was not a vision, but rather the shockwave from Cecilus's karate chop that went out from behind him, tearing a clinching blow into a group of buildings that were on the verge of collapse, leading to the collapse of the entire area.

But, however, Arakiya had received that karate chop in question.

Arakiya: "———"

Glaring, her blood-red eyes moved to look at Cecilus, who was just a few feet away.

Despite receiving a powerful karate chop to the forehead, Arakiya maintained her body in midair without even showing the slightest tremor, and in return, she raised her wings of Magic Crystal —

Arakiya: "———"

Immediately after those thin lips produced a faint sound, a blow fatally gouged Cecilus.



Moment-by-moment, as time flowed, elapsed, passed, “Arakiya” was disappearing.

Gradually feeling her existence, the whereabouts of her soul, being painted over, amidst the pain and anguish, Arakiya earnestly tried to recall the radiance of her Sun.

An obstreperous existence she had been. Despite having been created at the end of many sacrifices, she had been indifferent as to what would happen after she was created, becoming a dangerous object with nowhere to go.

While not knowing how to make effective or proper use of such a frightening being, that girl had calmly lined Arakiya up adjacent to the life she was leading, and had confidently told her to accompany herself.

Just why, why had she been able to try to oppose that perfected magnificence?

It should not have been possible for feelings of resistance or opposition to bud. That girl was the representation of everything Arakiya believed to be correct, and her very existence was the meaning in Arakiya’s birth.

In order to not let her lose that radiance, in order to not lose what she thought was beautiful about that radiance, she chose to leave her side, thinking it to be necessary, and somehow managed to endure the thought of being separated.

The reason she had endured, endured, endured it all, was because she believed that the Sun would rise once more.

—So long as she could protect the new day's dawn, it would be fine if she herself could not bask in the rays of the rising Sun.

Recklessly crying out, whining that she could not place her hands upon it, while eyes of disappointment were directed towards her by none other than her Sun, that was when she had finally arrived at this conclusion.

She thought she had been forsaken by the Sun.

She thought the Sun would no longer shine upon herself.

However, facing off in the decisive battle for the Imperial Capital, directing the Yang Sword towards a sobbing Arakiya, the Sun— Prisca, had not cut Arakiya down with that treasured sword of crimson.

Afterwards, while surrounded by the servants of the Great Disaster that had appeared, she ought to have been able to flee. But, in exchange for Arakiya's safety, she had chosen to be captured.

Those innermost feelings, that dazzling gleam, had not changed in the slightest.

If Prisca had remained unchanged, then Arakiya also desired for her vow to remain invariant.

—Prisca Benedict.

The Vollachian Empire's symbol of a Sun that had set, yet would rise again.

When thinking of her, Arakiya could remain as "Arakiya".

Arakiya could delay the limit for her soul growing hotter, and bursting apart.

However, even if her love and loyalty to Prisca was eternal, that limit could not be extended forever.

She was detaining a being that would engulf her, and would fully overtake her presence.

While Arakiya continued to resist that disgrace to her mind, the being that was even now borrowing Arakiya's body was amplifying its destruction in the real world, to which she did not have room to turn her attention.

The destruction would only become more refined, the ruination would only gain more momentum, and it was only a matter of time before a full collapse.

Stagnating for a long period of however many centuries, even if a part of its power was being utilized in conflicts between humans, nor if it was being used for the enrichment of human activities, the Stone would not pay any mind— yet when it had entered the fragile vessel known as Arakiya, it had learned to resist against disappearing.

The Great Spirit that had been taken in by Arakiya was displaying defensive instincts that it likely would not have employed were it in its original form, and ironically enough, it was strengthening its level of threat in order to protect the vessel of Arakiya.

Arakiya: “———”

Somebody, somebody was fighting in order to stop Arakiya; she could feel it.

It seemed like, because somebody was causing Arakiya's power to be somewhat exhausted, the brakes were being pulled on “Arakiya” fading away.

But, it was insufficient. Merely weakening her, merely keeping her in check, was insufficient.

In order to interfere with the objective of the Great Disaster, Arakiya had devoured it.

The Great Spirit, which would resign itself to the will of others regardless of what was done to it, upon being taken in by Arakiya, had learned the fear known as losing oneself.

Only one push was needed. After one more push, the Great Spirit would understand.

In order to keep “Arakiya” from disappearing, the Sun was required.

And, in order for “Arakiya” to fulfill her vow, something else was required— Thunder, was.

Somebody, somebody was fighting in order to stop Arakiya; she could feel it.

It was insufficient. That somebody, was insufficient. Just who in particular was needed, she knew.

That was why, while Arakiya was on the verge of bursting apart, she waited in hope.

—For Thunder, for reverberations of real Thunder, she waited in hope.



Arakiya: “—Kill me, Cecilus.”

The moment he heard that, of all things, his thoughts came to a standstill.

Having slammed a karate chop into his opponent with all his might, he received a stare back as if it had been utterly ineffective, and immediately after, as the beautiful girl sobbed out tears of blood, she had made such an entreaty in a feeble voice.

Cecilus: “———”

Then, faster than he could digest that muttering, Cecilus received a powerful blow to the chest.

The girl’s slender arms were essentially blades due to the sharpness of the dense growth of Magic Crystals on them, and alas, Cecilus’s slim chest was mercilessly cut open, staining his favorite *kimono* with blood as he began to fall.

Pain, was present. Awareness that he had blundered, was present. Signs of being in a huge pinch, were more than present.

However, more so than the wound that bore deep into him, more so than the blood that drew a trail through the air, he was unable to avert his gaze from the pitiful eyes and face of the girl from whom he was growing distant, unable to avert his gaze from the words that had been said——

???: “■!!” / ■■■.” / ■●■●■.” / ■■■●●■.” / ●●■.” / ——■.” /  
●●●●!!” / ■■●■●■●.” / ●●...■.” / ●■●■●■●.” / ●■●■●■.” /  
●●■●●■●——!”

Cecilus: “——My sincerest apologies but I beg you all to be quiet!!”

In that moment, Cecilus made a firm appeal to the incessantly audible voices of the audience.

???: “———”

Normally, Cecilus would never have done anything like silence the voices of the audience.

He would use the incoming voices as a rousing basis to raise his own motivation, and at all times he would just calmly allow them to go in one ear and out the other as they spoke to him.



That, he had silenced. Quiet, even with the troublesome pain, he wished for quiet.

Cecilus: “———”

While plummeting, Cecilus continued to stare at the girl amidst the silence as the audience hushed their voices.

Suffering as she shed tears of blood, the girl’s sorrowful appeals took the form of destroying the world, and in the midst of groaning out cries that bore no meaning, she was finally able to interject her own desire.

The fact that it had been none other than his own name, could have undoubtedly been called the destiny of the leading actor. However—

Cecilus: “——«Kill me», you said, now that’s something I can’t let slide.”

More so than the pain or shock, he found it difficult to accept the way in which the words had been put together, so Cecilus clenched his teeth.

That moment, he bent his knees and rolled as he fell head-first towards the ground, and as he attempted to secure a safe landing, he evaded, evaded, evaded the chain of stone pillars that targeted his destination, leaping as his heels grazed the surface of the ground.

And then, he lifted his head.

Cecilus: “I don’t think those words were meant for me.”

Of course, he did not think that there was anybody else present who was called Cecilus.

However, he fully understood that the person to whom the crying girl had called out, to whom she had entrusted her wish, was not himself— That was overwhelmingly aggravating.

The most important bout, the gamble on which all would be staked, the decisive scene, the time to rise to the occasion, any phrasing would do fine.

With such a moment, such a scene, such a climax having been prepared, there was no way it would have been fine for the Cecilus Segmunt who had been called out there to have been somebody other than himself.

Therefore—

Al: “—Cecilus! You, that wound...”

Cecilus: “I’ve made up my mind, Al-san.”

Having suffered a serious wound, Cecilus’s figure was shedding blood, and seeing that, Al uttered out a voice as he fastened his *dao* to his neck for some reason. Responding to him, Cecilus tore off a strip from his ripped *kimono*, and using it as a string, he tied back his disarrayed, blue hair.

Then, giving a smile, he looked up at the weeping girl— at the heroine, and declared.

Cecilus: “Bear witness, Observers of the heavens above— Witness the choices the world shall make.”

# Arc 8 Chapter 57 - Cecilus Segmunt<sup>20</sup>

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 6 “Cecilus Segmunt”

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial  
Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by  
Kazatashi, Goldkills, Translation checked by Garcar, Ice) — [Complete](#)

—Cecilus Segmunt was a Stargazer.

This opening passage has already been used, and thus it is rejected.

—Cecilus Segmunt was the leading actor of this world.

This is a fact that continues to be proven through how he enthralled others with his actions rather than it simply being told, so it is rather unsophisticated.

—Cecilus Segmunt was entirely unique within this world.

This point is not limited to just Cecilus, and thus is headache-inducing.

—Cecilus Segmunt was Cecilus Segmunt.

This is the most suitable definition, and thus it shall be used as the opening this time around.

In that case—



—Cecilus Segmunt was Cecilus Segmunt.

Sworn to the *Tenchi Shinmei*<sup>21</sup>, this fact served as the absolute, unshakable foundation of Cecilus.

No matter what had happened to his body, even if there used to be an adult version of himself, as the people around him were saying, who was a handsome young man with a blossoming appearance and limbs longer than he had now, that was already the Before Cecilus, and in this current moment, there existed no Cecilus Segmunt other than his own individual self.

Therefore, he would prove it.

Cecilus: “Bear witness, Observers of the heavens above— Witness the choices the world shall make.”

Having finished tightly tying up his hair with a strip from his clothes, he firmly slapped his cheeks with his empty hands.

Cecilus rarely used this method of motivating himself, but it was very important in playwriting for a change in feelings to be easy for anybody to see. By interposing this sort of depiction, the people watching would be made aware of the actor’s feelings on the stage, and of the fact that the play was progressing to the next scene.

Then, as Cecilus cocked his head with a “Come to think of it”,

Cecilus: “You guys are surprisingly reasonable, everyone. I wouldn’t mind in the slightest if you resumed with your usual chatter.”

???: “ ● ● ■ ▼ ● ■ ● !.” / “ ▼ ■ ■ — ” / “ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ !!” / “ ▲ ■ ■ ▲ ● ● ■ ▲ ● ● ▼ ■ ● ▲ ■ ■ ● ● . ” / “ ● ■ ● ● ■ ■ ■ !.” / “ — ▲ ▼ ▲ . ” / “ ● ● ▲ ▼ ▲ ● ● . ” / “ ■ ● ▲ ● ■ ■ ● ● ▲ ■ ■ ! ● ■ ■ ! ▲ ▼ ■ !.” / “ ● ● ■ ■ ■ ▼ ● ■ — — ”

That instant, the voices of the audience that had been forced into silence exploded, and while Cecilus nodded internally at their usual operations, he

got back into his flow.

Being glued to him at all times, their presence was something that continued to fulfill Cecilus's need for approval, and silencing them like that was the first time he had done so. It was an unthinkable action even for himself, but it was also certainly quite surprising that they would actually keep silent like that.

He was quite pleased by that fact, and it served as a good sign of things to come. After all—

Cecilus: “—I'm about to go triumph over an opponent who underestimated me.”

Right after he stated thus, a flash of light bore into Cecilus's face.

Al: “Ceci—”

Witnessing Cecilus's face being pierced right in the center of his broad smile, Al raised his voice.

As he rushed over, he was about to exert force onto his *dao* that was fastened to his neck for some reason upon seeing Cecilus's form like that. But, he desisted.

The image of Cecilus, pierced by the light, blurred, and he realized that what had died was an afterimage. And then—

Cecilus: “It'd be better for you to distance yourself a bit.”

Right after that reached Al's eardrums, the afterimage of Cecilus flicked away, and a shock wave expanded.

The sound that was delivered lagged behind the flash of light, causing space to rupture, and as it expanded as if to chase the expanding destruction,

covering a distance of ten-odd meters, it blew open a round crater in the street which no longer retained its original form.

Al: “Woahhhhhh!?”

As Al was caught up in the aftershock yielded by the attack, his scream trailed off, but that was not captured in the corner of Cecilus’s vision as he headed forward. Only, he did not completely ignore Al’s presence, either.

Acquiring information of his surroundings such as Al’s conduct and physical ability until now, along with how his previous position and scream were getting further away, as a natural result on stage derived from the nature of the opponent’s attack, Cecilus envisioned the figure of the unseen Al in the theater of his mind.

In all likelihood, that was exactly what had happened. That was because his current state was the best for putting on a show.

—Although actors would not be able to see every position on the stage at all times, it was absolutely crucial for them to constantly be aware of the happenings at every last corner of the stage.

That sensation expanded— no, the scope of the imaginary field of vision within his brain expanded.

Cecilus established his own position as centerstage, and directed the stage effects as well as the performance of the actors cast into the roles to his own liking; that was to say, he was running at breakneck speed towards the actualization of the most shining developments throughout the entire world.

Cecilus: “———”

As Cecilus ran on the border between life and death, the figure of the heroine floating above only grew more grotesque.

Unperturbed even when suffering the full strength of Cecilus's karate chops, the heroine had many small Magic Crystals growing on her slender shoulders and arms, her appearance having turned into one that gave the fantastical illusion of being clad with sparkling wings.

What was particularly eye-catching about that figure, which could even be called beautiful, were the belts of light gently caressing the sky that floated around the heroine— Magic Crystals of thin and flat construction.

Due to some sort of principle, one of the belts of magical nature was illuminated in turn by the flaming cityscape, swimming through the sky on a silky trajectory that could sway with the wind; that instant, it was fired towards Cecilus, cutting through the world.

The same attack that had blown Al away earlier, that approached Cecilus's face once more, his eyes gleaming, and approaching, approaching—

Cecilus: “—*Lick*. I see, now this is a peculiar flavor. I guess it should be called gemstone flavor?”

That instant, Cecilus stuck out the tip of his tongue, and he ascertained the taste of the belt of light that was about to bore into his face right before evading it. The sensation his tongue perceived was hard yet soft, and the flavor was, as stated, close to that of a gemstone.

Visually resemblant of hard candy, the gemstones had a disappointing flavor when rolling it around one's mouth— and were nothing more and nothing less than part of belts the heroine was clad in.

Cecilus: “Come to think of it, you started off by sending light and fire flying and then swapped to pillars of stone and limbs of earth along the way. Are these jewels the next progression of that... they are truly quite elegant so I like it! How splendid oh how splendid, the feeling of *kakyou*<sup>22</sup> is rising!”

Retracting the tongue that had licked the belt, Cecilus roared with laughter at his surge of morale.

In this eleventh hour, in this decisive bout, he was filled with awe that his opponent was a heavenly maiden clad in a feathered robe of gemstones. And in addition, he had gone and formulated his own understanding from the results of their earlier combat.

The karate chops that Cecilus had unleashed at lightning speed, they had the might to split an iron castle in twain, let alone a wall of stone. But, though he could not say for sure, he had heard that among gemstones, there were some that were harder than even those materials.

That was to say, the heroine whom Cecilus was opposing was—

Cecilus: “—The heavenly maiden of diamond!!”

Right after he uttered those words, belts of diamond were fired from the feathered robe of the heavenly maiden.

With a flash, the belts of light closed in as they bisected the world— they numbered around twelve, eleven if the one he had licked and evaded was excluded, but they surrounded Cecilus from eleven different directions as they assailed in an effort to kill him.

It was a domain undoubtedly tessellating with Death itself, and it was the kind of intense battle where one would have to dodge raindrops amidst a storm—

Cecilus: “If that’s what’s needed! Be it drops of rain or grains of sand, let’s dodge them!”

The eleven lines separating life and death ran amok, one more made its return, making it twelve lines, and evading those, evading, evadinginginginginginginginging—



If one hit him, it would be fatal, if it was fatal, it would fall to ruin, if it fell to ruin, curtain's close.

The tips of his toes were whittled down as he stepped, the blood spilling from the wound on his chest evaporated, and he twisted his small build through the gaps in the latticed belts that blocked his way, rejecting the lowering of the curtain. *Well, how about that, have you ever seen anything like it?* If this had been an adult's body, he would not have been able to slip through the gaps, so after various deductions, it was the current Cecilus's win.

Having won, he decided he would keep on winning, so in order to secure victory, he flashed his teeth in a smile——

Cecilus: “This is where imagination will spread its wings!”

With no room to stop moving as the fierce onslaught rained down upon him, he ignored everything as blood spurted from his deep wound.

The acceleration of his thoughts in the midst of battle was spectacular, and up until now, the fight had received great praise, applause, and loud cheers. However, at this rate, it would progressively become worse, boring, and hated by everyone; in order to devise the best directorial plan, he would need to put the functions of his body through a gear change to prioritize shining on the stage.

——First of all, he cut his ability to discern colors. The world was dyed black and white.

The coloration of the world lost its vibrance, but a monochrome world had the advantage of displaying the true nature of things which could only be displayed in a monochrome world.

——Next, he cut his ability to identify sounds. The voices of the audience and his own heartbeat, the delayed sounds of the bands of light cutting

through the wind and of the stage being demolished, were all entirely abandoned.

A soundless world was dull, but there was a flavor that could only come from this refined taste of enjoying discomfort. It was in this environment where that flavor could be found, that of delight assailing one's chest upon witnessing the masterful performance within the faces and gestures of the actors.

—In addition, he also cut his senses of taste, smell, and pain. He fully wielded his body for the purpose of battle, fully concentrated his mind on the thoughts that flashed by, and raised the curtain on the theater that was the imaginary field of vision within his mind.

Cecilus: “—Well then.”

Thus, with that breath interposed, the world of black and white— in the space where he continued to evade the fierce attacks from the belts of diamond, Cecilus was quite literally looking down upon himself as he earnestly struggled while putting on airs.

Expressing the acceleration of thoughts in a fantastical manner, it was a sensation akin to a single instant being prolonged. That having been said, it was not all-powerful. The leading actor was perhaps able to excel at preserving the scene, but there was a limit to how much they could captivate the audience if the situation did not move. That which swayed hearts, was the progression of a story.

That diamond heroine had made an entreaty whilst crying, and though Cecilus had taken great offense to that, he had distorted the intentions of that appeal for his own convenience, and he had no choice but to gain the driving force necessary to propel this situation that was steadily progressing in slow-mo.

Cecilus: “———”

Thinking by normal standards, the girl was someone who was affiliated with Cecilus. There was also the possibility that she was a hardcore fan who one-sidedly knew the overly famous Cecilus, but even supposing that were the case, it would pose no problems in his thoughts from here on out, so it ought not be questioned whether or not that was true.

What was important here, was that the Cecilus Segmunt she was familiar with was not his current self, but the annoying Before Cecilus who often came up in conversation.

Others would probably be astonished were they to hear about it, and Schwartz and Tanza had actually been astonished by it, but Cecilus had absolutely no interest whatsoever regarding the Before Cecilus.

No matter what he was told, it was a stranger's affairs; no matter what he did, it was an accidental resemblance; no matter what remained, it was someone else's achievements.

That was Cecilus's perception, and so, the Before and After within Cecilus were clearly differentiated. The heroine, who seemed to be in a floundering state after having found something to eat, shared it.

The heroine did not view the Before Cecilus and the After Cecilus as the same being.

Cecilus: “That in itself is a welcome development and since it's not progressing into something telling me to become big, I'm left with no choice but to progress things in the state they currently are!”

???: “I wonder about that. In spite of being grateful that I'm being considered a separate entity I feel a clear discontent at the fact that I'm not the one who is required.”

As Cecilus pondered, another Cecilus suddenly appeared beside him.

Even though he had just declared that the Before and After Ceciluses were separate, it was quite confusing for Another Cecilus to appear here, but it was true that a conversational partner being here meant that he was on the right track.

Cecilus: “Well, let’s perceive this as the result of my heightened concentration making the acceleration of thoughts easier to understand through a visual metaphor. More importantly is the topic of the current state of the *onnashujinkou*<sup>23</sup>.”

Cecilus: “I think that rather than the topic of the *onnashujinkou*, the topic is more so that of her *taido* when it comes to me. Of course, if you look at Boss and Tanza-san it’s not difficult to imagine that the relationship between a key figure within a story and their heroine can produce an *aishou* that hadn’t existed up until then.<sup>24</sup>”

Cecilus: “So you’re saying that such *aishou* can also be produced between me and her?”

Cecilus: “I wonder. Why did you decide to make her the *onnashujinkou* in the first place again?”

Cecilus: “Was just going with the flow.”

Cecilus: “With the flow, huh~?”

Cecilus: “But but you know the thing that Boss called a live feeling isn’t something to look down on. Swift decisions and spinal reflexes are essentially *kanka*<sup>25</sup> that relies on instinct, but isn’t it the case that I’ve gotten through many scenes because I’ve followed my instincts?”

Cecilus: “True, now that you mention it. So you’re saying that since your current state is the result of having followed your instincts, the *saikou*<sup>26</sup>

thing to do is to keep following your instincts?”

Cecilus: “That’s the kind of feeling I get. However if that’s what’s gonna happen then, y’know— My current instincts are wondering why it’s someone other than myself, Cecilus Segmunt, who’s being relied on.”

Cecilus: “I see. But that’s a matter of her not wanting the *current* me, isn’t it? The one being requested is the *Zen* Cecilus but does that mean that the *Go* Cecilus thinks he can’t do what the *Zen* Cecilus would be able to do?<sup>27</sup>”

Cecilus: “Ah, in that case, the solution is for the current me to surpass the previous me.”

Cecilus: “Nooo~ objections!”

The two Ceciluses nodded at each other, and having reached a mutual agreement, a dispute then occurred over which one of them would return to the Real Cecilus whom they were looking down upon.

An unproductive battle to decide which one of them was the true soul of Cecilus began, and then concluded— immediately after, time began to move as normal for the Real Cecilus, and he resumed dealing with the twelve lines of death birthed from diamond being fired from the heavenly maiden’s feathered robe.

Cecilus: “—I’ve been looking at things slowly so the speed of my sensations is fast fast fast!”

The twelve dancing light belts each acted independently with their own will, and drew irregular trajectories like living creatures differing from ordinary weapons. When he tried to knock one down with a karate chop, the part which made contact was gouged out entirely and became painful to look at. He perceived that they were even sharper than Rowan’s treasured Onibami, so this was quite the hard enemy.

Only, while he was being surrounded by the swarm of highly lethal, yet beautiful, gemstones, Cecilus thought to himself.

Cecilus: “That phrasing of «kill me», it means that she thinks the Cecilus within her head would be able to do so.”

In other words, that was an expression of trust that if it were the Cecilus within her head, he would easily be able to break through this diamond besiegement and reach her, and then magnificently cause her heart to stop.

Naturally, since Cecilus intended to surpass the previous Cecilus, it was an essential condition that he go above and beyond that—

Cecilus: “If it’s something that the *Zen* me has never done before, then how about this?”

For the hurdle he had imposed to surpass his own self, there was a spark in Cecilus’s thoughts.

If it were the Before Cecilus, he might have been able to entirely avoid the incoming attack, but if it were the Perfect Cecilus that resulted from the unity of the After Cecilus and the Another Cecilus, then he would create a climax that was more than merely evasion.

A belt of light was aimed for above his neck, a glimmer approached his torso, a cleaving motion aimed to shave off his feet rather than sweep him off of them; he stepped with his left and right legs in sequence to evade, then bent himself backwards, crouched down, stretched out his knees and jumped up in a complete evasion of all the shots, and as a result—

Cecilus: “This is a cat’s cradle of light!”

He kept on evading the twelve independent light belts at a hair’s breadth, and guiding them to become entangled midair, he magnificently knotted them into a web which became the “Tokyo Tower”.

During their journey from the Gladiator Island, Schwartz had displayed a pastime that involved playing with yarn, and since Tanza had unusually, and openly, been impressed with that, it caused Schwartz to get seriously bashful; such was what Cecilus had recreated.

Of course, there was no meaning even if he did such a thing.

The diamond belts were made from colossal Mana, and there was no limit to their length; once a knot was formed, it could be untied by breaking down and reconstructing itself, so it would be just as if nothing had happened.

He had no such mistaken sense of triumph that he had contained the opponent's attacks by this.

Only, he had acquired something. Conviction.

Cecilus: "I will surpass myself."

He had not seen the actual individual. Neither could he actually draw a comparison with him.

However, the Before Cecilus that Cecilus pictured inside his head, had never created this "Tokyo Tower". Because there was no "Tokyo Tower" inside of him.

So even if the Before Cecilus might have been able to successfully dodge, when it came to triumphantly creating a climax that would go beyond simply evading, the current Cecilus was in the lead by a step.

Cecilus: "———"

Right after that conviction, the formation of the "Tokyo Tower" of light beneath Cecilus came undone.

Returning to Mana, it reconstructed itself, as had been hypothesized—what had been slightly outside of the hypothesis, was that during the moment of construction, a colorless explosion would be yielded.

If it merely got erased then she would have kept losing as they played, and that occurrence seemed like a rebellious spirit opposed to that—

Cecilus: “You’re quite the sore loser!”

In a world that had no color, in which even his own voice was ignored by his eardrums, Cecilus was impressed by the heroine as he gazed at her from afar.

After being impressed, a colorless beam of light gradually ascended from directly below him— suffering a direct hit would cancel out his evasion of the belts, and the degree of freedom he had in the air was overwhelmingly lower than what he had on the ground.

This was bad, bad bad bad bad; he got fired up.

—Expanding his imaginary field of vision once again, he carried out a gear change on the functions of his body.

Sense of color, maintain current status. Sense of hearing, maintain current status. Sense of pain and sense of touch, reactivate; hiding the pain that instantly boiled up behind a smile with teeth bared, he searched for the “key” amidst the sensation of a single second being divided up into one hundred parts.

With that, he could search for the “key” that would turn the script over to the next page.

Cecilus: “—There it is.”

Laying the nerves within his body bare, he engaged in the hyper-dimensional act of savagery that was exposing them to the wind, and as he



ascended, Cecilus's outstretched leg hit something.

It was neither a convenient wall nor building. What had been hit was, from the cityscape being destroyed as it was engulfed in the battle between Cecilus and the heroine, a fragment of the rubble that had been whirled up, a single grain of gravel.

That, he used as a foothold.

Cecilus: "Shwee."

Using the exceedingly faint sensation that had struck the sole of his foot as a foothold, Cecilus's body leapt through the air.

To avoid the rising achromatic destruction from catching up to him, Cecilus stepped again onto blown up splinters of wood and shattered fragments of window glass, and finally stepping onto a slightly larger cinder of ash, he escaped higher.

Why was he able to do it? He could do it simply because he could, he would make all those who laid eyes upon him believe so.

Disregarding various logical and general notions, Cecilus's action of fleeing to the sky was an outrage against common sense. Those who witnessed it might have called it a miracle, but for Cecilus, this was only the beginning, nothing more than a handful of the miracles that arrived to color the world at various moments each and every day.

And thus, if he continued to cause these miracles——

Cecilus: "Impatient reality will bare its fangs."

Thanks to his unreasonable ascension, Cecilus escaped the beam of light, and before right or wrong could come as a result from that escape, the reconstructed light belts ate into the colorless beam of light from within, and began to chase Cecilus through the sky.

As the twelve belts entangled in a helix, its tip radially expanded while pointing towards Cecilus, and just as a carnivorous plant would captivate bugs with its beautiful petals, it bit at him. The flower petals closing like a bud, Cecilus would have no means to escape being swallowed by the diamond flower.

That too, surely, would only have been if it were the Cecilus who was not the current Cecilus.

Cecilus: “*Bang.*”

And, the sound of an atmospheric explosion a hundredfold of the sound he had voiced shook the battlefield.

Unfortunately, although Cecilus himself had shut out all sounds and thus could not hear it, he was sorry to the eardrums of the heroine and of Al who were also present in this location. But then again, the thing that made him want to complain the most, was probably the sky that Cecilus had kicked, and had caused to explode.

Cecilus, who could leave sound behind and run at lightning speed, was well-aware that the atmosphere had walls. Kicking those walls was not an easy feat, but it would have been troubling to be disdained as a poor actor who had messed up the climax. Even if he was performing without a rehearsal, perfectly captivating the audience was essential for the leading actor.

As a result, together with the sound of the explosion, Cecilus’s body shot straight downwards. He took a sharp nosedive, and faster than the diamond flowerbud could finish closing, he escaped the petals and fell to the ground.

Cecilus directly pierced the ground, and undoubtedly yielded an impact akin to a lightning strike.

He had paid the price with his right leg, which was now in a horrid state from the knee down, but it was hard to determine whether a gallant figure

seizing victory unscathed or the fierce figure sustaining injuries while felling the opponent would make for a better picture. It would be discourteous for the audience to go on and on about what should have been done after the fact, so he puffed out his chest with the sensation of receiving thunderous applause, and proceeded forward, forward—

Cecilus: “—Ten steps.”

By eye, he measured the distance to the heroine in the sky, and purposely stepped forward with his bloodied leg.

Aiming for Cecilus as he broke out into a run, the once closed flowerbud expanded anew, and as the diamond petals rained down on him as if spores being scattered, he left them in the dust with a single large step.

Cecilus: “—Nine steps.”

The space to Cecilus’s left and right distorted, and as they twisted, pillars of stone appeared.

Methods of attack other than the belts of diamond light resumed here, and clenching his teeth at the detestable arrangement, he unreasonably overworked his right leg that was placed on the ground in a reckless manner, and gaining speed, he sacrificed some stray hairs as he slipped through the gap in the pillars coming at him from left and right; the atmosphere ended up being the only thing that got pulverized.

Cecilus: “—Eight steps.”

Smashing the ground, were several quadrilateral blocks around the size of houses— masses of stone in the shapes of cubes emerged, and were fired towards him like a barrage of throwing spears.

Stretching out the knee of his left leg, he stepped on the tip of an approaching rock spear, and using that, which was so fatal that it could

have also functioned as a gravestone immediately after a direct hit, as a foothold, he plunged into the barrage.

Cecilus: “—Seven steps, six steps, abridge the rest!”

Adapting to the unforeseen situation, he reset the count of steps, and slipping past the storm of stone pillars constructed to reject the After Cecilus, the distance that once seemed to be infinite now closed in on zero.

The heroine exerted her fury to allow none other than the Cecilus she accepted, the Cecilus who could reach her, to get close.

At that stubborn, obstinate heroine, Cecilus was fired up to prove that even his current self could reach her.

That was undoubtedly a world-leading destructive contest of obstinacy on a level of danger that would go down in the history of the Empire.

Taking control of that struggle of obstinacy, Cecilus would accomplish that.

It was not a matter of what he would do once he accomplished it. He simply wanted to accomplish it, and so he would.

Cecilus: “—Two steps!!”

With karate chops from both of his hands, he blew away the obstructing stone pillars, and inferring the distance until the heroine who had been concealed, from where he had jumped out, he spotted her around ten meters in the sky above him; while giving a standing ovation to his instincts within his brain, he seized the range.

Cecilus: “———”

Thereupon, through the process of breaking down and reconstructing themselves, the twelve belts of adamantite light blocked the way again.

Escaping the storm of stone pillars, Cecilus looked up, and receiving that gaze, the heroine directed her belts of light towards him once more. In that moment, while greatly capturing the range, the light belts spread out, and their tips faintly flickered; the ultrathin articles divided themselves further, from twelve to twenty-four, from twenty-four to forty-eight, from forty-eight to ninety-six, from ninety-six to one-hundred and ninety-two, from one-hundred and ninety-two to three-hundred and eighty-four, from three-hundred and eighty-four to——

Cecilus: “~~Hk.”

As the light belts branched to an extent that became too absurd to enumerate, they beautifully glistened in the sky as they came falling like a waterfall.

Left, right, and behind, the directions which would have been a path of escape were filled with the pillars of stone; the stage had been transformed into an inescapable barrier. The only path was straight ahead, and even just a graze from the drops of the falling light would have been a fatal, inevitable death, let alone getting struck head-on.

——Fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable, fatal, inescapable.

Cecilus: “———”

The world devoid of color and sound was permeated with the probability of Death.

Before the destiny of an unavoidable Death, he recalled all the miracles he had accumulated.

It was a miracle that his right leg was still attached at the knee; it was a miracle that he could still move with an exceedingly deep wound in his chest that almost revealed his heart; it was a miracle that he still was overflowing with motivation at the figure of the heroine as she continued to cry. And then—

Cecilus: “———”

—It was a miracle that within Cecilus’s hand as it reached towards the heavens, a prop had arrived with the best possible timing.

△▼△▼△▼△

—Twelve-thousand, two-hundred and eighty-eight times.

That was the number of times Al had spent figuring out his role on this stage.

Al: “———”

Immediately after Cecilus, with his hair in a bun, had changed his mind with a reasoning that Al did not understand, the battle accelerated further into the realm that laughed at the thought of Al’s intervention.

From the get-go, it was a battlefield where he knew there was little he could do.

Within his defined territory, even after nearly two-hundred attempts, he’d only had two opportunities to intervene. Those two times had been undoubtedly meaningful, but in a battle that had kicked up a notch, there was not a single chance for Al to intervene.

To begin with, Arakiya herself was not even able to endure the aftermath of the attacks she was aiming at Cecilus.

Unlike the attacks prior to Arakiya's transformation into her deformed state with the magical crystals, where she simply shot out the Mana that welled up, her current attacks were clearly more sophisticated. The destructive power wielded by Arakiya— what could have been called “belts of light” had caused the entire area to become completely destroyed, and Al, who had been roped up by them, had been obliterated more than two thousand times.

What was the point of being in a battle in which one's mere presence would be fatal?

However, giving up on any form of intervention and withdraw from the battlefield was not an option. For, if he did, Cecilus would be killed by a belt of light before he could reach Arakiya.

In order to change this unchangeable outcome, Al had looked for an opening to intervene— repeatedly getting himself roped up there. After many hundreds, thousands of times, he realized this.

There were problems with Al's positioning, and there were times when he was obliterated by one of the belts as if he were merely a bug to be swatted away. Still, if he were to manage to see Cecilus make it over to Arakiya, he witnessed Cecilus's incomprehensible movements as he was subjected to an inevitable attack.

—Just before the belts of light that wrapped around Arakiya branched out into a hopeless number and poured down, Cecilus had reached out toward the heavens.

Al: “———”

At first, Al thought that Cecilus was about to unleash his full strength with his karate chop. However, Cecilus's right hand showed no sign of moving, even at the moment the light rained down.

It was not until hundreds of times later that he realized that he was not performing a karate chop, but was rather extending his five fingers.

It was not a karate chop or a fist, but an open palm facing the heavens. He had no idea what it meant. He did consider the surprise of him suddenly using magic, but in any case, Cecilus, with his magic a dud, would end up being swallowed by the shimmering light, and Al would likewise be roped up and obliterated.

Al: “———”

After confirming this, attempts continued to be made in vain, with no room for intervention.

In that ultra-fast-paced battle, results would come into being as quick as the blink of an eye, and even before a situation was ascertained, its possibilities examined, and ideas given shape, the number of reversible defeats accreted at an accelerated rate.

Even if he was not impatient with that fact, he was frustrated by the fact that he could not reach the destination.

A tremendous sense of regret ate away at him, making him wonder if he had made a mistake by hesitating to withdraw when he should have, leading him into a dead-end route, only for him to be turned to cinders along with those feelings.

Despite Al’s desperate attempts, Cecilus did not even look at him, and Arakiya did not give him a second thought. It was really frustrating.

It made him feel that this was their own private struggle and that they had only been repeatedly telling him so endlessly, thousands of times, and by violent and impulsive means.

—What if that was not the case?



Al: “———”

It was a possibility that had unexpectedly slipped into his mind, and Al quickly shook his head to deny it.

Several times, he had sensed an idea beginning to sprout and had witnessed the signs of its development, but in each case, there were no further results, and each time, it disappeared, swallowed by the light of doom.

However, this time, uncharacteristically, that idea had been brought past the end into the next restart.

What if that was not the case? —What if there was room for intervention?

Al: “———”

Thoroughly, Al decided to cling to the sprouting possibilities.

Cecilus would avoid all of Arakiya’s attacks and arrive in front of her. The shimmering belts of light that clothed her would spread out into countless branches and pour down, ending with light engulfing the world.

Over and over again, he kept trying to get a complete picture of what was going on up until this final act.

During this, he had noticed Cecilus licking the belts of light, taking him aback.

During this, he had noticed Cecilus kicking off empty space and flying through it, taking him aback.

During this, he had noticed that he was actually kicking off pebbles and scraps of ash, not empty space, taking him even more aback.

And so, he proceeded in furthering his understanding, furthering it, furthering it, before then raising his head.

Cecilus was perhaps, or maybe, was, more or less—

—Reaching towards the heavens as part of constructing his spotlight.

Al: “———”

Al thought to himself in shock, “*What else could be expected of me?*” as he was obliterated.

The hurdles of those demands were so high that thoughts like “There’s no way” and “Maybe, it could...” began to dance through his mind. But then, the realization hit him. He had been dragged into it.

Right smack-dab in the middle of the stage, not just on top of it, vacillating between getting off of it or not—

Al: “———”

It became a long struggle from there. No one would understand. No one needed to.

He must survive up to that moment, flounder over to that moment, reach that moment and intervene in that moment.

It would require a lot of struggling to achieve this. But this was fine— The times he would struggle did not amount to how many stars there were<sup>28</sup>. Because of that—

Al: “—Go for it, star actor.”

On the twelve-thousand, two-hundred and eighty-eighth time— the hilt of the *dao* was thrown into Cecilus’s hand, which he held up to the sky, gripping it ever so tightly.



—In the past, there had been a building known as the “loot house”.

In the slums of the Royal Capital of Lugunica, the symbol of the Kingdom’s long-standing debt, a place shrouded in darkness, where stolen goods were openly traded, had laid.

This loot house became the stage for a confrontation over a crucial item that could determine the fate of the Kingdom, ultimately meeting its demise in the clash involving the current Sword Saint, Reinhard van Astrea, who intervened to defeat the Bowel Hunter, Elsa Granhiert, resulting in its collapse.

The sword Reinhard had wielded at that moment, was a nameless, mass-produced blade.

It did not possess any extraordinary sharpness; it was merely a sword borrowed by Reinhard that happened to be in the loot house and used for the battle.

However, with that single swing in the hands of the Sword Saint Reinhard, it gained the opportunity to unleash a sword strike that even the most famous and treasured swords would never experience.

Of course, no ordinary sword could withstand that single slash, and it instantly crumbled in Reinhard’s hands, ending its life as a tangible object there.

However, was the broken sword truly unfortunate?

It was impossible for one to fathom the feelings of a tool, but between a sword gathering dust in a corner of the loot house, rusting away for decades before being discarded, or fulfilling its purpose as a tool, which could be said to have better fulfilled its true purpose?

One could say that the sword fulfilled in a single swing what it might have taken a thousand or even ten-thousand swings in the hands of an ordinary wielder to achieve.

The story has begun to veer off its main point, so we shall get it back on track.

Simply put, the reason for the collapse of the loot house was that an ordinary, blunt blade had found a wielder who could fulfill its true purpose as a sword, and thus had it been swung.

If that was the case, then.

If the Sword Saint could achieve that, there was no reason why an equally skilled wielder could not do the same.

Cecilus: “—You did a great job, Al-san.”

Confirming the sensation in the outstretched hand with conviction, Cecilus praised the man who had performed a miracle.

And thus did he acknowledge, and thus did he assert. Cecilus could not even begin to imagine the difficulties Al had faced in handing over the *dao* to him right now.

Human imagination was infinite, but even the rash idea of reaching infinity was presumptuous.

It was like the peak of a mountain that was known to exist yet could not be reached— a fantastical dream akin to the Heavenly Sword that Cecilus continued to pursue.

However, Al had made it in time.

Through means unimaginable even to Cecilus, Al had overcome the mountain and delivered the miracle Cecilus desired into his hands.

Bravo, bravo, nothing else but the sound of bravo, and thunderous ovation to the sounds of blooming incredible.

Cecilus: “———”

The rain of light became unavoidable Death and poured down upon Cecilus.

When one became an actor of Cecilus’s caliber, one might understand that the audience often desired a beautiful, star-studded ending rather than a mundane demise, and under certain circumstances, one might even consider it fitting, but now was not a good time. This was not the curtain call he had envisioned. Therefore——

Cecilus: “That *owari*<sup>29</sup> needs a rewrite.”

Cecilus swung the slightly oversized *dao* with the skill of a seasoned swordsman, as if he had swung it thousands, tens of thousands, or even hundreds of millions of times before.

Even though it would have been the first time he wielded the weapon, within Cecilus’s ever-so expansive imagination and theater of his mind, there existed a record of swinging this *dao* throughout the mornings, afternoons, and nights, puking up blood and sweating profusely. However, depicting such scenes would be no good for Cecilus, so he simply plucked the fruits of his efforts.

——In an instant, a flash of lightning that transcended the limits of the *dao*, slashed away the pouring rain of light into nihil.

It was not just the countless strands of light that were obliterated in that flash. The dense forest of stone pillars that covered Cecilus’s left, right, and rear, attempting to seal off any escape routes, was blown to smithereens.

At this moment, Cecilus Segmunt’s sword strike had surpassed the Spirit Eater Arakiya—— No, it had surpassed the Stone, Muspel, which was said to

be the very land of the Vollachian Empire.

Cecilus: “———”

Then, beyond the rain of light, Cecilus and Arakiya’s gazes met——

Cecilus: “——Hk.”

Cecilus twisted his neck to evade the thirteenth strand of light released. It grazed his right cheek, with the lower half of his right ear being obliterated; blood evaporated from his frayed neck and shoulder, but he successfully avoided the attack.

He praised the fact she had yet managed to conceal an ace of hers behind the rain of light, and more so concealed it well,

Cecilus: “One step——”

Resuming the count of steps remaining to cover the distance, he kicked the ground with his left foot and ascended into the air.

From there, Cecilus’s lightning-fast sprint closed in on Arakiya in the sky——

???: “———”

In an instant, the strands of light he had evaded gave rise to a colorless explosion, and Cecilus’s head was struck with the force of the blast.



*Cecilus:* “——Oya?”

Suddenly, finding himself standing stock-still in an unfamiliar room thrust into twilight, Cecilus tilted his head.

He looked around his surroundings, but it was a place he had no recollection of ever seeing. Cecilus had a reputation of being forgetful, but surprisingly,

he would never forget places and things once he had seen them.

No matter the situation or prop, there might eventually be an opportunity to put it to use. The things known as stage effects were also occasionally born from unforeseen ideas.

*Cecilus: "So it's a place that even I'm unaware of. Or rather to begin with the fact that I'm present in this kind of place is really putting my sense of discomfort to work."*

Even though he had no memory of this location, he was not so careless as to forget what he had been doing just before.

In the Imperial Capital filled with undead, begged by a sobbing heroine to kill her, Cecilus had taken offense to that and resolved himself to surpass his past self, and ought to have pulverized Al's *dao*.

*Cecilus: "It sure seems like I'm escaping from reality because things ended there and I'm worrying over having destroyed Al-san's dao. As expected, that's... Woah woah woah."*

If he broke someone else's possession, even Cecilus would feel pain in his chest. But, all things had a lifespan and a destiny. If the chance came around, there were things that ought not to be fretted about when destroyed. Al's *dao* fit into that category. After everything was settled, it would be fine if he relied on Schwartz to reimburse Al.

When such a conclusion was about to be made, a change in the room had been yielded— As light from the setting sun shone through the window, the door within the unfamiliar room was opened.

And then—

???: "Well, it's quite the nice thing isn't it, to be summoned even when I have no memory of being called for. Whenever I'm called it's always

because I'm being scolded for something, but I'm not worried about that today!"

*Cecilus: "—Hahaa, I see."*

While giving a cackling laugh, the one who entered the room with light steps was a blue-haired, slender young man— clad in a pink *kimono*, the person wearing *zori* was someone Cecilus had never seen before, but he could guess who it was.

With long limbs, and a refined appearance that still contained a soft impression, there were many common features to his own which he checked in the mirror every day, so there was no longer even the slightest room for doubt.

*Cecilus: "It's the adult me. Which would mean these are the memories of the Zen me?"*

Ascertaining the existence of his past self— of "Cecilus", Cecilus surmised the situation.

Since the topic of the Blue Lightning had spread to so many people, it was unreasonable to suspect that he had not existed, but actually seeing the big version of himself like this was quite moving.

Since he was aspiring to surpass himself, this "Cecilus" should have been someone like a rival to him, but—

*Cecilus: "Hm hm, isn't this great! The way I grew up was quite ideal indeed! The flowery beauty is fully intact while sex appeal has risen and the handsomeness has gone through the roof!"*

Witnessing the figure of "Cecilus" before him, he was utterly enchanted by how big of a deal it was.



Since his frame of mind was likely the same as that of the current Cecilus, maintaining the spirit of being the leading actor of this world, it was only natural that he had kept his mind and body in tip-top condition.

That such a way of thinking had been diligently put into practice, was in itself a very welcome sentiment.

*Cecilus: “Let’s see. Although it may be nice to be presented with a grown version of myself like this I can’t get a read on the next development. Perhaps in order to actualize the idea of me surpassing myself I’ve been plunged into a sword battle against the former me? But, considering that it seems like this me can’t be seen by that me...”*

Containing his excitement, Cecilus shifted doubt upon the current situation once again.

Even when a hand was waved right in front of his eyes, “Cecilus” did not notice the presence of Cecilus here. If he could not interfere with this scene, then just what was the meaning to be had here?

The answer to that would be clearly exhibited with the progression of the situation.

???: “—Whether it is scolding or not, I think depends on whether you have self-awareness in the given case, but is it not premature to be relieved simply because you haven’t a clue?”

Subsequently, the voice heard was from the person who had entered the room a bit after “Cecilus”.

That person closed the door with a hand behind their back, and glancing towards “Cecilus”, who had entered before him, he narrowed his long-slitted eyes.

What a terribly odd appearance that person had.

With long, white hair framing a white face, a form that was white throughout its entirety, even to its clothing and equipped tactical fan, the figure that was slimmer and taller than even “Cecilus” looked like a shady goblin that would show up in a picture book.

From that appearance, Cecilus received an impact that was truly to his liking.

“Cecilus”: “Unh. By saying that, do you mean that I just didn’t realize and it actually is a scolding after all? In that case I really messed up by entering the room first. I’ll burst through the window and rush up the wall to escape, Chisha.”

Chisha: “That would stir up the soldiers of the Palace so I would prefer if you refrained from such eccentricities. For the time being, it truly is not a scolding today. You do not have to be so on guard.”

“Cecilus”: “Please now, don’t frighten me like that. Jeez, Chisha really is bad with people. No matter how many years pass, that aspect sure doesn’t change.”

Chisha: “—Indeed, though it is unusual, I am in agreeemeeent.”

That white personage was called Chisha in an easygoing manner by “Cecilus”.

In that case, the man’s name was probably Chisha, and “Cecilus” was quite close with him. Currently, Cecilus had no acquaintance with Chisha, but he could tell from their interaction that they had known each other for a period of years. He also understood that it was no small number of years from “Cecilus’s” remarks.

*Cecilus: “Hm.”*

The age of “Cecilus” seemed to be around twenty, with a margin for error of around one or two years. That meant there was a gap of around ten years with Cecilus’s current state, so he surmised that his relationship with Chisha had begun during that time.

Considering how Cecilus’s name of the Blue Lightning had spread, ten years felt like quite a reasonable timeline— In other words, there was a high possibility that the scene of the past that Cecilus was watching was within one or two years of the present.

Grasping that, Cecilus progressed his thoughts further, and cocked his head at the same time.

It was natural to get caught up on this, but the reason why this past could be seen, and why he was seeing this past— regardless of the latter, he could generally comprehend the former.

*Cecilus: “Supposing it’s true that I was shrunk then I think the memories from before I became small were just sealed away and didn’t actually disappear or anything.”*

Since he had no memory of the time he was shrunk, he did not really understand the mechanism behind the shrinking, but it should not have been able to entirely erase ten of the years Cecilus had lived. Even so, the reason he could not remember the memories from those ten years, was none other than because his body and mind mutually influenced each other.

Just as how Cecilus’s body would be able to implement whatever he believed possible, his mind would have no choice but to regress in tandem if his body had certifiably shrunk— It was probably something like that.

Therefore, Cecilus thought that his memories themselves had merely been dormant, while actually having been inside of himself this whole time.

Since he thought so, there was no issue with the fact in itself that they could be seen.

The issue was, as before, the reason why he was seeing them.

*Cecilus: "...This seems like the memory of the time I got shrunk."*

Indeed, the reason why Cecilus had muttered that with a bitter look on his face, was because he had hit upon an unpleasant possibility.

Cecilus had never experienced it for himself, but when people were on the verge of death, it seemed like they would seek a method to escape the approaching doom before them, and would trace back through the memories of their life. It was a function of searching for an idea to refuse Death amidst the life they had accumulated up until then.

Thus, the reason for Cecilus's bitter-faced answer, was undoubtedly the suspicion that this scene before his eyes might have been a spark from Cecilus's lifetime in order to save his life.

In other words, if this was as Cecilus suspected, and was the memory from the time he had been shrunk, then could it have been a scene where the opposite was also true?

*Cecilus: "Isn't this something like seeing the place where I was shrunk, and then gaining a tegakari<sup>30</sup> for the method of returning to my original form, and breaking the deadlock of the situation? Isn't that like really really lame?"*

Despite declaring that he would surpass himself, having stepped towards the heroine with the resolve to die as she spilled tears, and Al having provided the greatest assist that went above and beyond his minor role, he would fail to carry out his original intention.

As such an answer for his own failure lay before his eyes, Cecilus had unpleasant feelings in the depths of his heart.

*Cecilus: “Don’t like it, I don’t like it, I don’t like it one bit!”*

Throwing himself down onto the floor of the room, he rambunctiously threw a tantrum and flailed his limbs around. But, Cecilus’s reluctance did not put a stop to the conversation between “Cecilus” and Chisha.

Leaving Cecilus behind as he sprawled himself out on the floor, the two people continued with their discussion.

“Cecilus”: “You’re making a somewhat complex expression, Chisha.”

Chisha: “—My goodness, even though you usually do not pay much mind to the countenances of others, you are only ever sharp at times like these; that is the reason I find you to be troublesoome.”

“Cecilus”: “Hahaha, you sure are saying some funny things. I do regularly look at the faces of people in my surroundings. It’s just that most of the time I just look at them and then ignore it without touching on the subject!”

Chisha: “Then, for what reason have you touched upon it today?”

“Cecilus”: “Why wouldn’t I be worried if my friend is tired? I think it’s a rather normal thing.”

Chisha: “It is ridiculous to hear a word such as «normal» coming from your mouth.”

With a face on which not even a hint of a smile emerged, Chisha replied so, to which “Cecilus” pouted his lips.

At that state, Cecilus, unable to interfere with the memory, gave up on his whining and looked up while sitting cross-legged. A friend, the fact that he

said that word and the fact that he had one, were the height of surprise.

Even if Schwartz and Tanza, Gustav and the Pleiades Battalion were his allies, they were not his friends or family. To think that he would have a friend.

However, leaving aside Cecilus's deep emotions, Chisha suddenly gave a distant look, and while calling "Cecilus's" name,

Chisha: "Supposing the views of myself and His Excellency ran in opposition to each other, just how do you think events would play out?"

"Cecilus": "If His Excellency and Chisha did? If you can talk it out then you should talk it out, but if there's no use in talking it out then wouldn't the only option be to have a showdown?"

Chisha: "When the time for that showdown comes, how would you proceed?"

"Cecilus": "Naturally I'd be His Excellency's ally. That goes without saying, doesn't it?"

Without reserve, without fervor, "Cecilus" plainly answered with a tone of voice unaltered. Then, hopping up and sitting his bum down on the desk in the inner part of the room, he suspended his legs and looked at Chisha.

Resting his chin in his hands, "Cecilus" closed one of his blue eyes, and,

"Cecilus": "A roundabout and enigmatic hypothetical story... By some chance, is Chisha perhaps plotting something?"

Chisha: "I suppose that is sooo... It is absolutely necessary to prepare for a large, large battle."

*Cecilus: "—A large battle."*

"Cecilus": "—A large battle."

Reacting to Chisha's statement, both the past and the present Cecilus overlapped in their remarks.

It was a matter that "Cecilus" seemed to not have a clue about, and Cecilus did not know Chisha well enough to declare that it was in reference to the current happenings. At those words, Chisha joined his hands together behind his back and, walking up to the window,

Chisha: "It is a battle we must win no matter the cost. However, in regards to that great battle, His Excellency and I are of differing opinions. Even from the establishment of victory conditions, my view does not align with His Excellency's. I have found no room for us to come to a common ground."

"Cecilus": "It's quite rare for Chisha to act independently from His Excellency. Or rather than rare, wouldn't this be the first time?"

Chisha: "I do not think that is sooo. I do often convey my own opinions to His Excellency..."

"Cecilus": "That's right. So, this is the first time Chisha is giving up on trying to persuade His Excellency."

Chisha: "———"

Gazing at the scenery outside the window, Chisha kept silent, and behind him, "Cecilus" turned his head around. The fact that Chisha did not reply, likely meant that "Cecilus's" point had hit the mark.

They had known each other a long time, but that was entirely why Vincent always made unreasonable requests of Chisha. His fame as the wisest Emperor since the genesis of the Empire had been built atop Chisha's blood, sweat, and tears.

*Cecilus: "...Hmm."*

Upon thinking thus, Cecilus got the feeling that he really knew Chisha well. In regards to His Excellency, who came up quite frequently in conversation, too, a vague face came to mind. For some reason, it was a face with wrinkles on its brow. The face was a haze, but the wrinkles on the brow were distinctive, and seemed to be the essence of the face.

He was not in a mental state where he could really welcome that sensation, however, Cecilus had a surge of interest in the conversation between “Cecilus” and Chisha, and he wished to see its developments through.

Chisha was acting independently from His Excellency—from Vincent. And from there.

Chisha: “I have no intention of clashing opinions with His Excellency on this matter. It is an absolute condition that His Excellency harbors not even a smidgen of doubt. And for that purpose...”

“Cecilus”: “—I guess I’m in the way?”

Quietly, yet slightly cheerfully, “Cecilus” posed a question to Chisha’s back. Receiving it, Chisha turned around without uttering a word, and narrowed his eyes while his white body was dyed orange by the setting sun.

Yet again he did not deny. The lack of words, the silence, was proof of affirmation.

“Cecilus”: “If His Excellency and Chisha oppose each other with opinions divided then I’ll follow His Excellency no matter what. That is a major prerequisite for myself and my unyielding vow of the sword.”

Chisha: “Indeed, I accept that your answer is so. At the same time, if you stand on His Excellency’s side, then my prospects for victory are essentially nonexistent. Even were I to have Arakiya or General First-Class Olbart... No, even were I to have all of the Nine Divine Generals other than you on my side, it would likely be no match for you.”



“Cecilus”: “Ho-ho-ho-ho, now that is quite the captivating story. I’ve actually been thinking this since long ago. Even though the Nine Divine Generals are the Empire’s strongest army corps, isn’t nine too many people?”

*Cecilus: “I think so too.”*

Even if they were to cut four or five members, something like the Five Great Summits or the Four Heavenly Kings would not be too shabby.

Cecilus had such a perception, and “Cecilus” was in the process of gradually heightening his fighting spirit. Basking directly in the gazes of the two Ceciluses, Chisha’s expression did not crumble.

Whenever Chisha made a face like this, caution was required, as he would have some sort of unthinkable plan.

Chisha: “Unfortunately, it is not as though I have actually persuaded the Nine Divine Generals.”

“Cecilus”: “Oh is that so? Well but that’s how it is isn’t it? There’s no way Goz-san and Moguro would betray His Excellency. But in that case what are you gonna do?”

Chisha: “———”

“Cecilus”: “Chisha’s not gonna give up there. That’s the kind of face you’re making, you know?”

A nostalgic emotion simmered up within him, but it was pushed back for later by “Cecilus’s” reaction. As “Cecilus” leaned his bum against the desk, he kept watch over Chisha’s every move.

No matter how Chisha tried to move, he could take complete control. But, that was something Chisha was knowledgeable of.

Well now, just what would he try to do? Just how would he get the better of this “Cecilus Segmunt”, and shrink him into the current form of a small child?

Chisha: “Cecilus, I shall remove you from the board. As His Excellency and I engage in a bout of reading the other’s every move, no stage shall be prepared for you to make your appearance. There is another role that shall be arranged for you.”

“Cecilus”: “Even if you say that to me, I can’t just give an answer in good spirits like «Ah yes that is indeed so». On the other hand, since you can’t remove me through force, are you going to use the power of words? As I’m sure Chisha is aware, I’m the General with the least ability to listen in the Empire.”

Saying that, he got off the desk and landed on the ground, and spinning around like he was dancing, “Cecilus” faced Chisha head-on. Chisha’s figure was dazzling as he stood amidst the setting sun, and “Cecilus” tilted his body forward, looking up at him with upturned eyes.

It was a relationship spanning a long time, one in which they mutually had full knowledge of the other’s good and bad aspects, and looking into the expression of such a friend, “Cecilus” smiled.

Smiling, he provoked Chisha to bring out the likes of the plan that he had prepared up his sleeve.

“Cecilus”: “Let’s see, what kind of words, views, or reasoning will you use to convince me? This will be quite the tough challenge, even for the wise man who is second only to His Excellency, Chisha Gold.”

At that cheap provocation from “Cecilus”, Chisha closed his eyes, and let a beat pass.

Then, opening those eyes, and with “Cecilus” reflected in them,

Chisha: “Cecilus— Please, I entrust His Excellency to you.”

—

—

—

—Neither was it carelessness, nor was it persuasion; the fact that it was an entreaty, filled him with awe.

“Cecilus”: “—This isn’t fair.”

*Cecilus*: “—*PERFECT*<sup>31</sup>!!”



The impression of his red blood spraying out, strongly overlapped with that of the red sunset within his memories.

With the evening glow upon his back, Chisha Gold had defeated Cecilus inside his office. Neither had he been caught in a moment of vulnerability, nor had he earnestly been persuaded by the benefits; he had been entrusted.

That was the reason why “Cecilus Segmunt” had become Cecilus Segmunt.

Cecilus: “—Hk.”

As a scorching heat assailed his senses, Cecilus’s consciousness returned to reality.

The pain to his head and half of his body, was the result of being caught in the explosion of the light belt he ought to have averted; the time in which

his consciousness had disappeared into the twilight of that day had been less than a half of a half of a half of a second.

But, that stagnation was more than enough for the heroine— for Arakiya, who was blocking the way.

Arakiya: “———”

The *dao* that had crumbled within his hand, the full might of its blow ought to have erased the belts of light, but having been reconstructed through Arakiya’s power, five, six of them were restored.

Even she would not have been able to instantly regain the power lost from that attack. The Magic Crystal wings that had been upon her back had fissured, and amidst the sparkling fragments as they scattered about, Arakiya was present.

In the depths of that slender body, was it the Stone, Muspel, whom she had devoured?

To turn her fangs against the very land of the Vollachian Empire, he was surprised by her indiscriminate nature. Something like that, not even Cecilus would think after having seen those tears.

Having heard her utterance, he could not ridicule her with his usual tone.

Cecilus: “But, since it was made with that kind of face, I’m going to have to decline your request.”

If she had wanted to inform Cecilus of her request no matter what, she should have at least given her best smile. If she had made such a choice with no regrets and no falsehoods, and had told him with a smile on her face, then Cecilus would also have received it in earnest.

Just like that helpless friend, who, with a smile, had ordered Cecilus to shrink.

Cecilus: “Ahh, so that’s what it was?”

Even now, Cecilus’s limbs were short, and his resuscitated memories were still only fragments of what had been lying dormant.

He did not know how to return his shrunken body to its original form. The memory had ended before he could recall what concrete method Chisha had employed, and with that, the objective of the remembrance had been fulfilled.

There was a phenomenon where people faced with death would search through their memories for a way to break the deadlock. What had just happened was an unmistakable instance of that. Only, the answer of how to break through the deadlock was different to what he had anticipated.

At the end of that recollection, Cecilus had thought that he would learn the method of how to return his body to that of an adult. But, it had not been so. That it had not been so, delighted him.

People faced with death would search through their memories for a way to break the deadlock.

He had seen that face of Chisha’s, and heard his request— For Cecilus Segmunt, that was more than enough of a basis to believe that he could defy death.

Cecilus: “In the first place, there’s no way I’d lose.”

He had confidence and pride in plenty, however, that was not to say that his strength was his sole basis for this.

By Cecilus’s own philosophy, there was an answer as to why he would not lose against Arakiya here.

The reason was because in this place—

Cecilus: “—Boss isn’t present. If I happened to die here, he’d break our promise without batting an eyelid, and come rushing over.”

Spilling that out, Cecilus gave a bitter smile with his blood-stained good looks.

That was the kind of boy Natsuki Schwartz was. Having departed from the Gladiator Island, in the midst of the eastward expedition of the Pleiades Battalion, Cecilus and Schwartz had exchanged a promise under the moon.

That was, Schwartz would not use the power of his miraculous “True Sight” to save Cecilus.

It was a promise formed with mutual respect for one another, but Cecilus knew. If push came to shove, Schwartz would break his promise without batting an eye. Cecilus himself would do so too. He was the same type as Schwartz.

That was why, he knew.

Were he to see Cecilus die with his “True Sight”, Schwartz would have come rushing here no matter what.

That had not happened. To put it in other words, that was faith from Schwartz.

And, that same thing was something that Cecilus directed towards Schwartz.

Cecilus: “———”

Towards Cecilus, who had gained an illogical conviction, six belts of light furiously flickered in approach.

While already airborne, yielding a subsequent movement would be difficult, and thus Cecilus would not be able to dodge. But, even if he did not dodge,

there was something he could do. That, was the trump card he had brought back from the momentary daydream.

—In Cecilus's hand, having lost the *dao*, the hilt of another blade was gripped.

Cecilus: “—Masayume.”

Its inscription called out, the pattern on the blade of the Enchanted Sword shook like a rippling wave. It was a blade belonging to Cecilus Segmunt which possessed incredible power, the Dream Sword Masayume.

Much to the lament of Rowan, who was unaware of its whereabouts, it was a supernatural sword permitted to cut things beyond the logic of this world, in a similar manner to the Fiend Sword Murasame.

It had been lost together with Cecilus's memories, so no wonder everybody had racked their brains over its whereabouts.

The Yang Sword Vollachia used the sky as its sheath. Thus, the Dream Sword Masayume used dreams as its sheath— Ergo, Cecilus had borrowed Masayume from the waist of “Cecilus” within the daydream.

As Masayume pulsed within his hand, it recognized the short Cecilus as its owner. Things would not have gone this easily with Murasame. He was thankful for this fortuitous encounter here.

With his gratitude received, the blade flashed— the six approaching belts of light were slain, and conquered.

Cecilus: “I'm aiming for—”

Arakiya— the center of her chest, at the large mass of power dwelling therein.

He would exorcize it. Never had he done so before. But, believing that he could, he would bring it to fruition. Such power existed within Cecilus. Masayume was reliable. Al was also present as an eyewitness. He would not fail, thus he fired himself up.

What remained——

Cecilus: “Dreams are meant to be seen when you’re awake, they’re meant to enchant you, Anya.”

As he spoke so, Cecilus looked into Arakiya’s eyes during his stretched-out super speed. With tears of blood flowing from her left eye bereft of light, the emotions on the beautiful girl’s face were harder to read than usual.

Within her deeply emotional right eye, which he had grown accustomed to seeing, a visible blue flame had emerged——

Cecilus: “——The person whom you treasure dearly, is someone who treasures you dearly too.”

Tenderly spinning those words, a flash unleashed by Thunder put an end to her nightmare.

In a manner as if to prove that dreams were something that the leading actor, standing atop the stage, would enchant the audience with.

——That was the answer given by Cecilus Segmunt, in response to the heroine’s entreaty.





Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.ll2o ([source](#))

# Arc 8 Chapter 58 - Proof of Existence

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 7 “Sphinx”, Parts 1-3

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial  
Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by  
Kazatashi, Beloved, Goldkills, Translation checked by Garcar, Tanaka, Ice) —  
[Complete](#)

—Going behind a guard who was keeping watch, he struck the pressure points that ran along the central meridian of their body.

Guard: “———”

That instant, the posture of the opponent was broken, and they collapsed without raising their voice. The reason why he had propped up the body as it collapsed was not out of consideration, but rather because it would have caused problems had the sound of armor striking the ground rung out.

???: “Good grief, it’s darn tirin’ for an old fella like me ta carry a large man with a single hand— Even tho’ their insides are hollow, they got some firm weight ta ‘em which makes it annoyin’.”

Saying that, the white-haired, white-eyebrowed old man— Olbart, carried the collapsed enemy with his lone left arm, using the tips of his toes to give a light strike to the defensive wall beside. As he did so, the surface of the wall rippled as if it were water, and stuffing the enemy’s body inside, it was swallowed, after which the wall’s surface filled back in.

Fortunately, it seemed like the undead were able to go without breathing, so he could bury them in the walls to settle things without having to kill.

As their hearts did not beat, neither did blood flow. Even supposing he did kill them, sweeping the fragments away with a broom would do the trick; fortunately, dealing with the cleanup was easy.

Olbart: “But, everythin’ aside from that aspect ain’t good in the slightest. When ya kill ‘em, there’re some that got the damn nerve ta get up right after they die, so recklessly killin’ ‘em’ll just make it more troublesome.”

Among the special traits of the opposing undead, the thing Olbart viewed as the most dangerous was the revival of defeated enemies.

When faced with enemies that would continue to be resurrected, no matter how many times they were defeated, even Imperial Soldiers, overflowing with fighting spirit, would fall into despondency— Olbart’s reason was nothing of the like, his issue was that the undead that were killed and resurrected would inherit the memories from before they were killed, rather.

Through such means, the opponent could use replaceable lives in exchange for instantaneous sharing of all sorts of information.

Olbart, the head honcho of the *shinobi*, was more than aware of how important it was to have accurate and recent information within warfare. It was to the extent that the enemies Olbart had killed the most within his lifetime were either scouts or messengers.

Killing was done to prevent the transmission of information, in the first place. So the fact that there was the danger that information would be transmitted even if they were killed, was nothing short of absurd.

Olbart: “Well, *shinobi* techniques’ve also got somethin’ that makes ya self-destruct upon death, sendin’ information through the color of its smoke, so we’re in the same boat, the same boat, I tell ya.”



Even though angering others was the principal domain of the *shinobi*, with this, they would surely go out of business.

Through the investigation carried out amidst the combat to push back the enemy forces during the evacuation from the Imperial Capital, it had been discovered that the undead possessed a vital point known as a “Corebug”, and that seemed to be the source of their resurrection. There were also some undead that could regenerate even if their heads were sent flying, but that would occur because their Corebug had not been destroyed.

In the end, the source of the Corebugs’ power was the Great Spirit known as the Stone, so even if the undead were fully killed down to their Corebugs, it would cause Muspel to lose strength, making it unable to support the vast lands of the Empire.

Therefore, Olbart was thoroughly putting in effort to enforce the policy of “not killing” the undead.

By precisely striking the weak spots of the human body that were known as pressure points, the body could be robbed of its freedom, becoming powerless like the undead that had been buried in the wall earlier. In that manner, the undead stuffed into the wall by Olbart numbered about fifty—he was relieved that their pressure points still functioned as weak spots, even though the construction and interior of their bodies were a sham.

But then again, considering the enormous numbers of undead, this resistance was naught more than meager.

Olbart: “For the imperial citizens, who specialize in the subject of killin’ or bein’ killed, ain’t it awfully harsh ta tell ‘em not ta die and not ta kill?”

That was an opinion that the allied troops from the Kingdom and the City-States, who were engaged in a cooperative relationship in order to save the

Empire, would frown upon were they to hear it, but it was an opinion that relatively many of the Empire's peoples would likely agree with.

As a result, with the enemy spearheading the Great Disaster being the worst possible matchup for the Vollachian Empire, they were engaged in a defensive battle with the absolute condition of not killing— No, it was not “as a result”.

Olbart: “It’s a bad habit of old folk ta always imagine the worst. An opponent who’s got the nerve ta use all the blood the soil of the Empire’s been soaked on ’til now... They’re totally targetin’ our weakness.”

A battlefield where soldiers of yore were revived one after another, it was an environment that had come into being due to the fact that Vollachia was a place where conflict never petered out.

Considering that it likely would not have amounted to such a disaster in any of the other countries even under the same conditions, the enemy had hence taken the most suitable measures in order to conquer Vollachia.

That was why, this side also had to understand that this was a board that must not be misread.

Olbart: “———”

Narrowing the eyes concealed by his white eyebrows, Olbart held his breath in the Crystal Palace, which he was in the midst of infiltrating by his lonesome.

Invisibility that eliminated one’s presence as much as possible, it was something that lived up to the name of the *shinobi*’s head honcho— having his presence be seized was a must-not, and that included that he’d had to go unnoticed while picking off the guards he did.

Were his presence to be detected, thereby including him as a target of the Curse of Thorns, Olbart would be made powerless. He was weak to pain. The mere thought of thorns stabbing into his heart made him want to toss in his sleep.

In order to avoid that, Olbart had been taking the utmost care in his movements.

—Invading the Imperial Capital with a select few, they would quickly defeat the ringleader of the enemy.

This was the plan being employed in the final stage of the war against the Great Disaster, and while it was a given for Vincent, Olbart also deemed it as the best possible method without any objections.

The numbers of the undead exceeded the count of Imperial Soldiers, and even if they engaged in a war of attrition, the lifeforce of the Stone would be depleted, and the lifespan of the Empire would diminish; that was how thoroughly they had been backed into a corner.

The fact that they had no choice but to hasten to a conclusion, was something that was utterly obvious to anybody's eyes.

Olbart: "Naturally, the opponent's also gonna be anticipatin' that."

However, if no other option existed, then there would be no choice but to take that one, even supposing opponent was indeed aware. What remained was how many things they had in their hand, of which their tactics were already exposed, that could defy their opponent's expectations.

Therefore, the select few were divided even further, and several decoys to attract the enemy's attention had been prepared.

While those decoys were active, Olbart only had to fulfill the duties assigned to him.

—Olbart's role was to infiltrate the Crystal Palace, and bring back intelligence regarding the uncertain interior of the Palace.

Of especially high importance were the whereabouts of the ringleader of the Great Disaster, the one known as Sphinx, and the liberation of the Steelman, Moguro Hagane, whose movements had likely been sealed within the Palace. Additionally, in the case he were to possess some leeway, there was the retrieval of Cecilus's beloved *katanas*, the Dream Sword and the Fiend Sword.

Olbart: "Tho', I prolly won't be able ta find Ceci's *katanas*. The Fiend Sword tends ta run away, and I ain't got any way of knowin' where the Dream Sword's been stored."

Cecilus was always eager to babble on about anything, but even though he would talk about how incredible his beloved *katanas* were, he was not so foolish as to blather on about their special qualities. He would probably give an answer if questioned, but to inquire about an opponent's hand was tantamount to inviting suspicion that one had a reason to do so.

Olbart had not been so foolish as to carelessly provoke Cecilus.

Anyhow, due to the improbability, Olbart put off the retrieval of the *katanas* for later.

Ideally, he would grasp Sphinx's location, and secure her body. If he could do so, then through the power of that commendable boy who, though in a shrunken state, did not want to return to normal— Schwartz, and the girl he brought along, then the undead could be entirely wiped out, down to their souls.

Being able to implement that would be the most desirable conclusion in this battle against the Great Disaster.

However, that would not be an easy feat.

Olbart: “—Good grief, this one’s another dead end.”

Contrary to his desire for a swift conclusion, Olbart’s feet often came to a halt.

Being able to perfectly grasp a scene simply by looking at a map, and absolutely never forgetting a location upon a single visit, were fundamental skills of the *shinobi*, and for Olbart, the Crystal Palace was a place of work that he visited frequently.

In spite of that, the reason why Olbart’s search was not progressing favorably was because the interior of the Crystal Palace, which he ought to have been familiar with, had been completely reshaped from that which Olbart knew.

Olbart: “Even tho’ this kinda perplexity’s originally meant ta be our speciality.”

Though Olbart did not think there was any value in it, the Crystal Palace was a building known for being the world’s most beautiful castle. Due to the decisive battle for the Imperial Capital, a part of its wall had been destroyed, but even so, there was no large impact had been done to its outward appearance when viewed from a distance.

However, the interior of the Palace was an incredibly different story.

Various aspects such as the construction of passageways, the positioning of rooms, and the size of doors had been altered, and it had been transformed into an entirely different palace, such that even Vincent, who had once lived here in the Crystal Palace, would become lost.

The lack of change to its exterior was guaranteed to bewilder any who would charge in without a plan.



Even if he returned with just this information, there would have been more than enough meaning in Olbart's preceding infiltration. Or perhaps Schwartz, who was serving the role of strategist, had already hypothesized this situation.

If that were the case, his power of insight was promising, but at the same time, it was a future threat.

There were none who knew how the Kingdom and the City-States, which were currently in a cooperative relationship with the Empire, would deal with the latter after the Great Disaster of the undead was stopped.

For when that time would come about, Chisha would no longer be by Vincent's side.

Olbart: "—However, ya really went n' pulled that off, Chesshy."

The flames of war, the winds of blood, and the atmosphere of Death that was persistently fragrant from both the living and the dead.

For those reasons, his heart had naught the time to mourn, but Olbart appraised Chisha for having stolen his technique through his "ability", and furthermore, for having replaced Vincent without Olbart having noticed.

Olbart enjoyed stealing the techniques of others, but he was not fond of being stolen from himself.

After all, growth was a privilege of the young. Even if they did not steal, there were unlimited possibilities for what they could produce by their own hands. Conversely, the old had no such room for growth. That was why Olbart was not fond of being stolen from.

What would happen if, instead of producing something new, young people stole, and then yearned for more?

Would it not be that this world would cease to produce new things, thereby causing Olbart to run out of things to steal?

Olbart: “That bastard Chesshy got some damn nerve ta act so cunningly— Tho’ it ain’t like I don’t understand how he was feelin’.”

Within a limited frame of time, Chisha had desired the best possible outcome.

In other words, Chisha and Olbart had possessed the same choice. Olbart was an old man who was nearing the end of his rope, and Chisha was a dead soldier who had established an opportunity to meet the end of his rope before long.

Hence, it was a matter of not having selected the means that would have increased the cards in one’s hand.

Having entered the bout with limited cards in his hand, Chisha had seized victory in this situation.

—This situation, in which Vincent had been kept alive, and Olbart had been enlisted as an ally.

Olbart: “———”

—Olbart Dunkelkenn had an ambition.

It was the final goal of his life, to leave his name in the history of the Empire, in a form with which none other could compare; to engrave, to prove that the being known as himself had indeed existed as an individual life.

Olbart had been received as a *shinobi*, had been raised as a *shinobi*, had lived as a *shinobi*.

In a role where many would use and discard their lives, where it was natural to be unable to achieve a long life, Olbart had lived to a point where the age of one-hundred was now close at hand. But, in his long life as an imperial citizen, as a *shinobi*, Olbart had spent the greater part of his days fulfilling the objectives of others.

That could have been called the destiny of the *shinobi* way of life, but Olbart had lived exceptionally long among the *shinobi*— In that case, then it would have also been fine for his end to be unbecoming of a *shinobi*.

If it was typical for a *shinobi* to silently disappear into the darkness of history without leaving their name behind, then would it not be fine for Olbart to purposely aim for the complete opposite of that?

Therefore, Olbart had vigilantly awaited such an opportunity.

In order to bloom at the end of his life, he had thought that the most effective measure would have been to take the head of the Wise Emperor, Vincent Vollachia, but—

Olbart: “If the opponent happens to be ruin itself, then there ain’t no point in betrayal.”

The opponent was the Great Disaster— the hosts of undead, and because their objective was the total annihilation of the Vollachian Empire, Olbart’s scheme was nothing more than a transient, brittle thing that would crumble away.

Olbart wanted to leave his name in the history of the Empire.

If that Empire were to be destroyed, then no matter what, Olbart’s wish would not be granted. Therefore, Olbart had to take off his hat to Chisha’s acting, which had not hastened him until the current situation.

Olbart: “Tho’ after these hijinks’re done and settled, it’d be nice if there’s still room for myself ta do somethin’. My lifespan’s gonna imprudently run out before I know it.”

After the war, when the exhausted Empire would be in the midst of reconstruction, he would augustly murder the Emperor before the Kingdom or the City-States could make a move—— it was not as though he did not have such thoughts, but he would not feel comfortable doing so, since he could not help but feel like he would be taking advantage of the Great Disaster.

Regrettably, unable to find an ideal opportunity, Olbart concealed his ambition, as it would have been overly optimistic so long as the Great Disaster remained undefeated, and he faced forward—— Ahead of Olbart’s vision was the large door that would have connected to the place that was the audience chamber in the original palace.

Olbart: “———”

Within Olbart’s mind, as he remained silent, there were two conflicting senses that arose.

The sensation that he ought not go beyond this door, and the sensation that he ought to go beyond this door—— the former was rooted in his instincts, while the latter was based on his intuition developed over his long time as a *shinobi*.

Normally, Olbart’s judgment would not have budged from the former option. However, Olbart’s intuition was speaking to him. Beyond this door, was undoubtedly the meaning in Olbart’s infiltration.

He did not know whether it was Sphinx, Moguro, the *katanas*, or something entirely different, but——

Olbart: “...Havin’ stretched out my years, an old man without much time left can’t die without gettin’ the opportunity ta overthrow the state, good grief.”

Spilling that out in a hoarse voice, Olbart decided on whether he would advance or retreat.

If this was the location of the audience chamber, it should have been possible for him to examine its state through the hole in the wall without having to go through the door; so going through the window of the corridor, Olbart traveled along the outer wall to arrive at his destination.

Without having opened the door, he peered into the room—

Olbart: “—Oioi, not even I’d go this far.”

Within the completely altered hall, upon seeing the fruit of the Witch’s labor, the head honcho of the *shinobi*, known as the Vicious Old Man, muttered so, unable to hide his discomfort.



—The soul of that *thing*, had already lost sight of its original way of being, having been ripped to shreds.

Called down to the surface via unorthodox means, pitiful souls were held prisoner, made to kneel in order to destroy the Empire that they ought to be subjects of; such was the situation that the undead had been placed in.

More or less, a process had been applied to alter the mental structure of the undead to differ from what it was during their lifetime. If not for that, the resurrected dead would likely not all assist in the destruction of the Empire.

The degree to which that process had been applied varied from case-to-case, but there was a danger that, inverse to the large load being imposed upon the original form and nature in order to make them loyal to orders, they would become unable to perform at their original strength.

Therefore, it was customary for the caster to want to lighten the load in proportion to how strong any given individual was during their lifetime.

In reality, capable individuals such as the Emperor of the Briar and the Magical Sharpshooter would experience a considerable decline in strength due to the load on their minds, so the Witch had shifted gears to allow them some of their free will in order to maintain their strength.

Were she to have made these powerful individuals into subservient puppets, they would likely be exposed to the disgrace of being unable to display even half of their true strength.

In any case, excluding such exceptionally strong individuals, and Lamia Godwin, who had displayed the will to take initiative in cooperating with the Witch, the souls of the undead were cruelly being toyed with.

During their lifetime, no matter what they might have wished for, no matter how noble of a warrior they might have been, no matter what it was that they had cherished, they were all being used in a way that trampled over all of that.

Thus, they were forced to move as the vanguard of the disaster that was bringing destruction to the Empire.

That *thing*, too, was no exception amongst them.

Dispossessed of their free will, becoming a being used and discarded as tools for the sake of battle, their soul would be called down again even were they to repeatedly taste Death, their earthen vessels revived with a new anchor.

Alas, that *thing* perfectly aligned with the conditions the Witch had established for undead fabrication.

With moderately high competency, being more than a little obsessed with battle, without any impediment to its strength upon being made into a subservient puppet, it had vehement regret and hatred scorched into it during its final moments——

For that reason, it ferociously rampaged in a ceaseless discharge of fury.

Torn to shreds, in a form that stretched out its soul as it was in the process of losing its original form, having forgotten that its body was ever in a humanoid form, it had been transformed into a repulsive, grotesque form.

Even if its appearance had completely changed, with large, long arms, an exceedingly increased number of legs, and a flimsy torso of skin and bone, it could not escape the situation of being used by the Witch.

Even after being killed over and over, its soul would stretch larger, and it would be revived as another monster.

In order to put an end to that, there was no choice but to fulfill the Witch's desires. To grant the Witch's wish, there was no choice but to scorch the Empire to naught as a harbinger of the Great Disaster.

At present, having transformed into an unthinkable appearance, that was the wish of that *thing*. That was its only desire.

That was its only, that was its, that was, that, desire was, that was its only——

???: “——The Giant Eye, Izmail.”

——. ———. —————.

Suddenly, mixed into the sounds of its eerie roar and the fierce battle, that had been audible.

Even though there ought to be many other sounds plunging into its ears, which were no longer in the form of ears, that voice alone had been heard in an awfully clear, strangely firm, and oddly proper manner.

Just what sort of meaning that held, that *thing* did not know.

It did not——

???: “Izmail!”

???: “E ea.”

Doubt yielded stagnation in its thoughts, and its many arms and legs that were meant to kill all ceased their movement. As if weaving through that opening, a hand reached out, and touching its thin torso, something was stolen away.

It felt as if something had slipped out.

It was not clear if that had been something important, or if it had been something large. But, the moment that had slipped out, the violent impulses that had filled its body faded away in one fell swoop.

Hollow, it was hollow. Its insides, had become hollow.

The many reasons to rampage that had been forcibly stuffed into it from outside all flowed back out, and as its interior became hollow, the only thing that remained was what had been there since the outset.

That was, its reason for fighting. That could even be called aspiration or ambition.

Its reason for hastily joining the battle, had been for the sake of fighting. The reason it had fought had been in order to leave its name in history. The



purpose of that had been for itself to prove that “itself”, the pride of its clan, had existed for certain.

The being known as itself, the Giant Eye, Izmail, the purpose of that——

Izmail: “Ahhh, has it been granted...”

Within the golden iris that loomed in a single large black eyeball, the face of that man was clearly reflected.

Those handsome features of black hair and almond eyes, without even the slightest waver in the face of a blade that closed in on his life, imposingly stared at him, and called out to the deformed Izmail.

The apex of the Vollachian Empire, had recognized Izmail.

That was——

Izmail: “——It is the honor of a Sword Wolf, Your Excellency the Emperor.”



A blow from the arm adjoined to a battleaxe was held off by Jamal, while the freedom to move about the streets, leveraging the mobility of their multiplied limbs, was restricted by Subaru and Beatrice via the use of magic.

Meanwhile, the many attacks carrying lethal power that were being unleashed were forcibly shot down by the leaping and bouncing Spica, narrowly preventing her companions from injury.

And then——

Vincent: “——The Giant Eye, Izmail.”

With his sharp gaze fixed on the grotesquely transformed undead, Abel called out his name.

For a moment, Subaru had felt doubtful, but he had decided at the outset that if Abel were to invoke the name of an undead in the Imperial Capital, he would believe it wholeheartedly. In fact, not even once thus far had Abel made a mistake in naming the undead.

Be that as it may—

Subaru: “Izmail!”

Spica: “E ea.”

In front of their linked hands, Spica thrust forth, swinging around, slamming her palm into the region that seemed to be the chest of the grotesque being called Izmail.

Star Eating, which was neither a punch nor a strike, was invoked, and Subaru and the others held their breath.

Provided the conditions were met, even if his form had deviated from being human, he should meet the same end as the other undead.

As expected, in front of Subaru and the others who were watching with bated breath, Izmail’s huge body slowly shook, and he stared at Abel with his giant, globular golden eye.

And then—

Izmail: “—Ah.”

Leaving final words behind in a soundless voice, all at once, his grotesque, hulking body crumbled to dust.

Jamal: “Ahh, fuck! Unbelievable! What the hell was that monster just now!”

Vincent: “A valiant warrior of the Cyclops Tribe, Izmail, the one called the Giant Eye. It is exactly as I called out at the end.”

Jamal: “The Cyclops Tribe, it ain’t just that they got a single eyeball huh, they gotta be such monsters as well, eh... Oh, pardon me for the tone.”

With the fight against the undead having concluded, Jamal grumbled as he wiped the blood and sweat off of his chin.

The remark from the man, regretful of the coarse language he had used, forgetting the person he was addressing was Abel, was off-the-mark.

The person named Izmail, had not possessed such an appearance in the beginning.

Subaru: “Beako.”

Beatrice: “I know, in fact. That person is a victim of the Sacrament of the Immortal King, I suppose. Because of having been resurrected over and over again, he wasn’t in a proper state, in fact.”

Spica: “Uu, au...”

Beatrice gave a curt jerk of her chin, and Spica looked down at her own palms with a downcast expression. While liberally stroking Spica’s head, Subaru inhaled deeply.

He had also encountered Izmail while escaping with Rem and Flop during the decisive battle for the Imperial Capital, but the change in his appearance was so gruesome that it was difficult to look at.

Perhaps because he had been blown up and killed in the dust explosion, or because he had been resurrected again after that death, he had kept getting more and more deformed.

But, even that never-ending hell was sure to have ceased with Spica's Star Eating.

Subaru: "Still, you were able to know who the person was despite them looking like that."

Vincent: "Upon being resurrected as an undead, the countenance is affected to some extent. That being the case, the characteristics inherent in each become essential in distinguishing them. That person was an easy-to-understand type."

Subaru: "Easy-to-understand, huh..."

Only vestiges of a human form had remained; because Subaru had already seen them lose their humanoid form and transform into that grotesque appearance, he could match it with the enemy he had encountered in the midst of the evacuation, but that was not the case for Abel.

Despite that, to be able to make such accurate guesses, rather than having a monstrous memory, it would be more fitting to suspect some kind of foul play.

Vincent: "It is only natural to be cognizant of the powerful beings in the realm. Whether they become enemies or allies, it is always preferable to have a multitude of bases for decision-making."

However, the words that followed from Abel were not about simply discerning based on physical characteristics, but rather on his evaluation of other aspects of his opponent.

Subaru: "———"

Upon hearing that, Subaru recalled Izmail's final moments just before turning to dust.

Although he had hardly uttered anything that resembled words, with their meaning undecipherable, it seemed to carry not resentment or bitterness, but rather a solemn emotion.

Perhaps it was reverence toward the Emperor, who had correctly identified his name.

Either way—

Subaru: “—Hk, things are getting intense here.”

Subaru murmured, gazing up at the sky, where the incessant rumbling of thunder could be heard.

In Subaru’s field of vision, amidst the cloud-covered sky, he could see mountains of ice breaking through, falling towards the Crystal Palace—they were of Emilia’s creation, which Roswaal had purposed for tactical use.

In the distant sky, were swirling clouds turned into ominous weapons; from another direction, were thunderous roars reverberating; and being minced by the serene strike of a sword, the cityscape’s destruction was visible.

At each bastion, it was evident that Subaru’s instructed conditions were being upheld, with each engaging in fierce battles.

Beatrice: “That blasted Roswaal is putting on quite a show, I suppose. He’s really letting his enthusiasm show too much, in fact.”

Subaru: “When I see that, it reminds me that he’s a pretty dangerous guy. Olbart-san is sneaking into the castle; he won’t crush him, will he?”

Beatrice: “If there’s a need to crush it, then he will, I suppose. That’s the kind of man he is, in fact.”

With a sound akin to the sky splitting, the shattered mountains of ice scattered countless sparkles into the sky.

Roswaal, alongside Medium, confronted the flying dragon rider enemy—one of the most challenging adversaries to deal with, so there was no choice but to trust in Roswaal's victory.

Of course, the existence of the Curse of Thorns and the Cloud Dragon also posed insurmountable threats.

Subaru: "All that's left now is whether Emilia-tan and Tanza can pull through..."

In the midst of the situation in the Imperial Capital, which went beyond being described as fierce battles, Subaru worried about Emilia and Tanza, whose outcomes remained uncertain among the companions he had dispatched throughout the city.

Currently, he believed that he had allocated his forces optimally, but he hadn't clearly determined Emilia's placement, making it somewhat ambiguous. However, given the role she had been entrusted with, getting her to work together with Tanza ought to have been the correct decision.

Subaru: "To be honest, when Izmail showed up, I thought we were in big trouble, but..."

The fact that they had managed to restrain the transformed Izmail on their own, without Emilia as part of their forces, was undoubtedly due to the concerted efforts of everyone.

In particular, Jamal's contribution had been significant, and his performance improved visibly with each passing moment. Perhaps he was leveling up at an incredible pace under such dire circumstances.

That in itself was a welcome development. Jamal was extremely reliable, provided the mental reluctance he had toward his inclusion were to be ignored.

Vincent: “Jamal Aurélie, are you able to proceed?”

Jamal: “Yes! If Your Excellency commands it, I can take on a hundred or even two-hundred more.”

Vincent: “So it seems. You all, too, should strive for everything you have.”

Subaru: “Dammit, acting all high and mighty just because you’re doing a job that no one else can.”

Swearing at Abel, who did not participate in the fight and was the only one who looked cool, Subaru then observed Beatrice and Spica.

It was a series of tightrope walks, but battling the undead was always an all-out war of the forces they had against them. As long as the expectation was to proceed with caution, it would not be wise to move forward with someone falling behind.

Beatrice: “*Mondai nai*<sup>32</sup> from Betty, I suppose.”

Spica: “Aau!”

In response to Subaru’s glance of confirmation, the two nodded back resolutely. At this rate, Subaru was perhaps the one they ought to be most concerned about in physical terms.

However, since Subaru was still connected to the Pleiades Battalion, it was clear that Abel was the one to be most concerned about regarding physical safety.

In any case——

Subaru: “The state of the battles should be changing soon, and if Halibel-san is doing his part, we should have a way to get closer to the Crystal Palace. And from there——”

He would have liked to acquire information on the other battlefields, and have material to consider for this loop as well as for how would future events unfold.

And just as he was about to call out to his companions, it happened.

???: “——I see. This is a strange phenomenon. Observation: Required.”

Suddenly, everyone turned around at the sound of a voice from outside their awareness.

Subaru’s eyes widened, and there was a third party who had not been present prior—— a short, pale-skinned undead figure crouched down, checking the dust on the ground with their fingers.

A familiar undead with pink hair was playing with the dust of the destroyed, “Star Eaten” Izmail——

Subaru: “——Hk, you.”

???: “From what it would appear, you have not directly interfered with the bug at the nucleus. The bug has lost its parasitic target and died... or lost its soul? The deprivation, hijacking, and reclamation... are very interesting.”

The one to have stated so, licking the dust that adhered to their fingertips with their tongue as a confirmation, was a being that looked exactly like one of Subaru’s companion’s relatives, but whose eyes bore no semblance of warmth—— Sphinx.

The mastermind of the Great Disaster, the very goal of this final battle, emerged here.



Subaru: “———”

At the sight of her imposing arrival, Subaru’s consciousness momentarily went blank.

The presence of the Curse of Thorns and the Magical Sharpshooter made it difficult for Subaru and his companions, with their trump card, Spica, to confront Sphinx, who was supposed to be in the Crystal Palace. Therefore, Olbart, who was good at stealth, had been sent in as a scout, and Subaru and his group hoped to continue hunting undead until the way was clear to reduce their enemy’s strength and gain an advantage in the coming decisive battle.

But to think that assumption could be so easily undermined——

Subaru: “——No.”

Subaru concealed his agitation by considering this a chance, and held Beatrice’s hand tightly. Glancing at Beatrice, Subaru then joined hands with a surprised Spica.

In front of him was Sphinx, the mastermind behind the Great Disaster.

And, like the other undead, she had been revived with the power of the Sacrament of the Immortal King, so Spica’s Star Eating should be effective against her. Being undead would give her the advantage of Escape by Death, but at the same time, she had one unavoidable weakness, Spica.

Take away that, the chance of resurrection, and the battle would be over.

It would be possible to end the fight without knowledge of the opponent’s intentions or aims. And so——

Subaru: “Sphin...”

Sphinx: “The requirement is a match between the Name and the «soul» of the target. It is surprising that you even made use of the Authority of Gluttony. Countermeasures: Required.”

Subaru: “—Hk.”

Sphinx’s quiet analysis crushed any preemptive action.

Due to the fact that Sphinx had just mentioned the Authority of Gluttony, and that she had even recognized Spica’s Star Eating at a glance, Subaru gasped.

Even though his intentions were seen through, he was forgetting the strength of the Authority, which, by simply hitting the target, would make her unable to escape.

Therefore, the price for it had to be paid.

Jamal: “—You idiot!”

And like that, a foul-mouthed voice had cut between Subaru and Sphinx, pushing him away.

Sphinx held up one slender finger, pointing its tip toward Subaru and his companions. Before the ray of white heat emitted from that fingertip could penetrate Subaru and Spica’s heads, a man jumped in.

Jamal’s sword was gouged out in the shape of the heat ray that he could not block, and it pierced through the torso of the daredevilish man; the fresh scent of scorched blood hit upon Subaru’s nostrils very, very strongly.



Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.ll2o ([source](#))

# Arc 8 Chapter 59 - Sphinx

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Chapter 7 “Sphinx”, Parts 4-9

Original Web Novel Chapter — [Complete](#)

Partial Human Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar), Partial Edited Machine Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Original by Kazatashi, Goldkills, Translation checked by Garcar) — [Complete](#)

—Sphinx was a failed result of the Witch of Greed’s research into immortality.

With the young girl who sacrificed herself to become the core for the creation of the miniature garden known as the Sanctuary— with Ryuzu Meyer’s body as the foundation, she was a replicant constructed with a Mana body using the same structure as a Spirit.

The Witch had thought that if a pre-existing soul could be adhered to the empty life of the replicant, pseudo-immortality by means of soul-duplication could thus be achieved.

However, this prospect easily crumbled before the fact that the size and form of the soul and the vessel of life individually differed.

The soul of the Witch of Greed, could not be contained within the replicant of Ryuzu Meyer.

The result born from this outright mishap, was the failure of the Witch of Greed, an existence that would mark the world with many misfortunes for years to come, Sphinx.

That being, bestowed the name of an impure monster, “Sphinx”, was about to be disposed of due to its unsuitability for its original purpose, but by a

twist of fate, it survived.

And, just like how many other artificial lives would do so, Sphinx also commenced work in order to fulfill the purpose of her creation.

The purpose for which the artificial Witch had been created—— in order to be perfected as the Witch of Greed, Sphinx would go on to pile up many calamities.



???: “——You idiot!”

And then, with blood pouring from his mouth as he cursed, Jamal fell to the ground.

The white light that had been fired was supposed to have pierced the heads of Subaru and the others. Because of that, Jamal had received a blow at a position around that of a child’s head as he protected them, but even so, it was still undoubtedly a serious wound that had pierced one side of his torso.

Subaru: “Jamal——!”

Sphinx: “The presumed target has escaped harm? Although, it falls into the scope of what is able to be handled.”

Having been pushed away and protected, was Subaru. Ignoring that reaction, Sphinx, the one responsible for that attack, was unconcerned with the fact that it had been unsuccessful.

Subaru gnashed his molars at the words of the leader of the undead who spoke in a calm and apathetic manner.

It would have been difficult for Jamal to continue fighting after having collapsed, not to mention that his life would be in danger if not treated

immediately.

Beatrice: “Subaru! Stay focused on what’s in front of you, in fact!”

Subaru: “—Hk.”

That instant, Beatrice called out in a sharp voice as she pulled Subaru’s arm.

Shifting his gaze away from Jamal at that call, Subaru looked at Sphinx. Likewise, Beatrice, Spica, and Abel also trained their gaze on her.

The three were on high alert, their attention focused on their enemy, Sphinx.

Jamal’s treatment would have to be postponed until later.

That was right. Absolutely, that was right.

But even so—

Sphinx: “I had thought you to be the foreign entity that would derail my plans, but perhaps I was mistaken?”

Even if he averted his gaze, Subaru was unable to remove his attention from the fallen Jamal, and looking at him, Sphinx tilted her head and spoke. Subaru’s mind fell into increasing disarray as he looked into those undead golden eyes.

Beatrice: “—Hk, let’s work together, I suppose, Spica!”

Spica: “Aau!”

Beatrice and Spica moved in unison in Subaru’s stead.

At Beatrice’s call, Spica, her long blonde hair fluttering, flew towards Sphinx. As Spica leaped, Beatrice unleashed amethyst crystal arrows to the

left, right, and rear of the stock-still Sphinx, blocking her escape route and providing cover.

As the coordination of the two blocked Sphinx on all sides, there was nothing she could do— such was not the case.

Sphinx: “El Jiwald.”

Contrary to the meagerness of the incantation, the effect of subsequent destruction was tremendous.

In response to the looming threat, Sphinx opened both of her empty hands, and, just as she had done when attacking Jamal earlier, she emitted white rays of heat, but this time from the fingers of her left and right hands.

However, this time, it was not a momentary beam of heat like that of a ray gun, but a sword of light that continued to be projected.

Wielding ten blades of light upon her ten fingers, blades with a long range, larger than around half a greatsword, Sphinx dominated the space around her with attacks that sliced in all directions.

Bathed in the white light, each one of Beatrice’s deployed purple arrows were sliced apart, and Spica, who had jumped forward towards her, was also assailed by their fury.

Spica: “—Uu!”

Just before the white light could cut Spica’s thin body in two, she disappeared from everyone’s vision.

She had teleported. Having activated her short-range teleport, Spica escaped from Sphinx’s line of fire, emerging on top of the ruins of a building that was just off the street.



And then, as if to follow Spica, Subaru and Beatrice, who were in the white lights' line of fire, were——

Vincent: “Fool, have you been befuddled by the sight of the enemy ringleader?”

With a bitter remark, holding down the heads of Subaru and Beatrice, forcing them to crouch down in place, was Abel.

Vincent: “We cannot expect Jamal Aurélie to get back up. Your contribution shall be essential.”

Beatrice: “N-no need to tell us that when we already know, in fact! You'll be rewarded for your quick thinking just now with our performance, so you better watch, I suppose!”

Beatrice, who had been violently saved, puffed out her cheeks and brushed Abel off as she stood back up.

Snorting his nose at Beatrice's stouthearted rebuttal, Abel, who had also gotten back up, then looked down at Subaru, who was still lying on the ground, and,

Vincent: “What is the matter? Your partner is in high spirits, but you, however——”

“Do not stand?”, such were the provocative words Abel had perhaps been trying to utter.

But, he quickly broke off his speech, as if sensing something was awry, and then frowned his shapely eyebrows.

Beatrice: “Subaru?”

Beatrice, beside him, blinked her eyes at the same strange occurrence as Abel.



Subaru: “———”

Subaru still remained lying face down at the feet of Beatrice and Abel. Spica, who had teleported to a distant position, also noticed, and bewilderment emerged in her eyes.

In the spur of the moment, the girls probably had no idea as to what had just happened.

Therefore, in the stead of Beatrice, Spica, and Abel, who could not comprehend the events unfolding before their eyes, it was ironically their enemy, Sphinx, who was the first to realize what had happened to Subaru.

Sphinx, with the pale face of an undead which had a considerable insufficiency to express emotions, but still with bewilderment and doubt in her eyes at having understood that,

Sphinx: “...For what reason, did you ingest poison? Explanation: Required.”

Vincent: “—Hk, YOU!”

Immediately after Sphinx’s question, Abel’s expression changed, and he hoisted Subaru up by the collar. It was a violent act, however, Subaru did not voice any complaints.

The reason was that Subaru had already broken the package of poison behind his molar, and he was at the height of suffering through the hellish agony that led to Death.

Beatrice: “NOOOO! SUBARU!? SUBARU!?”

Spica: “UAU—!?”

Upon seeing the figure of Subaru, convulsing as blood frothed at his mouth, Beatrice and Spica screamed.

Beatrice tried to cling to the trembling Subaru, but Abel pushed the girl away, inserted his finger in Subaru's mouth, and as he pulled out the packaged drug, his expression grew furious.

Vincent: "You, what is the meaning of this!? Have you lost your mind!?"

Subaru: "Bububu, bubububu..."

Vincent: "All that boasting about fighting against fate, yet this is what you do!?"

Abel's enraged voice, Beatrice's tearful cry, Spica's sorrowful voice as she desperately jumped back towards him, amidst the sense of loss of his whole body slowly melting, Subaru heard them all.

To the angered voice, to the crying voice, to the despairing voice, he could not answer with words.

Even so, there was sufficient meaning in this. It was a necessary measure— This was the best course of action.

In order, to arrive, at a future, in which, nobody, would die, this was, the best, the best best best best best, possible, method.

Subaru: "Bubu... bu."

Sphinx: "Explanation: Required."

With that information unable to be transmitted to anyone, with the Witch's question remaining unresolved, his breath ran out.

Natsuki Subaru's life came to an end— Again, just as it had already done so many times in this final battle.



—The first few years of Sphinx's journey, which ought to be called a quest, had been majorly difficult.

The body of Ryuzu Meyer, which had served as the basis of the replicant, lacked the aptitude for surviving in this harsh world; her life often came into jeopardy due to extremely bad weather, changes in temperature, and sometimes by Witchbeasts or malicious humans, and lacking the means to counteract that, there had been far too many deficiencies at the time this receptacle had been selected.

Since concepts such as growth and training were also meaningless for a Mana body, she could not even hope for things to improve.

Though it was possible to acquire knowledge and skills that were not dependent on the body, there would be many opportunities for her life to be threatened along the path to learning them, so those days had always been accompanied by danger.

In addition, the base model of Ryuzu Meyer was a half-elf, and since Sphinx had also inherited those physical features, she would often be exposed to persecution and odd looks.

However, she was hesitant to make any large alterations to the external features of the original form.

Those were the first things that had been given to Sphinx, and she feared that if she altered the preconditions too much, she would become unable to fulfill her own purpose of creation.

Therefore, Sphinx did not consider the idea of disguising herself to be acceptable, and instead sought a different way to survive.

As long as she could remain alive, there were times when she had even degraded herself to being a spectacle and a slave. And since the

appearance of Ryuzu Meyer was a refined one, there was also a time when she had been the servant of a lavish master.

Greedy to know things, greedy to learn things, Sphinx had made her abilities useful no matter where she was.

Once she understood just how good her memory was, utility value was born in a variety of situations. In the process of doing so, Sphinx realized that it was a way to protect herself.

In order to travel the world with a weak body, lacking the power to survive, it was best to create value for oneself, to offer it to those who sought it, and to gain their protection.

By doing so, Sphinx chose the means of continuing to live under the umbrella of others, until she was able to protect herself on her own.

Those days, lasted for approximately one-hundred and fifty years.



—What was the most common cause of death for Natsuki Subaru since being summoned to this other world?

Were he to be asked this question, Subaru would be able to confidently answer, “Suicide by poison”.

At the Crimson Lapis Castle of the Demon City of Chaosflame, he had experienced a considerable number of Deaths in the game of tag against Olbart, but so long as the cause of the death was not labeled “Olbart”, the ways he had died there were of various sorts.

Excluding exceptions like those eleven seconds of despair, the record for the most numerous was undoubtedly held by poison.

It was a terribly disgraceful thing to mention, but it could even be said that the person who had killed Subaru the most in this other world was Old Man Null, who had concocted the poison.

In any case, the poison that he had used so frequently during his lone struggle to escape the Gladiator Island Ginunhive with zero casualties— in order to form the Pleiades Battalion, still remained prepared within Subaru's mouth, even now.

Subaru: “—I'm gonna get everyone back home, safe and sound.”

That, was the absolute condition that Subaru had established as he took on this final battle for the Imperial Capital, and it was one on which he would not compromise.

Originally, he had carried that attitude and mindset even before he had been sent to the Empire and had had his body shrunk, but amidst his days in the Empire up until now, his resolve had been strengthened even further.

That was a large part of the reason for Subaru's rebellious spirit towards the Vollachian Empire, which was trying to impose the conclusion known as Death upon them by every means possible.

If the Empire forced Death upon them, he would reject it, no matter what it took.

For that purpose, he would do absolutely everything in his power.

No matter how many times, how many tens of times, how many hundreds of times it took, even if it meant he needed to go through the anguish of hell, no matter what.

Subaru: “—Gah, geuhh!!”

His vision flickering bright-red, Subaru's throat screamed in agony as if all of his blood, flesh, and bone, every individual blood vessel, and every single

cell in his body had been put through a blender.

But, the lethal pain that he had experienced right up to the moment of his death, as well as the cries and angry voices that had caused Subaru even more suffering than that pain, vanished into the beyond— This was Return by Death.

Return by Death had been activated via the suicide by poison, and Natsuki Subaru turned back the clock.

At that moment, Subaru was about to shift his state of awareness back to what ought to have been the scene right after he had washed his face at the final Imperial Soldier encampment before entering the Imperial Capital—

???: “—You idiot!”

Subaru: “———”

He felt the sensation of being shoved in the chest, and he heard the sound of cursing; Subaru was clearly being shown that the restart point for Return by Death had been updated.

???: “The presumed target has escaped harm? Although, it falls into the scope of what is able to be handled.”

Spilling blood as he cursed, Jamal collapsed, with the blade of the sword in his hand having had a round hole gouged into it. In the midst of this scene, the cold, indifferent voice of the perpetrator, Sphinx, analyzed the situation.

Both this scene and those words, were things that he had seen and heard only a few dozen seconds ago.

Beatrice: “Subaru! Stay focused on what’s in front of you, in fact!”

Subaru: “—Hk.”

Beatrice called out sharply to Subaru, whose thoughts were in disarray due to his understanding and grasp on the current reality.

Her voice shattered the contents of his head, and the shock from pain of the previous poisoning and the update of the restart point slipped away with an exhale. He adapted to the new situation before him.

The time to be dumbfounded, he had naught.

There was far too much that could be lost in that period.

—The checkpoint of Return by Death had been updated.

What this meant, was that within this decisive final battle for the Imperial Capital, which had now already begun, the members of the Rescue from Destruction Squad assigned to each bastion could no longer be rearranged.

As it was, he believed that the best possible personnel had been deployed to the best possible battlefields.

But, it was frustrating that he could not fully confirm the conditions that would cause the minimum damage. In particular, the fact that he had yet to verify the result of having paired Emilia and Tanza together, was a major psychological blow.

Of course, the safety of the other members was an inexhaustible source of his anxiety and worry, but—

Sphinx: “I had thought you to be the foreign entity that would derail my plans, but perhaps I was mistaken?”

As Sphinx tilted her head and posed a question, Subaru looked at the undead in front of him.

The building blocks he had assembled within his head until here, crumbled noisily.

The building blocks of thought that he had built up through trial and error was something that he had aimed to make far more perfect when viewed from a variety of angles. They crumbled away without leaving a trace—No, they were demolished.

Beside the building blocks that he had mentally built up, the Natsuki Subaru within his mind appeared, and violently tearing it down, he thoroughly destroyed it all until not a single part remained.

Until it became impossible to tell what the original form of those blocks were, until there would be nothing one could do about it even if it concerned them, he demolished, demolished, demolished, demoled, relentlessly demolished.

Then, he would completely forget about those building blocks, to which nothing more could possibly be done.

Only after doing so, could Natsuki Subaru finally set about a new sequence of trial and error.

Subaru: “—Not in the slightest.”

After a beat that felt to be long, as Subaru held both Beatrice and Spica’s hands, just like Abel as he narrowed his sable eyes, he stared down Sphinx as he gave his answer.

He had yet to discover a way to break through this deadlock. Nor did he know if his comrades were safe. Jamal still continued to bleed out.

His determination to successfully deal with all of that, had not altered in the slightest.

He would defeat the Witch, Sphinx, and put an end to this Great Disaster.



For that reason——

Subaru: “I, am the one who’s gonna derail your plans, the natural enemy of disaster.”



——Sphinx was now known as a Witch, but for the first few hundred years after her creation, she was not equipped with power appropriate for such a designation.

This, too, was a revelation that came about with the creation of Sphinx, but there was a correlation between “soul” and “receptacle”, and if dissonance existed between the two, it would serve as a significant flaw that stood in the way.

By nature, receptacles were optimized to match their souls.

In short, the techniques and abilities of the Witch of Greed could only be adequately wielded by the body of the Witch of Greed. As a being with the incomplete soul of the Witch of Greed filling the receptacle of Ryuzu Meyer, Sphinx had been hindered from fulfilling the purpose of her creation ever since the very moment of her genesis.

As a result, it had taken one-hundred and fifty years for Sphinx to attain power befitting her designation as a Witch.

For Sphinx, who harbored the flaw of discrepancy between receptacle and soul, things like how to walk, how to breathe, and even how to beat her heart had required her to exert effort akin to relearning it anew.

To become a mage, it would take her nearly one-hundred times longer than what it would take for someone of average ability.

Furthermore, in this era, for Sphinx to fulfill the purpose of her creation, there were far too many factors that stood as obstacles to her activities.

Being treated as a half-elf due to her physical features, she was used as a scapegoat for the grievances and resentments towards the epitome of Witches, the Witch of Envy.

Suspecting the existence of Sphinx, the product of the Witch of Greed's research, the person who claimed to be her disciple pursued her tenaciously.

While there were others as well, these were the two primary reasons that prevented her from staying in one place, forcing numerous setbacks in Sphinx's quest to fulfill the purpose of her creation.

At the end of those days, when she first succeeded in casting magic on her own, seeing the small flame which flickered at her fingertips, Sphinx recalled feeling immense disappointment.

—Was this the extent of magic that the one who was supposed to succeed the Witch of Greed could use?



???: “—You idiot!”

And, with blood spilling from his lips as he spat out curses, once again Jamal collapsed.

He had been pushed away by Jamal, and the moment he stepped back with Beatrice and Spica, who were holding his hands, Subaru confirmed the re-activation of Return by Death.

???: “The presumed target has escaped harm? Although, it falls into the scope of what is able to be handled.”

As she missed her target, Sphinx did not worry too much over the result differing from her expectation.

The objective of the Witch was to eliminate Subaru and his companions who were present here. In that sense, taking down Jamal, who was counted among their fighting strength, was deemed sufficient as the first strike. But—

???: “Subaru! Stay focused on what’s in front of you...”

Subaru: “Beatrice! Heal Jamal!”

Beatrice: “—Hk, understood, in fact!”

Anticipating Beatrice as she raised her voice, Subaru instructed her to heal Jamal. Hearing that, Beatrice’s eyes widened, and she immediately rushed to Jamal’s side.

Receiving Beatrice’s swift response, Subaru exchanged a glance with Spica, who was holding his opposite hand,

Subaru: “Spica, I’m counting on you!”

Spica: “Aa~, uu!”

Vigorously, Spica leaped towards Sphinx like a bouncing rubber ball.

In order to intercept Spica, Sphinx would extend ten beams of white light from her fingertips— Therefore, before that could happen, Subaru picked up the sword that Jamal had dropped, and hurled it at her.

Sphinx: “El Jiwald.”

Jamal’s sword, spinning vertically, was cut down by the rays of heat that Sphinx wielded.

The sword was sliced into six equal parts in midair by the swords of light, but it successfully bought enough time for Spica to teleport. Without this support, Spica's teleportation would not have made it in time.

Spica: "—Uu!"

As Spica gave a short howl, her figure teleported onto the debris at the side of the street.

And, as an arm violently reached out from behind him, pushing him down, the rays of heat that had originally aimed at both Spica and Subaru, who had been present behind her, had been dodged.

Having lunged forward, Abel's hand had grabbed him by the back of his head, and squeezed him down.

Vincent: "Fool, have you been befuddled by the sight of the enemy ringleader?"

Subaru: "You're an Emperor who's got no ideas aside from instigating stuff, regardless of what the *moyou*<sup>33</sup> is...!"

Placing his hands on the ground to avoid being crushed, Subaru quickly stood back up and complained about Abel's loathsome words.

Without saying anything in response to Subaru's rebuttal, as Abel maintained vigilance on Sphinx,

Vincent: "We cannot expect Jamal Aurélie to get back up. We ought to ignore him."

Subaru: "I don't agree in the slightest. He's got a little sister waiting for him to return home."

Vincent: "His bereaved family shall be granted sufficient compensation."

Subaru: “When one’s family member dies, nothing can be done to fill the hole left in their heart.”

With her hands over the wounded Jamal, Beatrice began to cast healing magic on his wounds.

Though it was frustrating, it was as Abel said. Even with the maximum effect of Beatrice’s skilled healing magic, the chances of Jamal returning to this fight were close to zero.

But, if they could save Jamal from the brink of death here, it would erase one of Subaru’s worries.

That held immense psychological significance in advancing the battle against Sphinx. Therefore—

Subaru: “Sphinx! I’m the one who’s gonna kill you!”

Sphinx: “———”

Sphinx, who had been glancing around to survey the situation, looked at Subaru upon his straightforward declaration.

If her attention were to shift away from Beatrice and the others towards Subaru, then it would be a success.

Subaru: “As an undead, you may think that you’ve overcome Death, but that’d be a huge misunderstanding and a downright lie. Nobody can live forever. There are no exceptions.”

Sphinx: “...That is certainly persuasive. After all, it is a fact that you are painting over my Sacrament of the Immortal King, and are meddling with the souls of the dead. I suppose that I would be no exception. Only...”

Subaru: “Only?”

Sphinx: “—No, there is no particular need to say it. Verification: Required.”

In response to Subaru’s daring provocation, Sphinx shook her head slowly. However, Subaru’s cheeks stiffened at Sphinx’s response.

The reason for that was not because there had been anything troublesome about Sphinx’s response.

It was because, while giving such a response, Sphinx slightly relaxed her lips, and smiled.

Subaru: “...Though, it’s not like Ryuzu-san was ever very expressive either.”

The fact that she had been resurrected as an undead likely contributed to it, but Sphinx’s smile gave an impression of being even more emotionally unexpressive than Ryuzu was— Subaru felt a cold sense of dread at that.

This feeling of dread, it seemed to stem from something more profound and fundamental than mere disgust at the being of a lovely appearance that had been turned into an undead.

And, it became even more clear with Sphinx’s next words.

Sphinx: “For one matter, there was Confirmation: Required— You over there, is it correct to believe that you are Emperor Vincent Vollachia?”

Next, it was Abel, at his side, to whom Sphinx turned the brunt of her words.

Subaru raised an eyebrow as the conversation’s focus unexpectedly shifted towards Abel. Given his position, it was natural for Abel to become the center of attention, but Subaru had not expected Sphinx to take notice of him here.

As someone lacking combat prowess, there was no reason to be wary of Abel, given the circumstances.

Sphinx: “Would that be alright? Response: Required.”

Vincent: “To a lowly terrorist like you, I have no intention of falsifying my name or my position— Without a shred of doubt, I am Vincent Vollachia, the Emperor of this Empire.”

Sphinx: “Your answer is appreciated. Now, there was another matter for which, Confirmation: Required.”

Despite Abel fixing his intimidating gaze upon her, Sphinx fearlessly continued to speak.

Perhaps because he was aware of the Great Disaster destroying the Empire, Subaru was at a loss as to how they would deal with Sphinx thereafter, who was confronting the Vollachian Emperor, Abel.

If they could prolong the conversation even slightly, it would provide Beatrice more time to heal Jamal’s injuries.

Recognizing the need to take advantage of this opportunity, Subaru refrained from interrupting their conversation.

Thereupon—

Vincent: “I shan’t promise any answer. Nevertheless, you may speak.”

Sphinx: “—Priscilla Barielle, or perhaps, Prisca Benedict.”

Subaru: “...Huh?”

The unexpected and sudden mention of Priscilla’s name caused Subaru to be taken aback.

Having participated in the decisive battle for the Imperial Capital, amidst the retreat that had begun due to the emergence of the Great Disaster, Priscilla's whereabouts had become unknown. As both her and Yorna had gone missing, their safety had been confirmed by ascertaining the continuation of the Soul Marriage Technique, which Priscilla could also use for some reason.

The Soul Marriage Technique that Yorna had cast upon Tanza and the residents of Chaosflame, and that Priscilla had cast upon Schult, were proof that they were still alive.

Of course, this was about Yorna, one of the Nine Divine Generals, and *that* Priscilla.

Given the circumstances of how Al had remained in the Imperial Capital for the purpose of rescuing her, he naturally assumed that she had survived tenaciously, but from the mouth of Sphinx, he did not expect her name to be brought up, especially in the form of a question to Abel.

Certainly, Priscilla had been involved in the fray since the Fortress City of Guaral, indicating that she had some connection to the Vollachian Empire and Abel. Due to the profound atmosphere, one might guess that there was trouble involving the husbands of Priscilla's past.

That was——

Subaru: “———”

At the mention of the relationship between Abel and Priscilla, which Subaru had not ascertained, he briefly glanced over at Abel, who had been mentioned, and Subaru noticed him narrowing his black eyes.

Subaru knew that this subtle reaction was actually proof of Abel's considerable agitation.



Though it was uncertain whether she had noticed this, Sphinx faced the silent Emperor——

Sphinx: “Is it correct to believe that you are her brother? Conviction: Required.”

Thus, she continued with a bombshell that betrayed all of Subaru’s expectations.



——Even though she had become capable of using magic by herself, there was no sudden change in Sphinx’s way of life.

By successfully invoking magic once, she was able to stabilize the method of utilizing the Gate of Ryuzu Meyer’s Mana-based body, and succeeded in reproducing the majority of magic grasped by the Witch of Greed’s soul.

However, that did not change the precarious position that Sphinx was placed in, and as always, she kept out of sight, continuing her days of not staying in a single place in order to avoid threats.

Only, compared to before, it had become easier to stay out of sight, and to escape threats.

Thanks to that, after one-hundred and fifty years had passed since her birth, Sphinx could finally get started on her investigation to replicate the Witch of Greed, the purpose of her creation.

——The first hundred years, she devoted her time to learning about the Witch of Greed.

Despite her foundation being that of the same soul as the Witch of Greed, there were far too many things that Sphinx had lost from the Witch of

Greed's soul, so the end goal she was supposed to be aiming for had become blurred.

So, in order to learn about the Witch of Greed who had already been dead for a long time, she set out on a journey to follow the legends and books in various places, but there was an organization known as the Witch Cult that was attempting to erase the Witches from history—that did not seem to be the original objective of its founding, but their activities served as hindrances, so results were very slow to come by.

As a result, changing the course of action, which had seen no progress over a hundred years, Sphinx searched for a different method.

—For the next hundred years, she aimed to fill in the gaps of the Witch of Greed within herself.

Due to the fact that she had gone around the world for a hundred years, and had made essentially no progress, Sphinx thought that perhaps the greatest clue to learning about the Witch of Greed was herself, who possessed the same soul.

Unsuccessful in replicating the Witch of Greed, Sphinx had been born an insufficient failure.

If she were to fill in the missing parts of her soul, restoring it to its original form, would that not then be fulfilling the purpose of her creation, to replicate the Witch of Greed?

—However, after spending a hundred years on this venture as well, it became apparent that it was infeasible, so she was at a standstill.

There was a development in her search for resources in order to learn about the Witch of Greed, which she had not abandoned, even if she had altered her course of action, and this development caused Sphinx to lose sight of the mountaintop she ought to be aiming for.

It seemed like the Witch of Greed was the possessor of an awfully complex human nature.

According to the resources she had discovered, the Witch of Greed exchanged words with many people, and granted them the knowledge or wisdom they desired, which, for better or for worse, often interfered with history.

On the other hand, there was also the figure of the Witch of Greed within Sphinx's vague memories, and this version avoided contact with people as much as possible, and seldom involved herself with the lives of others.

Those conflicting images of the Witch of Greed, birthed a hesitation in Sphinx's investigation.

By this point, over three-hundred years had already passed since the birth of Sphinx, and with a desire to progress her investigation in order to fulfill the purpose of her creation, Sphinx approached a decision once again.

And then, Sphinx decided— She would make a major alteration in the methods she had been using up until now.



—Abel and Priscilla were brother and sister.

It was an impactful fact brought about by Sphinx; however, it tied the seeds already within Subaru together in a way that made sense, and resolved many of the doubts he had harbored.

The fact that Priscilla had intervened in the Empire's civil war, and the fact that she knew several people from the Empire starting with Serena. Sometimes, she would have conversations that insinuated that she had a

significant history concerning the Empire, and she would occasionally act in a way that seemed like she had an unusual relationship with Abel.

And, just like Abel, she had the same bizarrely arrogant and self-important personality.

He fathomed Abel's self-importance as being due to the fact that he was Emperor.

So then, just why did Priscilla act so self-important? The solution to that answer was because she was also part of the Imperial Family.

—Nay. It was that she used to be part of the Imperial Family.

Subaru: “To decide on who becomes Emperor, wasn't there that crazy *kimari*<sup>34</sup> about all the siblings needing to fight to the death?”

Vincent: “I have no intention of debating the ethics of the structure of the Imperial Selection Ceremony with you.”

Subaru: “With or without a debate, the moment you started acting as Emperor and allowed Priscilla to live, I more-or-less figured out how you two siblings feel about that *kimari*.”

The more he heard about the blood relation between Abel and Priscilla, the more he could not help but accept it, but the more he learned about that current situation, the more he understood how impossible it was for the Empire.

Originally, the rule was that everyone in the Vollachian Empire who possessed the right to succeed the Imperial Throne would fight to the death, and until only one final person remained, the Emperor would not be decided— Abel was in violation of this rule.

In other words, Abel and Priscilla had conspired, and their current positions were ones that went against the Imperial Selection Ceremony.

Vincent: “We did not conspire. I made a decision, and I carried it out. With the death of Prisca, only Priscilla remained. That is the entirety of the matter.”

Subaru: “That’s all... Huh!? So doesn’t that mean Priscilla was in a position that absolutely should have never returned to the Empire!?”

Vincent: “Are you able to imagine the extent of worry I experienced at the Fortress City? To begin with, if we are on the subject, that has been the case ever since I heard about her becoming a candidate in the Kingdom’s Royal Selection.”

Subaru: “As unusual as this is, I actually sympathize with you on that...”

As an outsider, Subaru could not imagine this, but in order to have his sister Priscilla escape, Abel ought to have crossed an equally dangerous bridge. Surely even now, if this information were to be leaked outside, it would be a bombshell that would even threaten Abel’s position as Emperor.

For that sister, whom he had gone through so much trouble to let flee, to be nominated as a candidate for the next Monarch of the neighboring country in the short time he had taken his eyes off her, and then to come back and fight in the Empire’s civil war predicament as a foreign player, Abel must have been fighting against a hellish stomach ache behind the oni mask that almost seemed like a practical joke.

Anyhow—

Subaru: “Regardless of you two being siblings, the news that Sphinx has an interest in Priscilla is not bad at all. If Priscilla is being kept alive in the Crystal Palace, then that’s also corroborated by the Soul Marriage Technique.”

Vincent: “—Though, I judge that the relationship between Priscilla and this damned Witch cannot be declared an amiable one.”

Subaru: “You may not be aware of this, but you two siblings are pretty hard to get along with, so you better fix that. That’s even the case with your allies, so isn’t it a bit too excessive for your enemies?”

Vincent: “Such disrespect; even if I happen to overlook it, that shall not be the case with Priscilla.”

As soon as the information about them being brother and sister was revealed, Abel did not hesitate to skip over the topic of their blood ties.

In reality, it was true that he was more scared of angering Priscilla, who would unrelentingly cut down people whom she judged to be disagreeable, than he was of angering Abel, who did not possess the strength to strike down insolent individuals.

Subaru: “Speaking of cutting down, that sword that Priscilla is always swinging around—”

Vincent: “—The Yang Sword Vollachia.”

He had never gotten a good look at it up close, but he understood that the thing Priscilla often suddenly unsheathed from the air was a treasured sword that concealed tremendous power.

When Subaru brought up that topic, Abel gave the best possible answer.

Subaru: “...If I’m not mistaken, is that Yang Sword something that gets passed down generation to generation in the Empire?”

Vincent: “Indeed.”

Subaru: “Then, hidden identity or not, isn’t it bad for her to wield it in the first place!?”

Vincent: “—Indeed.”

As Abel responded in a stiff voice, Subaru began to get a headache over Priscilla's audacious behavior.

That was likely so—— As a former member of the Vollachian Imperial Family, the fact that she was alive was a bombshell that could pose quite a threat to the reign of the Emperor, and yet she boldly stood at center stage as a Royal Selection Candidate of the Kingdom, and on top of that, lacked caution as she often wielded the treasured sword of imperial origin.

It was no wonder that whenever somebody who knew the old Priscilla appeared, they would make moves that suggested they knew of her past. It was because the person in question had not kept anything hidden at all.

Subaru: “Is she like Emilia-tan, who thought she could get by with calling herself Emily...”

That too, was because Emilia was a charming, natural airhead, a beautiful girl without peer, but in Priscilla's case, since she ought to have been fully aware of her own position, it was just her poor personality. In any case——

Subaru: “In truth, aren't you the one who's supposed to have the Yang Sword?”

Vincent: “———”

At Subaru's question, Abel maintained his silence.

Were that incorrect, Abel would have responded so with eloquent reasoning. The fact that he did not do so, meant that Subaru ought to think such was the case.

That was why——



???: “—You idiot!”

Now that he thought about it, just who was that cursing actually directed towards?

Was it towards Subaru and the two girls, whom he had suddenly jumped in to protect, or was it perhaps Sphinx, who had mercilessly aimed for the children? —Or was it towards Jamal himself, who had reduced his own options for the following events?

Of course, it would have been one of the former options, as there was no way it was the final possibility.

Certainly, from Subaru’s perspective, using Return by Death to try and break the deadlock, Jamal’s act of protecting Subaru and the two girls was an interference that held no meaning.

If Jamal had not protected him, Sphinx’s surprise attack would have evaporated Subaru’s head, and Return by Death would have activated, which would have allowed him to commence his response from an earlier state.

Where that would have been the same as now, after contact had been made with Sphinx, or if it would have been from an earlier point, he did not know.

Only, in that case, Jamal would not have been injured, which would have expanded the possibilities for strategy in a situation in which a battle against Sphinx was unavoidable.

As a result, when Jamal collapsed due to the magic, Jamal was subtracted from the fighting strength of Subaru’s group, and Beatrice was restrained to using healing magic in order to save him from the verge of death.



Looking at just the events that had occurred, Jamal's conduct had actually been a burden on Subaru's group. However——

Subaru: “———”

Taking pride in the fact that he was a Sword Wolf, motivated to cut open a future for his sister with his sword, Jamal had sacrificed himself to protect Subaru and the two girls; Subaru would not let that action be meaningless.

After all, lives, instincts, and hearts were not those kinds of things.

Sphinx: “The presumed target has escaped harm? Although——”

Subaru: “You made me eat your shoe! But, now we're even!”

Sphinx: “———”

Missing her target due to the collapsed Jamal, Sphinx was about to start saying something. Painting over the words of the Witch, Subaru spoke to Jamal in a loud voice.

Subaru did not know whether that loud voice of his had reached Jamal or not.

But, at the camp site immediately after he had been sent off to the Vollachian Empire, Subaru had received some terribly cruel treatment from Jamal. Just now, he forgave that—— Jamal, too, was unmistakably one of his comrades.

Subaru: “Beatrice! Heal Jamal!”

Beatrice: “——Hk, understood, in fact!”

At Subaru's subsequent direction, Beatrice quickly hastened to Jamal. Feeling the sensation of her slender fingers drifting away, Subaru pulled Spica, who was holding the opposite hand towards himself,

Subaru: “Spica, I’m counting on you!”

Spica: “Aa~, uu!”

With an expression brimming with motivation, Spica kicked off the ground, and with the vigor of a bouncing rubber ball, she leapt towards Sphinx.

Spica jumped right towards her, causing her long, blonde hair to flutter, and Sphinx ignored the fact that her speech had been canceled, and raised both of her hands.

She created ten swords of light— thereupon, Subaru threw one of Jamal’s swords.

Sphinx: “El Jiwald.”

Spica: “—Uu!”

The white light melted Jamal’s rotating sword, and also aimed for Spica, who was present beyond it. But, before they could reach her, Spica’s form teleported to the side of the street. At the same time, Subaru’s head was forced to duck down by Abel’s hand from behind, so they had succeeded in evading Sphinx’s counterattack.

Vincent: “You did well to shift gears immediately. But, there shall be no meaning if you cannot keep it up.”

Subaru: “I know! I’ll say this now, but don’t abandon Jamal!”

Vincent: “—His bereaved family shall be granted sufficient compensation.”

Subaru: “In that case, I’ll save the people you won’t save!”

Talking back to the overly-rational Abel, Subaru held his ground with his body that had been made to fall. With that posture, he glared at Sphinx, whose attack he had evaded,

Subaru: “Sphinx! I’m the one who’s gonna kill you!”

Sphinx: “———”

Subaru: “I’m gonna kill the undead you. Resurrection magic isn’t all powerful. You think I’m lying?”

Sphinx: “...That is certainly persuasive. After all, it is a fact that you are painting over my Sacrament of the Immortal King, and are meddling with the souls of the dead. I suppose that I would be no exception. Only...”

In order to draw attention to himself, Subaru tried to provoke her, to which Sphinx shook her head from side to side. Having recognized that Subaru’s claim was somewhat persuasive,

Sphinx: “—No, there is no particular need to say it. Verification: Required.”

Despite maintaining vigilance over her natural enemy, Subaru— or, to be precise, Spica’s Star Eating, she gave a smile that seemed to be the exact opposite of that mental image.

The Witch’s smile, only the origin of it was unknown to him. Ultimately, there was no need to know, either.

Vincent: “Do not lose your nerve.”

Speaking to Subaru in a low voice, for a moment, Abel stood next to him and furrowed his brow. The intention of those sable eyes requested an explanation, but Subaru would leave that up to the flow of events.

With the aftertaste of her smile remaining, Sphinx looked towards Abel,

Sphinx: “For one matter, there was Confirmation: Required. You over there——”

Subaru: “—This guy is Vincent Vollachia, the Emperor of this nation. That, and, you aren’t mistaken that he’s Priscilla’s older brother.”

Sphinx: “———”

Before Sphinx could finish asking her question, Subaru interrupted with the answer.

The moment that was done to her, Sphinx moved her eyebrows with a level of clear surprise for the first time. Abel, who had just given him a warning, was surprised to a similar extent, but that was a necessary expense.

Spica: “Uu~, au!”

Jumping at Sphinx, Spica took action that counterbalanced that sundry expense.

With an agility that resembled the hunting style of a cat, Spica closed in on the Witch, but rather than the claws of a cat swinging its paws, she had the might of swing from a lion, or a tiger, or perhaps even a bear.

It was the kind of blow that, if received directly, would make a mess of even an undead warrior in a single hit; without sparing any quarter, Spica had pummeled that into Sphinx’s slender body—

Sphinx: “I am surprised. It seems that you have specialties that lie outside the realm of meddling with souls.”

Spica: “Aaau~!?”

Sphinx’s quiet analysis overlapped with Spica’s high-pitched voice of astonishment.

Spica’s astonishment was natural. The blow containing all of her might had indeed been delivered to Sphinx. However, with the single arm Sphinx had raised, she had skillfully parried it.

With her blue eyes wide-open, Spica stared into the golden eyes of the Witch,

Sphinx: “Were you taken aback? My defeat in the Demi-Human War was partly because of my inexperience in martial arts. Taking that into account, I began learning from square one. But then again—”

Spica: “Uu!?”

Sphinx: “There is a limit to the enhancement of abilities that can be yielded through the Flow Method for this replicant body.”

While speaking, Sphinx used the momentum from her parry, and threw Spica down headfirst.

That elegant movement and technique were not something that had been acquired through half-hearted training. As the Witch had confessed herself, she had used her former defeat as a resource to learn from.

It would make anyone think that it was unnecessary to mention the person who had beat the Witch in a fist fight in the past.

Subaru: “Spicaaaa!”

Spica: “—Uu~, au!”

As Subaru raised his voice, Spica firmly clenched her teeth.

That moment before her head hit the ground, Spica twisted her body around, and used her body like a cat once more. Gently landing on her knees, Spica nimbly distanced herself from Sphinx.

Spica: “Au!?”

However, Spica’s movements were stopped as she tried to fall back.

Sphinx had caught the sleeve of Spica's right arm, preventing the latter's withdrawal— Immediately after, the girl and the Witch exchanged glances, and an extremely close-quarters bout of combat commenced.

Spica: "Uu! Au! Aaau~! Aau!"

Each grappling with one arm, Spica and Sphinx engaged in high-level combat with minimal movement.

As Spica desperately swung around blows, Sphinx utilized smooth technique as if to say "the soft controls the hard", and sometimes, she would interweave magic fired from her fingertips into her counteroffensive.

Subaru: "Beako!"

Beatrice: "Just a little longer, I suppose!"

Witnessing the tempestuous battle, Subaru called out to Beatrice, and she responded. With her hands glowing, Beatrice was pouring all her efforts into using healing magic on the collapsed Jamal.

So then, should he keep waiting for Beatrice, who was yet unable to return, and go without providing cover?

Subaru: "Like I could ever do such a thing!"

Eliminating the option of doing nothing, Subaru suddenly drew the Guiltywhip from the back of his waist.

Then, as Subaru made that decision, Abel violently held back his shoulder.

Vincent: "Wait, Natsuki Subaru. If you move carelessly—"

Subaru: "You goddamn idiot! Is this the time to be saying that!?"

Talking back to Abel's sharp complaint in a loud voice, Subaru shook free and began sprinting.

He heard Abel clicking his tongue behind him, but without stopping, Subaru raised his whip overhead to provide cover to Spica, who was being toyed with by Sphinx's tactics of interweaving magic and martial arts.

Subaru: "Shh—!"

The tip of the whip flew with speed that could not be derided as the strength of a child.

To be more accurate, it was not as good as when his body had been at its original size, but he had put his concentration to good use in this extreme situation. Even if his shrunken body had forgotten the days of training he spent to master the whip, his willpower produced a miracle.

The whip tore through the air, and like a snake's fangs, it was absorbed into Sphinx's back—

Subaru: "—Wha..."

Sphinx: "Feelings of protectiveness and impatience amount to poison that causes lapses in judgment. Since I have a comprehension of what emotions are, albeit only slightly, I know of their dreadfulness."

As Sphinx indifferently responded, she caught the Guiltywhip with her right hand. But, Sphinx had purposely reached out her right hand to do so. Sphinx's left hand was grasping Spica's right sleeve, and her right hand was fastened to Subaru's whip, so now both of her hands had been sealed.

However—

Spica: "Aa, uu... Hk."

Spilling out pathetic cries of pain, Spica fell to her knees, as her left thigh had been pierced by white light— Unable to use either of her hands, that had been done by a blow fired from Sphinx's undead golden right eye.

Sphinx: “Fingers and tools can be used to assist with the invocation of magic. It is a mistaken conception that those who are not versed in magic are prone to having.”

Subaru: “Spica—— UOAHH!?”

With Spica groaning at the pain, Subaru screamed in her stead, but Sphinx pulled on the whip with a forceful movement, resolutely felling him to the ground before the Witch.

Clenching his teeth, Subaru endured the pain. The face of Spica on her knees right next to him, and the face of Sphinx looking down at him from above, were both clearly seen by him.

Meeting eyes with the golden irises in which no heat could be felt——

Sphinx: “——For what reason, are you smiling?”

Subaru: “Because everything until now has gone exactly as I had planned.”

Seeing Subaru’s expression as he lay face-up on the ground, Sphinx voiced a question.

Answering it, Subaru let go of the whip that he had purposely been holding onto, and with the emptied hand, he directed a finger gun towards Sphinx. And then——

Subaru: “——Minya!”

The tip of Subaru’s finger glowed, and immediately after, a crystal arrow of amethyst hue was fired.

Surprise, close-range, negligence, a performance that deserved an Academy Award—— as various factors intertwined, Sphinx had no measures by which she could evade Subaru’s preparations.

Sphinx: “——Reflection: Required, indeed.”



Tilting her head right away, Sphinx so muttered, her voice cracking slightly.

Subaru's purple arrow made an impact on Sphinx's right eye, and bore through it. The area around the impact began to crystallize, encroaching on Sphinx's pale skin.

Originally, Yin Magic was supposed to display particular efficiency against the undead, but this was instantaneous.

Subaru: "Did you think I was just an intelligent brat? It's a misconception that everyone tends to have."

—Subaru was the Spiritual Arts User who had contracted with the cute and talented Beatrice.

Even if his body had been shrunken, his connection with Beatrice would not be severed. Beatrice and Subaru were connected by their Gates, and Beatrice would draw from Subaru's Mana to utilize magic.

The reverse was also true. Subaru could also borrow Beatrice's power to use magic. That was precisely how, in the first battle after he had contracted with Beatrice, they had employed magic to mow down the hordes of the Great Rabbit.

But then again, that first battle had used up all the Mana that Beatrice had amassed over four-hundred years, and now the most Subaru could do was fire off a trump card limited to a single shot within Beatrice's range of sight.

But, the important things were the fact that he had a trump card, and the fact that he did not make a mistake when he used it.

Subaru: "Spica, one final push!"

Spica: "Uu!"

Sphinx had been taken aback by the impact of the magic, so Subaru would rush her down there.

Her leg battered, concealing her expression that was stiffened by the pain with an unfaltering fighting spirit, Spica jumped up and grabbed Subaru's hand, and he firmly stood up on the spot.

Her wounds were painful. But, no matter how many times he tried, they would not get any more minor than this.

Therefore, this was the best development to move forward with everybody remaining alive— Subaru acted in place of Spica's left leg, and together they headed towards Sphinx.

By having Spica's Star Eating reach its target, they would defeat Sphinx—

Sphinx: "You were at least able to see through Valga's stratagem. Admiration: Required."

As the scope of the crystallization extended out from the right eye, Sphinx praised Subaru.

Then, the hardening face of the Witch took the shape of a smile, and she placed the index finger of her left hand right under her jaw. That finger was forming a finger gun, as if to spite Subaru.

Subaru: "—Hk."

That instant, Subaru intuited that her action was a preparation for Escape by Death.

It was a plan to commit suicide by blowing off her own head, and resetting the situation— If she committed suicide here, and escaped with intelligence on Subaru's group, Sphinx would never appear before them again.

The chance to have Star Eating reach its target, would not come about again.

Before he could move to put a stop to that, a faint light glowed in the tip of Sphinx's finger——

???: “——YOU IDIOOOT!!”

A slashing attack accompanied a cursing voice akin to coughing up blood, and Sphinx's left arm was cut off at the elbow.

Sphinx: “———”

Seeing her arm spin as it flew away, Sphinx widened her eyes.

Throwing the sword, which had a hole in its blade, severing that arm, and preventing the Escape by Death planned by Sphinx, his eyes bloodshot, was Jamal.

Having sustained a serious injury, Jamal attacked, and it was Beatrice who supported his body. While applying healing magic to his wound, Beatrice followed up on Jamal's sword throw.

For a moment, Sphinx, who was gazing in wonder, and Beatrice, who had previously responded that the healing would take more time, crossed gazes,

Beatrice: “That was a downright lie, in fact.”

Sticking out her tongue, Beatrice revealed that this miraculous comeback of Jamal's was not a miracle in actual fact.

Be that as it may, even with the loss of one arm, Sphinx could do the same thing with her remaining right hand—— No, she could have done so if not for the moment with Beatrice.

Vincent: “That sent shivers down my spine.”

Contrary to the contents of the words, the spun voice was as indifferent as always.

But, there might have very well been some real danger— After all, too much force had been applied to Jamal's sword to say it had been merely passed over.

Sphinx: "Admiration: Required."

Vincent: "I require no such thing."

As Sphinx widened her remaining left eye at the events that had transpired, Abel coldly responded. Then, the black-haired Emperor, swinging the sword he had received, severed Sphinx's right arm from its shoulder.

Sphinx: "Ahh..."

Her left hand had been lost, her right arm had been severed, the balance of her body crumbled as she attempted to escape, and with force Sphinx's back crashed onto the street of the Imperial Capital without even bracing herself.

Passing the Witch on the ground as she looked up, Subaru deeply exhaled as he looked down on her.

In order to corner her like this, it had taken a multitude of tactics, and to a lesser extent, some trial and error. Finally, having arrived at this point, which had taken all of that, Subaru now stood before Sphinx.

Subaru: "It's our win."

Sphinx: "...Indeed. I shall admit it. It is, my loss."

A serious injury for Jamal, some injuries for Spica and Subaru, and no injuries for Beatrice and Abel; that was the result obtained in this domain,

and fully understanding that, Subaru made his declaration, to which Sphinx nodded.

Even without her two arms, it was quite possible for her to shoot something from her eye, like she had done to attack Spica. The right half of her face was already crystallized, but it was of maximum priority to not allow her to do anything else.

Subaru: “Sphinx.”

The fact that this was not an act of him calling out to her, was something that even Sphinx herself understood.

This was merely an indication to have Spica get to work, the path he had prepared for her Authority, Star Eating. Leaning on Subaru’s shoulder, Spica reached her hand out towards Sphinx.

By meddling with the soul of the undead Witch, they would finally put an end to this Great Disaster—

???: “—Jiwald.”

The next moment, right before Spica’s fingers could make contact, the crystallizing face of Sphinx evaporated— the fired white light blew off the Witch’s cranium, crushing Subaru’s plan.

Everyone: “———”

Sphinx had been killed proper from somewhere in the sidelines, and Subaru’s group had their breaths taken away. The Sphinx before their eyes crumbled, and promptly turned to dust.

And, the one who had done that was—

???: “From how it appears, I have concluded that this was an exceedingly perilous scene. Respondence: Required.”

???: “The effects of the Sacrament of the Immortal King are useful, but when that usefulness is experienced, it is irritating that information cannot be immediately shared on the spot. Improvement: Required.”

???: “Before that, I suppose we ought to give priority to eliminating them. Counteroffensive: Required.”

At the bustling voices heard in quick succession, Subaru clearly felt Spica’s body stiffen through his shoulder. Likely, Spica also felt him do the same.

It was only natural that they experienced that level of shock.

???: “——Combat: Required.”

???: “——Combat: Required.”

???: “——Combat: Required.”

After all, having disposed of the cornered Sphinx, several uninjured Witches, several uninjured Sphinxes, had gathered together.



——For Sphinx, intervention in the Demi-Human War was something exceedingly convenient.

The feelings of antipathy between humans and demi-humans that had been on the rise within the Dragon Kingdom of Lugunica, flared up into a large inferno with merely a small kindling, and the longstanding transient peace was destroyed.

The environment of persecution suffered by demi-humans, regardless of their participation in the civil war, entirely eliminated the unnaturalness of Sphinx making contact with the Demi-Human Alliance. If she introduced

herself as a half-elf, she did not need any greater justification to join the alliance.

There, meeting the two principal leaders of the Demi-Human Alliance, Valga Cromwell and Libre Fermi, was also quite the fortuitous happening for Sphinx.

In particular, Valga of the Giant Clan, who, contrary to his fierce appearance, possessed an outstanding intellect, had realized the usefulness of the magic and knowledge in Sphinx's possession, and had daringly included her into their tactics, securing victories for the Demi-Human Alliance on many battlefields.

Sphinx, too, unveiled much of the Witch of Greed's knowledge that had never been revealed until then, and assisted in Valga's plans, or perhaps it was her who had gained assistance.

—The Sacrament of the Immortal King, too, was a forbidden art that had only been successfully reproduced thanks to the Demi-Human Alliance.

Even if she had knowledge of the technique itself, it was the research of the details needed to implement it, and the strategic plans in which the technique was actually utilized, that had allowed Valga to skillfully lead in the Demi-Human War.

Sphinx had no interest in the victory of the Demi-Human Alliance, and she had just been making use of that environment, but back then, the presence of Valga and the others had helped her out immensely. But then again, Libre, the snakeman who held the same position of leader alongside Valga, had misgivings about dealing with Sphinx, and they had not constructed a good relationship with each other.

In any case, Sphinx had obtained many of the things she had desired with the Demi-Human War.

Amongst them, that which she had wished to observe the most was “love”— in order to fulfill the purpose of her creation, it seemed to be the thing that the incomplete Sphinx was lacking the most. The sense of attachment that was generally defined as “love”, she had gained many opportunities to witness it up close, and that was a great result for her.





Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.ll2o ([source](#))

Within Valga, within Libre, within many of the demi-humans and humans alike, that was present.

The actuality of its existence, and the confidence that it was indeed missing from within herself, were the greatest things Sphinx had gained.

Only, with the situation that had not moved for over three-hundred-and-fifty years finally having moved, it ought to be said that Sphinx had gotten a bit greedy— With the threat she had forgotten about, she reunited.

Knowing that Sphinx had been constructed with the purpose of replicating the Witch of Greed's soul, harboring an unbearable vindictiveness of desiring her existence to be erased, was the Witch of Greed's disciple.

—Ultimately, Sphinx ended up being defeated by that disciple of the Witch of Greed.



The situation he had feared, had arrived precisely at the moment he had feared it.

The sensation of cold fingers being thrust into his mouth, and the sensation of the drug package, which he had grown accustomed to being in there, being yanked out, caused Subaru to recall that.

???: “I suppose this is poison for the purpose of suicide? It is an inexplicable preparation.”

???: “Is it truly so inexplicable? When one heads for the battlefield, they have generally resolved themselves for death. Additionally, if one is captured by their enemy, it is effective in eliminating the room for having information extracted.”

???: “What about a battlefield on which that general expression would be improper? They should also be aware that if they were to lose their life here, it would not necessarily mean their mouth would be sealed for certain.”

With the same voice, with the same manner of speech, with the same tone, analyses piled up, and ultimately, several pairs of eyes looked at Subaru.

The Witches who all bore the same face, simultaneously peered into Subaru’s black eyes—

Witch: “Answer: Required.”

Witch: “Answer: Required.”

Witch: “Answer: Required.”

Then, having stolen Subaru’s method of suicide, and binding his arms behind his back, they enquired so.

—The several newly-appeared Sphinxes had completely overpowered Subaru’s group, which had a great deal of struggle to corner just a single Sphinx, in less than a minute.

Spica: “Ua, uu...”

Pinned to the ground, Spica desperately squirmed in an attempt to assist the captive Subaru.

But, even if given treatment, the wound on her leg was deep, and she could not shake free from the Sphinx who was pinning her down. It was not just Spica. Beatrice and Jamal were also lying collapsed on the street in a battered state.

In particular, since Jamal had continued to shower the Sphinxes with abusive language, he had ended up being scrupulously tormented until he

had completely lost consciousness.

And then——

Vincent: “From one indecision to the next, do you not tire of it all?”

Sphinx: “Even when you are cornered to this degree, I admire that your spirit still refuses to yield. I can sense the blood relation with your sister... with Priscilla Barielle.”

Vincent: “Hmph, did you think I would waver at the mention of Priscilla? In addition to mimicking Lamia, the one known as the Witch engages in some terribly impudent actions.”

Abel trained a hostile gaze on Sphinx, and spat those words out together with the blood in his mouth.

Right now, the ones facing off against the Sphinxes were him, standing on his own two feet, and Subaru, whose arms were bound behind his back. And with Subaru forced to kneel, Abel became the sole man standing.

Present here were three Sphinxes.

One of them was restraining Subaru, one of them was pinning Spica down, and the last one was free to move as she pleased.

Facing them, Abel had sustained no small number of wounds amidst the short resistance. His clothes were sullied and torn, and wiping the blood off his cheek with his sleeve, by his feet was the sword he had discarded as it had lost its blade.

But, even with this much damage done to him, Abel had not sustained a fatal wound.

In this eleventh hour, that was thanks to Abel’s remarkable swordsmanship blooming—— such a thing was not the case, for it was by the Sphinxes’

intentions, that Abel had been kept alive.

Sphinx: “Lamia Godwin, it is true that I have learned from her. She possessed a certain observative ability to see the true nature of things. She was much closer to the truth of «souls» than I am.”

Sphinx: “Thanks to her, parallel reproduction of the Sacrament of the Immortal King has succeeded. It slightly deviates from the desired result, but, it is true that it has advanced us one level higher.”

Sphinx: “Without that, it would have been infeasible to appear before you in this manner.”

The Sphinxes strung words together; the trick of producing several of the same undead at the same time, was an abuse of the Sacrament of the Immortal King, used by Abel’s sister when she had attacked the coupled dragon carriages— used by Lamia Godwin.

To be honest, supposing Spica’s Star Eating were flawless, then the multiplication of undead was nothing more than an act of increasing the number of targets that could be hit. Because she understood that, Sphinx had separated Subaru and Spica, and had restrained them.

And then, the reason that the Sphinxes had kept Abel alive by himself was—

Sphinx: “—As a member of the Vollachian Imperial Family, your Yang Sword was a threat. Vigilance: Required.”

Vincent: “———”

At the words of the empty-handed Sphinx, Abel slightly narrowed his sable eyes.

That which Sphinx maintained vigilance over, the Yang Sword Vollachia— a great treasure of the Empire that concealed tremendous power. Subaru,

too, had once personally witnessed the remarkable power of the Yang Sword.

However, at that time, the owner of the Yang Sword was not Abel, but——

Sphinx: “——Priscilla Barielle. Or perhaps, Prisca Benedict.”

Subaru: “Guh, Abel...!”

Sphinx: “He ought to be the Vollachian Emperor, Vincent Vollachia. The way you call him Abel, I thought it was improper to call him by a nickname or alias? Correction: Required.”

Pointing out such a trivial imperfection in his speech, she firmly pushed Subaru down into the ground by his face. Ignoring Subaru as he groaned with his face rubbing against the ground, Sphinx tilted her head at Abel,

Sphinx: “It seems that you truly do not possess the Yang Sword.”

Indeed, facing Abel—— facing Vincent Vollachia, she plainly declared that he did not have ownership of the Yang Sword, the proof that one was the Emperor.

Subaru: “——Hk.”

At Sphinx’s assertion, Abel maintained his silence, but Subaru’s throat clogged up.

Just how humiliating that would have been for the Vollachian Emperor, Subaru did not know.

But, he knew that just like the fact that he had let the sister whom he ought to have killed in the Imperial Selection Ceremony live, asking any more about the Emperor’s nature would not be tolerated.

And then, the act of ascertaining that, was unmistakably the reason why Sphinx had kept Abel alive.

Sphinx: “Would you accompany me, Emperor Vincent Vollachia? If it is alright with you, I would like to take you to meet your younger sister, Priscilla Barielle. Analysis: Required.”

Vincent: “To meet Priscilla, you say? What are you plotting?”

Sphinx: “I refuse to answer. Deliberation: Required.”

To Abel, who did not possess a decisive blow in order to resist, Sphinx made a peculiar offer. The true intent behind that offer had not been spoken. But, if Abel agreed, he would be able to survive a little longer.

Nevertheless, the apex of the Empire had naught the charm to carelessly follow such a proposal.

Vincent: “Do not jest with me, Witch. If there was need to converse with Priscilla, I would do so on my own, even without the likes of your permission. Just who do you think I— who do you think I am?”

Sphinx: “———”

Boldly answering so, Abel crossed his arms, rejecting the Witch’s proposal.

Sullied, shedding blood, with even his life in the palm of his opponent; however, the figure of Abel maintaining his unwavering attitude, was undoubtedly that of the very Sword Wolf held in great esteem by the Vollachian Empire.

Sphinx: “—Reflection: Required.”

There was no change in her countenance or verbal expression, but Sphinx’s voice housed a clear disappointment.

As the reason for that had not been revealed, it remained unknown. But, Sphinx found it unfortunate that she could not take Abel to where Priscilla was.

And, Sphinx, reflecting on the fact that had caused her such disappointment, as if rejecting it,

Sphinx: “What about in exchange for the lives of these individuals? Re-analysis: Required.”

The question was asked while pointing fingers at Subaru and Spica, who were pinned down.

In order to bestow the question with more persuasive power, Sphinx increased the pressure of her bind on Subaru.

Spica: “Auu! Uu~, uau!”

Subaru: “Spica...!!”

Likely, the same amount of pressure was being applied to Spica. Kicking and struggling, Spica had a better shot of escaping the restraint than Subaru did, so she attempted to fight back against the Sphinx behind her.

And before the resistance could take hold—

Subaru: “Gah, gi, gyaaaaaaaaah...!”

Sphinx: “—Reflection: Required.”

The dull, creaking sound that reverberated, was the destructive noise of a bone being painfully broken. That was the result of not Spica’s, but Subaru’s right elbow having been bent in the opposite direction.

Sharp pain stabbed his brain, and the pain from all of his other bruises and scratches was momentarily blown away. Blood frothed up as he bit his lip, unbearable tears streamed down drop-by-drop.

While making that example out of him, neither the Sphinx who had broken his arm, nor the Sphinx who was about to break Spica’s arm, nor the Sphinx



who had directed them to do so, had shown even the slightest fluctuation in emotions.

Only, in order to grant her own desire, her gaze was that of a spectator, wondering if the example that had been made would produce results. However——

Vincent: “——Tedious.”

Abel’s reply, even though Subaru’s arm had been broken, conceded no emotions whatsoever.

Receiving that, Sphinx finally let out a short exhale, and,

Sphinx: “If possible, I would have liked to bring you back alive, but...”

Vincent: “Do not jest. Had you wished to fulfill that no matter what, it would have been better to fashion me into an undead and bring me along.”

Sphinx: “To say that would be difficult, is a conclusion of all the materials of analysis until now.”

At Sphinx’s answer, Abel closed one eye as if going into rumination. But, before those thoughts yielded any progress, the Sphinxes began to take action.

The Sphinxes pinning Subaru and Spica down each raised a single finger—— Holding Subaru and Spica up, the Sphinxes placed those fingers against the backs of each of their heads.

Subaru: “A-Abel...”

Gasping and sweating at the pain of his broken arm, Subaru called out to Abel. In the same situation as Spica, who was struggling next to him, it was obvious what Sphinx’s aim was.

But, it was for naught. After all, examples being made would not serve any use.

Vincent: “There is no meaning in taking hostages. Or perhaps, does the Witch fail to understand such simple things?”

Sphinx: “Is that so?”

Vincent: “What?”

Sphinx: “Emotions or feelings of protection are difficult things to deal with. Even you, the apex of the Empire, are no exception— Exertion: Required.”

Indeed, the sole free Sphinx spoke to Abel, and then slowly lifted her hand.

Then, raising a single finger of that raised hand, as she aimed it at Abel’s chest,

Sphinx: “Please do not move. If you value their lives...”

Vincent: “—Menial.”

Abel’s short words, which seemed as if he was gnashing his teeth, yielded a crooked smile on Sphinx’s mouth.

That moment, Sphinx’s fingertip glowed with light— It was not just the one aiming for Abel, but the fingers thrust against the backs of Subaru’s and Spica’s heads were also glowing.

—He had been waiting for the Witch to make that vicious choice.

Subaru: “Leap, Spica!!”

Sphinx: “Eh?”

Right before the fatal light was fired, Subaru forgot about his pain and yelled out. Receiving that, one of the bewildered Sphinxes disappeared from there— She had been forcibly taken along by Spica’s teleport.

And with Spica's leap as a signal, there was also movement on Subaru's side. That was not movement from Subaru himself, but—

???: "No matter how you look at it, you are pushing it way too far, I suppose!"

Speaking in an angered voice was Beatrice, who had been silently awaiting Subaru's signal in her collapsed state.

Having patiently endured, she now poured the feelings of wanting to rush forth, which she had withstood from the moment when Subaru had his arm broken, into the amethyst crystals, and shot them into Sphinx, who had perpetrated that deed.

Sphinx: "———"

The situation had hectically moved to turn the tables.

The attack of the Sphinxes, who had been restraining Subaru and Spica, had ended in failure.

The one who had been a hindrance on Subaru's side was Beatrice, but the one who had been a hindrance on Spica's side was none other than Sphinx herself.

—When Spica had teleported, she had intercepted the line of fire of the Sphinx who had fired her magic at Abel, and had made the heat ray of light shoot down the Sphinx who was restraining her.

Sphinx: "This is——"

Subject to an undesired friendly fire, the one remaining Sphinx widened her eyes.

One had been shot down and terminated by her own magic, and another had been crystallized into an amethyst statue by a magic arrow.

Still, this was about all that could be done with a surprise attack.

Sphinx: “I do not think that the final person will also stand back up.”

Subaru, with his arm broken, Spica, who had been restrained, and Beatrice, who had been thought to have been unconscious, had attempted a counterattack. But unfortunately, Jamal, who had been thoroughly beaten down, did not stand up.

Ascertaining that, the final remaining Sphinx quickly readied both of her hands, produced ten swords of light from each set of five fingers, and this time, she attempted to mince up Subaru and his friends for sure.

Because of that, she did not even realize that she had taken her eyes off of the one person whom she absolutely should not have taken her eyes off of.

Vincent: “—Come forth, Yang Sword Vollachia.”

A quiet, yet dignified voice, one reliable to an aggravating extent, sounded upon Subaru’s eardrums.

No matter the tumult, no matter how many people were present, no matter how harsh a battle was unfolding on the battlefield, that man’s voice would always unquestionably reach its desired target.

That was the kingly caliber of the one who stood atop all others, shouldering the destiny of guiding their way.

As if to prove that, dazzling the eyes of all those present, providing a red illumination was—

Sphinx: “—I thought you were not supposed to have that in your possession.”

Vincent: “Fool— Never once have I said that I had relinquished the Yang Sword or any act of the like.”



Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by V!c.112o ([source](#))

Only, the treasured blade of crimson which he had not drawn once, no matter what hardship had stood in his path, merely for the purpose of drawing closer the opportunity for victory in this moment, he now drew out from the sheath of the sky.

And then——

Subaru: “This battle of trickery, is our win.”

Vincent: “The stratagems of my two strategists—— You have underestimated them.”

Bearing the pain, Subaru took pride in their victory, and Abel took pride in the victory of the capabilities of the strategist who was not present here, the one who had devised the plan that had made even the Witch firmly believe that Abel had lost his trump card.

——The next moment, with Yang Sword in hand, Abel kicked off the ground, and leapt.

That was the dash of one who possessed definite strength, incomparable to the Abel up until this point. As the owner chosen by the Yang Sword itself, he was propelled to a dimension befitting that status.

To be precise, as if the world was being illuminated by sunlight, Abel forcefully raised the treasured sword overhead——

Vincent: “——The Yang Sword cuts what I decide to cut, burns what I decide to burn.”

Sphinx: “———”

The flash of crimson ran diagonally, and without any resistance, it burned away Sphinx’s ten white lights that had immediately tried to intercept Abel.

It was illogical for light to burst into flames, but the supernatural power that could make one believe it was natural was contained within the Yang Sword's radiance, and therefore the following conclusion was inevitable.

Sphinx: “—Ah.”

And, leaking out a hoarse breath, Sphinx, having taken a great leap backwards, looked down at herself.

The Witch had fallen back with agile movements, however, one tuft of her pink hair had been cut by the flash of the Yang Sword— that instant, Sphinx's whole body ignited.

And, that was not just the Sphinx who had been cut; the fire also spread to the Sphinx whom she herself had shot and reduced to dust, as well as the Sphinx who had been turning into an amethyst crystal.

—The Yang Sword Vollachia had decided to burn the Witch, Sphinx, to naught.

The result of that, was the burning figures of the Sphinxes.

Sphinx: “———”

Enveloped in a blaze, it probably would have been best to keep vigilance over Sphinx as she struggled in vain before she was reduced to ashes, but—

Vincent: “‘Tis unnecessary. Being scorched by the flame of the Yang Sword, is precisely that sort of thing.”

Subaru: “...I see. I'm beginning to doubt your nerve for keeping that hidden until the eleventh hour.”

With the Yang Sword lowered in one hand, Abel indicated that Subaru's caution was a needless fear. Subaru talked back with some bad-mouthing,

but he did not respond.

Only, being scorched in a rising blaze, he trained his gaze upon Sphinx, present amidst a flame that would reach even her soul.

Staring at her, Abel— nay, Vincent Vollachia, spoke.

Vincent: “The proposal for this occasion— It was a great service, Chisha Gold.”



# Arc 8 Chapter 60 - Witch

Light Novel Adaptation found in Volume 37, Intermission “Witch”

Original Web Novel Chapter – [Complete](#)

Original Translation by Witch Cult Translations (Garcar) – [Complete](#)

The Crystal Palace of the Imperial Capital of Lupugana, in the place that was formerly its audience chamber, the *shinobi* who had snuck in, Olbart Dunkelkenn, waved his right arm that was missing from the elbow down, and frowned his white eyebrows.

Olbart: “Finally stopped movin’, eh? Jeez, that makes a geezer like me feel way too depressed.”

In front of Olbart as he slowly shrugged his shoulders and heaved a sigh, was the grotesque figure that caused the *shinobi* old man to become fed up—its form had been altered in a repulsive manner, to the extent that it would be ridiculous to even call it an undead; what remained of that grotesque *thing’s* face was sprawled out across the floor.

Olbart considered his treatment of that bizarrely abhorrent *thing* to be an assistance<sup>35</sup>.

The undead were resurrected with their memories intact. In addition, in order to resurrect the undead, the Mana of the Stone, Muspel, who dominated the vast lands of the Empire, was being expended— Therefore, he had been ordered to keep the killing of the undead to a minimum.

Olbart: “Even so, it was better ta kill it. It’s way too awful if it makes me think that way.”

Valuing human life or having mercy towards the weak, that leeway that only people with such room in their hearts possessed, was something that Olbart, who did not have much time left, had already discarded a long time ago.

For Olbart, the audience chamber— no, this experimentation ground of “souls”, had gone too far.

Olbart: “Reminds me of the bunch who made Araki, this way of doin’ things. Even tho’ it wasn’t for fun or for revenge, I couldn’t bear ta dispose of it ‘cause they nerve ta do this kinda thing. They were dealt with, tho’.”

In Olbart’s mind as he spilled those words, an unmatched, unorthodox group who he had dealt with in the past emerged.

In order to produce the perfected Spirit Eater known as Arakiya, those criminals had sacrificed an enormous amount of people, and had said that their actions were out of a sense of duty, that it was for the sake of the Empire’s future.

This horrid scene inside the audience chamber— something had tampered with the souls of the undead resurrected in earthen vessels, something that had been mixed into their souls, something that had transfigured them. It was not for the sake of winning this war, but a barbaric act performed for an objective that completely disregarded the imminent victory or defeat. Within the details that had produced those grotesque forms, he could feel a curiosity that desired results, utterly detached from emotion, similar to that of the unorthodox criminals.

And the objective of that curiosity was understood by Olbart with a single touch.

Olbart: “—Ya got some nerve ta try n’ tamper with souls.”

Olbart often used a *shinobi* technique that would interfere with the souls of others— with their Ods, and cause them to shrink. Chisha had also stolen and made use of it; however, that technique only touched upon the outer layer.

But, this inquisitive mind desired results that went beyond just that.

What exactly those results were, Olbart, who did not know the curious individual in question, had no way of knowing, but—

Olbart: “I get a reeeal~ bad feelin’ ‘bout this, Yer Excellency— I guess there really ain’t the room for my betrayal after all.”



—During the Demi-Human War, the Demi-Human Alliance was defeated, and the individual Sphinx was defeated.

In regards to that defeat, Sphinx did not have many words to say.

She had lived for over three-hundred-and-fifty years, but most of those days and months had been spent hiding away, continuing to exhaust her everything just to survive; Sphinx was no match for the opponent, who had resolved and trained themselves to kill her.

If she were to speak of the events that had happened, that would be the entirety of the story.

To be honest, within Sphinx’s mind, as she was defeated by the disciple of the Witch of Greed, faced with certain death, there were still no particular emotions.

In the first place, she had no attachment to her own life. The many years she had spent exhausting herself to prioritize her own survival were just

because she thought that was rational in order to fulfill the purpose of her creation.

And then, when it seemed like she was going to disappear without having fulfilled the purpose of her creation, what she had possessed until the end was the instinct to flee, as it was difficult to abandon that purpose.

That was why she fled to the basement of the Royal Castle of Lugunica, which had become the grounds for a decisive battle; the fact that she displayed the willpower to break away from the Witch of Greed's disciple there, was also a result of following her instincts.

It was merely that, that escape sequence, in which she had no particular attachment to her life, altered Sphinx's fate.

???: “—I have use for you. You shall serve me well, in order to grant my wish.”

In that man's corrupted eyes, the intense flame of ambition could be seen flickering.



—The flame of the Yang Sword Vollachia, would burn anything it had decided to destroy to ashes.

The plan of Vincent Vollachia and Natsuki Subaru had been to make Sphinx firmly believe that, for whatever reason, the Emperor had relinquished the treasured sword of crimson.

As a result, at the end of a grand wager of lives, Sphinx was scorched by the flame, having lost in the bout of deceit.

The blade of the Yang Sword that had reached the Witch, Sphinx, delivered a scintillating flame to the bearer of the Great Disaster who had been

resurrected as an undead; the several Sphinxes that were facing off against Vincent's group, the Sphinx waiting in the Crystal Palace, the Sphinxes observing each battlefield of the Imperial Capital, and the countless Sphinxes that ought to have been launching attacks all throughout the Empire, all burst into flame simultaneously.

Sphinx: “—Countermeasures: Required.”

While being scorched by the bright-red flames, the Sphinx who had been cut, muttered so. But, even if she made use of the undead's advantage of meagerly feeling pain, she would not be able to hold out for long with herself being burnt to a crisp.

In that case, would she abandon the several bodies that had already been scorched, and proceed with the plan as a new Sphinx, having learned from this Death? —No, that would be impossible.

The flame of the Yang Sword was burning Sphinx's very soul.

Even if she tried to create a new undead version of herself, as long as the foundation that was her soul remained burning, it would be impossible to prevent the earthen body from burning as it was created.

Sphinx: “———”

She had no countermeasures. Together with the sensation of a deadlock, the body of this Sphinx crumbled.

Even if she died by burning, and headed to the next iteration while having learned from this Death, the reconstructed Sphinx would merely come to the same conclusion that she had no countermeasures as she met her end.

Her end, this would be her end. Having spent a long time going around the world, the Witch of Greed's failure, Sphinx's quest of investigation, would have its curtain's close here.

She had exhausted every measure, she had sufficiently laid out traps, but it had not been enough.

That was a defeat similar to the one she had experienced in the past, during the events of the Demi-Human War. At that time, too, Sphinx had exhausted every measure, yet it had still not been enough, and she had been left with no choice but to perish in defeat.

The reason that had not come to pass, had not been because of Sphinx's own actions, but because of the interference of an outsider.

Thus, this time, she could not hope for the same thing to happen.

After all, the owner of that ambition, who had saved Sphinx back then, was already gone.

Leip Barielle was dead. That was why, there was no longer—

Sphinx: “—Analysis: Required.”

Suddenly, engulfed in the fiery blaze as she was, Sphinx who was supposed to be heading for her demise, took action.

While the flame of the Yang Sword kept her entire body alight, Sphinx placed a finger below her own jaw; blowing away the entirety of the Corebug present within her cranium, she induced her own Death.

And then, the Sphinxes present on the battlefield, in the Imperial Capital, and throughout the entire Empire, all carried out that same act in succession.

Sphinx: “—Analysis: Required.”

Sphinx: “—Analysis: Required.”

It was not that she had given up on herself. Nor was it that she had been dominated by suicidal thoughts.

Only, through dying, all of Sphinx's memories could converge on her soul. If all the countless Sphinxes died simultaneously, and all the countless memories converged, the collective base of knowledge known as herself would accumulate.

Of course, it was only a matter of time before the soul where all those memories were gathering would be scorched, thoroughly burned to naught.

However, in the time before it was burned to naught, Sphinx naturally continued to construct her own burning selves, and by doing so, she was able to accrete countless analyses and debates about the situation and countermeasures.

In the past, she had possessed no strong emotions whatsoever regarding Death. But now, things were different.

Sphinx: “—Resistance: Required.”

Sphinx: “—Resistance: Required.”

Sphinx: “—Resistance: Required.”

Resisting, resisting, as she resisted, Sphinx scraped together every conceivable possibility, and analyzed them.

The conclusions of each bastion, the soul experiments at the Crystal Palace, the history of the Vollachian Imperial Family, the Spirit Eaters, the foreign entity from the Kingdom, Stargazers, commandments, the Great Disaster, every last possibility, the fragments of existence itself; she analyzed all of it.

And then—



—Bound to the prison, Priscilla's crimson eyes fully witnessed the entire chain of events befalling Sphinx before her eyes.

The Witch's body had suddenly burst into red flames, and with a single glance, Priscilla understood that it was the scintillating flame brought about by the Yang Sword which was passed down in the Vollachian Empire.

She also understood that the one who had delivered that scintillating flame to the Witch, was none other than Vincent Vollachia.

Priscilla: "So you have finally revealed the card you had kept facing down? You truly are cunning to the bitter end, elder brother."

As a member of the Vollachian Imperial Family herself, the fact that Vincent had not drawn the Yang Sword, and instead preserved it as a trump card, was obvious to Priscilla. Of course, given the troublesome quality that came with wielding the Yang Sword, it was no wonder that Vincent did not thoughtlessly rely on it.

Anyhow, having been defeated in the bout of deceit, the Witch was destroyed by the flame— at least, she should have been.

Priscilla: "You, what did you do?"

Sphinx: "—Analysis: Required."

The Yang Sword's flame would burn what it wished to burn, and the Yang Sword's blade would cut what it wished to cut.

That was a truth that could not be bent. Despite that, the Witch who ought to have been engulfed by bright-red flames in front of Priscilla, slowly broke free from that scintillating flame.

The flames had ceased their scorching of the Witch.



The Yang Sword's flame would burn what it wished to burn, and the Yang Sword's blade would cut what it wished to cut.

Ergo, the fate of the Witch, scorched and cut by Vincent's Yang Sword, was not something that could be altered. However—

Priscilla: "Who are you?"

If the one who was burned, the one who was cut, became something else entirely, it would be a different story.

In all likelihood, Vincent had killed the Witch, had killed Sphinx with the Yang Sword.

But, the form of the Witch who had escaped the flame, was not the Witch that Priscilla knew.

The cracked pale skin, the black eyeballs endowed with irises of golden hue, and the youthful appearance of a little girl, with all of those cast away, that being stood before Priscilla.

Long white hair that reached down to her back, and black eyes that housed a clear intellectual and inquisitive spirit— White and black, if one tried to draw that being, then those two colors would be fully capable of representing it.

Priscilla: "Who are you?"

???: "—The Witch of Greed."

At Priscilla's repeated question, there was a quiet response, yet one brimming with conviction.

Having fulfilled the purpose of its creation after a long time, the being whose very soul had altered in nature— the current incarnation<sup>36</sup> of the Witch of Greed, having escaped the fate of being scorched by flame, spoke.

Witch: “The purpose of creation has been fulfilled— Now, I<sup>37</sup> will proceed to fulfill *my* purpose in life.”

So she declared.



Illustration from Volume 37, coloring by Setowi ([source](#))

# Other Volumes

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## Side Content (Root folder at [Link](#))

- Side Stories:
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  - Artbook Short Stories (various) - [Link](#).
- IFs:
  - Rem IF (Arc 2 spoilers) - [Link](#).

# Notes

## [←1]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations: “Fight between tiger and Dragon here (龍虎の相打つ) is a play on the idiom «竜虎相搏つ». It literally means a battle between a dragon and a tiger, but is used to mean a battle between two equal opponents. The version here swaps out «竜» with «龍» to account for the terminology of Dragons in Re: Zero, the latter being used for the likes of Mezoneia and Volcanica, the former for ground, water, and flying dragons.”

## [←2]

English flip. Means “party member(s)” (党員), originally “メンバー” (members).

## [←3]

English flip. Means “last person” (最後の人), originally “ラスト” (last).

## [←4]

English flip. Means “assistance/backup (in a fight)” (助太刀), originally “フォロー” (follow).

## [←5]

English flip. Means “role” (役), originally “ロール” (role).

## [←6]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations: “*Joubutsu* (ジョーブツ) is a word from Japan that Beatrice is using. This is conveyed by using the katakana form instead of the kanji form (成仏). The word itself generally means things like dying peacefully, leaving one’s regrets and adhesion to the world behind, going to heaven, and it also has applications in Buddhism.”

## [←7]

English flip. Means “advice/counsel” (勧告), originally “アドバイス” (advice). As the source Japanese can be considered to have a slight misspelling (usually loanwords of the sort would be in Katakana rather than Hiragana), the Romaji for “勧告” also has a misspelling (would be *kangoku* normally).

## [←8]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations: “Here Iris changes her pronoun from Yorna’s pronoun, «わっち», read «wacchi», to what is likely Iris’s original pronoun, «私», read «watashi»”.



## [←9]

In feudal Japan, a “ronin” (浪人), meaning literally “wanderer”, was used to denote samurai with no lord or master, who rejected to commit ritual suicide upon the loss of their master. For more information, see [here](#).

## [←10]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations: “Tennozan (天王山) is the name of a mountain in Japan. Throughout history, it was a place of great strategic importance due to its location. Because of that, a Japanese saying that goes «decisive as *Tennozan*» was born, and essentially indicates that a moment or location is very important in determining an outcome. In the context of this chapter, Julius is repeating the phrase as something he likely learned from Subaru.”

## [←11]

Engrish flip. Means “kind/sort/type” (たぐい), originally “タイプ” (type).

## [←12]

Balleroy’s title, “Magical Sharpshooter”, in Japanese is written “魔弾の射手”, which is also the localization of an opera known as *Der Freischütz*. In German folklore, the figure of the *Freischütz* is a marksman who, by a contract with the devil, has obtained a certain number of bullets destined to hit without fail whatever object he wishes. As the legend is usually told, six of the magic bullets are thus subservient to the marksman’s will, but the seventh is at the absolute disposal of the devil himself.

## [←13]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations - *Soumatou* (走馬灯) is a kind of revolving lantern that is designed to show a revolving shadow picture. It is used as an expression to signify the phenomenon of one’s life flashing before their eyes.

## [←14]

*Kabuki* (歌舞伎) is a classical form of Japanese dance-drama. *Kabuki* theatre is known for its heavily-stylized performances, the often-glamorous costumes worn by performers, and for the elaborate *kumadori* make-up worn by some of its performers. For more information, see [here](#).

## [←15]

This might not be immediately clear in English, but the way Garfiel’s referring to Ryuzu the second time around translates closer to “old hag”, hence her reaction.

## [←16]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations - *Soumatou* (走馬灯) is a kind of revolving lantern that is designed to show a revolving shadow picture. It is used as an expression to signify the phenomenon of one’s life flashing before their eyes.

## [←17]

Baseball terminology. It doesn't really lend itself well for an Engrish flip, but obviously, Subaru is speaking English here.

## [←18]

Engrish flip. Means “advice/counsel” (勧告), originally “アドバイス” (advice). This one is actually written in Katakana.

## [←19]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations: “The dialect being referred to is a quirk of Madelyn’s speech in Japanese, where she frequently attaches «つちや» (-*ccha*) to the ends of her sentences. In our translation, we typically add a «frig’» or «friggin’» to her speech in these cases, however it admittedly does not capture the essence of the Japanese speech quirk perfectly, and there isn’t much that can be done in English in this regard.”

## [←20]

Throughout the chapter, the sections done in Cecilius point-of-view are filled with Engrish spam. Whenever phrasing sounds odd, most likely, he’s using English expressions. As narration is not flipped around, no other notice that it is happening will be provided.

## [←21]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations - *Tenchi Shimei* (天地神明) is a Japanese phrase meaning “the Gods of Heaven and Earth”. In expressions where they are sworn upon, it conveys a sense of reverence and commitment.

## [←22]

Engrish flip. Means “most interesting part of a story/climax” (佳境), originally “クライマックス” (climax).

## [←23]

Engrish flip. Means “heroine/female protagonist” (女主人公), originally “ヒロイン” (heroine).

## [←24]

Two Engrish flips. First one means “attitude/behavior” (態度), originally “スタンス” (stance). Second one is intended to mean “affinity/chemistry (between people)” (相性), originally “ケミストリー” (chemistry).

## [←25]

Engrish flip. Means “inspiration (to someone)” (感化), originally “インスピレーション” (inspiration). “Live” earlier is also Engrish, in the sense of a “live show”, but it doesn’t really



have an equivalent.

## [←26]

Engrish flip. Means “best” (最高), originally “ベスト” (best).

## [←27]

Two Engrish flips. First one means “past/prior” (前), originally “ビフォア” (Before). Second one is intended to mean “after/later” (後), originally “アフター” (After). As you might suspect, all prior uses of “After/Before Cecilus” in narration are partially in Engrish as per this flip. Same applies to uses of “Real Cecilus”.

## [←28]

The phrasing here may sound like it implies something regarding the stars and the times Al redoes things, but the Japanese is likely just being flowery regarding how much he would struggle, which doesn’t translate well to English.

## [←29]

Engrish flip. Means “ending” (終わり), originally “エンディング” (ending).

## [←30]

Engrish flip. Means “clue/tip” (手がかり), originally “ヒント” (hint).

## [←31]

Spoken in Engrish. I don’t think there’s a suitable enough Japanese expression to my liking, so I’ll leave it as-is.

## [←32]

Engrish flip. Means “no problem” (問題ない), originally “ノープロ” (no prob).

## [←33]

Engrish flip. Means “pattern” (模様), originally “パターン” (pattern).

## [←34]

Engrish flip. Means “rule” (決まり), originally “ルール” (rule).

## [←35]

The expression used, “介錯” is mostly used to refer to the ceremonial beheading to end the suffering of someone who’s has committed seppuku by disemboweling themselves. So basically, Olbart basically thinks he euthanized someone to help them.

## [←36]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations: “Tappei provides a reading for the word «現身» of «うつせみ». Normally, this reading does not match this Kanji, and is instead for «空蟬», which is used to refer to the cast of shell of a cicada. This may be some word play to imply the Witch of Greed has cast off the shell of Sphinx.”

## [←37]

Translation note from Witch Cult Translations: “Here, the Witch of Greed speaks using the pronoun «ワタシ», which is not Sphinx’s pronoun, but Echidna’s. Based on this, the line can be taken to mean that, now with Sphinx’s purpose fulfilled, she will strive to accomplish the original purpose of the Witch of Greed.”