The Master of Death in Nazarik

by dEBB987

Summary

Today at midnight, the server would close down and any players left would be forcefully logged-out. That’s what was supposed to happen at least. Harry knew better than that though. He had seen the changes in the runes, had seen how they changed to become more permanent with each "new version" of the server.
This was the last day in Yggdrasil.

Today at midnight, the server would close down and any players left would be forcefully logged-out.

That's what was supposed to happen at least. Harry knew better than that though. He had seen the changes in the runes, had seen how they changed to become more permanent with each "new version" of the server.

Harry didn't know how old he was anymore, nor did he particularly care. With his status as Master of Death, he would not really "die" until the day came of the very final apocalypse, when each and every universe have collapsed, and there was no more life out there… only then he would be allowed to pass on. It had been hard to accept at first, but since the inevitable destruction of his original world, he had lived in numerous universes, each with their own set of particular rules, and his body and magic always adapted to the changes.

In the worlds he liked or were entertaining enough, he usually stayed until its destruction. If the world was boringly normal, he would stay only long enough to explore a little bit and satisfy his curiosity.

He hadn't liked the polluted world he had arrived in, where the big enterprises used workers as if they were napkins. There wasn't anything really interesting in this particular world, and he had been prepared to leave when the "game" of Yggdrasil came out.

There was something so utterly magical in that game; he could see it practically dripping. His curiosity would not let him leave without testing it first.

And that's how he ended here. He and Momonga had been chatting for a while now; walking in Nazarik's hallways after HeroHero left them. Sebas tian and the Pleiades were following behind them and towards the Throne room when Momonga suddenly stopped and cursed.

Apologizing, he said something along the lines of "I'll try to be back before midnight" and leaved, probably due to a problem in the Real World. Harry thought it was a pity; he was looking forward to his friend's reaction to the change that was bound to happen, but there was nothing he could do about that now.

Watching the staff of Ainz Ooal Gown in his hand, he recalled the moment where they had made the change of Guild Master, after their friends had left the game and only the two of them played and hunted together. Harry had asked to be the Guild Master because it would be beneficial once the runes in this world took effect.

Calmly walking to the Throne room, he ordered the servants following him to stay still before sitting down in the throne. He looked at Albedo, recalling the changes he had made to some of the NPCs in Nazarik all through the last months.

That had been one of the reasons he had asked for the position of Guild Master, he had made a few changes in the NPCs that were more likely to cause trouble, such as the configuration of Albedo to
be a slut and the settings of Rubedo… seriously, what had Tabula been thinking?

Time was running out, and as the last seconds passed by he closed his eyes. He felt the change immediately the moment the clock reached midnight, the runes activating all at once, his senses momentarily overwhelmed by the sheer amount of pure magic around him.

It finished in an instant, and he couldn't help but feel slightly disoriented at the abrupt change, one moment surrounded by nothing but magic before it was all gone at the next.

He opened his eyes and tried and failed to use the menu he was supposed to have access to as a player.

"Is there something wrong?"

It was the first time he listened to that voice, looking at Albedo, he couldn't help but feel excitement.

This was going to be fun.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Now that this story has more chapters, I can make a few warnings.

1) As you may have deduced from the prologue, the story takes place in the world of Overlord. I’ve written under the assumption that you know the novel or, at least, the anime, and thus don’t really describe the characters that much. If you have not finished the anime this story may be confusing for you.

2) Changes don’t really appear until after the 6th novel is over with (anime 2nd season, spoilers!), so if you find yourself impatient you’re free to leave, thanks for giving this story a chance even if it wasn’t what you were looking for.

3) This story contains two series of Omakes. “Childhood memories” series is regarding 5-year-old Floor Guardians and “Small” series is regarding a 5-year-old Harry. Before disregarding the whole story I’d suggest a quick read on them~

4) Similarly, if you like the main story but not the Omakes you can skip them, as they have little to no interaction with the main events.

That was all, wish you a nice reading!
The wards

Chapter 1 The wards

Harry had had trouble deciding the race he wanted to be. At the very beginning, when he was creating the avatar he strongly suspected would be made "real", the only thing he was sure about was that he didn't want to be something as boring as a human.

He didn't want to give up magic either. With this condition in mind and after seeing the options Yggdrasil gave, he finally settled for being a Djinn, something similar to the Genie of the lamp. He had been tempted to be a Necromancer like Momonga, mostly because it would be an internal joke if he could get the subcategory of "Master of Death" as his friend had done. Who would have guessed he could have that title twice? But in the end, he figured he would be uncomfortable if he couldn't take an appearance that somewhat resembled a human, so he had given up that idea.

The Djinn were a race heavily specialized in magic, in Yggdrasil, their description was "An invisible shapeshifter that can appear in the form of a human or an animal" and even if his original form looked like humanish smoke, the shapeshifting category allowed him to have a physical body that resembled his own. As such, he looked the way he was used to, white skin, black messy curls, emerald eyes, and a slightly short height.

In this body, physical attacks weren't his forte, but as he reached the maximum level of 100 he considered he could at least defend himself long enough to escape if it came down to a close-range physical battle.

His original body, the one he had before being forced into the game's avatar, had been stronger. Living for as long as he did, he had learned all kinds of fighting in his travels, and had a very big arsenal for physical, magical and mental battles. He wasn't sure if that would apply now that the game was made reality, which brought him to his current test.

Sneaking out of Nazarik without being noticed.

He had told the maids he was retiring for the night, so he was alone when he used a mix of his Djinn magic and his original magic to make himself invisible, odorless and silent. Using the ring of Ainz Ooal Gown, he teleported to the first floor, and noticed Demiurge's most trusted guards at the top of the staircase.

Silently wondering why they were out of their assigned posts, he was about to start walking when he saw Demiurge and his guards looking in his direction, looking confused and alert. Blinking in surprise, he tried to think how he had been discovered so soon when he realized he had done nothing to hide his aura. Demiurge probably sensed his magic and the aura he had as a "Supreme being" even if he couldn't see or hear him. Cursing softly, he admitted defeat and canceled his concealing magic with a flick of the wrist.

"Greetings" he said with a smile, nodding in their general direction as he walked closer to them. Once he reached the top of the stairs they kneeled as one, with Demiurge at the head.

"Hadrian-sama. May I ask why you have come here, without your escort?" asked Demiurge from his kneeling position. Was it his imagination or his tone held a slight reprimand? And here he thought only Sebas would voice his concern.
Harry knew the demon had wanted to ask why he was invisible as well, but was grateful he didn't. The answer "because I wanted to sneak out unnoticed" probably wouldn't have been a good one.

"There's something I need to do outside, please don't pay me any mind and continue with your assigned duties" was Harry's non-answer. He wanted to test out the limits of his power in this world and how much he could mix it with wizarding magic, among other branches he had gained from previous experiences in other worlds.

"Pardon me, Hadrian-sama, but I cannot allow your noble self to proceed unaccompanied. I am aware that it may inconvenience you, but I hope that in your boundless mercy, you will permit one of us to escort you." said Demiurge still with his gaze down. Ah, his intention by going out was to try to put protective wards in Nazarik, and wanted to be alone in case it was a failure… but Demiurge wasn't likely to allow it. Seemed he would have to attempt it another day.

"Hmm very well, then one of you may come with me" he said before walking towards the entrance, another pair of steps following him.

_The sky was very beautiful._

He couldn't help but admire it from his place flying in the sky, relaxing at the silence that was only broken by the sound of the wind and Demiurge's wings as the demon flied behind him.

"Yet another world to explore. It’s bound to be interesting, don’t you think?" he muttered softly, without taking his gaze from the night sky.

“Of course, Hadrian-sama. Another world… If your servant is allowed one question, may I inquire on the number of worlds my Lord has known?”

“Hm? How many… well, if you count the world Nazarik was located in originally, I’d say I’ve visited at least 50” he answered, turning around to meet the demon’s surprised gaze. ‘Visited’ was the right word alright, it’s not like he had actually stayed in all of them. There had been a few too violent for his tastes, and others were his original magic was partially blocked, so he had refused to live on those.

And then, there were a few where he had ended up as a political advisor, the true King in the shadows. It had all the fun of strategy without half the complications, which made it very entertaining.

Not paying attention to the soft gasp coming from the floor guardian, he instead focused on the moving ground that Mare was using to conceal Nazarik. His magic certainly was impressive.

"I'll go pay a visit to Mare" he said looking at Demiurge's frog-like face. He nodded and excused himself, saying he had a previous compromise. Considering the task he had given him and Albedo, they were probably still discussing the best security system for Nazarik.

"You may go"

Harry flew slowly, waiting for Demiurge to get farther away before activating again his concealing magic. This time, he also called in the magic and aura that usually surrounded him, hoping it would be enough.

Nodding to himself, he slowly flew down until he was on the ground, surrounded by Nazarik's tombs in the graveyard area. The graves seemed placed at random, and with only the light of the moon upon them it made for a nostalgic scenario.
Ah, he would have liked it if Momonga had stayed. If only for companionship's sake, at least he would have had someone he could speak normally to. The NPC's, being servants, always talked to him with respect and adoration, and, in case of Shalltear and Albedo, with infatuation.

He had changed Albedo's settings from being a slut to 'chooses her romantic partners carefully', since he would have dreaded to have her succubus instincts compromise a mission. As such, it had been an honest surprise when she had stated her love for him when he asked the guardians about their opinion of him. He should have expected that, considering he was a ‘Supreme being’ and thus, supposedly unable to make any mistakes…

He was getting out of track. Kneeling on the dirt, he placed his left hand on the ground while the other one summoned the elder wand. The three objects never failed to follow him, no matter where he went, but he couldn't help but feel sad that his other belongings had stayed in the polluted world from before. He had a lot of things from other universes in his bag; he would have to ask Death to retrieve it soon.

"Focus" he reprimanded himself. Closing his eyes, he started to chant in his mind the routine of protections he placed whenever he designated a place as ‘home’. The air surrounding him became warm and he could feel his magic giving soft pulses to the ground, a sphere invisible to anyone but him starting to grow around Nazarik's external walls.

The place he needed to cover was huge; he could feel his magical reserves getting slowly drained. By the time he was about to finish, he had lost a considerable amount of mana.

He was focusing on the finishing touches when three panicked voices saying "Hadrian-sama!" reached him.

Raising his head, he blinked in surprise at the sudden appearance of Demiurge, Albedo, and Mare, all looking at him with worry. They had knelt in front of him, when did this happen? He could see his own hand on the ground, so his invisibility must have disappeared at some point during the warding. Albedo had both hands together as in prayer, her ring shining under the moon’s light. Ah, now he knew how exactly they had surprised him.

He had given rings of Ainz Ooal Gown to all the guardians, stating that it was necessary for the security of Nazarik. In case of an invasion it was better if they could travel freely from one floor to the other, so he had accepted no objections for this. They must have teleported here.

"Hadrian-sama, what's happening? Is everything alright?" asked the sweet voice of Albedo from his right side.

"Oh, I'm…" He began to say before pausing, how could he explain the meaning of wards to them? Better keep it simple.

"I'm using my magic to protect Nazarik. In my world, they're called ‘wards’ and serve as a magical shield against most forms of attack.” They also served for concealing and what not, but it would take too much time to explain it fully.

"B-but, Hadrian-sama is… w-why are you hurt?" said Mare nervously, kneeling in front of him. Couldn't they see his HP was fine? Oh, maybe it wasn't. Considering a part of the wards required some living force… Harry wondered how much HP he had lost without realizing.

"I'm fine, it's part of the process since I need to kneel so I have contact with the ground. I have finished now, please don't worry" Harry answered rising from his previous spot. The guardians stayed kneeling, and didn't seem less worried so he added "Why did you come here?"
"Demiurge said you were going to speak with Mare so I wanted to see you… but when we arrived
Mare said you never graced him with your magnificent presence and then the air seemed to change.
We came to see the cause, and when we found Hadrian-sama in such a state, we didn't know what to
do! Please forgive us Hadrian-sama, we have failed!" was the crying response of Albedo, a few tears
threatening to fall from her eyes. Mare was in a similar state while Demiurge looked outright
depressed.

…IWhat was going on? What was affecting them so much? Did they think they had failed because
they mistook him as an enemy? Thinking about this, Harry decided to try another approach.

"This brand of magic is from my original world, there was no way you could have recognized it so
please don't worry about it." he said softly, making calming motions with his hands. Letting out a
sigh, he suddenly felt very tired.

"I must apologize; it seems I have distracted you from your assigned duties so I will retire for the
night. Thank you for your hard work, I'm very pleased with you" Harry said giving them a warm
smile. The last thing he saw before teleporting back to his room was the faces of the still depressed
guardians. He would have to reassure them in the morning; right now he was feeling like shit.

"We have failed" were the sad words of Albedo when their leader left, the other two looking at her
with sorrow.

"H-Hadrian-sama sacrificed so much…" was the trembling response of Mare, before breaking down
crying. Their Master had lost a terribly high amount of mana and health. When they arrived he was
kneeling with his eyes closed, and wouldn't react no matter how many times they called for him.

"We have failed Hadrian-sama. Even when he set us the task of Nazarik's security, is evident our
effort wasn't enough. Why else would he come and do it himself if not for our incompetence? We
must double- no! triple our efforts! Least he decides to leave us! We must work hard to be deserving
of his mighty rule!" said Demiurge, his form was slightly trembling and his tail moved from side to
side in obvious distress.

The other two looked at him with determination. They would NOT fail their dear Master a second
time.
Potions and a Basilisk

Chapter 2 Potions and a Basilisk

Harry teleported to his room, arriving at the part he used as an office, he gave a slight nod to the surprised and worried maid before entering his bedroom, feeling very tired.

He still had the Potter luck though, so he entered only to find a distressed Sebas, who somehow managed to reprimand him while still being perfectly respectful. The way he got mad was terribly similar to Touch-me, the guild founder.

"I'd prefer you refrain from heading out alone in the future…” Sebas face was quite stern, laced with worry. Still, as tired as Harry currently was, he could only nod in acceptance, promising not to do so in the future and apologizing for not notifying anyone he was going out.

Sebas didn't seem satisfied, but seeing the current condition of his master he refrained from saying anything more, and instead opened his inventory and offered a few healing items and MP refilling items.

He wanted to know what had happened that left his Master in such state, but seeing the tired look he was giving him and the hopeful looks he kept stealing at his bed, the butler understood now was not the time to pry.

Harry looked at the offered items oddly, and used the panel control to see his own status.

No wonder he was feeling so bloody tired. He hadn't noticed the Health invested was that much, he didn't feel any pain at the time, probably because he was giving it up freely and was not hurt by a third party, but it certainly seemed a bit excessive.

Why had the wards taken so much? They were designed by him, he knew they only took what they needed in order to fulfill their purpose, and he had been thinking about all the attacks, both physical and magical, that could harm Nazarik—

Ah, so that was the reason. He had probably thought one too many possibilities, and had ended up with an overprotective set of wards. Well, at least he didn't have to worry about a third party harming them now.

"It's alright Sebas, it will heal on his own. Besides, the day has already ended so I have plenty of time to get back to normal" Harry said softly, refusing to use the items when he didn't know if they could be created again in this new world. With so many unknowns, he couldn't be careless.

The butler seemed about to protest, so he added "It's my final decision" in a tone that left no room for arguments. Sebas bowed, asking if he needed anything else, and wished a goodnight once Harry instructed to be waken the next day at 7.

He let out a sigh of relief once the door clicked softly. The first day had been uncomfortable, his servants seemed to want to do everything for him, so Harry had to tell them that no, I don't need any help dressing and undressing, and no, I don't need you to tuck me in I'm not a child, among other things.

He somewhat understood that Sebas and the maids had been created with the thinking of the 18th century tradition, so they did a few things old fashioned, but he really didn't want nor need to be pampered.
Glad he didn't need to argue with an overprotective Sebas, he changed into more comfortable clothes and went to sleep.

He woke up at 6am, knowing he had an hour before Sebas came, he put on privacy wards around his room before sitting down at the edge of the bed and calling for his old friend.

"Death"

"Hello Master, I'm surprised you have called so soon" smiling at the skeletal form that had appeared in front of him, he silently wondered if it had taken that form to mock the undead beings in this world. He tried no to relate him with Momonga's appearance.

"Hello old friend— Wait! Don't tell me anything about this world, I want to discover it myself!" he hurried to say when he recognized the mischievous glint in Death's vacant eyes. There were no expressions in the skeletal form in front of him, but he just knew he had been about to receive a life-changing spoiler.

Ignoring the disappointed sigh of the immortal and sometimes childish entity, he asked it to retrieve the bag he had left in the tiny room he had used in the polluted world. Once Death summoned it and delivered it to him, they chatted amiably for a few minutes before his sensorial alarm told him someone was about to enter his office.

"Until next time old friend" he said grinning before lying down, and made rubbing motions at his eyes when he heard the knock and Sebas voice outside his bedroom.

Saying he was awake, he asked him to call his three previously distressed guardians to his office while he changed. Once ready, he went and explained more to them about the wards, and the fact that they had needed both, a large amount of MP and HP for their intended purpose. Afterwards, it began a long and tedious conversation where he had to reassure them multiple times that he was fine and no, my guardians, you didn't do anything wrong.

He let out a soft sigh, and said for the tenth time "Of course I'm satisfied with your work. You're doing your best, as a proper servant of Nazarik should. I'm happy with your loyalty and hard work, I can't think of anything that would make me happier."

Had he known they had spent the previous night overworking to compensate for their supposed incompetence, he wouldn't have said the last sentence, but he had been asleep at the time.

Once his guardians finally leaved, he asked one of the maids to bring the Mirror of Remote Viewing. Sitting down, he began to toy with the magical item, doing his best to ignore the watchful eyes he could feel in the back of his head.

He had told Sebas to stay in the little reunion where he had given the explanation to the other guardians, so he could understand that it had been a once-in-a-time event that would not be repeated, unless the enemy somehow managed to bring all the wards down. Even if you were from Harry's original world and a ward's specialist, it would be close to impossible to dissipate them, so he was very confident on them.

Not to mention that they had taken a lot from him, so they better be worth it, dammit.

Doing his best to ignore Sebas' sharp gaze, he let out a happily surprised sound when he could finally manipulate the object as he wished.

"Congratulations, Hadrian-sama"
"Thank you, Sebas. If you're tired you may leave to rest" doing nothing but watch his experiments probably was both, boring and tiring.

"Thank you for your kindness, but it would be unthinkable for a butler to rest while his master worked. With the aid of magic items, I am not affected by fatigue. Please allow me to stay by your side until the end, Hadrian-sama." was Sebas immediate response. It sounded different than usual though, with more determination. He was probably still affected by yesterday's events.

Agreeing with him, he started to search in the areas near Nazarik. As a Djinn, he needed to sleep once per week, but didn't need food even if he could still eat. His magical ring made it so he didn't need either, so yesterday had been the first time he slept since arriving in this world.

"Oh, it seems there's a little village near us" Around 10km south of Nazarik, the area seemed like a farming village and the little moving spots he supposed were humans seemed to be agitated. Zooming in an area at random, he saw the people from the village being killed by fully armored knights. It was a full massacre, the villagers couldn't hope to compare to the equipment and training of the knights. Should he help them? He didn't know anything about this new world yet.

…Then again, the unknown situation they were in wouldn't change until they ventured outside. Having taken a decision, he moved the mirror to the side and stood up.

"Sebas, put Nazarick on maximum alert. I will go first, tell Albedo to follow me after fully equipping herself but without her world item. After that, prepare support units in case something happens that results in our inability to retreat. The support units sent to the village should be adept at stealth or have the ability to go invisible." Harry said while he opened a [Gate] with his left hand, before halting.

He shouldn't show his face, anonymity may be important if that village was supposed to be destroyed by some legal nonsense. Thinking about that, he opened the inventory with his right hand and accioed a mask, instantly feeling several items hitting harmlessly against the palm. Should have been more specific. Taking one randomly, he placed it on his face without looking at it.

"I understand, but I wish to request the task of defending your body to be given to me." Sebas was by Harry's side in an instant, his gaze pleading silently.

"I need you to relay my orders. Besides, the knights in that village are close to Nazarik and may decide to attack us. Therefore, you must stay." seeing Sebas' worried look he added "If I determine that the situation is too dangerous and my life might be at risk I'll retreat immediately, you have my word"

Sebas seemed better now, so Harry crossed the [Gate] before he could change his mind. The scene that greeted him was the one of two females (sisters?) on the ground, the older trying miserably to protect the youngest, offering to take the blow the knight had been aiming at them.

Summoning the elder wand, he threw a couple of silent stunning spells at them, their bodies falling with a metallic thud. No resistance to magic then? The spells hadn't even been particularly overpowered either.

Using Djinn magic to check the status of the humans in front of him, he was surprised to see that the knights were a 16 and 18 level, while the females were a 8 and 4 level respectively.

How… weak. Then again, he should be careful and assume these knights were the weakest of their group. Deciding he should summon something to safely test the strength of the knights in the village, he activated the Djinn spell and thought [I wish for a Basilisk].
The Djinn could summon any creature so long it was living, the exact opposite of Momonga's undead creatures. The restrictions changed with the level of the summoned creature of course. It was tiresome that all summoning spells had to start with the words "I wish for" since it took precious seconds, but it was a condition of his race so he couldn't do anything about it. He had yet to check if it was limited to the creatures that existed in Yggdrasil or if it would work with creatures he had knowledge of from other worlds. He made a mental note to test it later.

The Basilisk from Yggdrasil was different from the one in his original world; for starters this one had extremities, 8 legs actually, so it looked more like a giant lizard than a giant snake. The eyes were similar to those of a chameleon and had a single horn on top of his nose.

The Basilisk had a petrifying gaze and venomous fangs, its skin wasn't very hard to get through since it was something like mithril and magic above 7 tier could kill it, but it was more agile than its size suggested. Somewhat weak at the level of 40, he figured it would be enough to test them and send it off with an order to kill the Knights attacking the village, pointing at the two resting on the floor for reference. He also instructed to close his inner eyelids, so the petrification effect wouldn't be used but the Basilisk could still see. He didn't want to deal with accidently petrified villagers.

Harry didn't expect his basilisk to hiss angrily and crush the two knocked-out knights with its claws, killing them both instantly before running to the village. It had probably misunderstood when he had pointed at them. Damn, he had wanted to interrogate them.

Hearing a step behind him, he turned to see a full armored Albedo stepping through the still activated [Gate] before it finally closed.

"The preparations took some time. I apologize for my late arrival" Albedo's melodic voice spoke from beneath the horned helmet. She possessed the greatest defensive ability in Nazarik, so he could relax slightly.

"No, it's fine. You came just in time."

"Thank you. Then… how shall we dispose of these inferior lifeforms? If you do not wish to stain your hands with their blood, I will gladly eliminate them on your behalf, Hadrian-sama." she said looking at the, literally petrified, girls that were stuck in a hugging position, the injury in the back of the older one still bleeding.

Shit, of course they had looked at the Basilisk before it closed its eyelids; it was just his luck. He should have summoned something else.

"...What exactly did Sebas tell you?" when Albedo didn't respond he sighed and said "my intention is to save this village. Our enemies are the knights in armor, like those corpses over there"

Seeing Albedo nod in understanding, he turned his eyes to the petrified girls. It was bothersome, but it had happened because he summoned a creature carelessly, so he had no one to blame but himself.

Taking the invisible little bag that was hanging on his neck, he hissed Ravenclaw in parseltongue to open it and accioed a potion that was used to cure petrification.

He could use an Yggdrasil potion that cured all negative status, in this case paralysis, but he wanted to know if his old potions could be used in this new world. Kneeling down at their level, he used his wand to send the potion directly into the oldest, considering he couldn't make her open her mouth in her current state, before waving the wand at her back to heal the bleeding slash.

"M-my sister! She can't move! Please, I beg you…!" She started screaming in panic the moment she
realized she could move. Grimacing slightly at the loud voice that was yelling very close to his sensitive ears, he quickly repeated the process with the young one before standing.

The man above them seemed to be a very powerful magic caster. Dressed in a white tunic with golden borders that ended at his calves, a glimpse of a blue t-shirt and black trousers underneath, the material of his clothes seemed of very high quality. He must have been some noble, even if she couldn't help but think that the expressionless white mask that only had holes for the eyes was weird.

She had felt relief when the knights had fallen, and didn't care if they were dead or unconscious. But before she could say anything, the man had summoned a basilisk of all things, a basilisk! And her eyes had moved on their own accord to meet the ones of the creature.

I can't move! I can't move…! Nemu, please run! She had thought desperately but her sister was as frozen as her. What would happen to them now? Would they have to wait for Nfirea to visit? But even then, she wasn't sure a cure for a basilisk's gaze existed. Panicking, she saw in the corner of her eye the strange man kneeling, a brownish potion in hand. Mercy, please…!

And then her body tingled and she could move again. "M-my sister! She can't move! Please, I beg you…!" she began screaming before halting, watching as another brown potion came out of nowhere and he pointed a stick she hadn't noticed before at her little Nemu.

Sensing her sister move, she cried in happiness, hugging her with even more force than before. She was about to begin thanking him when the woman at his side said "Worthless scum. How dare you raise your voice when addressing my master? After all the help you have received from my generous loved one? You inferior lifeforms deserve ten thousand deaths for that."

Freezing at the cold, sickening sweet voice that came from the armored woman that was raising her weapon at them, she couldn't help but wet herself.

"Calm down, Albedo. Given the circumstances, I'll forgive it." said the young male voice of the magic caster looking at his companion before turning his gaze to them. Even with the mask, she saw calm emerald eyes stare at her before he said "I have healed the slash on your back. Where you or your sister hurt anywhere else?"

Ashamed at her current position, she could feel her cheeks burn as she shook her head in negative. That had been her only injury.

"Do you know of magic?"

"Yes, yes I do. The alchemist who comes by our village… my friend, knows how to use magic." she answered the strange question. Was there really anyone out there that didn't knew magic existed?

"...Is that so. Well, that makes things easy to explain. I am a magic caster." he said before doing a circular motion with his stick around them. She couldn't see any difference, but the air around her seemed warmer and she felt protected.

Letting out a breath she didn't knew she had been holding, she heard him say a few spells out loud this time.

"[Anti-Life Cocoon]."

"[Wall of Protection From Arrows]."

A dome of light, roughly three meters in radius, surrounded the sisters.
"I have cast a defensive spell that keeps living creatures from coming near you, as well as a spell that weakens the effectiveness of shooting attacks and low-level harming magic. As long as you stay here, you should be safe."

After calmly explaining the effects of the magic to them, the caster turned to leave, the armored woman (his lover? servant?) following behind him.

"Ah... th-thank you for saving us!" she said, the soft cry of "Thank you!" from her sister resounding right after.

He stopped briefly to look at her and Nemu, so she decided to hastily add "And, and this may be asking for too much, but- but you are the only one we can count on. Please! Please save our parents!" she begged, bowing on the ground until her forehead touched the dirt.

"Alright. If they're still alive, I will rescue them."

She looked up at him, eyes open wide with surprise, before lowering her head again in thanks.

"Th-thank you! Thank you very much! And, and, may we know...your name?" she said rising her head again to see him.

...His name? Should he use his own or an alias? Thinking about this, Harry recalled an idea he had had last night.

Ainz Ooal Gown, the Guild he and his friends had created with so much effort in the last few years. Even if the usage of this name may bring the invasion of other players that held a grudge against them, he felt it was ideal to pay honor to their memory.

Decision made, he answered "My name is Ainz Ooal Gown" with a grin no one could see under his mask. What was life without risk anyways?
Chapter 3 Carne Village

By the time Harry arrived at the center of the village, there were no knights left alive and the villagers looked rightfully frightened at the possibility of the creature focusing on them. He should have ordered it to leave at least a few survivors for interrogation, but it was too late for that now.

"That's enough, my Basilisk" He said out loud for their sake. The giant lizard got farther away from them before sitting down like an oversized puppy, waiting for orders while it moved its large tail from side to side. With eight legs, the whole scene looked very weird.

After assuring the villagers that the creature was under his control, he spent the rest of the day with the Chief, gaining information and allies before attending the burial ceremony. He didn't even consider using a Resurrection wand on them; death was a natural part of the living cycle after all.

It was close to twilight, so he was waiting for it to end to bid his farewell. Bored, he sighed before looking at the basilisk at his right; considering it unusual that the summoned creature was still there. The time limit was up since a couple of hours ago, really.

Although he had some hypotheses, he still did not know enough to come to an answer. While he was thinking about this, a pair of figures turned up beside him.

One was Albedo, and the other was roughly humanoid, but resembled a spider dressed in a ninja uniform. Its eight legs were tipped with sharp blades, an Eight Edge Assassin. He was glad they could turn invisible; otherwise the villagers would have inevitably panicked.

"Are you part of the support troops?" He asked before they could say anything.

"Yes. There are 400 vassals beside myself who stand ready to assault the village at any time."

Assault the village? What had Sebas said exactly? He was really bad at passing messages. Harry made a mental note to avoid using him for that purpose in the future, even if it amused him that the butler would have trouble doing something so simple.

"...There's no need for an assault, the problem has been dealt with. How many of you Eight Edge Assassins are there?"

"There are 15 of us in total."

"Then make everyone else go back, you are to stay and be watchful, notify me if you see something unusual." 400 creatures were a tad much for a battle in a small village; they would end up utterly destroying it if they fought at full force and then his efforts would go to waste.

After watching the Eight Edge Assassin nod in acknowledgement, he dismissed it at the same time the burial seemed to be ending. Looking for the village chief, he found him talking to some of the villagers with a worried expression. Merlin, what was happening now? Sighing, he got closer to them while wishing whatever it was could be dealt with fast.

It seemed there were some mounted people running in their direction, quickly approaching Carne Village.
village. Considering he had gathered a nice amount of information from them, he offered to take care of the problem without an additional fee and instructed everyone to gather near the chief's house, the giant basilisk staying protectively in front of them.

Silently, he sent a [Message] ordering his assassins to let the unknown group pass into the village. He was hoping they would be reinforcements from the previous group of knights; he had lost the opportunity to interrogate them after all.

He stood in the square waiting for them to arrive, with only Albedo and the Chief for company. After a while, they finally sighted many mounted warriors along the road leading to the village. The men didn't seem to wear a uniform, their gear too varied to be considered anything other than protection equipment. Frankly, they looked like a bunch of mercenaries.

As they got closer he counted 20 of them, the riders forming neatly in the middle of the square. A single man stepped forward from the rest of them, most likely the leader of their group. Their attire was so different from the previous, full-armored knights; he lost hope of them being reinforcements.

The man's eyes rested briefly upon the village chief before lingering distrustfully on the giant basilisk. He seemed momentarily confused at the odd protective behavior of the creature before his gaze shifted to Albedo, making a quick evaluation of her armor and weapon.

After determining none of them were going to move, the man immediately turned his keen gaze on him. Harry remained calm in the odd staring contest, until the man finally seemed to be satisfied.

"I am the Warrior-Captain of the Re-Estize Kingdom, Gazef Stronoff. By order of the King, I have been visiting each of the frontier villages to exterminate the knights from enemy countries that have been making trouble here."

Surprised whispers could be heard from the villagers behind him, was this man really so awe-inspiring? Looking questionably at the chief, he was glad he didn't have to voice his ignorance.

"According to the traders, he is a man who claimed the championship of the martial arts tournament, and now he leads the elite warriors of the King." was the response to his silent question. Now that he looked more closely, the group actually had the same emblems on their chests, the Kingdom's symbol.

"You must be the chief of this village. Can you tell me who the person beside you is?"

"Ainz Ooal Gown, a magic caster. This village was attacked by knights, so I stepped in to rescue them. Pleased to meet you" Harry answered before the chief could speak.

Dismounting, Gazef made a deep bow and thanked him for his help. He considered it unusual that a high-class man bowed to an unknown like him, but nodded in acceptance even as he said that his help had not been for free.

He didn't bother to correct Gazef when he classified him as an adventurer, simply saying that he was from a far-away country and was currently traveling. When asked about the knights, he answered with a short and to the point "All dead" before pointing at the pile of bloodied, partially destroyed armors Albedo had piled in a corner.

"...Already dead... Ainz-dono, did you strike them down?"

"Not me directly" he said, turning his head to look at the basilisk that was still on guard in front of the people from the village. Gazef's gaze turned once more to the creature, even if he purposely avoided looking at its eyes, staring intently at the blood in its claws and jaws.
Harry then stated that he had controlled the creature with the help of the enchanted mask he wore and that its gaze had been nullified. Gazef nodded in understanding, looking relieved, before asking the chief if his group could stay for the night. They were walking towards the chief's house when one of Gazef's men came to report the sight of people surrounding the village.

The hope of reinforcements that had been previously crushed came back to life, so he sent a silent [Message] ordering to surround the new group that was getting close to the village, but refrained from attacking them without further knowledge. Sending [Messages] would have been complicated if he didn't silently place privacy wards to avoid being herd by the humans around him. Merlin bless the wandless Muffliato charm.

Getting inside the closest house, the chief's, they could see men in light armor surround the village with their winged monsters. Angels.

"Someone out there doesn't like you, Warrior-Captain." the village was too little and poor to be really that significant, and he had just arrived, so he hadn't made any enemies yet. Probably.

"It comes with the job. I didn't expect the Slaine Theocracy to have their eyes on me, not enough to send a special operations unit... the legendary Six Scriptures. It would seem that both in numbers or ability, they're superior to us." Harry raised an eyebrow at his inclusion in the last phrase. Looking at the low-level angels that looked like the ones Yggdrasil had, he wondered if they could summon similar creatures of higher level.

"I apologize, but I'll have to refrain from participating in the coming battle" he said before Gazef could ask, having rightly interpreted the hopeful gaze. It's not like he was against taking the risk of colliding with a force greater than himself, but he would never learn anything if they ended up being as weak as the previous knights. He wanted to witness a battle among equals.

He refused the petition to loan his Basilisk as well, and found himself surrounded by the men Gazef had come with, all pointing their weapons at him.

"Then... as decreed by the Kingdom's law, will you subject yourself to conscription?"

His face hardened under his mask. "You would find that's a very bad idea." he said softly, looking straight at Gazef, who averted his eyes after a few seconds. He was glad Albedo was mounting guard outside the house, or the Warrior-Captain would have surely lost his head.

"...That would be frightening indeed. We would be wiped out before even crossing blades with the gentlemen of the Slaine Theocracy."

"Glad you understand me." he said simply, not denying his words. The warriors lowered their weapons while the villagers seemed offended, whispering furiously among themselves. They had been disrespectful with the person that had saved them.

He recognized the look in Gazef as the one of a man that had accepted he was going to die. If he was really as important as he was made to be, having him as an ally wouldn't hurt. Making a decision, he gave him two items, one would ensure the man survived with 1 HP no matter the blow he took, while the other one would make the "carrier" change places with the "owner" of the item.

After giving his word to protect the villagers, he went out and made a low-level protection ward around the house everyone was reunited in. Standing at Albedo's side in front of the house, he watched the fight unfold with an attentive gaze.

While mildly interesting, he didn't learn anything other than the weakness of angels. Seeing that
Gazef was about to die, he told Albedo to grab his shoulder (and promptly ignored the sound full of glee that followed the action) before activating the item.

He now stood in the middle of a bloodied battle field. After using strong anti-information magic (it seems they had been watched after all) he ordered his assassins to knock them out in quick succession, starting with the leader. There wasn't any advantage in giving the enemy a chance to speak.

He had been prepared to help them stun the enemy, since their numbers were larger than his 15 subjects, but the humans were too slow to react to the invisible, fast attack that was descending upon them.

"Take them to Neuronist for interrogation." he instructed to the arachnid ninjas. He waited in his position until all of them had been taken to Nazarik, not wanting to go back so soon to the village.

Glad when it finally ended, it was already dark when he started to walk slowly back to the village. Albedo seemed tense though, was she still on guard even without enemies around? Or maybe…

"...Do you hate humans?"

"I detest them. Humans are weak and inferior lifeforms. They would look so pretty if I squashed them like bugs." she answered immediately with a sweet voice. That was going to be a problem, considering he wanted to meddle with humans. Sadly, the idea of changing those descriptions when he still could hadn't occurred to him. Back at the time, he hadn't thought it would be a hate this strong.

"Is that so? I don't hate them. I don't think anything of them as a race, but I'm willing to admit that there are a few whose determination and will to live up to their belief is worth admiring. The opposite is true as well, there are some that are nothing but a waste of space." he paused at Albedo's surprised gasp before continuing "I understand how you feel. However, I hope you can control yourself for the time being, it's very likely that we'll end up coexisting with them for a long while." Albedo nodded energetically in response.

He silently wondered if Albedo thought less of him now. He wasn't willing to dramatically change his own person just because someone else may not like it. If being himself made them think he was unfit for being their ruler, then he would nod in acceptance and leave Nazarik without a fight.

He couldn't see the pensive face of Albedo under her closed helmet, nor hear her worried thoughts when she internally panicked if she had said the wrong thing. It had been an honest answer, but if those were the thoughts of his beloved, then she would do her best to try to adapt to his perception. A Supreme Being could not be wrong, if they said white was black, then it must be.

Since Harry could not tell what she was thinking, he went over the day's proceedings once more. He had failed not once but twice in securing a good source of information, and both times it had happened because he hadn't explained his intentions clearly. The fact that his dear subjects would follow his orders blindly was a very worrying thought, on the worst case scenario; it could lead to Nazarik's complete annihilation. Maybe he was being too paranoid, but it still made him worry. He would have to teach them to recognize the intentions behind the orders, so they worked with defined objectives instead of going in blindly following him.

Still, there was no point worrying about that right now. Finally arriving at the village, the people came out to meet them.

Briefly explaining that they had "chased off" the enemy, he accepted the praise and grateful words of
the villagers and the suspicious gaze of the Warrior-Captain. Considering this, he was honestly surprised when Gazef came closer to say "Truly amazing. I do not know how I can repay you for your help, Ainz-dono. Please, look for me when you come to the Royal Capital. I will welcome you with open arms."

Thanking him, he politely declined to travel with him and his few survivors before bidding farewell to everyone. They traveled by mounting the Basilisk, walking in a random direction for a while before stopping. Using magic to determine if there was anyone watching them, physically or otherwise, he only noticed the assassins that had been silently following them, so he opened a [Gate] to go back home.

Back in Nazarik, he used magic to shrink the basilisk, placing it in his bedroom before reuniting his guardians to update them on the day's events, letting Albedo give the summary report. He clarified that he would only use the name of Ainz when acting as a representative of Nazarik in the outside world, and that he wanted them to still address him as Hadrian.

All things considered, it had been a quite productive day.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Well this chapter was a tad difficult to write, mostly because I didn't want to bore you with the details of the Light novel that had stayed the same, but it was still important so I tried to summarize it as much as possible. Hope it was decently done.

I thank you for all the favs, follows, and positive reviews. I accept constructive critics of course, thank you for staying with me.

I'm aware that there are people that would like me to follow the events of the light novel, while others would like me to be more original with this fanfic. My idea is to do a little bit of both, something I would like to show in the next chapter. This one was already finished, but I wanted to publish it at the same time as the next one to prove my point.

I'm on vacation right now and have plenty of time to write, so I'll update this story quite regularly.

And for those who actually bothered reading this note, here's an extra scene:

Harry was on his office, reading a report on the information Neuronist had gathered from the interrogations. The fact they were so weak had been a surprise, even worse when the Captain of the group had been the first to die with only 3 questions answered.

Sighing, he used a [Message] to ask Neuronist if there were any high-ranked people left. After a brief pause she told him that according to the others, only one remained. With an order to put him on a separate cell, he used the ring of Ainz Ooal Gown to go to the Room of Truth in the Frozen Prison of the 5th Floor. He ignored the torturing tools and blood of the place and went directly to the cell room Neuronist had prepared.
The man was bound and gagged on the cell's floor, fearful eyes looking up at him. Summoning his wand, he forced him to stand up before immobilizing him.

Looking at blue eyes, he used legilimency to see the important tidbits of his life. There were a lot of memories he could do without, but he tried not to overly skip them either. When he finally ended, he broke eye contact and blinked.

So the thing in the magic-sealing crystal was an angel. Dominion of authority, a creature that could use magic up to the 7th tier and was considered by this people as undefeatable.

Releasing a dark chuckle, he thanked the man with a painless killing curse and turned to leave. It seemed he had been worrying over nothing.
The reward of a memory

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 4 The reward of a Memory

Closing the door of his bedroom after bidding his servants a good night, he looked at the small, peacefully resting basilisk that had decided to steal his pillow.

Why hadn't it disappeared? Sitting on the bed, he picked up the small, puppy-sized lizard and brought him closer to his face for inspection. It really looked like the ones on Yggdrasil. Using magic to make it slightly larger, he ordered it to stand still while he kneeled to check the now lion-sized reptile.

There was nothing out of the- oh. Oh my, was that a scar? Looking closely at the basilisk’s eyes, he could see an old-looking scar adorning its scales, a little bit above the right eye, in the place the eyebrow would have been if the creature had had any.

"Did the knights hurt you?"

He felt a negative response. While the Basilisk didn't seem able to understand parseltongue, a pity really, he could still communicate with it, even if it was in the basic levels of yes and no, and through a link he shared with all his summoned creatures that determined their position as servant and master.

If he had summoned a more intelligent creature, he wouldn't be having so much trouble doing this test, but he was being stubborn deciding he could get it done with his very first summon in this new world.

"Have you ever been hurt?" A positive response.

"Have you ever gotten hurt while under my rule?" A negative response.

His hypothesis was that the basilisk had not disappeared because it had not been created from scratch, it had been, as the name of the magic stated, summoned. Meaning it had been taken from somewhere and brought to him, the magic forcing it to obey the caster.

Thinking he was on the right track, now he only wondered if the creature would obey him until death or if it had a time limit…or some other limit really. Would they obey him if he ordered their own death? Could they break the forced imperio they seemed to be chained with using their own magic or something else?

Curiosity peaked; he made a note to invest whatever free-time he had to experiment with summons. Shrinking again the basilisk, he placed it on his pillow before resting on the other side of the king-sized bed. It was curious how he had gotten somewhat attached to the little thing.

Two months have passed since he rescued Carne village. He was glad he could abuse his power to delegate most of Nazarik's administrative functions to Albedo, giving him more time to test out theories. After summoning several creatures with different levels of power and intelligence he had determined a few things.

One was that the imperioused state was unavoidable, even if it was the highest and most intelligent of creatures.
Two was that this state was not permanent. The higher the creature the less time he had to command it, as he discovered when a 90 level chimaera decided he would look well with burned skin. He had avoided the hellfire by a hair, and promptly vanished it before it could try something else. The conversation with Sebas about the burned down wall in his office hadn't been pleasant.

Whenever he summoned something, he needed to vanish it to wherever before the time was up, or he risked the creature's betrayal. The average time for each creature seemed based only on the power level, so he could categorize and plan ahead using this.

Unexpectedly, the creatures that were between 35-50 level of power tended to stay loyal to him even when the time was up. Some had chosen to stay in Nazarik when asked, and Aura had been happy to have new pets. The creatures whose level was lower than 35 were too scared to do anything other than flee, while the higher levels seemed offended they had been chained to obey him (not always the case though, mostly happened when he had his aura hidden and the creatures thought themselves to be stronger than him).

The only one he had kept as a personal pet was his very first summon, the basilisk that now expended some of its time as a puppy-sized lizard.

It was on his lap right now, as he checked the reports Albedo had given about Nazarik's condition. He could sense the killing intent Albedo was emitting, and couldn't help but tease her by petting the little lizard resting on his legs.

He considered it cute, and somewhat disturbing, that his guardians always gave jealous (and killing) stares at the little basilisk whenever they thought he wasn't looking. Sure the little one sometimes accompanied him on his shoulder when he was standing, rested on his lap when sitting down, and at his side at night, using one of his pillows as its own, but…

Ok, he admitted he was doing it on purpose. Not all the time though, he wasn't a sadist. He didn't want to overly bother his guardians, nor did he wish for a lazy good for nothing basilisk. (Also, there was a time when Shalltear had literally cried at the injustice, so he had toned it down since then).

As it was, he now tended to let the lizard recover its giant size and run freely on the sixth floor for a good portion of the day, so it could do some exercise. He had forbidden it to eat other creatures though, all of them were supposed to be treated as members of Nazarik.

Focusing back on the report at hand, the last one, he made a happy sound and congratulated Albedo for a job well done. At times like these, he seriously thought he was overworking them… he may as well give them a reward.

But what could he give that everyone would like? The only thing they seemed to have in common was their total loyalty and adoration for the 42 members of the Guild, the Supreme beings.

He could give them memories of their best times, when Ainz Ooal Gown had been at his prime. Actually, now that he thought of it, he could use it as a learning experience for his guardians.

"Albedo, please tell all the guardians, except for Gargantua and Victim, to meet me in the Throne room in an hour" he said to the succubus that looked like the perfect picture of innocence, as if she hadn't been staring to death his pet a moment before.

Seeing Albedo bow in agreement, he waited for her to leave before letting out a mischievous grin. This should be entertaining.

When he entered the Throne room, the guardians were already on their knees. He walked normally
to the enormous seat in the center of the room, followed by Sebas. Once he sat down, Sebas bowed and knelt with the others.

"Greetings my guardians, please raise your heads. I know you all have assigned work, don't worry I'll try to be brief. I just wanted to let you know that I'm very pleased with your hard work." he took in the happy expressions before continuing "So much in fact, that I would like to give you a reward." he said smiling.

After receiving the, by now expected, response of "We are happy to serve, we don't need rewards, your presence and words are enough reward" and so on, he raised his hand in a silent gesture to stop them.

"Then, what about a game?" rising from his seat, he took from his pocket the previously shrunken table he had gotten from the inventory and, summoning the elder wand, returned it to its normal size; placing it gently on the ground.

He took out the vials, each of them holding the same memory, and placed them gently on the table, one for each guardian including Sebas. They looked curiously at the gray swirling liquid in each little flask. He had decided to give them a copy of the very first adventure they had had as a guild, the one where they conquered the Great tomb of Nazarik.

Since the memory was his and there was a portion were they had separated battles, he made sure to include the ending were everyone reunited in the Throne room, got the parchment that designated Nazarik as theirs, and took a photo with everyone laughing.

"These are something from my original world called memories. When used right, they allow you to watch something already long past unfold in front of you, even if you were not present in that moment. I'll give these to you so you can see my friends and me the moment we conquered Nazarik." The guardians seemed happily surprised, so he was quick to continue before they could begin thanking him.

"The objective of this game is to discover the way to actually see the memory. There are neither rules nor time limit. You can experiment with them however you chose, don't worry about accidently destroying it, I'll give you another copy the number of times you need it. All the little flasks contain the same memory of course" looking at the expectant and determinated figures knelt in front of him; he ended his explanation with "any questions?"

When no one said anything he pointed his wand at the memories and levitated them in front of them. They took them as if they were the greatest thing in the world and thanked him, promising to do their best. Nodding in satisfaction, he wished them good luck before leaving the room.

The answer was that they couldn't. Not without a wand or a pensieve. The purpose of this little exercise was for them to learn to admit they couldn't do something, to learn how to ask him for help or a better explanation. Hell, he would be happy if they learned when to say "What you ask for is impossible".

Feeling very proud of his idea, he went back to his room. He was thinking about becoming an adventurer…

Shalltear

"UGHH!" she screamed in frustration as she threw an unlucky Vampire Bride to the other side of her bedroom.
Nothing, she couldn't think of nothing. It had been two weeks since her precious Hadrian-sama gave them the vials. She tried not to think about how it felt more like a punishment than a reward, since it would be disrespectful, but seeing the harmless little flask resting over her desk made her want to cry.

She had been the first guardian to ask for another copy, all because one of the Brides had suggested using undead magic on it. The substance in the flask had become dark before freezing, leaving a very solid rock-like surface in its place. She had brought it shamefully to her Master, and he had given it a brief interested look before he vanished it and gave her a new.

This process was repeated several more times, so now she was without ideas, depressed and with 3 less Vampire Brides.

"Say something! Give me an idea!" she ordered to the frightened Bride that had been too slow to leave the room when she had entered. Listening to the new suggestion, she thought it over before grabbing her threateningly by the neck.

"Now, say something useful before I kill you" she whispered

"M-my apolo—"

"I would suggest you do not disappoint me any further" She interrupted before letting her go, the Bride gasping for air before giving her a new suggestion.

Humming, she grabbed the delicate, transparent vial and gave it a try, resulting in the substance changing to a dark red color. Turning it over, the fluid seemed denser, almost like blood.

At this rate, she would run out of Vampire Brides.

Sebas in the meantime, let out a tired sigh, looking uncertainly at the vial in his hand. He had tried using Dragonoid magic, even if he wasn't an expert, being a monk and all.

Three weeks have already passed, and with each day he felt more like a disappointment. What kind of butler couldn't accomplish his Master's orders? He had tried to physically manipulate the substance, but it always slipped from his fingers. He had then, opened the flask and carefully turned it over his eye, wondering if Hadrian-sama words "...discover the way to actually see the memory" had been literal.

They were not.

The substance had not hurt him in the slightest, but it had inevitably slipped to the floor and he had been unable to recover it. With his head down in shame, he had been forced to ask for another copy for the first time.

Hadrian-sama hadn't looked disappointed, but he could just be trying to be amiable. His Master was benevolent like that, always gentle with his subjects, even to the ones undeserving like himself.

He and the guardians had been appointing reunions in every chance they got, exchanging ideas back and forth, but not even Demiurge or Albedo knew how to proceed this time. Sadden; he always worked thrice as hard whenever Hadrian-sama asked him for anything, trying to compensate for his failed attempts at solving the puzzle his Master had called a reward.

Mare

He had been staring at the crystal flask for a while now, almost hypnotized by the swirling liquid. Lying down on his bed with the covers completely covering him, he turned the little vial on his hand
to see the liquid from all angles.

A month had already passed, and Mare held the second place among the guardians for the greatest number of failed attempts, the first one being Shalltear.

He had asked Hadrian-sama for 34 copies already, having tested all kinds of magic; all he got to show for it was the burned mark on the corner of his room, where one of the vials had utterly exploded.

Mare knew he was powerful and very good at magic, but the fact was that this was unfamiliar, since it came from the original world of Hadrian-sama; and no matter how much he researched in the library with the help of the other guardians, they could never find anything that even mentioned something like this.

Maybe if he asked Hadrian-sama… but, weren't they supposed to solve it on their own? He thought depressively.

Then he opened his eyes in realization, bolting out of bed by reflex. Hadrian-sama hadn't say anything about not involving him, he only said the objective, and that there were no rules, meaning that…!

Gasping, he sent a [Message] to the maid that was following Hadrian-sama today, requesting an audience. Feeling excitement at the positive response, he quickly changed into his usual attire and took the vial from his bed before using the ring to teleport outside his Lord's office. Knocking shyly, he entered with insecure steps.

"T-thank you for receiving me so suddenly, Hadrian-sama" he said with a bow, his Lord looking at him with undisguised curiosity.

"No problem at all Mare, I always have time for my loyal subjects"

Mare smiled happily at the warm answer, feeling overjoyed to hear his Lord's praise. Nodding once, he took a deep breath before hurriedly asking "Hadrian-sama, may I ask to know more about how the memories work?"

Time seemed to freeze for a moment, before the shoulders of the Djinn began to shake. Mare was about to start muttering apologies when his Lord let out a delighted laugh.

"Of course!" he answered between chuckles, and asked the maid and assassins hiding on the ceiling to leave the room. Then, he took out his unique wand and waved it around a couple of times before looking back at him with glee.

"What would you like to know?"

Mare felt his eyes widen at the positive response. Hopeful, he asked without thinking "Are we really able to use the memories?"

That had been really disrespectful! To even suggest Hadrian-sama would give them an impossible mission-

He couldn't finish that line of thought however; since laugh started to resound all over the room.

"Well done Mare! Indeed, in your current situation, none of you would be able to use them" he said looking straight at him, emerald eyes shining with pride.
Mare glowed with happiness at the gaze, standing straighter. Hadrian-sama seemed to be waiting for something though, so he asked "T-then… what are we lacking?"

"This" his Lord said with a grin, taking out an odd-looking bowl from the bag he always carried around his neck. The black item was medium sized, and covered in symbols he had never seen before.

"Did you bring your copy?"

"Y-yes!" he said showing it to him. His Master nodded once in understanding before motioning him to come closer to the desk, where he placed the bowl.

"Then, what would you do to see the memory?"

Seeing both items, it was fairly obvious. Opening the vial, he emptied the contents in the bowl, watching with interest as the symbols glowed for a moment before going back to normal. Then, he took the bowl and brought it to his lips, drinking the gray liquid.

And nothing happened.

Hadrian-sama seemed like he wanted to laugh, but was refraining from doing it for some reason.

"…Good try. Any other ideas?" he asked while giving him yet another copy of the memory.

He emptied the flask in the bowl again; sure that step had been right at least. What else could he do other than drink it? He looked at it pensively, the liquid swirling brightly. What could you do with a liquid? Drink, bath, attack, clean…

Uncertainly, he brought his face closer to the liquid, his own reflection staring back at him mockingly. Taking a deep breath, he submerged his face in the not-big-enough-for-this bowl.

And the scenery surrounding him changed.

Once the memory ended, he could feel something pulling him upwards, and found himself standing on the office again.

Crying happy tears, he whispered "Thank you, thank you, thank you…!" over and over again, hugging Hadrian's midsection, his face hidden from view. He had seen her! Bukubukuchagama-sama!

Somewhere on the back of his mind he knew he should stop, since his Master's clothes were getting wet with tears… but then he felt a hand pat his head comfortingly, and he couldn't help but cry harder. He didn't know for how long he bothered his Lord with his gratefulness, greedily taking the warm friendly pats on his back and head before calming down.

Taking a step back to put some distance between them, he bowed to apologize, his Lord dismissing the issue.

"I would give you the bowl, but the other Guardians may deduce its purpose. So, until all of them have discovered it, I'm afraid you will have to wait, Mare"

"B-but Hadrian-sama! To take such a valuable item-"

"It's fine. I can replicate the runes, so I can use almost any recipient to make a pensieve"

Deducing that to be the name of the item, he nodded shakily. He was feeling so grateful and happy,
he was sure he would end up exploding.

"Also…Mare. What did you learn with this little game?"

"To pay attention to Hadrian-sama's wording" was the immediate response. His Master just blinked once at him before sighing.

…Not the answer he was expecting to hear.

In the end, Mare hadn't really admitted he couldn't do what Harry had asked them to, but at least came to ask for an explanation… that was something, right?

Harry really wasn't sure whether to take this as a success or a failure. He settled for thinking that it could have been worse.

"You can tell the other Guardians you have finished the game successfully. You are not allowed to give them the right solution, but I'll let you answer one question per guardian. Whether they ask you at the same time so they can hear all your answers or not is up to them" he said winking at Mare, who giggled and nodded in understanding.

**Demiurge**

He had been surprised when Mare was the one to call for a reunion. After their failure at getting information from the library, the young elf hadn't really suggested anything else. He hoped they could progress this time around.

Mare had been the first one to solve it.

Watching him with wide eyes, he was frozen on his seat while the other guardians expressed their surprise in their own way; Albedo and Shalltear looking like they were torn between being happy for him or sad that it hadn't been them.

How had he done it? He wondered with honest curiosity, focusing completely on Mare when he opened his mouth to speak.

"Hadrian-sama said it was ok to answer one question per person" he dropped suddenly on them. Letting out a surprised gasp, he felt relieved. If they made the rights questions, this game would finally reach its end.

While he carefully thought which question would be best for gathering more information he heard Cocytus ask

"Did. you. receive. help. from. someone?"

Oh no, that could have been phrased better—

"Y-yes" Mare said simply, not saying any names. They would have to waste another question now.

"Who?" Asked Shalltear, who didn't seem to realize that counted as her question

"Hadrian-sama" the elf said with an innocent smile.

He was momentarily confused, wasn't this their task to complete? But remembering Hadrian-sama's wording, he realized he had never stated they had to do it completely on their own.

Good work Mare he thought, mentally admitting he wouldn't have risked his Master's
disappointment.

Being one of the greatest minds in Nazarik meant the expectations placed on him were larger than the ones placed on the other guardians. At least for this kind of objective, were they needed to use their intellect to deduce the right answer and fulfill Hadrian-sama's real wish.

He had had his hands full these last weeks. Between playing the game their Lord had made, organizing Nazarik’s security system, fulfilling his obligations as a Floor Guardian on the 7th floor, and his duties as researcher to help with the matter of Nazarik's resources, he didn't have much time left for anything else. He didn't want to know what would have happened if his Lord had asked another thing from him.

As his loyal servant, his duty was to accept the request, no matter what he would have had to do in order to work on everything at once. But if he did that, he would risk failing at one of his duties, not performing at his best due to the lack of time.

What would be best in that kind of situation? He wondered before his line of thought was interrupted by the next question.

"How did Hadrian-sama help you?" Was Sebas' chosen question, his sharp gaze making Mare squirm uncomfortably on his seat.

"He… he answered my questions"

Mare was being very unforgiving. He really was answering giving as few details as possible.

"Ohhhh come on Mare! You're not really telling us anything!" yelled Aura at her brother.

"S-sorry onee-san, Hadrian-sama said not to give away the answer. This is j-just to help a little" whispered Mare with an apologetic face.

"Haaaaah! how difficult! My head is burning!" came the stressed complaint from Shalltear, her hands grasping her head as she moved restlessly.

"Did Hadrian-sama give you anything?" asked Albedo staring intensely at Mare.

"Y-yes…"

"Oh! What did he gave you?" came Aura's intrigued voice.

"A bowl"

Silence followed the unexpected answer. A bowl? He saw them looking expectantly at him, the very last question.

"Was this bowl something necessary to see the memory?" He asked calmly, tail twitching in anticipation.

"Y-yes"

Ah, so it had been an impossible mission from the very beginning; and it had taken them a month to realize it.

No, Mare had been the one to understand it first. If not for him, it probably would have taken them at least another couple of months, everyone here was stubborn like that, himself included.
Hadrian-sama wanted them to admit they couldn't do it? he thought with a feeling of dread. Had he wanted them to realize how incompetent they truly were?

No, he must be misunderstanding something… Ah, Maybe-

"Maybe Hadrian-sama wanted us to rely more on him?" he thought out loud, drawing the gazes of the other guardians.

"Eh? What do you mean?" asked Aura, her head tilted to the side questioningly.

"If we had thought about consulting with him from the beginning, this game wouldn't have lasted a single day. But instead, we invested a whole month in it." he explained calmly "I think the purpose of this game was to remind us that we should ask for his superior wisdom, so we can serve him better"

"I see. As expected of Demiurge"

"Ohh! So that was it!"

Tuning out the exclamations of his fellow guardians, he brought attention to the fact that the only thing left was to decide the order in which they would visit their Lord, to finish the game. Using papers with numbers, the order was defined randomly, and the reunion came to an end.

Hadrian

Either Mare said too much in his answers or they made very good questions. Whatever the case, two days after his chat with Mare, all his guardians had solved it. Even if all of them had drank from the pensieve before using it correctly, which he found very amusing.

They had loved the memory of course, their reactions unmistakably happy. The last one to come had been Sebas, so he ordered him to gather the guardians in his office.

Once everyone arrived, he gave one pensieve to each, and asked them to make a list of the things they would like to know about his friends, the "Supreme beings". He would search for a memory that fitted their chosen topics and give it to them, or tell them to ask for something else if he didn't find any memory related to the list.

After telling them they had a week to think it over and make the list, he could finally check the results of the now completed game.

"Now, there's something I would like to ask you. Tell me… What did you learn with this little game?"

Each guardian gave him their own answer, which could be summarized in a "To ask for a fraction of your infinite wisdom whenever we are having trouble with an assigned task" along with some apologies for incompetence and what not.

Their answer had been too synchronized, so he knew this was probably the conclusion they have arrived at in one of their meetings. Looking at Demiurge and Albedo specifically, he thought the idea most likely had come from them.

"It's not a sign of incompetence. If anything, when you ask for more information or the doubts you have on your assigned task is a sign that you consider your job important enough to try to avoid making mistakes." seeing the uneasy looks on his subjects, he added "I want you to know that I'm here to listen and solve any problems you may have regarding your work. Also… it's valid to make
suggestions if you think a plan could be better or if you don't agree with a specific part of it. You're more knowledgeable on certain subjects than me, and your opinion is appreciated."

They seemed to understand his point, even if they didn't look very convinced on the "make suggestions" part.

"...If I told you I wanted to fight with someone stronger than me without your help and not using my best items. What would you do?"

Now they really got his point. A chorus of disagreeing sounds coming from them, and he actually saw Sebas fidget from the corner of the eye, as if he had wanted to physically restrain him from doing something so foolish.

"Glad you understand. I have nothing more to say on the matter, is there anything you would like to add?"

"Hadrian-sama wouldn't really do something like that right? It was just an example?" Said Aura with an uncharacteristically soft voice.

The others seemed oddly attentive. Were they seriously worrying? He really wouldn't (unless he was dying of boredom, and even then it was farfetched). In his first few lives, he had been willing to offer his life for others, but as the time passed he didn't really see the point anymore. Death would always come in the end.

"Only an example Aura" he said in a tone he hoped was soothing. When the silence remained unperturbed he dismissed them from his office and retired for the day, taking the small basilisk that had been resting on his desk.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Finally ended! This chapter has been the longest so far.

I'm aware that in my usual chapters the Guardians don't have much screen time, so I made this chapter to focus on them. I had wanted to write from all their points of view, but as I was writing in the end I couldn't make it fit.

So Albedo, Cocytus and Aura didn't have screen time on this one, but I'll try to include them on the next chapters. Also, Demiurge's part was the most difficult by far; I hope I represented him decently.

What do you think so far? Feel free to let me know in the reviews.

Thanks for staying with me. See ya!
Chapter 5 The Guardian’s reactions

The first one to come to his office after Mare’s success had been Cocytus.

He had feared the pensieve would break when Cocytus practically gave it a headbutt instead of diving in slowly. He resolved to add runes that would make it indestructible after that particular display.

Once the memory ended, Cocytus fell to his knees with a loud thud breathing heavily, making the floor in front of him start freezing. His tail moved from side to side, so uncontrolled that he actually hit a few pieces of furniture in his office, breaking them instantly. Nothing a reparo wouldn’t fix, but that seemed to take him out of his stupor.

“I. apologize. Hadrian-sama.” the insectoid whispered in his characteristic rough voice “I. was. too. happy. my. control. slipped.”

“It’s alright Cocytus, I can fix them easily” he said, making a dismissive gesture at the broken objects “I’m glad you liked your reward”.

Any loyal person in Nazarik would love this memory… that was Cocytu’s opinion at least. Truth be told, he had conflicting emotions regarding this reward, mostly because he didn’t feel like he deserved it.

Albedo, Demiurge, Aura, Mare… the other guardians shined daily in their contributions for Nazarik, helping their Master with their assigned tasks.

As per Demiurge’s request, he was in charge of Nazarik’s defense in case an invasion occurred, and while he knew that it was an important task, he couldn’t help but wish he could prove himself by actually doing something. It was heretic, to wish for enemies strong enough to invade Nazarik so he could prove his worth… he didn’t deserve such a high reward at all.

“Cocytus?”

“Hadrian-sama. may. I. ask. something?” his Lord nodded in acceptance, watching him with interest.

“Is. there. anything. else. I. can. do. to. serve. Nazarik?” he said before he lost his courage. He had always considered himself as a sword, one that would obey whatever his Master ordered without a second thought. To ask for something else was… but he couldn’t help but wish for more, to be useful.

“Other than the defense I take?” his Lord hummed thoughtfully for a moment before he snapped his fingers and looked at him with something akin to excitement

“Actually, you can. This is not the first world I live in, nor will it be the last. I have a collection of weapons that should cause certain effects, but have yet to test them in this world. Would you help me with that?”

He thought that the fact his Master had conquered other worlds was to be expected, he was a
Supreme Being after all, but he tensed up when he heard this world would not be the last. Did this mean he would leave too? A feeling of dread descended on him, making him shiver.

Nazarik would be helpless if his Master left, the moral of all the members would be nonexistent if they failed Hadrian-sama in such a way that made him want to leave. They wouldn’t be able to stop him either, if he really decided that… they were his faithful servants, and would obey their Master’s wish even when they knew it would mean their end. No, actually, it would be much more merciful to just die than to continue living without anyone left to serve and swear loyalty to—

“Cocytus?”

“Understood. Hadrian-sama!” He said louder than he intended to.

“…very well. Then I will give them to you, along with a list that describes the way they’re supposed to work. I expect a report with your observations for each weapon. Any doubts?”

“No. Hadrian-sama. I will do as ordered”

“I’ll be counting on you” his Lord said with a nod, gaze contemplative. Understanding he was being dismissed, he stood up slowly, walking carefully so he didn’t break anything else. How could he have lost control like that?

Stepping out of the office with his head down in shame, he decided to mention what Hadrian-sama had said in the Guardian’s next weekly reunion.

Aura had been the second to go, knocking on their Master’s office half an hour after Cocytus left. She had seen him on the way here actually, but he seemed to be deep in thought and hadn’t answered her salute.

She balanced from one foot to the other in excitement outside the office before going inside with Hadrian-sama’s permission. He didn’t seem surprised at all when she asked for the bowl, but chuckled when she drank the flavorless liquid.

Thinking it over, she took a deep breath and immersed her face carefully on the bowl once she emptied the vial on it.

After the memory ended, she stood with watery eyes in the office. Bukubukuchagama-sama had been so cool! Her creator had been on Hadrian-sama’s team, so she could admire the perfect team work they displayed in the battle, and the way they confided in one another with their lives.

“Thank you so much, Hadrian-sama!” She exclaimed happily, looking brightly at him with tears running down her cheeks. His gaze softened, and came closer to her offering a handkerchief to clean her face.

She took it gratefully, giggling when she felt Hadrian-sama pat her head in a comforting manner. After hesitating for a moment, she raised her arms, silently requesting for him to pick her up. Her Lord seemed surprised for a moment before complying with a small smile.

One arm was under her knees while the other one rested on her back, carrying her steadily. She placed one hand on the upper part of his arm, close to the shoulder, grasping the cloth strongly. Her other hand held the handkerchief as she hid her face in his shoulder, crying happy tears once again; which only got worse when she felt warm pats on her back.

This really was the best reward ever.
Sometime later, Albedo was on her way to her beloved’s room, having received a [Message] from Aura saying it was her turn. Albedo had been irritated at first, when she had seen the number 3 on her piece of paper, but her mood got better when Demiurge commented she would have more than enough time to prepare and be in pristine form.

Finally arriving to his office, she breathed slowly to calm down. It had been 18 hours since the last time she had seen her precious Master, and wasn’t that way too long? Her wings flapped impatiently as she knocked, receiving an immediate “Enter” in response.

He seemed to have been expecting the visit; his desk was unusually free of any reports and books, occupied only with the blasted little Basilisk he had chosen to privilege with his affection. She refrained from grinding her teeth and focused instead on her beloved.

He nodded once when she asked for the bowl, making it appear on the table with a snap of his fingers. She had no way of knowing it had always been there, since Harry had deduced he would be doing this all day, and had simply placed a notice-me-not charm on it after cleaning everything on the desk.

She got it right on her second attempt, immersing her face slowly on the bowl and watching the memory play in front of her.

Once it was over she stood silently in the office, staring at the floor, her hair coming down to hide her face from view.

“Albedo?”

She was aware that her form was slightly trembling, she was trying very hard not to-

“What’s wrong Albedo?” she heard his worried tone from very close, his warm hand touching her shoulder slightly.

"Ahh!” Unable to resist her succubus instincts anymore, she tackled her beloved with enough force to make him fall backwards, with her body lying on top of him.

Beautiful emerald eyes looked at her with shock, his form tense underneath her. He stayed still for a moment before placing his hands on her shoulders to try to put some distance between them.

“Control yourself, Albedo!”

“Hadrian-sama, I can’t- anymore!” she exclaimed at the same time she lowered herself on him, her wings flapping persistently.

Shit, shit, shit…! He had made the maid and assassins leave, since he wanted his guardians to have some privacy, having expected an emotional response. Which meant he was on his own now.

“Get off of me this instant, it’s an order!” he yelled. As a Djinn, he wasn’t strong enough to forcefully push her away, so he tried to ignore Albedo’s provoking movements and think of a magical way out of this.

It’s not like he didn’t like her. She was easy on the eyes, intelligent and loyal, but the fact he couldn’t ignore was that she was… well, intense. Her creator had been Tabula-san, and, having read her description, he was aware that everything she felt, she did strongly. Shalltear was similar in that aspect, with a tendency to act by impulse.

Having any sort of romantic relationship with any of them would be asking for trouble.
He thought about casting petrifying charms on her, but then remembered that she had an item that protected her from any sort of negative status, paralysis included. Cursing, he tried to think of something else.

“Just a little…!”

“Stop!”

“Then please let me be your pet! So I can hug you, rest on your lap and at your side at night…!”

He swore not to get close to the Basilisk while she was present ever again. He really should have stopped the teasing when Shalltear cried.

Merlin’s baggy sweatpants she was trying to undress him now!

Panicking for the first time in the last half-century, he did the first thing he could think of and apparated out of his office, taking her with him since they were in contact.

He was used to the odd feeling of apparition, having perfected it to the point where he didn’t have to take any steps to do it. But Albedo was slightly disoriented, so he took advantage of that and slipped away from her, taking off the tunic he wore over his usual clothes since she had a very strong grasp of the fabric.

“Hadrian-sama!” turning, he sighed in relief when he saw his assassins, who had been standing on the hallway as he had ordered.

Looking at the now restrained Albedo, he used his hand to massage his brows tiredly.

“Take her to her room. I’ll decide on a punishment later” he said as he took back the tunic from Albedo’s hands, the fabric slipping easily from her unresponsive fingers. He didn’t put it on again though, and simply bended it on his arm as he made his way back to the office.

Turning to the left, he didn’t stop until reaching the bedroom, where he dropped gracelessly on the king-size bed. Using his wand to place privacy and locking wards, he closed his eyes and tried to sleep, ignoring the whisper of laughter that sounded remarkably like Death’s.

Shalltear in the meanwhile was fuming in her room. Albedo must had taken too much time, because she didn’t receive any [Message] from her saying it was her turn, and when she contacted the maid that followed Hadrian-sama today she told her that he had retired for the day.

She had taken three hours to be ready, making sure her chest was adequate and steady so she would be able to move without problems, and now she would have to wait for tomorrow’s morning. Being an undead, she didn’t sleep so it was a very long night for her, waiting for the sunrise impatiently in her room.

Once morning finally came, she requested an audience with her Lord, and got permission to see him. Using the ring her precious Master had given her, she teleported outside his office and knocked.

Going in, her eyes delighted with her loved one’s beautiful form standing behind his desk. The fact that he wasn’t overly tall never failed to make her happy, since she considered it made them fit better as a couple.

After they exchanged greetings, she asked for the bowl and her Lord made it appear on the desk with a snap of the fingers. Carefully coming closer to the desk, she gracefully emptied the liquid and drank it.
Cheeks reddening at the amused eyes of her Master, she was given another copy and this time she tried to immerse her face into it.

Once the memory ended, she blinked a couple of times before admitting defeat and crying freely, her hands coming to her eyes as if to hide them. She stood like this for a moment before she felt something soft graze her hand, and saw a handkerchief floating in front of her face.

Smiling at the offer, she took it thanking him, using it to delicately dry her tears. She would have preferred it if Hadrian-sama had come closer to give it, but he hadn’t moved from his position behind the desk, oddly tense as if expecting an attack.

Her creator Peroroncino-sama hadn't been present in Hadrian-sama's team, but she could see him before they separated and after everything ended, and she was happy that she got to know more about him.

"Thank you Hadrian-sama" she said bowing her head and bending slightly her knees, her hands raising the long skirt of her dress a little.

“I’m glad you liked it.”

Walking around the desk, she came closer to return the handkerchief, emerald eyes following her every move closely. Why was her Master on guard around her? Had she done something?

“Hadrian-sama? What’s wrong?”

He blinked and seemed to consider something, before finally relaxing with a sigh.

“I’m sorry Shalltear. I was worried about something, but it seems I was being paranoid. Come closer”

Happily obeying his command, she was ecstatic at the apologetic pats she received on the head.

“Good work, I know it must have been difficult”

“N-not at all! I’ll always do as Hadrian-sama wishes!”

Her Lord didn’t say anything, but gave her an understanding smile; so she knew he had seen right through her.

“Thank you. I’ll be counting on you then.”

Harry watched Shalltear leave with cautious eyes. The only guardians left were Demiurge and Sebas. Even when the butler wasn’t an official guardian, he considered him as such because he and the pleyades were the protection assigned to the 9th floor. That should count for something, right?

The next one to knock on his door was Demiurge. He really couldn’t help but chuckle, trying to cover it with a cough, at the troubled expression the demon made after drinking from the pensieve.

Giving him another copy, his guardian did the right thing, so Harry waited patiently standing behind his desk. After Albedo’s unexpected attack, he had placed protective runes in the area surrounding his desk, not really sure what to expect when Shalltear had been the next one to visit. The runes would only activate if he said the code but his preparations hadn’t been necessary. He was about to take down the protection circle when Demiurge called, so he ended up postponing it for a later date.

Demiurge’s reaction was the most controlled by far, standing a little bit shakily and cleaning the
corner of his diamond-like eyes. Considering his description, he should have guessed it would be something like this, since Ulbert had programmed him to be a Master manipulator and leader strategist; he had a very strong grip on the emotions he showed in the surface.

The only thing that indicated just how much the memory had affected him was the traitorous tail, moving a little from side to side. Well, Ulbert had been part of his team so he had been present all the time in the memory, it was logical that he would be affected by it.

Quickly recovering the composure, the demon knelt and placed a hand above his heart, a genuine happy smile on his face. He then proceeded to give a short speech to formally thank him and swear undying loyalty to him once more.

A little overwhelmed by the intensity of Demiurge’s voice, he just nodded, silently accepting his pledge of loyalty.

Early in the afternoon, Sebas knocked on the office’s door. Following the actions of the other guardians, he got it right on the second attempt and was currently watching the memory play.

Sebas failed attempts, or lack of them, were interesting. He was the one that asked the minor quantity of copies, with an amazing total number of 4, counting the one he just drank from the pensieve.

Dragonoid magic didn’t seem to react with the memory at all, not modifying it in the slightest. Now he was curious what would happen if he tried to use magic of his original world on Sebas or vice versa. Would the magic react as intended? Maybe the memories were the only exception?

His line of thought was interrupted by Sebas choked gasp; it seemed the memory had ended. Sebas took a step back, looking slightly disoriented and blinking repeatedly, avoiding Harry’s curious gaze. Once the butler calmed down, he bowed by the waist deeply, thanking him profusely.

“You all have worked hard for Nazarik. This is the least I could do to show you my appreciation”

“We were created to serve the Supreme beings; to follow your orders is already a reward as it gives us a reason for existing. Thank you for your consideration, please allow us to stay by your side.” Sebas only had the knowledge his creator had blessed him with in the moment of his creation. He had a few blurry memories of snippets of conversations or certain situations regarding the Supreme beings but he couldn’t understand most of it. As such, he was more than happy to learn more about them.

“Thank you Sebas. In that case, there’s something I need your help with- ah, no, there’s no need to kneel. Please stand up.”

Following the command, he stood perfectly still in the middle of the office. Hadrian-sama, who had been behind the desk since his arrival, walked around it until he came to be in front of him, the unique wand that always came out of nowhere in his right hand.

“I would like to test a spell I learned in my original world. Don’t worry, it’s not going to hurt you.”

Sebas nodded once to show his acceptance, not sure if he was supposed to speak.

His Master waved his wand around him and Sebas could feel something covering the top of his head like an invisible blanket before he felt it slip. This situation was repeated several times and he could tell they were supposed to be different spells, but the end result was the same.

“Unexpected. Thank you Sebas, these are very interesting results.” He didn’t know how to answer to that and was relieved that he didn’t need to when his Lord continued “Now, since the game has
ended, please inform the guardians that I’ll expect them here in an hour.”

Bowing in agreement, he left the office wondering what the test had been about.

First, Harry had tried to transfigurate Sebas appearance, like the length and color of his hair and facial features. When that didn’t work he had sent a silent Tarantallegra, the dancing feet spell but it hadn’t done anything either. A confundus charm, a clumsy hex, no matter what kind of magic he tried Sebas remained the same. He had tried everything except a potion and harmful dark magic.

He was glad he discovered this with Sebas and not in the middle of a fight with a Dragonoid.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Well, now I actually managed to include everyone. Yay!

Obviously, poor Cocytus misunderstood. As defined in chapter 1, Harry has never conquered any world. Also, writing Albedo’s scene was difficult since I’m pretty bad with everything even remotely related to romance. So no, no romantic pairing for Harry, sorry! It’s not like I’m against it, I just can’t write it.

So this is a prelude for the end of the last chapter, but don’t worry, the story will actually move forward on the next one!

Thanks for reading. I’ve started to work though, so I may not update as frequently as I have done previously.

See you around!
Chapter 6 The Genie of the lamp

There was a World item that could only be used against magic casters. A little innocent golden lamp that could bind the victim’s magic so it would only work when the owner of the item gave an order, the victim forced to obey. There were several limits for this:

1. The one that uses the item must be from the Human race and have a level lower than 20.
2. Any command given is redeemed void after 24 hours.
3. The magic caster must have a level greater than 60 and be close to the item by at least 1km during the first use.
4. If the one that used the item dies, the magic caster is automatically released.
5. The bound magic caster cannot kill or harm the user directly.

It’s not like the bloody item came with instructions though, so it was only very bad, very Potter luck that a human had used it successfully on Harry.

He had been walking along with CZ Delta, having chosen her to parade with him as adventurers since she had a Neutral-Good karma of 100. They were going to be in close proximity with a great quantity of humans in E-Rantel, even working for them, so he needed someone that could actually stand their presence.

It had taken some convincing, but in the end he managed to leave Nazarik in the good hands of Albedo. He had yet to decide a punishment for her, but he figured that having leverage over her could come on handy.

They weren’t taking the main road that lead to E-Rantel, traveling instead on a plain covered in high grass. The scenery was calm and he was certainly enjoying the nice view this world offered in comparison with the dark polluted one. He had insisted in taking this route mainly for that, actually.

“I can sense human-shaped forms in that direction” came the sudden voice of CZ Delta. No, Shizu, since that had been the alias she had chosen to use for this mission.

Now that she mentioned it, he thought he could see some smoke rising to the otherwise clear sky. Curious, he decided to go investigate the cause, since he knew the people in this world actually used magic-based inventions to cook and stay warm.

The people in this village (too small to be a city) were being attacked by fire-spitting, low-ranked demons, smoke rising due to some of the houses burning. The Chief of Carne Village hadn’t mentioned the existence of this place, but he didn’t seem like the kind of man that traveled so he wasn’t really surprised.

“Go help them” he instructed to the maid, the female running towards them after a single, expressionless nod. They may as well start to gain popularity as wanna-be adventurers.

He chose to go to the opposite side of the village, were the buildings were still intact, hoping to catch whoever was leading the attack. He never reached his destination however, since he failed to notice that one of the villagers was surrounded by demons, a small golden lamp shakily grasped in his hands.
“To serve and obey, the bounds are here to stay!” came the desperate cry of the youngish male, chanting the words as if expecting a miracle.

-Villager POV-

He had been pointing the lamp towards the closest demon, so he was surprised when the smokish magic turned to the left and covered a petite male warrior that had been leaving the scene. The lamp whistled in a manner similar to a tea pot and glowed for a moment before going back to normal.

“Don’t let me die!” he quickly screamed when he noticed the demons were about to attack. The farmer recognized the signals of the lamp that indicated it had worked, even if it hadn’t been the target he had pointed at.

The magic of the lamp was little more than a rumor, a legend. No one in his family had ever been able to use it and only knew the chant and supposed function of it because of one book that had been passed down for generations, one that had been used more as a fairy tale book than anything else. He had been desperate though, and the lamp had happened to be nearby when he was forced to leave his home.

He had closed his eyes when he felt death was imminent, but the attack never came. Opening them slowly, he saw the warrior from before standing in front of him, the floor covered with the corpses of the demons that had been about to kill him. His back was carrying two thin swords, and on his hand was a wood stick.

“What the hell?” the warrior seemed as confused as he was when he turned to look at him, his gaze almost immediately falling to the lamp on his hands. “You’ve got to be kidding me!”

In the blink of an eye, the warrior closed the distance between them and he suddenly saw a sword pointing threateningly against his neck. Moving backwards in fear, the look of rage on the warrior remained unperturbed.

He watched him worriedly for a moment before relaxing, remembering his words from earlier. The man in front of him was bound to guarantee his survival.

“S-stay with me” was his second order. He had tried to say it confidently, but the murdering look of the male made it impossible. He needed him to stay near however, even if his order was not to let him die, the warrior could purposely get away from him so he wouldn’t be able to interfere in time to save him again.

Not much time passed before all the demons were killed. Oddly enough, most of them had been exterminated by a short girl with red-gold straight long hair, an eyepatch covering one of her green eyes. She had stayed for a long while after the attack was neutralized, asking each and every survivor if they had seen a warrior with two long, thin swords on his back.

When his turn came, he answered negatively, the man bound by the lamp remaining oddly quiet. She hadn’t looked at the warrior, not even once, and even if her face was somewhat expressionless, her tone had been worried.

She leaved before the twilight turned into night, running at a speed so fast that if not for the marks on the ground she had left, he would have assumed she had just disappeared.

**Hadrian**

Shit. The order was for him to “stay” so his magic had reacted automatically, placing concealing
He cursed when he saw her leave in the general direction of Nazarik, probably going back to report he was “missing”. He hoped the NPC’s wouldn’t panic.

He might as well hope money would start falling from the sky.

Sighing, he followed the man to a house that was slightly destroyed, his eyes glaring at the lamp that was currently hanging in the farmer’s belt. The third order had been not to steal that lamp from him.

Looking back at Nazarik’s direction, he could only pray he would be released soon from the gold bands that now adorned his arms.

He had been ordered not to steal it, but he could convince another to do it for him. The lamp blocked his magic, but he knew which words to whisper to tempt something as gullible as a human, and was the first thing he did the moment his “Master” went to sleep. The villager that tried to steal it had been way too clumsy though, and had been caught by the owner. After hearing what Harry had done, the farmer had ordered him to erase from the thief’s memory everything that happened from the tempting and forwards. Once the intruder leaved, he had been ordered to “stay in the lamp unless I say otherwise”.

A genie trapped in a lamp, ha bloody ha.

**Demiurge**

Nazarik was an absolute chaos.

It didn’t seem to matter, what kind of magic or item they used to search for Hadrian-sama, nothing came out. Not even Nigredo, with her specialized surveillance abilities could find him. They knew that he was alive, the divination magic had said that much at least, and that was the only thing stopping them from completely crumbling down.

The fact that they couldn’t find him made him think his Master may be in another world. Cocytus had warned them about their Lord’s words, but he had thought they still had time. Time to prove this world was worth staying in.

If Hadrian-sama vanished like the other Supreme Beings, who shall we be loyal to?

We were created to be loyal to them, but once we lose that value, what reason is there for us to exist?

He had managed to convince the others to fulfill their roles inside Nazarik, saying that their home should be in perfect condition for when Hadrian-sama returned. No one could hide their fear, worry, sadness, and all the emotions he was feeling and couldn’t show because the moment he slipped it would be Nazarik’s end.

Albedo hadn’t come out of her room since receiving the news. He thought he had seen guilt in her eyes, but wasn’t sure because his analytical mind had been refusing to work properly in that moment.

CZ Delta had been the last one to see him, but she hadn’t noticed anything that could explain his sudden disappearance. He regretted his lack of knowledge regarding memories, if he knew how to take them from the pleiade, he would be able to analyze his Lord’s actions himself.

Going back to his floor, he hoped Hadrian-sama would return soon, he knew Nazarik wouldn’t survive united otherwise.
**Albedo**

Had her Lord leaved because of her inappropriate actions? That had been the question resounding on her head after the news of his disappearance. She wanted to apologize, to beg, to give up her life, to do whatever necessary so long he stayed.

No, not even her life would be enough punishment, if her Master had really leaved because of her. She had trapped herself in her room, unable to look at the depressed faces of the others knowing she may be at fault.

Please! Please come back!

**Hadrian**

Bored inside the lamp, he had summoned Death to at least have some company.

And immediately regretted it, since all the entity did was laugh at his current predicament. Yes, I know I was foolish to let my guard down, thank you very much.

Harry didn’t ask Death to help him and the entity didn’t offer its help either. Life would become boring very fast if he escaped from every problematic situation using his friend’s help, really.

“You do know they won’t last, right?”

“Nazarik? It’s only been a day”

“…a week actually”

Had he really been trapped for that long? Inside the lamp he could only see golden walls so it was hard to tell. The owner of the lamp had called for him a few times, asking easy things like “repair my home” and “Give me gold”. The reparo and transfiguration had been made without much effort from his part, so they would go back to their original state in a month or so.

“Wait, a week?” realization came. Any orders had a time limit, so unless he had repeated that order today, he should be able to leave.

And…no, still trapped.

He needed a watch. But it seemed that opening his inventory was out of question, since he found out he could only use the magic needed to fulfill the orders of the stupid human. He was glad he had his bag.

He was forced to manually search for a watch, since he couldn’t use accio, so he was entertained for a long while before he finally took out one. Placing it on his wrist, he blinked when he saw Death was nowhere to be seen.

“Thanks for the idea, old friend” he said to the empty space, knowing Death could hear it anyways.

There should be a little lapse of time when the old order reached the time limit and the human gave it again. So he now passed the time trying to get out every five minutes or so until-

Yes!

Finally out of the lamp, he tried to kill the sleeping farmer, but found himself unable to. So he took the item with him before running at top speed in Nazarik’s direction. When he finally arrived at the
entrance, he looked at the watch on his wrist and saw it was 2:14am.

Harry couldn’t apparate or send a [Message] with his magic blocked, so he entered by foot and towards the first floor. There was supposed to be a surveillance team at all hours, so they should be aware of his presence.

“Hadrian-sama!” was the chorus of voices that received him in the entrance to the first floor, relief practically dripping from them. The guardians, the pleyades, the maids and other NPCs had filled the spacious area, looking at him tearfully.

He raised a hand before they could say anything, requesting silence.

“I don’t know how much time I have, so listen carefully. This item” he said showing the lamp “was used by a villager in my last location. I’m bound to follow the user’s orders and had been trapped inside for the most part of the last week. Although I’ve stolen it, I don’t think I’m free yet since these golden bands are still in my arms. Therefore, I want you to immediately kill this person”. He had been hoping stealing the object would be enough to break the curse, but it obviously wasn’t the case.

Looking at the furious gazes of his subjects, he quickly added “Do not torture him. He needs to die quickly in his sleep, before he can order me to protect him. If you fail at this you’ll probably end up facing me in battle. Are we clear?”

Reluctant nods followed his words, no one seemed very happy with this condition. After a quick discussion, he had ended up going back to the still partially destroyed village, a group of 20 Eight Edge Assassins following him invisibly.

Demiurge was also preparing a little group of low ranked, automatically generated, demons to destroy the village. There were a few people that knew about the lamp, and how it had successfully captured him. He didn’t want any rumors about that in case a stronger enemy got wind of it.

This was the reason he had decided to destroy them. It was a little sad since he knew there were innocent people too, but they would have been killed by demons anyway if he hadn’t interfered, so it was probably their fated death or something.

He had been in a world like that once, where the cause of death was actually carved in stone, so it didn’t matter what the people did or how many times you managed to postpone it, there was no escaping it. Damn Death had chosen “falls down the stairs” for him, and by Merlin it had been humiliating. After surviving so many battles, he was fated to die by bloody stairs!

Being the Master of Death didn’t mean he couldn’t die. He just didn’t stay dead for long before coming back, either to the same world or to a new one depending on his choice. He had gone back to that same one, hoping his cause of death would change to something more dignified but no, he hadn’t been that lucky.

Finally arriving at the village, he entered the house he had repaired and let 2 assassins take the lead. The reason he hadn’t chosen a NPC was so, in the odd chance he was ordered to kill them, he wouldn’t be forced to fight with the precious children his comrades had made. The NPCs really had reminded him of the small children that got lost on the supermarkets, sadden and worried that they had lost their parents forever, not knowing they were simply down the hall. It had only been a week, really…

It was over in a matter of seconds, and he was happy to see the golden bands of his arms disappear. He had given the lamp to Sebas with instructions to leave it in his room; he wanted to check the item’s description before putting it in the treasury.
Going outside, he ordered the two assassins to join the ones surrounding the village; since their purpose was to make sure no one escaped. After that he apparatead to Nazarik’s entrance, not wanting to see the destruction that was going to happen.

He knew it was necessary, but that didn’t mean he had to like it.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

EDIT* Yes guys I know, not my best chapter most definitely. I like to think my writing has improved comparing this chapter to the last I’ve written tho.

Next chapter’s going to have Pandora’s Actor! After that I’m still deciding the course I want to take in this story, since I have a couple of ideas. Also, should I give Harry his own NPC? I don’t like OC but maybe I could change the creator of one so it was Harry’s instead. What ya’ think?

For those that asked I actually like the character of Momonga, but wasn’t sure how to make them interact. I may bring him later in the story, but no promises.

Thanks for reading.

See you around!
The treasury and the undead

Chapter 7 The treasury and the undead

He had… actually forgotten this guy was here.

He had come to the treasury after satisfyingly studying the lamp. As the new “owner” of the item, he could get more information of it with the spell [All Appraisal of Greater Item] and had been relieved when he discovered that it could only be used by weak humans. So long it didn’t fall on the hands of an overly intelligent one, it shouldn’t cause much troubles.

He had come alone to the treasury, mostly to take a break from the NPC’s that had been following him non-stop as if afraid he would suddenly disappear. He had tried to convince them he didn’t need guards while inside Nazarik but it had all been for naught.

Not to mention, Albedo seemed very affected by the… situation involving the memory. She had requested an audience with him the day he returned and had proceeded to apologize profusely multiple times, asking for a punishment. He didn’t know what to do however, and had ended up postponing it. He should hurry and decide something though; maybe then the thorn in her heart would leave.

He had been thinking about this when he entered the treasury and saw Momonga standing in front of him. No, not Momonga, just someone that looked like him… a doppelganger?

“You may show your true self.” He watched with interest as the form shifted, looking similar to the original appearance of Narberal Gamma. The face was flat, with no nose or other facial features. Its mouth and eyes were replaced by three empty holes.

“Welcome to the treasury, Hadrian-sama!” by the life of him, he couldn’t remember this guy’s name.

He hadn’t come to read his description when this was still a game, mostly because Momonga had never stopped playing, so he wouldn’t have been able to modify him even if he had wanted to. The fact that he had completely forgotten about him was quite embarrassing.

“I apologize for not coming to visit sooner. Has anything unusual happened here?”

“Oh, of course not Hadrian-sama! Everything is as the Supreme beings designed, not a treasure out of place!”

He did weird mannerisms when he spoke, moving dramatically to emphasize each word. Had Momonga really created him to be like that?

“I’m happy to hear so, thank you for your hard work”

After that came one of the most over the top speeches he had heard, which could have been summarized in a “No need for thanks, this is my purpose after all”. He really couldn’t understand why Momonga would make him act like this… he would have expected it to act like the neutral, reserved person his creator was like.

He tuned out most of the speech, only coming back to reality when he heard “… may I know the
purpose for which you have come?” the NPC finished giving a pose, his right hand grasping the military hat while the other took a hold of the jacket that was hanging from his shoulders.

He couldn’t help but think this NPC was similar to Lockhart. Chuckling in amusement, he explained that he had come to place a newly obtained World-item, showing the little lamp he had been keeping in his inventory.

“Oh! So another World-item has been obtained by the Supreme beings! truly-“ Sweet Merlin, he wasn’t going to live down another speech.

“Thank you for your kind words, but I’m afraid I must hurry. Please guard the entrance while I go place it with the others”

Receiving a salute one would expect from a soldier, he paid no attention to the german words and continued. Placing the lamp with the other items, he took a moment to open the bag that he carried around his neck, accioing a very specific book from his personal library.

He had written about the NPCs descriptions in here a few years ago, when the members of the guild started to leave. He had made this book in case he needed to remember something specific about them. Going to the very end of the book, he searched for Momonga’s section, with only one creation.

Pandora’s Actor. And he had greatly underestimated the guy.

According to his book, Pandora’s Actor possessed wit and cunning that ranked among the pinnacle of Nazarick’s denizens. He also had very flexible abilities, to the point where he could replace all the other Guardians. A level 100 NPC whose talents lay in disguise, and someone that could copy 45 separate forms and abilities, even if only at 80% of the originals’ potency.

A treasure in charge of the treasury, hmm? Maybe the flamboyant personality was for the enemy to underestimate him? As expected of Momonga… but leaving him isolated in the treasury seemed like a waste.

Going back to the area Pandora was guarding, he took a ring from the inventory and gave it to him.

“This… is the Ring of Ainz Ooal Gown, and it possesses the ability to…”

“Indeed.” he interrupted “Have you ever left the treasury?”

At the negative response, he continued “While I expect you to continue with your duties in the treasury, it’s important you get familiar with Nazarik’s structure and the other servants in case of emergency. I know Momonga created you to know about it, but there’s a difference between knowing how something should be and actually seeing it. You may use the ring to travel freely between floors, except for the 8th, so long you warn beforehand the guardian of said floor. Any doubts?

“None Hadrian-sama” Pandora’s Actor clicked his heels together with great force, and saluted again.

“Keep up the good work, Pandora’s Actor.” he said before teleporting back to his room.

-Time break-

Harry would be the first one to admit, the twins could pull off a very swaying puppy look. Nevertheless, he had been Godfather (and father in his original world) of more than one child, so he
had stood his ground against the NPCs that were more than reluctant to see him leave again.

He still thought that becoming an adventurer was the best way to gather information, so they had reached an agreement. Due to the disaster that had happened with the world item, he was now followed by invisible assassins and high ranked shadow demons to use as shields in case of emergency. This had been the conclusion of the reunion he had had with the guardians before leaving.

He would be parading as a swordsman, while Shizu would be an archer. The automaton had very technological weapons that were uncommon on this world, the most normal looking being the bow she now carried on her back along with magical arrows. The bag was enchanted so that any arrow used would be replaced after a cooling time of 40 seconds, so he didn’t have to worry about wasting resources.

It was already night when they finally reached E-Rantel. The part near the entrance they had used was calm, but as they continued walking a few, far away screams reached them. Sharing a glance with Shizu, he ran towards the source of the screams, halting when he saw undead creatures killing indiscriminately any citizens that happened to cross their path. A graveyard was a few yards beyond them, the doors completely open with undead creatures coming in waves.

Some people with metallic medals around their necks were trying to fight them, probably coming because of the screams too, but were greatly outnumbered. There were only two groups of 4 people, and they were losing ground quite fast. Adventurers... the medals were like the chief had described.

“Shizu, make sure the undead don’t advance any further.”

“Understood, James-san”

Taking out the twin swords, he began to destroy the low ranked zombies that had begun to approach him, quickly advancing towards the entrance of the cemetery. Shizu was keeping them from spreading while the other adventurers began to gain ground since the upcoming waves were being killed by him.

“Stay here in case they start to come out again” he said looking at the adventurers that had silver plates “Shizu, follow me”

“Wait a minute, you're just two! Stay here and helps us in the entrance until help arrives, one of our own has already leaved to alert the others-“

He didn’t hear the rest, advancing further into the graveyard with Shizu following closely behind him. He let pass some low-ranked ones to keep the others entertained, while taking care of the undead that had evolved into slightly more dangerous creatures.

Once he was further away from the entrance, he summoned five hellhounds and a low-level chimera, mentally calculating how much time he had before he would need to vanish them.

“Go kill the undead”

They kept fighting like this until the number of undead diminished and only a few low-ranked zombies remained. Figuring the people on the entrance would take care of them if they got out, he ignored them and vanished his chimera, leaving only the hellhounds.

“Entertain the adventurers that enter the cemetery. Three shall wait near the entrance, while the others stay here” The creatures were weak, and would probably be killed but at least he would know if he ran out of time to investigate on his own.
Going forwards, he followed Shizu’s directions since she could sense humans near, and kept walking until they reached what seemed like a chapel at the heart of the graveyard. Several suspicious-looking people were standing in a circle, chanting in some kind of ritual.

They all wore crude black robes which covered their entire bodies, the faces hidden with black head cloths that only showed their eyes, while the wooden staves they carried had strange carvings on their ends.

The only exposed face belonged to the man in the middle, and he looked like he was undead. He was well-dressed, and seemed to be concentrating on the black stone that he held in his hand.

Harry knew they had already been spotted, since a few were looking in their direction, so he simply strode directly over to them. As he got closer, he could hear how one of the hooded persons said “Khazit-sama, they’re here.” to the man with the black stone.

He wasn’t sure if he should capture them or kill them. While he wanted to know about whatever ritual they were doing, they were obviously the source of the undead summoning, and he needed to leave a culprit for the people to point at.

Deciding he didn’t need to kill all of them, he sent a silent [Message] to Neuronist to expect new prisoners, and gave the order to Shizu to send paralyzing arrows at them when he gave the signal before taking down the Muffliato.

“Good night gentlemen.” Normally, he wouldn’t bother with mindless talk, but he wanted to have all the enemies reunited before deciding how to fight.

“…who are you? How did you break through that horde of undead?” asked the man standing in the center of the circle, apparently known as Khazit.

“We were hoping to register as adventurers, but saw this mess before we could. Unlucky, isn’t it?” the people in front of him took a stance at his nonchalant tone, while Khazit looked around the surroundings guardedly.

“Just the two of you? Where’s the rest of your party?” ah, so he was expecting an ambush.

Shrugging slightly he replied “You wouldn’t believe my answer regardless, so why bother?” then he looked behind the group; to the presence he had felt once they were close enough “There’s no need to be shy. Come out, unless you are hiding because you’re afraid?” Shizu was better at recognizing live creatures from afar, using the infrared vision, but he wasn’t bad at it once they were close enough.

“Fufu~ Not bad~” answered a female voice coming from the chapel. A young woman stepped into the light, a black cloak covering most of her body. “May I know your name? Ah, I’m Clementine. Pleased to meetcha~”

“There’s no need for presentations, we are just unregistered adventurers really”

“Ohh~? a worker then? That would explain why I haven’t seen you before, even when I’ve investigated all the high-ranked adventurers in the city~”

Khazit looked like he wanted to say something, looking irritably at the female warrior, but Harry spoke before he could

“I’ll let you deal with the group of men” looking from the corner of his eye, he saw the maid nod once in understating “Clementine, I’ll be your opponent”
He didn’t give them a chance to reply, immediately starting the fight. His opponent was quick to respond however, evading his attacks swiftly. From the corner of his eyes, he could see the bodies of the hooded men fall to the ground, even if the one in the center remained standing with a white shield in front of him.

Clementine had opened her coat for better movement, revealing an armor (if it could be called that) completely covered with adventurer plates. Platinum, gold, silver, iron, copper, mithril, orichalcum, all arranged in a sick idea of a trophy. He mildly wondered if Riddle would have done something similar.

The woman was smirking at him, even laughing at times as she side stepped his attacks.

“You are very confident”

“Youp, no warrior in this country can beat me~ no, wait, almost no warrior-” she didn’t get to finish her sentence, avoiding the sword by a hair. Clementine’s eyes narrowed, and for the first time she had a look of annoyance on her face.

He blocked the stiletto that tried to pierce his shoulder in the next moment, but couldn’t retaliate since they both had to jump to the side as a white skeletal dragon rose from the ground in front of Khazit. Ah, it hadn’t been a white shield, but a white claw.

Those were impervious to magic from the 6th tier and under though, so Shizu would be forced to use the other weapon he had allowed her, a size-changing hammer. He couldn’t see her fight however, since he had his own opponent.

He had fought as a warrior in previous worlds, so he felt confident in his ability even if it wasn’t his category in this one. As a Djinn, he hadn’t been able to equip and use weapons for fighting, so he was using a full armor minus the helmet, his features different from usual with blue eyes and brown hair.

Alternating between dodging and attacking, he could now understand the wonder of martial arts. She was so self-assured because it allowed for movements that would have been impossible otherwise, sliding easily under his swords and increasing her speed so much that he had been momentarily forced to focus completely on the defense, before jumping backwards to put some distance between them.

Just as both sides were about to strike again, the earth shook as a second skeletal dragon was created. Ah, poor Shizu, but the hammer was a bludgeoning weapon, so it should be able to destroy them after a while. Right now it was at the biggest size, the handle was as tall as Shizu, while the head of the hammer was as big as the dragon’s claw.

Clementine had used his slip in concentration however, closing the distance in a blink of an eye. Harry retreated, but the ground was unstable due to the new dragon’s summoning and his opponent was fast. There was a flash of light, and then the screeching of metal clashing with metal rang through the graveyard.

“…So haaaard~ what’s that armor of yours made of? Adamantite?”

There was a dent in his armor, which meant Clementine’s strikes held more destructive power than he had first supposed. He was actually surprised she hadn’t aimed at his head, was she mocking him?

“Oh well. If that’s the case, next time…” she didn’t complete the sentence, but the meaning was more than clear when she stared darkly at his unprotected face. He hadn’t wanted to use a helmet
because he figured people would trust him more easily if it wasn’t hidden, but it seemed he had underestimated his opponent’s skill.

Better finish this now.

Closing the distance, he used the sword of his right to try to cut off her head, while the left deflected the stiletto that had tried to pierce the middle of his head. His sword was blocked effortlessly by the fragile-looking stiletto of the woman, just as he expected.

“Bend. Enlarge.” the sword of his right followed his command, bending and growing until it should have pierced the head of the surprised female. These swords had been tested by Cocytus, working as they should so it followed basic commands.

She had avoided the attack by a hair however, using a martial art that seemed to slow-down the motions around them. Letting out a frustrated “tsk” he blocked and side stepped the following attacks, his opponent becoming more vicious.

The moment they stopped briefly to catch their breath, he quickly apparated behind her, and used the sword in his right hand to immediately cut off her head. He had not used anything other than physical abilities in their fight, so she hadn’t expected the use of magic. He had tested if he could use magic while wearing the armor, and discovered that while the Djinn magic was blocked, he could still perform some of his original magic so long it didn’t require the use of the elder wand.

He watched as the female body fell down with a thud, before focusing on Shizu’s fight. It seemed she was ending as well, only a dragon remained and the magic caster, Khazit, was dead on the ground.

She had actually used her superior speed to avoid the dragons and kill the magic caster first. Once the one controlling them had died, the dragons had attacked her merely because she was alive and closer, the undead creatures focusing on her.

Then he looked at the dragon’s feet. While Shizu had only stunned the hooded men, the dragons had stomped over them in their battle, so he had no one left alive to interrogate. Sighing he figured he may as well test the resurrection wand.

Opening a [Portal] he sent Clementine’s body to Neuronist, telling her to conserve the body as fresh as she could until he went to test the Resurrection wand. The prison was in the 5th floor, so the corpse would be easier to keep due to the low temperature.

Then he felt one of the bonds disappear. One of the hellhounds had been killed.

“We are running out of time, go check the bodies for any valuable possessions. Make sure you remain invisible” he said to the assassins that followed him. He had instructed them not to interfere unless he said the code word, and was glad they had refrained from acting when he had received the blow from Clementine.

As he thought this Shizu delivered the final blow to the dragon, the creature now resting in pieces.

“Shizu, stay in the entrance of the chapel and send me a [Message] when the adventurers arrive. Take whatever the assassins find into your inventory in the meantime.”

“Understood.”

Entering the chapel he felt a living presence at the very end of it. He still took his time investigating
around though, but didn’t find anything interesting. Feeling disappointed, he got closer to the living being, and found a boy wearing a strange, transparent outfit, with tear-shaped clots of reddish-black blood that wept down his cheeks. He was just standing, and had not reacted in any way to his presence.

“Can you hear me?” when there was no response he pointed the sword threateningly to his neck, but the boy still didn’t move. Mind control then.

The cause probably was the spiderweb-like crown that rested on the boy’s head. He had never seen anything like it before.

“[All Appraisal Magic Item]"

Taking in the information that showed up in his mind, he let out an appreciative whistle at the interesting item, the Crown of Wisdom. Then the only remaining bond with his hellhound was dissolved, the adventurers that had reached the middle of the graveyard were now free to advance.

Should he take the item? According to the description, that would end the boy’s life… and he didn’t know if this was someone important in this city. Not having much time to think it over, he regretfully made the spell to destroy the crown.

If only he had more information, maybe he could have done things differently… he was supposed to be a hero though, so he may as well act like one. He picked the boy up and put him over his shoulder, and was walking towards the entrance when he received a [Message] from Shizu saying they had company.

“What were you two thinking? Running off like that…!” He recognized that voice as the one that had shouted at him when he first entered the graveyard.

“They seemed to have taken care of it, though” said a young voice, he wasn’t sure if male or female.

“That’s not the point! It was an unnecessary risk, if they had stayed with us in the entrance then the city would have been better protected.”

“Well, nothing happened since we arrived in time to help you, so there’s no point in complaining right? They did a good job” A very deep voice.

Finally arriving to the entrance, he saw the silver-plate group of 4 that he had left at the entrance, and a group of 5 gold-plate men. He could see shadows moving not so far away, so probably the other group of silver was searching the graveyard for more enemies.

“Please stop antagonizing Shizu, she was just following her reckless comrade” he said with an apologetic look.

“That person on your shoulder…!”

“I found him inside; under mind control” he answered the leader of silver before looking at the golden group “We should hurry, since he seems to need medical attention. We’ll let the rest to you” There was nothing else in that chapel anyways.

He started to walk away, more steps following than the pair he was expecting

“…Yes?”

“Who are you?” The silver group was walking with him and Shizu, the golden one entering inside
the chapel.

“Ah, I apologize, there was no time for introductions back then. My name is James”

“Shizu” was the deadpan response.

“Nice to meet you. I’m the leader of the ‘Swords of Darkness’, Peter Mauk. That fellow over there is the eyes and ears of our team, the ranger Lukrut Volve.” A leather-armored blond man nodded in acknowledgement, his eyes resting in Shizu with obvious interest.

“Next is our magic caster and the brains of our group, Ninya, The Spellcaster.”

“Pleased to meet you.” said the youngest, apparently male.

“And last but not least, our druid Dyne Woodwonder. He uses healing spells and magic that controls nature, and he’s well versed in herbal lore.”

“Pleased to meet you!” came the greeting from the burly, barbaric-looking man with a full, bushy beard.

“Likewise. Did you have trouble defending the city?”

They continued to chat like this until they reached the city, the other adventurers guiding them to the nearest temple that gave medical attention. Once he left the unconscious boy in there they went to report the events to the Adventurer’s building.

By the time morning came, Harry and CZ Delta were leaving the tall structure with new mithril plates hanging from their necks.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

This chapter was hell on earth, very difficult to write.

It’s kinda tiring to write (and probably for you to read too) when the changes aren’t many, but I wanted to make clear that the group of Peter was alive…

Either way, from now on I’m going to skip the parts of the Light Novel that are to remain the same, basically making this a “story told in snippets” were we both rest (me from writing and you from reading) and I just go to the changed interesting parts with a little prelude in the first paragraph of the chapters so you know in which part of the novel I’m on.

I’ll also include some new characters and events, so there are going to be some chapters that completely ignore the LN, because certain things need to happen to actually arrive to the plot I had in mind when I started to write.

As always, feel free to let me know your opinion, even if I don’t really answer that often. I ignore all the reviews that only try to tell me that my story must be a certain way,
mostly because this is my plot-bunny. If I like the idea I may actually add it to the story, and there are some aspects of my writing that could certainly be better so it’s not like I’m against critics or you expressing your opinion. Just know it may not be followed-up because this is my idea and my story.

So, thanks for reading! Next chapter will be more interesting, I hope~

See you later!
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Chapter 8 A Back-up Manual

Something was off with his servants.

He came back to Nazarik regularly, either during the nights or during the adventurer’s missions he completed too fast. He didn’t want to drag too much attention, so he always returned from the completed missions in 5 days at the soonest, the longest so far being two weeks.

He didn’t come back because he needed to, but mostly because the NPCs grew restless whenever he stayed out of Nazarik for too long. Convincing them to let him parade as an adventurer had been hellish, and they all were acting weirdly. The guardians specially, always made sure to have a reason to “visit” taking turns so he would see one of them whenever he was on Nazarik.

Demiurge seemed to like to speak about all the advantages and good points he had found about this world thus far, which was interesting but, why was he focusing on the positive? Shouldn’t he prioritize the negative so they were prepared?

Albedo would fidget nervously from time to time, but was faring better since he decided her punishment. He had her go deliver a message personally to the Duke of terror Kyouhukou, knowing she wasn’t especially fond of the place he resided in. She had shivered in disgust, but had done as ordered and seemed back to herself. Except for the fidgets and odd questions she would make regarding his happiness and if he was satisfied with their work.

Cocytus liked to report personally the results of his tests with the weapons he had given him, which was odd because he had been sending written reports just fine before the whole thing with the world item happened.

He wasn’t stupid, he knew they were checking on him, seeing if he was going to pack up and leave like most of the guild members had done. He only wondered where they had gotten the idea all of the sudden. While he knew they feared they would be left masterless, he couldn’t understand why they were acting on that fear when it hadn’t affected them before.

Even worse when they seemed to think he would leave on his own free will. That he would actually choose to abandon them.

Maybe they had too much free time? He had wanted to assign some NPCs in missions outside Nazarik, but had discarded that idea when the bloody lamp-situation happened. He couldn’t coddle them forever, though…

Sighing, he figured he would send them off with emergency portkeys. So he sent Sebas and Solution to go make connections with wealthy people and recompile information from the high-classes in E-Rantel.

Narberal and one of the male servants were to go investigate magic, since he now knew there was a Magicians’ Guild in the Kingdom. He had put emphasis in the fact that they were to behave amiably, not cause trouble and only use force when defending themselves, never killing the opponent. The male servant had a Neutral-Good karma, so Harry hoped his presence would balance Narberal’s.
Demiurge was to go investigate the nearer countries, but was restricted not to go out from the chosen “safe place”, leading the other servants from there. He was thinking about putting a Fidelio on it later on, once Demiurge actually arrived to that place to carry out his mission.

The twins were assisting him with the greenhouse he had wanted to build for the collection of plants he had brought in his bag, since they could probably be used in potions. The Bareare family was indebted to him, and judging from the love for potions they seemed to have, he didn’t think they would be opposed to the idea of coming to Nazarik to make experiments with the herbs.

He had shown Aura and Mare a few plants while he explained the area they would probably need to grow healthy, and Mare had a look Neville would have been proud of, an herbologist at heart indeed.

Cocytus was still entertained with the weapons, while Albedo and Pandora administered Nazarik. The over dramatic NPC had a nice share of ideas, and they seemed to get along when they worked, so he was glad he had taken him out of the treasury. His attitude seemed to bother most of the maids though.

Shalltear was helping him with a test. He wanted to know if the NPCs could overcome their programmed weaknesses, so he had her train in a secluded part of the second floor, where she would kill some of the automatically generated defenses and try to overcome the “Blood Frenzy”. She was only allowed to try once per week though, since he didn’t want to run out of the daily, naturally spawned (POP) monsters.

Now that they were nicely entertained, he could finally breathe in peace. Entering to his room, he missed slightly the little Basilisk, but after the mess with Albedo he had decided to leave the creature permanently giant and on the sixth floor.

He had decided to make a manual for his dear servants, a recompilation of back-up plans on what to do in case this or that happened to him. Thinking about the possible causes that could prevent him from leading Nazarik, he started to make a list:

1. Death, coma & terminal disease
2. Mind control
3. Mental cage
4. Kidnapping
5. Summoning
6. Emergency Quest

These, he thought, were the worst case scenarios that could redeem him incapable of executing his role as Nazarik’s Guild Master.

Death wasn’t much of a problem, since he would come back soon enough, so he only left instructions for protecting his physical body and heal it if possible. He would still need to gather enough magic and strength to come back, but it would accelerate the process nonetheless. His dead state was actually the same to a coma, so he smashed them together in the same section. A terminal disease could leave him too weak to be useful, not to mention that it could be very long and painful, so the instructions were to kill him and follow the process for death.

On the second possibility, he had items against mind control and his occlumency was as strong as ever, but the shitty devs could have made other objects similar to the lamp so he had decided to include it. He figured that the easiest way to break free from the control of a World item would be to travel to one of the previous worlds he had visited. That should break whatever magical bond tied him to the item. He would need to ask for Death’s help with this one though, so he postponed the
A mental cage was one of the most troublesome, but he wasn’t sure they even existed in this world. He only knew of them because some 5 lives ago he had had a nasty encounter with a powerful Dream-eater demon, oddly shaped as a golden triangle, with a single eye, a top hat and a cane. The creature had trapped him in his own mind until he defeated him, stealing some of his memories in the process. For this one, he would need someone capable of Legimency since the battle would be unfolding inside his mind castle. Deeming it unlikely, he postponed this one too.

Kidnapping wasn’t much of a problem. A portkey or apparition should do nicely since it was unknown magic in this world. Even in the odd case it failed, the permanent company he had in the form of assassins and shadow demons should be enough to either escape or send a message with his position. The instructions for this one was to ask Nigredo for surveillance, make everyone go back to Nazarik in case they were on missions outside and wait for him to either come back or send a “help me” message, in which case they were free to plot however they wished for his rescue. If nothing happened after a certain period of time, they were free to plot too.

A summon was a whole other level of troublesome. Being the Master of Death had a few drawbacks, the most important being the fact that strong-enough magical beings could summon him to make one request. He wasn’t forced to grant it or anything, but the magic of the ritual bounded him to the world he had been summoned at, and only gave him two choices to get free of it. One was to grant the request, while the other one was the death of the summoner. He tried not to kill them if the request was something either morally acceptable or possible to do quickly. For this one, he would have to teach the guardians the summoning ritual, so he could come back as soon as he was finished wherever… having a communication device would be useful too, he may ask Death about it later.

The last was an Emergency Quest, which were requested by Death when the equilibrium between destruction and creation of life was being unbalanced by a third force. Death could not interfere with the matters regarding those living, but Harry didn’t have such restriction, so he helped his friend in these instances. The last one had been long ago, when he had to fight against a mad titan that had wanted to destroy everything in the name of courting the entity. He had laughed long and hard at his friend’s face when he discovered the motivation of the villain. Nothing could be done on this one, other that keep communicated… he really would have to research a way for doing that.

He would have to work on it another day though, since he received a [Message] from Shizu, who had stayed in the hotel’s room, informing him someone was asking for his presence. Sighing tiredly, he put on the armor minus the helmet and apparated at the suite’s bathroom, silently wondering who was asking for them at 1 in the morning.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Man the guardians won’t like the process of terminal disease. Why are you so cruel Harry?

Congratulations for those that saw Bill Cipher on the Mental cage scenario, and Thanos on the Emergency Quest. Bravo!
These are actually a few plot-bunnies I have, so I may do a spin-off where one of these situations actually happens. In this story though, only the 1, 2 and 4 apply so don’t worry about it getting overly complicated.

I’m actually rather fond of the overly-used idea of a MOD!Harry summoned in a world where Normal! Harry hasn’t defeated Voldemort. If I ever do a spin-off of the 5 it would be something like that but with guardians thrown in the mess. (EDIT* I actually did it lol, the story can be found in this x-over section as well. Wish me luck)

Yes people, this is foreshadowing. Whether it happens immediately or not, I’m still deciding. (Edit* It wasn’t! haha)

See you later!
Chapter 9 Downfall of Castle and Country

He was frozen, standing in the dirty cell of the prison, unable to take his gaze from the female form that was looking at him with a slight, almost imperceptible smirk.

A world item? The Slane Theocracy had a world item... and several divine items, by the sound of it.

The resurrection wand had worked as it should on Clementine, who apparently used to be part of one of the secret "special operations units" of the Theocracy. Neuronist had begun the usual interrogation, but she had died again at the 7th question. Her strength seemed to deteriorate from the resurrection, and he had the feeling that using it too much on the same individual would end up with the body disintegrating.

With this in mind, he had ordered to keep her sedated, until he had the time to actually come and interrogate her. He was regretting not having done this sooner.

It had been three months since he first registered as an adventurer; he had passed the first two weeks as a mithril class before being promoted to adamantite, in a mission where he had recollected some herbs from a sealed evil tree in a record time of three days. Harry had decided that he wouldn't return from a mission any sooner than 5 days after seeing the incredulous faces of the Guildmaster and the Magician Guild's head of the kingdom.

Only now he had found enough time to use legilimency on her, discovering this. The Theocracy... that was the country Demiurge was investigating right now!

Cursing loudly, he ignored the humorless chuckle of his prisoner and leaved the cell, barking an order at Neuronist to sedate her again, his right hand coming to the side of his head as he activated a [Message].

"Albedo"

"Hadrian-sama? Is everything all right?" came the immediate answer, sounding alert.

"Cancel the missions. Everyone is to return to Nazarik, except for Sebas and Solution. Tell them to use their portkeys, I want everyone back as soon as possible." judging by the description of the world item and the memories he got from Clementine, the mind-control could surpass even the protections placed against it by the race (such as the undead) or the items the NPCs wore, so he wanted everyone to come back safe soon.

"Understood, Hadrian-sama" this was one of those instances where he really appreciated being their leader. He didn’t need to waste time explaining since his orders were absolute.

"Once they’re back make the guardians reunite in the Throne room, I’ll be there in 10 minutes. Make sure Pandora comes as well."

"We’ll be ready by then" was Albedo’s last response before he ended the [Message], only to start a new one immediately.
“Nigredo”

“How can I be of use, Hadrian-sama?”

“I want surveillance on Sebas’ team at all hours, notify me immediately if there’s a confrontation, it doesn’t matter the level or species of the enemy. Albedo will give you more details later, understood?”

“Y-yes Hadrian-sama” the voice sounded a little overwhelmed by the intensity and the way he had delivered the order, but he really couldn’t care for something so trivial at the moment.

“I’ll be counting on you” were his parting words before he ended the [Message]. He was almost outside the prison now, he could begin to see the surroundings filled with nothing but snow.

Stopping, he concealed himself before teleporting to the 6th floor, a few yards away from the point where the portkeys should bring his servants. This zone of the floor was covered in runes that formed a circular drawing, and two golems were standing guard just outside the largest circle. There were three different sized circles of runes. The last and middle layers were binding runes, meant to trap whoever stepped on them.

On the other hand, the center of the circle would send an alarm to indicate someone had arrived. The sound this alarm emitted would be different if the one coming wasn’t keyed to the recognition ward he had placed in the zone. He had figured that would be enough to identify if the one coming was an outsider that had taken the appearance of a Nazarik-member.

Completely hidden, he watched with relief as all the servants that had been sent outside returned, all of them jumping to avoid the second and third layer of runes. Harry hadn’t wanted them to worry over his unease, so this was necessary to calm his nerves before telling them about the Slane Theocracy.

Having a clear head now, he waited until they left the floor before cancelling the concealing charms. Taking a deep breath, he steeled himself for the conversation that would take place before walking leisurely to the Throne room.

“I’m happy to see you’ve safely returned. I’ve received outstanding information from the most recent prisoner; we’ll have to consider the Slane Theocracy as a powerful enemy now.”

He then proceeded to take out a large pensieve from the bag hanging around his neck, and used the elder wand to place the newly acquired memories he had gotten from Clementine. Signaling the guardians to take a look, he waited patiently for the memories to play out. There were too many to play them all at the moment, so he had focused on the bits he considered the most alarming.

The World Class Item, Downfall of Castle and Country, a seemingly unassuming white dress with a large opening on one side and a round neck, the image of a dragon with five claws rising to the sky embroidered with golden threads. A mind-control item.

The Divine Class items, as well as all the memories he could find that demonstrated the strength of the Black Scripture.

And finally, the purpose of the special operations units known as scriptures.

- Black Scripture: the strongest, with each of its members focused on a specific type of combat or skill that was comparable to a whole combat group. Clementine even considered some of them like demigods because of their immense powers and the fact that the blood of the Six
Gods runs in them. Harry admitted they seemed like adamantine-ranked adventurers by the memories she had of the time before she betrayed them.

- Sunlight Scripture: The ones Harry had captured had been a group that focused on carrying out the extermination of demi-human villages. The majority of its members had been magic casters that could use Divine spells of at least the third tier along with all the other normal high level spells that were employed by adventurers. For obvious reasons, he didn’t have to worry about them anymore.

- Windflower Scripture: specialized in information gathering and espionage, Clementine had worried about them chasing her for the crown she had stolen. Harry had kidnapped her however, so he thought it was safe to assume that this specific division was still busy trying to find her.

- Clearwater Scripture: specialized in infiltration, the members of this group were heavily focused on stealth and the ability to modify their physical appearance. Harry had thought about placing a thief’s downfall on both, Nazarik’s entrance and the portkey’s zone just in case they somehow managed to trick them.

- Holocaust Scripture: specialized in assassination, guerrilla warfare, and counter-terrorism, it was mainly used as a military unit in charge of protecting the home soil of the Theocracy.

It was quite distressing the fact that they seemed to possess several divine-class items, along with the world item, all of them left behind by the “Six Gods” they believed in. Harry was sure they had been players, and was greatly relieved that it had only been six and not a whole 40-something people guild.

He wondered if it really made a difference the fact that some members of the Black Scripture seemed to be descendants of them. Maybe they were born with a natural higher level than the normal humans? Whatever the case, the Black Scripture was the most dangerous, so he would focus his attention on them.

Seeing his guardians emerge from the pensieve, he prepared for the discussion that was to come.

“I’m confident you understand the relevance of these memories” receiving alert nods from them; he continued “I have reasons to suspect that the World item is one that was designed to affect NPCs, which would put everyone in Nazarik at risk with only one exception”

A brief moment of silence passed before Albedo, Demiurge and Pandora seemed to catch his meaning.

“Hadrian-sama! Surely you are not implying-!” came Albedo’s panicked voice

“Please, if I’m allowed to make a suggestion-“Demiurge’s sounded more like an odd mix of worry and reprimand.

“Although it may sound disrespectful, it would be better if-“Pandora didn’t sound different than usual, even if he was fidgeting in a manner a true militar never would have.

The three had spoken at the same time, sharing a displeased look between them once they noticed. This little scene had been enough for the other guardians to catch up however, all looking at him with disagreement.

Harry lifted a hand to request silence, before explaining “I’ve heard about a similar item before, in the first years after the foundation of Ainz Ooal Gown. It was only designed to work on the mercenary, POP and Guild-NPCs.” Harry actually was aware that this wouldn’t be the case. The lamp he had been trapped at had had a similar description, but it still had worked on him.
He wanted to be the one that stole this particular item however, because if one of them resulted affected he would be forced to kill them. Harry on the other hand, would be able to avoid the effects of Downfall of Castle and Country if he wore another World item himself. The back-up plan he had devised for this was made simply because carrying around a World item everywhere was dangerous, so he couldn’t use them on a daily basis.

Not even with Death’s help had he been able to create a device that could jump through dimensions, but the worlds in this same universe weren’t nearly as restricted. Thus, his friend had greatly helped him design a world-jumping device in the form of a black hairclip, easily missed among the messy curls of his head. True, he wouldn’t be able to come back to this world immediately after arriving to the one he had chosen, but the matter of fact remained that he would break whatever effect a World item had on him.

This would not be necessary for this mission however.

“B-but Hadrian-sama, surely you don’t mean to retrieve it on your own?” came Mare’s soft voice, the puppy look on maximum level.

“Of course not Mare” his guardians seemed momentarily relieved before he continued “but none of you will come with me”

“Please consider it again! Let me protect your great person, let me be your shield Hadrian-sama!”

Albedo’s wings flapped once in consternation as she voiced her opinion.

“I would rather not risk you falling to mind control” he answered seriously, but couldn’t say anything else since Shalltear spoke.

“We would resist! There’s no way we would raise our hand against Hadrian-sama! Against Nazarik!” she exclaimed, eyes filled with determination. Was she seriously this naïve? She had yet to pass his test of overcoming the blood lust, there was no way she would be immune to a World item of all things.

He chose not to comment on this though, and instead said “You seem to think I will go unprotected. No, I merely meant that I will not allow you to carry this mission along with me, but I’ll certainly need you to be alert nearby, in case something goes wrong”

After that, he proceeded to explain the plan he had in mind. Harry would be using “Avarice and Generous” a pair of gauntlets, which looks like a devil's hand while the other looks like an angel's. This should allow him to summon creatures without consuming EXP if the situation went out of control, taking instead the EXP stored in the item.

Aura would be nearby with “Picture of Nature and Nation” a big scroll, with the power to isolate an object/people in a different dimension. She was instructed to use the scenario that only had one exit if she received his signal. They would only use it if the attempted theft was discovered by the Black Scripture, the plan was to enclose them in this dimension and annihilate them.

In terms of close combat, Shalltear should be enough in a fight against 12 humans. Having seen the battles of the Black Scripture made him think they were around the level of adamantite adventurers. For her, he would assign the World item “The Black seeds of the Fallen” a thin collar adorned with opaque blue stones, it incremented the negative energy of the user, so it would heal an undead like Shalltear, recovering 50% of the health taken from each blow. A simpler way to put it was that whatever damage taken was halved if the user was an undead.

Cocy tus, Mare and Albedo were to stay in Nazarik unless he said otherwise, with the defense at
maximum, while Demiurge prepared an army in case they needed to destroy the whole city. They would get there through a **Gate**, something Pandora should be able to do if he took the appearance and ability of one of his old comrades, so long it was a Magic Caster.

Harry would have liked to reassure them further with the Back-up Manual, but he had yet to complete the book, so this would have to do.

Deciding a surveillance team of Mercenaries and POP monsters would be used to study the Slane Theocracy territory, all that was left was wait to receive enough details to patch up the plan before executing it.

Chapter End Notes

**AUTHOR NOTE:**

Well, I didn’t think I would be writing this so soon.

Then again, following the timeline of the Light Novel, the next one was Shalltear’s mind control. This would not happen however, since

a) She didn’t leave Nazarik  
b) Harry didn’t give an order to capture people that used Martial arts  
c) Harry was aware of the World items because one was used on him.  
So, if I want to respect the timeline I guess this is what would have happened instead of the Bloody Valkyrie Arc.

As always, reviews and comments motivate me to write faster (not to mention they generally make me happy) so feel free to let me know your opinion.

I never wrote a disclaimer, but I assure you I’m not making any profits nor gaining anything by writing this story, so please don’t be disappointed if I don’t follow-up the comments of “You should do this or that”. I write for fun really, and this is simply an idea I had.

So~ thanks for reading, I hope you were at least mildly entertained by this beginner’s story.

See ya later!

P.D. Did you know I wrote the final chapter of this story after the 8th chapter? My evil side wants to post it since it would be a huge spoiler and it is ready. I’m trying very hard to resist temptation. I’m confident no one is expecting that ending.

P.D.D. I know my profile doesn’t really say anything, but I’m a woman hahaha one of the reviews addressed me as “Sir” and it was weird xD so just as curious data, I’m female haha. I still liked the comment however \_(﹊﹊﹊)_/
Harry really, really had bad luck.

Two weeks had passed since he sent surveillance and infiltration teams to the Slane Theocracy, but they had been unable to find the special operations unit known as the Black Scripture.

Well, he now knew that happened because they weren’t in that country but here, in the Re-estize Kingdom, right in front of him.

Potter luck indeed.

He and Shizu had been returning from a mission, walking calmly in the night towards E-Rantel when the automaton suddenly stopped, sensing the presence of a dozen individuals coming in their direction.

“Bandits?”

“Very foolish ones, if they think they can attack James-san… but they give me a bad feeling”

Instantly alert, he asked her to explain herself, but she only answered with a whisper of “Is just… like intuition”

From what he remembered, Shizu didn’t have many skills that could identify items, or general information about the enemy (such as HP, MP, AGILITY, and so on) but Harry certainly could. He would need to amplify his range of detection though.

“Is there anyone else in our surroundings, other than them?” he whispered

“None that I can sense, James-san” Nodding in understanding, he made his armor disappear, replaced by the clothes he used as a Magic Caster. He quickly used all the Anti-information magic he could think of and, once that was finished, placed concealing charms on both, himself and CZ Delta.

 “[Distant Vision]”

Harry had to blink a couple of times at the sudden little screen that appeared in a corner of his vision, very much like it had used to when this was a game.

Coming towards them were a dozen humans, each with a different set of armor. Their equipment did not have a simple appearance, and seemed to emanate great power. Recognizing them thanks to the memories he had taken from Clementine, he cursed under his breath at the unexpected encounter. Who would have imagined that the Black Scripture would come to him fully equipped?

The group had an aura that was very different from the humans he had encountered so far in this world. It was like the difference between a mouse and a lion.
“[Discern Enemy]” Identifying the enemy's estimated level, he was surprised to see that one of them had an astounding level of 70, the others not far behind with a mixture of 60s and 50s.

After that he made sure this information wasn’t false by using [See Through]. The level and status remained unchanged, but their physical appearance seemed to shift. So they had been using a magical item to conjure a fake face…

“[Sense Enemy]”

Confirming that indeed, they were the only ones here, he decided it was time to activate the plan he had discussed with the guardians.

He sent a [Message] to Albedo, giving her instructions of the location they would use to meet up. He needed to equip the World Item if he wanted to be safe against the one the old woman was wearing.

“CZ Delta, we’ll start moving towards the meeting point. Don’t take your eyes off them, not even for a second. I will be supporting you with [Distant vision], but the reaction time would be longer if we depend on it.”

“Understood, Hadrian-sama” the maid said with a nod. Seeing her walk backwards would have been funny in any other situation, but right now it only slowed them down. Sighing in resignation, he picked her up and carried her like he had done with Aura, an arm under her knees while the other one supported her back. This way, she could look at them over his shoulder and he could run at top speed without distractions.

Apparating would have been faster, but he didn’t want to lose sight of the enemy not even for a second, and leaving behind the maid was out of question.

Arriving after a couple of minutes, he put down the pleiade (was that a blush?) at the same time a [Gate] appeared in front of him, stepping out were Aura, Shalltear and… Albedo?

“Go back Albedo” Harry whispered dangerously after taking down the concealment charms. He didn’t have time for this!

“Hadrian-sama, please reconsider! There’s no better shield than me” a fully armored Albedo answered, her world item held strongly in her hands. She had shivered at the glare he had given her, but her voice had been steady and filled with determination.

Sighing tiredly, he figured Pandora and Demiurge would be enough to plan a strategy if something came up. They would be fighting inside the dimension made by the world-item, so surveillance wasn’t going to work on them. Demiurge had orders to bring back-up troops if he received a signal from any of them.

“You’ll be supporting Shalltear on the front line then. Work together to defeat the enemy, I expect to see actual team work, yes?” he saw her nod once before dismissing it, having more important things to worry about. Taking the gauntlets, he put them on before turning to the now-visible pleiade.

“Delta, what’s their position?”

“They’re still walking towards our previous location. The humans have a defined formation, and appear alert and on guard of their surroundings. They don’t seem to have realized our presence, nothing in their attitude changed when we moved towards here.” was the swift report of the maid.

“Excellent. Aura, come here” he said to the elf and proceeded to place concealing charms on her.
“Your mission is to guard the only exit, make sure no one escapes from the dimension”

“Yes, Hadrian-sama!”

“Shalltear, go all out and ripe them to pieces. Don’t worry about the old woman with the World item; I’ll take care of her before joining the battle” if only the Black Scripture had been in their country, he would have focused on the one with the World-item and leave the rest for another day, so the solo-mission would have sufficed. But since they had come so nicely to his territory, he figured he would use the guardian’s help to get rid of the problem from the root.

“Understood, Hadrian-sama!”

“Albedo, act according to the situation, you’ll be leading the attack. Define a strategy against the enemies based on the information we got from the memories”

“Yes! I will not fail you, Hadrian-sama!”

“Good. Then we start at my signal” turning around so he had the enemy on his vision, he asked CZ Delta to leave, opening another [Gate] for her. After that, he used some buffs on himself and his team to enhance their skills. Figuring they were as prepared as they were going to be, he gave the starting signal to Aura before placing concealing charms on himself, becoming invisible once more.

He watched from the corner of his eye as Aura unrolled the parchment and activated its power, [Image of Mountains and Rivers]. Shalltear, Albedo and Harry were protected by their World Class Objects, so they would not be trapped in the alternate world created by parchment. Instead they would appear in the painted world that would replace the region of reality that would be devoured. However, being the user of the object, Aura would be automatically absorbed into the alternate world.

They were going to willingly enter of course, while usually the World Class Objects could not affect other World Class carriers, it was possible if those carriers accepted their influence. It was unlikely a user would accept such a thing so readily without having more information, which meant the old lady was going to be left alone while the rest of her team was trapped.

Watching attentively the enemy group, he apparated at a safe distance behind the old woman the moment the rest of her team was gone. Rising his arm, he silently casted [Triple Maximize Magic: Magic Arrow].

A magic circle appeared in front of him, and 30 white arrows of light, made of mana, were released towards their target, leaving a shining trail behind them.

Actually, [Magic Arrow] was a low-level tier magic that had the advantage of never missing the target, even if it was relatively weak. He had used [Triple Maximize Magic] before that however, so the level of his attack was now comparable to a 8th tier spell.

The old woman didn’t even have a chance to move before the spell hit her, her bloody corpse falling to the ground. The dress was a World-item, so it hadn’t suffered physical damage, and now it was only getting dirtied by the blood.

He used [True death] on her body in case someone tried to resurrect her, before summoning his elder wand to transfigure the corpse into a bone. A World-item could only be affected by another, so the result was a single bone hidden in a suddenly-empty dress.

Picking up the dress, he placed it in the bag he carried around his neck, along with the bone. He
would dispose of the body in Nazarik’s grounds, just to be sure.

When he had apparated behind the woman, the sky had “broken” as if it had been covered by a thin glass. Whoever had been monitoring the Black Scripture had been forcefully blocked by Harry’s presence, due to the Anti-information Magic.

Satisfied it had only taken a couple of minutes, he quickly accepted the influence of Aura’s World-item to enter the dimension were his guardians were currently fighting against the other dozen people.

Still invisible, he took a moment to process the current status of the fight happening in front of him. The surroundings hadn’t been changed on the surface, so he was still standing in a pasture that was close to a forest, the only difference being the mist that now surrounded the huge area.

A muscular, robust man lied dead on the ground, a broken mirror-like tower shield resting near his left hand. He had a hole in the middle of his plated-armored chest, and judging by the size of the injury it had probably been caused by Shalltear’s divine weapon. He recognized the man from Clementine’s memories as the one in the 8th seat, Cedran.

Near to him lied another corpse, this one of a thinner man with pointy black hair, a chain loosely grasped in his hands. He was missing the right part of his abdomen, some organs peeking out of the ripped flesh, very dead indeed. This one was in the 9th seat, Beaumarchais.

Farther away lied the bloodied body of a woman with long blue hair, a huge witch’s hat near her head. Her dress code was weird, with one sock white while the other was blue, the clothes leave very little to the imagination. Her eyes stared unseeing at the sky, as blood coated her surroundings. She had been slashed diagonally through the middle of her body, the injury deep. Albedo was probably responsible for this one, even if it hadn’t been a direct attack since that would have cut her in two. This one had held the 11th seat.

Three others were magically frozen in place.

One was a burly man with blond hair that was slicked back, which reminded him briefly of Malfoy. He was equipped with a decorative set of armor and a very large lance around the length of his body. The 6th seat.

The other one looked like a school girl, with short, very light brown hair and orange eyes hidden behind purple-framed glasses. She was wearing a female school uniform and carried a light purple bag. The 7th seat.

The third was a muscular man with tanned skin and white hair, his chest was bare, but his arms and legs were heavily protected with an armor that had a style similar to a samurai’s. He was carrying a giant black axe that was actually bigger than himself. The 10th seat.

The rest of the group was still fighting, the most troublesome being the captain (1st seat), a young man with long black hair and sharp red eyes. He was wearing an ornate armor, and was barely holding his ground using his divine weapon, a lance, against Shalltear’s Spuit Lance.

If Shalltear could focus only on him, he would already be dead, but as it was the vampire was also fighting against a man covered from head to toe in a material that looked similar to spandex, the color of black and red of the uniform contrasting against the white ribbons that covered his hands and feet. A ninja and the one in the 12th seat.
On the other side was a blonde woman with summoned angels surrounding her, using holly magic against the vampire. The clothes were similar to that of a nun, if you ignored the green color and the knee-length skirt of course. She was the 4th seat.

Some yards away, Albedo was ruthlessly killing Basilisks, among other creatures a man was summoning from his rings. He looked a lot like Clementine, so Harry immediately recognized him as her brother, the 5th seat. Supporting him was the 3rd seat, a man wearing a black cloak, with a brown thin staff that Harry recognized as a divine weapon, even if it seemed like wood to the naked eye. There was also a petite swordman with medium brown hair and green eyes. His swords had a spiral pattern, and was wearing a cape with an alarm clock pattern and a miniature top hat. The 2nd seat.

Having analyzed the fight, Harry prepared to add his two cents and support his guardians. If he hadn’t been invisible, the others would have been able to see the emerald eyes glowing, magic seemingly swirling in them.

“Step back at my signal. Try to put as much distance as you can from the enemy, otherwise you’ll get caught in the cross fire” was the [Message] he gave to the fighting guardians. He waited until he heard the yells of “Gah!” that symbolized a “yes” before activating the magic.

“Expecto patronum!” the white, luminous stag ran towards the middle of the battlefield, the enemy halting momentarily at the sight, while the guardians remained unperturbed. He had told them it was an alternative to the [Message] spell, the disadvantage being that this was visible.

Well, it had been a disadvantage until Pandora pointed out the enemy wouldn’t know their purpose, and may get distracted thinking it was harmful.

“Now!” Harry’s voice resounded through the battleground, coming from the luminous creature, a moment after that he silently activated [Time stop]. Moving as one, the two ladies kicked the ground to step back, leaving a small crater in the surface. They were still moving backwards, getting away from the confused enemy when the time stopped.

Albedo had put a good amount of distance between her and her group of enemies, but Shalltear had been followed by the ninja, who was now frozen mid-air, in the space between the vampire and the captain of the Black Scripture.

His spell had also frozen the guardians, since “Friendly fire” was allowed now, hence the necessity of them getting away from the enemy.

[Delay magic: Mirror’s reflection] he used pointing to the area in front of Shalltear. This way, a barrier will reflect half the amount of damage the vampire would have received from the ninja’s attack.

[Delay Magic: Spear hostage] an 9th tier spell, it was stronger than [Immobilize Mass Species], mostly because the area of effect was way smaller and the method of “restraining” the enemy’s movements was by using spears to pierce them from the ground. It went without saying that it also inflicted damage, even if the condition was that the target had to be touching the ground.

[Delay magic: Mantle of Destruction] a 10th tier spell, its effects were to drain living force from everything in the area of effect, making it way too destructive and mana-consuming. It also took some time to activate, hence the use of the previous spell.

Harry’s still concealed form walked calmly into the battlefield, only stopping once he was at Shalltear’s side and took her arm; ready to apparate them to Albedo’s position. He didn’t think the
The vampire was in range of the spell, but it was better not to risk it.

Time running out (pun intended); several things happened at once when the flow of time resumed.

The ninja bounced off the barrier with a cry of pain, the momentum bringing him closer to his captain.

The ground was momentarily illuminated by several blue dots of light before spears came rushing out of the surface, piercing anything alive that was on their effect area. The ninja had yet to touch the ground however, so he was briefly spared the suffering. At the same time, Harry apparated, letting out a surprised scream of “Wait!”

Then an obscure layer of pure, dark magic descended upon the Black Scripture, swiftly muffling their cries of agony. It absorbed everything under it, including the corpses and the previously frozen warriors that were in the range of effect. Once the destructive magic touched the ground, all the life seemed to be absorbed, leaving behind dead, infertile soil.

For a moment everything was silent, until Harry’s sharp cry of pain pierced the wind.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Good heavens, this was eternal. Too many characters at once, it’s impossible to keep up!

I’m not good with describing appearances (I’m trying to fix that, but is difficult) so if you want to see the characters that conform the Black Scripture you can see them with Google’s help :P there’s a wiki about Overlord that helped me a lot with this chapter really xD

Before you reclain about it, I’m aware [Distant vision] doesn’t work like that, but was too lazy to meddle with the whole summon and unsummon stuff.

So, thanks for reading, sorry-not-sorry about the cliffhanger, but I wanted a break from writing without making you wait too much, so… yeah.

I received some comments mentioning that changing from “he” to “I” was confusing in the first few chapters (which is true) so I went back to edit them. They should be ok now, I hope I didn’t miss anything.

Feel free to leave me comments and reviews, those make me stronger >:v (I wish!) nah, but it really helps to motivate me to write faster :P Next chapter’s gonna be interesting, and it should be easier to write than this whole, character-introducing shit, so I hope I can get it ready by next week.

See ya around!
Chapter 11 Missing

To be fair, this had been Harry’s fault.

Completely concealed, he had taken Shalltear’s arm when she had been in the middle of a battle. Truly, what had he been thinking?

The moment time resumed, the vampire had felt something restraining her arm and had attacked the invisible foe without a second thought, the lance piercing Harry’s shoulder at the same time he apparated them away, his cry of “Wait!” coming a second too late.

For a moment, he had lost concentration about the destination he wanted to arrive at… and a moment was all it took.

He had apparated them to Albedo’s side of the battlefield alright, but they were way too close to the enemies pierced by spears. Put simply, they were in range of the destructive spell now.

“Shit! Expulso!” he exclaimed, putting as much magic as he could behind the spell. He watched Shalltear’s surprised gaze for a moment before his surroundings were filled with darkness, pain coming in unending waves. The feeling was similar to the one the cruciatus caused, and while he could endure most of it at the beginning, the agony he felt was doubled at the end, making him release a sharp cry of pain.

Logically, he knew it only had lasted some seconds, it was his spell after all, but speaking from the victim’s point of view the whole ordeal had felt like an eternity. Once the darkness finally lifted, he could see the infertile field covered in corpses, most of them with holes that signaled the place where the spears had pierced them. Other than that, they looked relatively unhurt.

[Mantle of Destruction] was a spell that consumed the living force of a being, forcefully taking it out of the system. The pain was caused by the energy being dragged out from all parts of the body at the same time, so it caused great HP damage while leaving the body physically intact.

The others had already been injured when Harry activated that spell, so in the end the only one left standing was him, even if his legs were trembling and the pierced shoulder was throbbing with pain, blood sliding down his arm and torso.

“Hadrian-sama!” came the chorus of female voices filled with panic. The concealment spell he had placed on Aura was starting to dissipate, since he could now see a distortion in the air when she moved towards him; along with the other two guardians.

“It’s not too bad” he tried to make light of the situation, but couldn’t give more than one step before losing his balance. Stupid, shaky legs.

Albedo was only too willing to support him, coming at his uninjured side in a blink. Shalltear took a step closer to do the same, but was stopped by Albedo’s World item pointing threateningly at her.

“Don’t you dare touch him! Haven’t you done enough-?!” Albedo started to say as she brought her weapon even closer to Shalltear’s frozen body, but Harry placed his bloodied hand over her arm to
stop the movement.

“It was my fault Albedo” Harry calmly admitted, interrupting her mid-sentence, Albedo froze immediately, her gaze focused on the spot of her arm he had dirtied with blood “Shalltear, lift the curse please?”

The wound would have begun to heal on its own if not for the weapon’s curse, one that made almost all healing magic useless against the injuries made by the item. As it was, the injury had been bleeding non-stop and he was beginning to feel a little bit dizzy.

“O-of course!” said the vampire before hurriedly closing the distance, one hand hovering over his shoulder while the other one grasped the Spuit Lance tightly. Harry could feel the malicious magic vanishing from the wound, and let out a relieved sigh once all of it was gone.

Summoning the elder wand, he did his best to help his inner magic heal the injury, until he ended with a pink scar-tissue. After that, he waved it over himself and Albedo’s arm to clean up the blood before turning to address the vampire.

“I’m sorry Shalltear, this happened because I startled you. I should have taken down the concealing charms” he really had been stupid, and considered it lucky that the lance had pierced his shoulder and not somewhere more vital. Madeye would have surely killed him if he had done such a thing to him, so he was grateful for Shalltear’s less lethal reaction.

As a djinn, his resistance against physical attacks was greater than other races, but Shalltear was strong and it was a divine weapon…

“No! It was my fault, to have acted with such hostility against Hadrian-sama… It’s an unforgivable sin! Please, I beg you my Lord, bestow upon me a fitting punishment!” Shalltear was on her knees in an instant, a couple of tears rolling down her red cheeks as she hiccupped softly.

Harry didn’t think she deserved any punishment; it had been completely his fault, to act so carelessly while in the middle of a battle. Back at the time, his reason for not taking down the concealment was so the enemy would remain unaware of his whereabouts, in the odd case they managed to survive or avoid the attack; but he could have used a [Message] to tell Shalltear to move further away or something.

Still, he remembered quite clearly that Albedo hadn’t been able to rest or work properly after her… reaction to the reward-memory, until he had given her a punishment. Thinking something similar would happen if he just tried to dismiss the issue, he sighed before speaking.

“I’ll decide on one at a later date, so please rise” once the vampire stood shakily, he turned to the elf that had stayed silent until now “Aura, please check the stats of the enemy, make sure everyone is dead. Shalltear, stay close to Aura and protect her if the enemy is faking it”

The two guardians agreed, immediately moving towards the corpses that lied dispersed on the battleground. They seemed to be chatting between them, but were too far away for him to discern anything.

“This was my fault, is a punishment really necessary?” he whispered, closing his eyes briefly.

"If I may voice my opinion, I consider it the right thing to do, it'll be better this way” was Albedo’s answer, her soft voice coming from very close, so much in fact that he could feel her breath on his cheek. Ah, she was still helping him stand.

“Thank you for your help Albedo, I can stand properly now“ He had gotten over his height issue a
long time ago, but couldn’t help but find the position uncomfortable since Albedo was as tall as him, and was much closer than strictly necessary.

“She’s alright, please don’t worry” he interrupted, taking a step away from her to prove his point. His legs were still trembling slightly, but not to the point that he was unable to move by himself. Opening his bag, he accioed a potion that was meant to heal the nerves after the cruciatus, figuring it would be enough to reduce the effects that remained from the destructive curse. Not long after drinking it, Shalltear and Aura came back.

“They’re really dead, Hadrian-sama” said the unnaturally serious voice of Aura, the place she was standing at looking oddly blurry. He waved his wand lazily upon her, taking down her concealment.

Now, what should he do with them? Use [True Death] and get rid of the corpses like he would with the old lady? Or risk resurrection so he could get more information? Ah, decisions, decisions…

…Well, Clementine had paid in levels her resurrection, so it probably would be the same with them. Resurrecting one at a time should be fine, so long he killed them immediately after using legilimency, right? Demiurge can experiment with the bodies after that, like he did with the others’.

Walking slowly and carefully, the effects of the dark curse weren’t nearly as intense as before, but he had yet to regain his strength. He went and transfigured the corpses in different objects, placing them in his bag for the time being. Once that was done, he told Aura to stop the influence of her World-item, going back to the real world briefly before he opened a [Gate] to return to Nazarik.

A few days later, in the Slane Theocracy, a girl stepped out of the main room, finally liberated from the meeting of the Cardinals, a gathering of the highest ranking people in the country.

She had a unique hairstyle, with the left side being a different color from the right. One was silver, while the other was an all-consuming black. The color of her eyes was similarly mismatched. On her hand was a war scythe that resembled a cross-shaped spear, swaying slightly as she walked.

Although she looked youthful, barely 15, her age did not correspond to her appearance at all. She was a cross-blooded child, half human, half elf, and the Black Scripture’s Extra Seat, known as “Certain Death”. She was a guardian, responsible for defending the place where the relics of five gods were kept.

The girl walked with an oddly pensive look on her face, taking out a Rubik cube from her right pocket, she began to play with it mindlessly after hanging her weapon in her back.

“One face is simple enough, but getting two faces right is hard.” she said out loud to no one in particular, even as she thought about the news the Cardinals had delivered.

The whole Black Scripture, disappeared? According to the surveillance team, they had been there one moment, gone at the next. The only exception had been Kaire-san, and only for a brief moment before the signal had been totally interrupted.

Sure, the surveillance team wasn’t nearly as good as the Windflower Scripture or Thousand Mile Astrologer, but they had been in charge of following the Black Scripture since the others were busy trying to locate the traitor, Clementine.
The meeting had gone on and on, seemingly unending, the only conclusion all of them seemed to agree with was that something dangerous was in the Re-Estize Kingdom. The Cardinals didn’t know what to expect, if their strongest had really been incapacitated as one of them seemed to believe. What kind of monster had arisen then?

In the end, they decided to leave things as they were for the time being, while the Windflower team returned to the country so they could try strong divination magic to help locate the missing Black Scripture.

Also, the people that used to be part of said Scripture and had retired would be asked to come back to work again, if only so they wouldn’t be totally defenseless in the absence of their strongest team. Everyone had agreed on that course of action.

“But that doesn’t solve anything, does it?” he talked with herself as she walked in the empty hallways, her gaze focused on the toy in her hands.

She wasn’t worried about the members of the Black Scripture, if anything, her mismatched eyes seemed to sparkle with curiosity, delight, and battle-lust. After all, anything that could defeat the whole group would have to be strong, maybe God-kin or Dragon Lord.

“Could it be The Vampire Dragon Lord or the Elder Coffin Dragon Lord?”

The curve of her lips widened in a clear, predatory smile. She was itching to know whatever creature they had encountered; thinking that she may finally have a good, exciting battle.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Aaaaand there you go! I had fun with this one, much better than the previous chapter, really.

I’m not sure about what to do in the next chapter. I have some ideas, but I haven’t decided how to include them in the story quite yet. Who knows, maybe I’ll take a break and do a simple Omake.

Anyways, thanks for reading! Feel free to comment, review, follow, fav, kudo or do whatever you feel like doing. Or nothing of the above, if you’re just here for a quick read.

See ya!

EDIT* Zesshi is going to appear, I swear to God I didn’t write her just for the heck of it. I thought it was going to be sooner though, but… yeah, sorry for the wait, I know this chapter doesn’t make much sense at first. She will appear~
Omake: Childhood memories

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Omake 1 Childhood memories part 1

It had been an accident.

Harry had been cleaning the contents of his bag. After so many lives, he figured it was about time he got rid of all the trash he had kept when he got through his collector phase.

In the first three or four lives, he had looked at pretty much anything as if it were a unique treasure; because once that world died he knew he wasn’t going to find anything like it ever again. This way, he ended up with a lot of curious, useless objects that only were taking space in his bag.

Harry didn’t even remember what most of them were. Sure, he could remember if he so tried, but that would mean meditation, going into his mind castle in order to check the memories of that particular world. All in all, it would be time consuming and tedious, so he decided to follow his instincts in whether something was useful or not.

He was doing this alone in his office, throwing the useless objects at the corner of the room while the ones he was keeping were placed in a different section of the endless bag.

Well, he had been alone at first anyways.

Harry was sure as hell they had agreed to come “visit” him all at the same time, there was no way this was only coincidence. One after another, the guardians came to report something, claiming he had called for their presence. They kept coming in between intervals of 2 minutes, until all of them were standing in front of his desk, looking confused.

“What? No, I didn’t ask you to come Shalltear. Who told you I did?”

“He told me, he… eh? I can’t remember?” So she didn’t know either. Harry narrowed his eyes, frowning with worry and apprehension. Had Nazarik been infiltrated?

As he was thinking this, he got distracted and threw a seemingly empty, crystal bottle at the pile of discarded items, the flask breaking in pieces. A moment after that, a brilliant yellow light engulfed the whole room like a flash, momentarily blinding him.

When he opened his eyes again, the guardians were still in front of his desk, but now looked like 5 year-old children.

“What the flying fu-!”

“Swearing in front of children!? You monster!” came the jokingly affronted male tone from his side before the one speaking bent down with laughter.

Of course this was Death’s fault. Now he understood why his guardians didn’t remember the person that told them Harry had asked for their presence.

Stupid, childish, grudge-holding, immortal entity.

“This is payback for laughing at you in the last Emergency Quest, isn’t it?”
“Now we are even, yes”

“You’re such a-”

“Language! Young children repeat everything they hear, you know? Specially swearing” Harry was about to retort when a young voice asked

“Hadrian-sama? Who are you talking to?” Sweet Merlin, Aura looked even cuter as a little kid, her head inclined slightly to her right, looking like a confused puppy.

So Death not only pranked them, but was in his invisible-for-all-but-Harry form. Fantastic.

“I’m speaking through [Message] with a friend.” He lied calmly, doing his best to ignore the not so discrete chuckles that were coming from Death. “Hey little one, could you please tell me what’s the last thing you remember?”

“Eh? Uhm, Nazarik was translo- trans- err… we were… we came from a swamp to a grassland!” was the attempt at explaining before she surrendered, crossing her arms and frowning at the floor in frustration, inflating her red cheeks adorably.

So, the first day after the runes activated? Harry repeated the question addressing the others, all of them seemed to remember the little reunion they had had on the sixth floor, but didn’t seem to remember anything about the incident with the wards.

“I don’t get it Hadrian-sama. Weren’t we grown-ups back then?” was Demiruge’s well-articulated question, bringing his little hand to his chin pensively. The demon was one of the kids that had less trouble with vocabulary, and hadn’t stuttered not even once when speaking. The rest of the children looked at each other with confusion, not really understanding what was going on.

“Certainly. Some things happened after that, but it doesn’t matter right now” standing up Harry walked around the desk, mildly noticing Death’s disappearance, and knelt once he was in front of them, so he was more at their level. The children only looked at him curiously, without the surprise and the “Please don’t kneel for us!” exclamations he had half-expected.

“This situation is only temporary, there’s no need to worry. Until then, would you like to spend some time with me?” The kids looked happily surprised for a moment before the whole room was filled with a chorus of high-pitched “YES!”. Harry couldn’t help but chuckle at the childish excitement they were exhibiting.

…but that’s right, they never had a childhood. They were simply created.

Well, Harry would make sure they enjoyed these days at least. After seeing the effect of the curse that had been contained in the crystal bottle, he recognized it as the “Law of Retrogression”, a de-aging magic that lowered the magical, mental, and physical skills of the target, making them look like a younger state of themselves. Depending on the strength of the curse, the duration of the effect varied. The one in the flask probably had been one of the strongest, so he thought it may last three days or so.

As he was thinking this, Harry felt something small rushing at him and caught it by reflex, golden eyes full of adoration looking up at him as a little Albedo made grasping motions with her tiny hands, right in sync with the flapping of her small black wings.

“Hug! hug!”

He placed her on his left side, the little girl snuggling in his shoulder before sighing happily.
“Not fair! Me too! Me too!” came the excited voice of Aura as she ran towards him

“C-can I h-have a hug too?” Mare was as shy as ever, but looked hopeful, walking behind his sister.

“Hadrian-samaaa!” was the simple cry of Shalltear, making that betrayed face kids usually did when they thought their parents only spoiled their siblings and not them.

The room was in chaos in an instant, and he found himself surrounded by the remaining five children, expectant faces staring up at him. He didn’t have enough arms to carry them all… but he was still kneeling, so instead of standing up, he sat down briefly before laying on the cold floor.

“Hadrian-sama?”

“I can’t carry all of you, but we can lay down together” Not one minute after that, Harry was staring at the ceiling, his torso and arms restrained by the weight of the kids.

Albedo had quickly claimed his left side, and seemed quite content as she listened to his heart; her upper body was above his own, while her knees supported her on the floor. Shalltear had claimed the right side, her face hiding in the crook where shoulder met neck, which was somewhat uncomfortable since her breath was tickling him slightly.

The twins’ heads were lying over his stomach, the rest of their bodies on the floor. Aura was face up, looking at the ceiling with a relaxed face, while Mare was curled in fetal position, facing Harry’s upper body.

Cocytus had simply hugged his right arm, the four arms trapping the limb against the insectoid’s cold chest as the long tail swayed happily, hitting the floor repeatedly at a steady rhythm in such a way that it was highly probable it would end up breaking the hard surface. Harry found amusing the fact that the guardian was the smallest among the children, being at least one head shorter than the twins. If one were to judge the age based in nothing but height, anyone would say Cocytus was at least two years younger than the rest.

Demiurge had stood at the side momentarily, seemingly at loss at what to do. After some encouragement, the small kid ended up doing the same as Cocytus but with his left arm, the demon’s little arms held the appendage loosely, even as the metal-like tail curled strongly around Harry’s forearm.

If Harry was truthful, the position was far from comfortable. The floor was hard, it was difficult to breathe with the kids laying over him, Demiurge’s tail was obstructing his blood circulation, and the arm Cocytus was holding was cold as shit. He was glad to have resistance against [Frozen], negative status, because he was sure the arm would end up like that otherwise. Still, this was not the first time he took care of a bunch of children, so he kept his discomfort to himself and closed his eyes, somehow managing to fall asleep like that.

Harry woke up when someone knocked at the door, Yuri Alfa requesting permission to enter. Ugh, it was better if the current… situation wasn’t widely known.

“Please wait a moment” he told the maid before he started to move, disturbing the sleepy guardians. Placing privacy charms around the room, he tried, and failed, to sit up. The kids were quite unwilling to free him.

“Hey little ones, I need to get up. Please go to my bedroom and behave until I arrive, yes?”

His question was greeted with hums and murmurs of who knows what, Harry was sure those weren’t even words.
“Come on…The first one to touch the door of the closet wins a reward”

Awake all of the sudden; he watched them run hastily towards his bedroom, some tripping up in thin air since they were still half asleept. Finally free, he stood up and placed silencing and locking charms upon the bedroom’s door before stretching out, his back popping satisfactorily. Once he was seated behind his desk, he finally let the pleiade enter.

She was asking about the guardian’s whereabouts, so he told her they were on a secret mission, and would be out for the next few days.

“Please let the area guardians know, so they can act properly in their absence”

“Understood, Hadrian-sama”

Dismissing the maid, he watched as her eyes stared suspiciously at the broken surface Cocytus’ tail had caused, before she bowed and turned to leave. Once the door closed, he stood and walked towards his bedroom, taking down the locking charms and leaving only the silencing one before he entered.

“I won, I won!” was the immediate greeting of Shalltear, jumping excitedly in her place close to the entrance, letting him know the winner the moment he opened the door.

“Only because you pushed me, so it doesn’t count!” was the angry shout of Albedo, the other guardians were either sulking or watching the exchange with interest from their position in the bedroom’s floor.

“Calm down, it’s only a game” that didn’t seem to change anything though, so he added “Why don’t we play something else? This time with me?”

The mood improved quickly as Harry knelt down in front of them, explaining a few simple games and letting Shalltear decide which one they would play, since she had been the winner.

By the end of the third day, Harry was glad Death had pulled this prank. At least now the guardians had something they could call “Childhood memories”.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

EDIT** I already modified the prologue comments but still. If you don’t like the Omakes you can skip them, as they have no connection to the main story. No problem at all.

I had wanted to write about Children-Guardians! for a while. I’ll continue this Omake later, writing about the things that happened on those days. This is my favorite chapter (if it can be considered as one) so far <3

I’ll publish it in the normal section of overlord too, because everyone should know about the idea of Children-Guardians! haha
I would like to say that if any of you want to write about this prompt you can do it. I just love the idea so much I wouldn’t mind if you use it, so long you include mi username and the title of this story so people know they can find my own version of the idea here.

Thanks for reading, hope you liked it. Reviews make me happy, you already know that.

See ya later!
Chapter 12 Lizardmen

Harry had been talking animatedly with the Sous-chef in the bar of the 9th floor, teaching him about the wonders of firewhisky and butterbeer when he was interrupted mid-sentence by an oncoming [Message] of Entoma, saying the battle was about to begin. Exchanging farewells, he used the ring to go to his office, where a giant mirror awaited.

It’s not like he had anything against the lizardmen, but Demiurge had suggested it would be a good idea to try to rule over them without the use of fear, as practice for the future. Harry had agreed because he figured he would have to stand with his own nation sooner rather than later, considering the information he had gathered from the Black Scripture.

There was still a powerful character in the Slane Theocracy, stronger than the captain of the captured Scripture had been. Harry thought she probably had a 94 level; and was in charge of the security of the other divine items their “Gods” had left behind.

The fact that she was half-elf had also intrigued him, considering the Theocracy was famous for their humanity-focused values. Then again, she was the offspring of an unwilling union between a “God-kin” human and the elf king, initiating the war in the first place, so there goes that.

The elf king was also another intriguing character. Harry was almost sure the elf was a player, so he was torn between initiating contact to try to form an alliance or capture him so he could experiment a few things… player resurrection being the main topic. While Harry himself wouldn’t stay dead due to his Master of Death status, it would be crucial information in case he confronted future players.

Harry would rather have the alliance though, so he decided to speed up the plans for founding a nation. The other option was to make themselves known and be part of an already-existing country, the advantage being that they could shift the blame to them in case things went bad, but it would also mean their movements would be closely monitored and restricted, not to mention they would have to abide to the laws of said nation…

All things considered, getting his own would be quite better, which brought him back to the Lizardmen conquest. He had given free rein to Cocytus in his fight against them; so long the army was conformed of POP monsters with a level not greater than 50, since he considered it would be overkill otherwise. The troops of the Lizardmen were around 1,400 warriors, so Harry had ordered to cease the attack once it was either halved or if they surrendered, whichever happened first. Extermination was not their objective after all.

The fight was rather short, the odd-looking leaders of the clan, being the strongest and better equipped, were the only ones that had a small chance of surviving the slaughter that couldn’t really be defined as “battle”. Two of the reptile commanders had died in the fight, one that was covered with some sort of bone armor, while the other was small and had been throwing rocks of all things with some sort of slingshot. The attack stopped after that, Nazarik’s troops momentarily retreating since they had already killed half of the enemy’s army.

A few automatically generated monsters from Nazarik had died as well, most quite unnecessarily… he would have to speak with Cocytus about the information-gathering and preparation needed before
initiating a battle. Those deaths could have been prevented if he had investigated the enemy’s skills and the environment of the battleground. Harry would ask him to deliver a “Lessons-learned” report later.

Standing up, he stretched and went to his dress room to prepare. The plan now was to show some of their true power so the Lizardmen knew resistance was futile, and would be more receptive of Cocytus’ governance. While Harry had experience leading groups of people, he didn’t have the time to actually improve the reptilian’s living conditions and knowledge. Besides, Cocytus was almost finished with the weapon-testing, so this should fill in that gap of sudden free time.

Harry wasn’t good with anything related to fashion, so he simply choose to wear what the maid had picked for him, a dark emerald dragon-skin cloak over black trousers and a light green t-shirt; the black dragon-hide boots being the only garment that remained the same as usual. By the time he was finishing he received Albedo’s [Message] informing that everything was ready in the lake, so he apparated to the designated place.

…and promptly blinked at the image in front of him. That was a staircase made of esqueletons? even worse, they seemed to be a mix of the undead Old Guarders, Nazarick Elder Guarders and Nazarick Master Guarders. Around 6000 of them, just to make a bloody staircase.

Harry had just asked her to make a more stable ground. He had expected a giant rock or something, nothing as elaborated as this… then again; they were supposed to impress the Lizardmen so this worked quite nicely.

Walking closer to the edge of the forest, he stopped once he was in the field of vision of his scared, reptilian audience. Then, Harry used a super-tier spell that could contain whatever substance the caster specified, from spells to elements; it could be used to nullify magic or to forcefully change the surroundings of the battlefield.

[Space typhoon: water absorption]

After the magical, bluish-white cocoon that had been surrounding him dispersed, the clouds in the sky were disturbed by the appearance of a whirlwind, all the water from the lake being suctioned upwards by the typhoon, which resulted in the area changing to dry ground. Huh, Harry didn’t remember the area of effect being that large, he couldn’t see the end of it from his position.

The whole ordeal had lasted only a few seconds, and he could hear screams of horror coming from the lizardmen. Some of the undead that had been waiting at the sides instantly moved to make a pathway with their lances, leading Harry to the awaiting staircase. He didn’t wait for the lizardmen to be silent before advancing, the guardians walking behind him.

Harry had used all the anti-information magic he could think of before Cocytus delivered his attack, so only the authorized Mirrors of Remote Viewing would have been able to watch it unfold. This way, he didn’t have to worry about an enemy spying their movements, so he had all the guardians except Victim, Sebas and Pandora come with him.

Harry had also applied two very useless data crystals on his person. One was [Red carpet] which only made the entrance of the user more dramatic, a red carpet appearing in front of the user so his feet never touched anything else; the red material disappearing from behind him with every step he took. The other one was [Descending Lost Star] with a similar useless effect, which only served to project more his magical aura, highlighting his close surroundings with white, smokish energy.

The staircase was quite tall, so he simply used [Mass Fly] to arrive faster at the top, blinking in surprise for the second time that day when he saw the throne made of bones that awaited him. So
Demiurge not only did unspeakable things to obtain the skin used in parchment (he knew the demon’s personality, there was no way those bipedal sheep were not intelligent creatures, not with how happy he seemed when questioned) but he had used some of their bones to craft this… peculiar furniture.

Harry knew its crafting probably wasn’t easy, since he had worked with a carpenter as a hobby in one of his first lives, but did it really had to be made of bones? Damn you Demiurge. It’s not like he could remain standing though, given the circumstances, so he sat down gracefully on it before using his next spell.

[I wish for: Stardust Herald] immediately followed by [Reckless Summon], a spell that allowed the caster to bring ten copies of the last summoned creature, but they would only have 80% of the power level of the original.

Eleven creatures appeared almost at the same time, ethereal humanoid phantoms that had blue fire instead of flesh, the only solid features being the hands that were holding the dark great swords, as well as the helmet that covered their heads. These were the same creatures that he had summoned to warn them of the incoming attack, so the Lizardmen recognized these beings.

The Heralds levitated down to pass on his message, requesting the leaders to come forward. Shalltear’s single clap dissipated the low-level creatures once they had delivered his missive. This at least, they had agreed to do previously in their reunion.

Several Lizardmen saw this, and their tails thrashed violently, obviously scared in front of such enemy.

“—Don’t be afraid. Don’t disgrace us in front of our opponents.”

One of the leaders yelled to them, their posture immediately changing to stand up straight and thrust out their chests. After that, the one that had shouted and another one came closer until they were just at the base of the staircase. The air felt dry, and it seemed to be affecting them in a similar way a [Poisoned] status would, their movements slow and heavy. They had been fighting just one hour before, so they were probably physically and mentally exhausted, not to mention hurt.

“We have arrived! I am Shasuryu Shasha, representative of the Lizardmen, and this is the greatest hero of the lizardmen!”

“I am Zaryusu Shasha!” Same last name, they were family then?

They were looking up at him, standing proudly even under the circumstances. Harry felt respect for the dignified way in which they stood up against him, even when they had a clear disadvantage. Ah, he really didn’t like acting the villain role.

“Our master feels you have not adopted a sufficiently respectful listening posture.” came the sweet voice of Albedo from his side, even when Harry hadn’t really done anything to imply that. The succubus didn’t even let them answer before addressing Demiurge, the demon responding to the silent request with a commanding “[Kneel].”

The brothers fell to their knees, unwillingly following the order. Their eyes opened in panic as they tried and failed to change their current position, Demiurge answering with a smirk and a “[Do not resist]”

Harry felt bad for them; he really hoped his plan worked in the intended way. Letting them raise their heads, he accepted their surrender before letting them know he would not be ruling them personally,
and that they would answer to Cocytus instead, making a hand motion to indicate the giant insectoid.

“Also, I would like to speak with you and the other leaders on my domain. Be ready tomorrow for when Cocytus comes,” he ordered simply before adding “That is all I wish to say. I shall look forward to our meeting.”

“A moment please, w-what will happen with the lake?” the lizardman hurriedly asked, the worried eyes of Shasuryu meeting his own.

“Hmm? I merely wished to avoid staining my cloak in the marsh. I will dispel the magic once I return.” he replied casually at the same time he stood up, opening a [Gate]. “Farewell, Shasha lizardmen”

Once they returned to Nazarik’s grounds, he ordered Cocytus and Pandora to monitor the lizardmen movements, watching out for any suspicious actions. In the meantime, Harry went to the Throne room, preparing the ritual magic he was going to need for their visit.

On the next day, Harry was seating in the throne when the leaders arrived, Cocytus entering first as their guide. He didn’t know if the insectoid had said or done anything, but the reptilians seemed speechless as they knelt in front of him, the albino one actually trembling.

Once they raised their heads, Harry proceeded to strongly suggest them to keep an eye on their people, since betrayal or rebellion wasn’t something Nazarik would act kindly at. The more Harry spoke, the more clouded their eyes seem to get, which told him his ritual was working. [Heartfelt Appeal] was a smoother version of [Domination Mantra], working on a subconscious level. The effect was not immediate, but it made the victim much more gullible, receptive to external influence. Even better since they would think it was their own decision, accepting it easily.

By the time he was done speaking, he was reaching the time limit he had imposed on the ritual, the effect beginning to slowly dissipate. Once Harry felt the spell had completely disappeared he dismissed them, opening a [Gate] so they would not have to take the long path, Cocytus following after them.

He was glad the second ritual wasn’t needed, that would have been a disaster. Harry had placed the runes for [Domain of the true Monarch] in the room, so everyone with a level under 60 was incapable of dealing damage. It’s not like they couldn’t attack, but it wouldn’t have any effect unless they used a World item.

This one didn’t have a time limit and he didn’t see any problem with its presence so he let it be. Leaving the Throne room, he was walking leisurely back towards the bar, fully intending to finish his explanation of the firewhisky and butterbeer when he heard a female, inebriated shout saying “Another!”

Curious, he got closer to the bar’s door, stopping just before arriving at the entrance so he could take a peek. He could see Shalltear’s seated form, an empty jar in her right hand as the Sous-chef came closer to give her a more delicate cup of alcohol. She was, obviously, the source of the shout.

Can vampires even get drunk? Wasn’t that considered as a negative status? Harry wondered mildly as he saw the depressed state of the guardian. He stood immobile for a moment before looking at both sides of the empty hallway.

Satisfied no one was in the proximity, he concentrated on the appearance he wanted to take, his features changing easily to match his thought. The shapeshifting came naturally to him, since it was one of the Djinn features, so it was over in less than a minute. Confident in his disguise, he entered
the bar without verifying his appearance.

He had taken the form of one of the male servants, and was confident he had replicated the details of his features because he had a hand in his design. Harry hadn’t wanted to create a NPC, since he felt it wasn’t his place to create a living being, even less when it was just for fun… but the other members of the guild had asked for advice in certain areas, so he had contributed in a few things. Appearance, skills, classes, races… only once he had meddled with personality, and it hadn’t been much.

“One beer please” he ordered as he sat down at Shalltear’s side, before turning slightly to face the guardian.

“Good evening Shalltear-sama” he was surprised when the vampire didn’t answer, too busy mumbling things under her breath. She didn’t seem to have noticed his presence, since she had her unblinking gaze fixated in her cup.

“I’m sorry, I’m so sorry…” she apologized over and over, and didn’t get out of the trance until the Sous-chef placed Harry’s beer on the bar. Her red eyes looked at the beverage for a moment, before finally noticing him.

“Oh, it’s Nero. It’s been a while…”

“Indeed, Shalltear-sama” he greeted with a small smile before his expression became worried “Please forgive my prying, but what is the problem? Why are you acting this way?”

The vampire sniffled loudly; taking Harry’s jar of beer and emptying it in one go. Sous-chef looked at her disapprovingly for a moment before taking the empty glass and turning around to serve another.

"No big deal... No... I made a serious mistake, that's why I'm looking for comfort in alcohol, like the pathetic failure I am.” she said with her gaze lowered, before she started to apologize again, this time with the words “Hadrian-sama” thrown in the mix.

…of course this was his fault; he had yet to give a punishment. He had been busy this past month, taking information from the members of the Black Scripture, being an adventurer, and supervising the various projects that were running in Nazarik. As such, he had quite impressively forgotten he was supposed to punish her.

Sighing, he knew there was nothing he could do to help her, since she wasn’t allowed to even talk about what had happened. None of them could, he had ordered their silence because he was aware the other NPCs wouldn’t let her live it down. The last thing the vampire needed was to be reminded of her mistake over and over again.

Harry had used glamour charms and [False Data Life] to hide his injuries until they fully healed on the night, so the rest of Nazarik didn’t know anything about it.

“…I don’t know what’s going on, but if there’s something I can help you with just let me know” he spoke softly before trying to change the topic. Shalltear ignored all his attempts at starting a conversation however, so he just drank the beer before leaving.

Harry couldn’t have known he had accidentally punished her already. While he had cleaned the very characteristic blue blood of the Djinn from his person and Albedo, he had done nothing to remove it from Shalltear’s pointy weapon, the others knowing immediately she had dared to hurt him. Even worse because the order he had imposed didn’t let her explain or defend herself in any way, Albedo...
and Aura forced to stay similarly silent.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Sup! How are ya?~

Poor Shalltear, still paying for Harry’s mistakes. Don’t worry, gotta fix it up soon ;) I kinda wonder how she would react if she knew she ignored Harry, or that he called her “Shalltear-sama” haha.

Personally, I never liked volume 4 on the novel, I considered it boring since most of it was written from the lizardmen point of view. I know Kugane Maruyama had wanted to write from the “oppressed” perspective, and he did so quite successfully, but I just like Nazarik so much~ I sort of missed them.

I was tempted to completely skip the whole thing, but managed to do this really summarized chapter for them.

As always, thanks for reading, hope you liked it & reviews make my day most of the time. Thanks a lot for them! I think I haven’t received any negatives since the Lamp chapter, which makes me incredibly happy. Next chapter is gonna be an Omake, because I feel like writing it ~

See ya!
When the [Law of Retrogression] had been activated, he hadn’t been affected because he had been seating in his desk, the protective runes he had placed after Albedo’s reaction to the reward-memory still in place.

Harry really didn’t even imagine Death would use it on him only a few weeks after the Guardians had been affected.

“Where am I?” a small and slender 5-year-old Harry whispered to himself as he walked in the abandoned corridors of... whatever place this was. The clothes he was wearing were nice, and fitted him better than Dudley’s hand-me-downs. Harry didn’t have a way to remember magical clothes were enchanted to fit the shape of the user after all.

Harry had lived way too long for the spell to just strip him of all that knowledge and memories, so he remembered pretty much all his previous lives except this one, but had the way of thinking of his 5-year-old self.

“Death can be pretty mean” he whispered, knowing the entity was responsible for this because it had stayed long enough to laugh at his face before disappearing. Starting to walk, he looked curiously at the space that was big enough that even someone like Hagrid would feel small in comparison. He moved slowly and warily, glad he had yet to encounter someone since he didn’t know if they would be friends or bullies.

Just as he thought this, he heard a choked gasp coming from behind him, and turned around to see a woman with long black hair and pretty black wings looking unblinking at his small form.

“...Hadrian-sama?” that was a good way of referring to him right? with respect? he was sure he had heard something similar before.

“Yeah... hello” he said shyly, not knowing how he should act with such a nice lady, his small hands grasping the edge of his shirt for lack of anything better to do as he looked up to meet her golden eyes. Those were kinda like a cat, very pretty.

“Hadrian-sama...I apologize for my ignorance, but may I know why Hadrian-sama has taken such appearance?” the black wings were trembling, as if she wanted to move them but was trying not to. Had he done something wrong?

“Hmm... this is a spell” he said uncertainly, frowning at the floor. He knew the magic, because he remembered it from another world, but he didn’t know how to explain it to her. He wasn’t sure he should do it either.

“A spell? Was Hadrian-sama affected by the same spell as us?” the lady knelt down in front of him, her soft musical voice slightly cooing. Harry didn’t know how to react to her sudden approach, taking a few steps backwards with worry painted on his face. The lady seemed very hurt for the action, and looked like she wanted to cry so he guiltily walked closer to pat her head, standing on his toes so he could actually reach it.
“Sorry Ma’am, I don’t know who are you” seeing the panic that replaced the previously happy expression on her face he quickly shouted “but it’s not always! I mean, I will remember, um, later, yeah” he finished lamely, blushing in embarrassment. He was really bad at explaining things.

“…what’s the last thing Hadrian-sama remembers?”

“Just Harry is ok. Hmm… some dirty world, you couldn’t breathe there, very nasty” he didn’t know how to describe the polluted world he had arrived at, but his last memory was of his first day there and it was terrible, since he discovered you couldn’t breathe the hard way.

“Fuhuhu~ Could it be that only me can call Hadrian-sama with a nickname? Harry-sama~” she looked very happy, her wings flapping freely “Such world should be destroyed, if it bothered Harry-sama! Then again… maybe it was” she seemed to whisper the last part to herself, Harry had no way of knowing she was thinking said world was destroyed by himself; simply for the sin of bothering him with its existence.

“Um, just Harry is ok really” he said uncomfortably, looking at the wall since he didn’t feel like meeting her intense gaze. “Um, where…where are we?” he risked a quick glance at her before quickly returning to the wall, he felt as if she were a predator, dangerous.

Eaten. He was going to be eaten. That’s what his instincts seemed to be saying.

He shivered at the thought, he had to escape! how, how, how? He internally panicked, knowing that trusting his instincts had saved him more than once. He had appeared in the roof of the school when Dudley was running after him; maybe he could do it again?

Closing his eyes strongly, he listened partially to her response of “In the Great Tomb of-“ before his surroundings changed, now standing in some sort of park. A very big park, he couldn’t see an end to the trees and other plants that surrounded him. Harry had been thinking in the park that was near school, and didn’t know he had subconsciously activated the ring of Ainz Ooal Gown he still wore.

He felt some sort of connection going into the trees, several actually, so he decided to follow the strongest, guiding him through the forest-like place until he reached a giant lizard with many legs and a horn on his nose. The beast seemed happy to see him, waving its tail from side to side.

“Hi, I’m Harry” he hissed in parseltongue without meaning to “Do you know where we are?” The lizard didn’t answer his questions, but he felt safe with the giant creature, like he had met it before.

“Can I stay with you?” he said this time normally, jumping in surprise when he felt a positive response come from somewhere in the back of his mind. What was that?

Before Harry could react the giant lizard stood up and came closer to him, the tail still waving uncontrollably. Once it was nearer it laid down again, its body curling around Harry so he was surrounded by nothing but scales.

The lizard’s skin was soft and cool, and Harry felt safe with its presence, so he didn’t have any trouble falling asleep like that, blissfully ignorant of Albedo’s inner heart attack as she searched everywhere for him.

Harry didn’t know for how long he slept, but was scared to death when he opened his eyes sleepily only to see a boy with eyes of different color grinning at him, the thin arm sostaining the giant tail that had been covering Harry as if it weighted nothing.

“Hadrian-sama!” The boy shouted excitedly, naming him as the lady had done “I didn’t know we were playing hide and seek!” he said with mock seriousness before giggling.
“Um, sorry?”

“Ah! Y-you don’t have to apologize! It was really fun, yeah!” The boy hurriedly said, misunderstanding Harry’s answer for an apology instead of the whut? expression it was.

“Emm ok? But, who are you?”

The boy looked heartbroken for a moment before he quickly covered it up with an uneasy smile, saying “T-that's right, Albedo told us Hadrian-sama didn’t remember! Tee-hee~” the boy said as he hit his own head lightly.

“Come on Hadrian-sama, let’s go back. Everyone is worried about you, they'll be happy once they see you’re alright.” The boy smiled at him, offering his hand to help Harry stand up. He didn’t seem dangerous at all and his instinct told him the boy could be trusted, so he accepted the hand and walked at his side, chatting a little along the way. He seemed really familiar, like the giant lizard had been. Glancing back, Harry could see the reptile looking pitifully at him; with its head hanging low... it seemed very sad to see him leave.

Once they arrived at a big office, Harry couldn’t help but tense up. He wasn’t nervous because of the room, but because the people in it were all staring intently at him with a mix of relief and something he didn’t quite recognize. He never liked to be the center of attention… not to mention that the lady he had met was here too.

Harry hid behind the closest person when the lady with black wings tried to get closer, feeling oddly on guard in her presence. He felt something smooth touch lightly his back before he saw a metal-like tail curl loosely around his waist, as if ready to yank him out of harm’s way. The man in suit he had used as shield seemed to stare warningly at the saddened lady before looking downwards at him.

“Don’t worry Hadrian-sama. No one in Nazarik would ever dare to hurt you” he spoke in a smooth, calming tone. There was something in his voice that seemed oddly magical; the image of a mermaid leading the sailors to their doom came to mind.

“Nazarik? Is that where we are?” He asked curiously at the tanned man, who seemed to tense slightly at the question, even if his smile never faltered.

“...indeed.” The man in suit said after a small pause, before introducing himself and the rest of the people in the room, affirming they were here to... Serve him?

What?

“Anything you wish is our command.” The man reaffirmed further, which didn’t help any with Harry’s intern turmoil. “What do you want, Hadrian-sama?”

Eh? If Harry had been nervous before, now he was a complete mess, his thoughts running in every possible direction but coming back empty, their expectant gaze making things worse. He needed something that would keep them entertained, but what could Harry ask for, when he didn’t know anything of this place? All he knew was their very difficult names and that they guarded some floors here.

“Um, Can I see the floors you keep safe? If you’re not busy...” he whispered softly, not really sure if this was a good idea.

The people (and giant insect) seemed excited by it though, so he let out a relieved sigh, glad he didn’t do something wrong. The man that was still at his side asked him if he would like to visit them in order, and addressed the girl with red eyes at his affirmative response.
“Of course!” was the excited squeak of Shaltir? Shalltear? before she started to walk towards him. “I’ll show you the way, Hadrian-sama” she said more calmly once she was closer, making a slight, elegant bow.

“Shouldn’t we go all together? Surely that would be-“ started to say Albedo before the man, Dem-something, interrupted her.

“Every guardian should be more than capable to show their own floor.” The tone of voice made clear this was final, but she didn’t seem to agree with him, so they were staring each other down in a silent battle.

“Ah, Let’s go please?” he told to Shalltear uncomfortably, taking her hand since she was older than him and felt like that was what he was supposed to do. The girl let out a weird squeak before nodding happily, walking out together hand in hand.

“Shalltear” the man in suit said calmly before they could leave, still in his original position “Nazarik is full of wonderful places a child such as Hadrian-sama would enjoy. Make sure you show them right” putting a heavy emphasis in the word “child”, it seemed to have a hidden meaning Harry didn’t really get, even if the girl nodded once at the man before walking out of the room.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Small-Harry attacks Albedo with wariness! It’s super effective!

Poor Albedo really haha but she’s so intense, I think any child would feel overwhelmed. I really didn’t think she would be able to control herself that well with such an innocent, cute, small Harry. Don’t worry though, her floor is the ninth and there are a lot of entertaining places there so I think Harry will overcome his guardedness.

Anyways, this is my take in the situation, and while you may think different that’s how is going to stay :P mostly because I’m too lazy to rewrite the whole thing haha.

Demiurge’s last phrase was so Shalltear didn’t bring Harry to the places full of undead and what not, can you imagine his reaction to that? Only Children-friendly Nazarik please!

Anyways, I had fun writing this and I hope you liked it somewhat, even if Children-guardians! Is still my favorite by far haha. Don’t get mad, I never said it was going to be a continuation of the last Omake :P but next one will be, so please don’t kill me with voodoo dolls!

Feel free to do whatever, I’d suggest the fav, follow, kudo, and comment sections~

See ya later!

P.D. Why whyyyyy nobody told me I was using “leaved” instead of “left”?!! I’m drowning in shame now! Dishonor to my family and my COW! Don’t remember if I told you, but english is not my mother language and this work is unbeta so I don’t have
anyone to help me with this sort of thing. Please tell me! Also, special thanks to Naramyon for pointing that out, and your awesome reviews in Ao3 < 3 Best reader ever bud!

Also, best wishes for you my awesome readers < 3 I like you, you silly bunch of random strangers that I’ll probably never meet : v
Chapter 13 The Hero’s Story

Harry had been surprised when Shalltear let out a terrified “A-another one?!” when he was about to assign a punishment. She had hurriedly covered her mouth and apologized over and over, saying something along the lines of “Of course I deserve something harsher for what I’ve done!”

What did she mean, he had already punished her? He hadn’t done anything of the sort, he would surely recall it. Asking her to look at him, he used silent legilimency to take a peek at the superficial thoughts she was having, but even then he didn’t understand what had happened. What about his order for silence could be considered a punishment?

When he asked her about whatever he had supposedly assigned, she refused to comment on it, her thoughts shifting to a “maybe that was just a pre-punishment and shouldn’t be considered as one?” which, again, didn’t tell him anything about what had happened.

“Shalltear” he said after thinking a possible solution for his dilemma “Your punishment will be to sleep until I allow you to wake up” The vampire seemed very relieved at his statement, nodding once in acceptance.

The rooms of the Guild members were designed as a presidential suite; with a large bathroom, a bar, a piano room, a master bedroom, a guest bedroom, a kitchen for a personal chef, a dressing room, and many other really unnecessary rooms.

Harry took a surprised Shalltear to his guest bedroom, telling her to stand close to the bed. He had been about to ask her to lay down, but the vampire was already blushing, fidgeting with the buttons of her neck as if ready to rip them open. It was better if he didn’t give her more ideas.

“[R.I.P]” Harry said pointing at her direction, magic surrounding the affected area for a moment before the white-light of the capsule disappeared.

It was a high-level spell that, once cast, made all the desired targets go into a state of intense drowsiness; where even intense pain would not stop the effects from taking hold. Once the victim(s) closed their eyes, they were rendered permanently catatonic until the effect of the spell wore off, though there were means of staving off its effects for a brief period of time. The only surefire way to stop [R.I.P.] was for the caster to be defeated before the target succumbs to their urge, thus making the allotted time frame incredibly short.

Using his wand to levitate the suddenly snoring vampire, he placed her gently on the bed before using legilimency again, this time going directly into her mind. There was a thin layer protecting her deeper thoughts and memories, something Harry attributed to her resistance over mind-control, but it was still easy for someone like him to bypass her natural defense.

Her thoughts seemed to be organized in different sections, because he found himself standing in a circular room with a dark marble floor that looked almost like standing water, candles emitting a cool blue light in the stone wall, and seven handle-less doors around him. It actually reminded him strongly of the Department of Mysteries.
He decided to take a peek at each one until he found the one containing memories, so he opened one door at random, closing it harshly almost immediately as he felt his face blush.

Well, that one was for fantasies. He brought a hand to massage his brows, trying to dispel the image that seemed to be carved on his corneas. He really shouldn’t judge, it wasn’t her fault but Peroroncino’s, that perverted bird-brain had been her creator after all.

Focus, focus… he admonished himself, mentally marking that door as “checked”, he moved towards the one at the right, watching the image for a moment before closing it softly. This one was filled with mist, whispers of conversations coming at random in a way similar to the murmurs of the Veil of Death. Harry recognized the voices as his own and the other Guild members, so he supposed these were the snippets she remembered from the time before the activation of the runes.

He advanced like that, moving towards the right as he passed through the doors that held dreams, incomplete ideas, nightmares, before finally reaching the one holding past events. Getting directly to the night when they had captured the Black Scripture, he skipped superficially the memories until he found one where she was seemingly surrounded, with the other guardians in the room with her.

By the time the memory ended, Harry wanted to face-palm, groaning in frustration. The weapon, the quite literally bloody weapon! So the order for silence had hurt her instead of protecting her as it was supposed to.

What could he do to fix it? He would have to explain what happened; maybe show the memory so it was easier to understand, for them to see it hadn’t been anyone’s fault but his own. Then again, maybe it would be worse for them to see him get hurt again in the memory? Ugh, decisions, decisions…

Getting out of Shalltear’s mind, he woke her up, ignoring the disappointed face she seemed to be directing at her untouched dress, and told her to wait in his office. He had been thinking about calling for a reunion, so he could explain everything only once, but Cocytus was probably busy with the Lizardmen, Demiurge was out in a mission, and the twins were trying to control the sudden invasion of Devil’s snare that was threatening to consume the whole greenhouse they had created.

Sighing, he used [Thought Projection], a type of Magic which allows its user to create a psychic copy of his body. This Magic can work even over great distances, allowing the user to essentially be in two places at once, but the copy was intangible like a hologram, used merely for communication and observation. After all, you could only create one copy.

In the end, Harry decided to simply tell them the punishment had already been completed, remove his order for silence, and tell them to get over it. He said so personally to Albedo, Shalltear, and Pandora, and sent the Projection for the guardians he didn’t want to disturb. The hologram would wait for a very short moment (even when he said it wasn’t really that urgent, they didn’t seem to want to make him wait) to deliver the same message he had told the others. They seemed to understand, and Demiurge looked quite impressed at the “punishment”, actually complimenting him on it, which made Harry feel even guiltier.

Once finished he ended the spell, since it consumed MP regularly for as long as it was active, and sat down in his bedroom looking at nothing in particular. He hadn’t meant to do something so harsh to Shalltear, he felt like he should compensate her somehow…

He couldn’t think of anything appropriate at the moment though, so he let the matter rest as he went back to the hotel he and Shizu were resting at, wanting to distract himself with other matters. He and the automaton went out, in a self-appointed mission of exploration, walking without clear destination under the night sky.
After a while, they crossed paths with some bandits that were assaulteding a simple looking cart, taking the goods that were in there. He could see an adult female restrained at the side by two goons as the others attacked a man that was already on the floor.

“Let’s knock them out” he said to Shizu, bothered that his peaceful walk had been interrupted. The bandits were neutralized in a matter of seconds, so Harry focused on the injuries the married pair had. The woman was alright, but the man had broken ribs that could end up puncturing his organs, so he used one of the blue potions Nfirea had given him to heal the bleeding man. Harry knew it was against the law, but didn’t really care since it was improbable they would actually kick him out of the Adventurer’s ranks, being Adamantite and all.

The pair was grateful for their intervention, recognizing them as adventurers due to the plates that hang from their necks. The man tried to offer the goods he was carrying in compensation, some sort of black powder named “Lailah Powder”, but Harry refused to take any, like the good hero he was trying to act as.

Exchanging farewells, he sent one of his assassins to follow them, just to make sure they arrived safely at their intended destination. After that, he asked Shizu to wake up whoever was the likely leader, since Harry wanted to make sure they got all of them before taking them to nearest city for judgment.

Using legilimency again (he seemed to be doing that a lot lately) he was surprised to discover that these were only a small part of the mercenary group that had a hand in most thievery and kidnapping of the zone, doing unspeakable things to the women that were unfortunate enough to take this path. Thinking they may get away in the corrupt judicial system, he decided to simply kill the lot and be done with it; they didn’t even deserve the effort that would take to bring them to Nazarik’s prison.

He killed them in a single hit, once he had explained to Shizu the direction they would need to take to arrive at the mercenaries’ main base, so she could start to analyze and watch out for traps and any guards that may be in the zone.

Cleaning the sword in the clothes of the last rapist, he returned it to its holster and nodded to Shizu, starting to run through a narrow path infested with sharp branches. They continued like that for a while before Shizu started to reduce her speed, Harry following her by mere reflex until she actually explained “There are traps in this zone, bear-traps, dug-holes and other irregularities”

Nodding in understanding, he paid close attention to the ground, sidestepping the traps without losing any speed. Soon enough, the groups of trees began to become increasingly scarce and eventually disappeared completely as they arrived at a grassland with some rocks protruding on the ground. They had reached the plains of Katche.

At the heart of a flower-shaped basin was a large hole dug into the surface. A faint light could be seen escaping the hole, giving the image that the interior probably was a gentle slope that continued down.

The two structures on either side of the entrance to the cave were roughly handmade, two wooden barricades that were little more than just a group of trunks tied with ropes. Two guards were stationed behind them, probably meant to cover them from arrows while they gave the alarm. The guards had hung some bells around their shoulders, so even if a surprise attack on them succeeded, the loud ringing would alert the bandits inside.

It fitted with the information he got from the “leader” of the small group, so he knew this was the only exit of the tunnels that conformed the mercenaries’ base, known as the Death-Spreading
Brigade, with 70-something people in its band. Deeming it unimportant whether they rang the alarm or not, he and Shizu ran directly towards them, killing them easily, the bells ringing as they continued to descend to the well-enlighten tunnels.

They killed without much thinking, Harry using his swords while Shizu used her extending hammer, advancing quite fast towards the lowest part of the tunnel until they encountered a single man standing in the middle of the path, positioned to attack with a single sword in hand.

The man’s body was thin but not skinny, with hard muscles that were tempered by experience rather than by training. His hair was cut without much care, messy, and uneven just like the traces of beard on his chin. His brown eyes stared keenly forward, and the corner of his mouth was curled up in the beginning of a sneer. He was equipped with a chainmail, a leather pouch tied on his waist. From the memories he had seen, Harry identified this man as Brain Unglaus, someone that was supposedly almost on pair with Gazef in terms of fighting skills.

“Shizu, go ahead. The main objective is to save those women, but don’t let any mercenaries get out” he said to the pleiade as they got closer to the standing man “I’ll take care of this one.”

Without reducing their speed, Shizu changed from running on the ground to running on the top part of the wall, at the same time Harry threw a rock at Brain’s head, forcing his enemy to dodge and give space for Shizu to pass through.

The man seemed surprised that one of his enemies had gotten away, but made sure not to show his back to Harry as he took a stance again.

“For being only two intruders, you seem to have had a lot of fun. I guess it was to be expected from adamantite adventurers” Brain greeted him with a savage grin on his face, looking absolutely confident in his fighting ability. Well, Gazef was supposedly the strongest man in the country, so Harry could understand it.

“Brain Unglaus, what is a man like you doing here?” Harry asked curiously. It would be a pity, but if the man shared the view of these mercenaries, he was going to bring him to Neuronist. The man had a natural talent he could use for research after all.

Brain just relaxed his shoulders, tightening his grip on the hilt of his katana. “That’s none of your concern James.” He said putting emphasis in his alias name, meaning he knew of his adventurer’s persona “Forget about that, I’m ready. I can wait for you if you’re not, how about it?” the warrior said with a smirk.

“Confident. Then, if I defeat you, you will answer my question yes?” Harry said calmly as he positioned his swords in front of him. Brain raised his blade, levelling its tip at him.

“Chestooo!” As he shouted, Brain brought his katana down with a forceful swing. Filled with a power that could split an armored warrior bodily in two, racing through the air like a hurricane. Harry didn’t bother to block, simply sidestepping the attack.

“…huh?” Brain frowned as he stared at Harry with narrowed eyes before breaking from his stupor, tightening the grip on the katana’s hilt once more.

Harry simply quirked an eyebrow at him, surprised at the small pause in the battle before it resumed, his swords blocking easily the single katana. He didn’t really get why Brain felt weaker than Clementine, until he remembered the wonder of Martial arts.

“Are you not going to use martial arts?”
A warrior needed to anticipate all sorts of circumstances; he had seen adventurers learn various martial arts, and incorporate them all into their own strengths as they tried to prepare to the bizarre battle conditions they were prone to. That being the case, what about Brain?

“Hmph, I won’t need martial arts for a brat like you” Brain responded as he put distance between them and lowered his stance, returning his katana to its sheath. The warrior seemed ready to do whatever he was planning to, so Harry closed the distance once again, blocking the katana that tried to cut off his neck and giving his own blow that cut cleanly through Brain’s shoulder.

The warrior let out a sharp cry of pain, jumping backwards with a shocked expression, panting heavily as he let out a whisper of “...Im-impossible...” with a pale face.

“I would suggest you start using Martial Arts, otherwise you don’t really stand a chance” Brain couldn’t defeat him even with their use, but Harry wanted to motivate the warrior to use his full strength. The answer of his foe was to let out an enraged“You damn monster—!” as he used the unharmed arm to try to strike at Harry’s ankles, swinging down with his katana as he used his body weight to further hasten the blow.

Harry simply jumped to avoid it, using his sword to lightly poke the forearm grasping the katana, which resulted in the hilt being released from Brain’s hands, sliding in the ground until it hit the wall harmlessly.

Brain’s line of sight did not move, staring at his weapon in shock before he began to pant with a panicked face, sweating and trembling.

“Could it be that you can’t use martial arts?” Harry asked sincerely, considering that with Brain’s natural talents, maybe the warrior hadn’t felt the need to learn them. Brain simply gasped, but remained otherwise silent, trying to move to retrieve the katana. Harry didn’t let him recover it though, stepping in front of him with his swords ready to continue the battle.

The man in front of him simply panted, looking incredulously and fearfully at him.

“...I… trained so hard...”

“...so this is where we stop then. Answer my question, why are you here?” Harry pointed his sword at the defeated enemy, putting the other one back at its holster.

The warrior let out a humorless laugh, whispering “I’m an idiot...everything, all is meaningless” his broken sentences weren’t very enlightening.

“That’s not an answer. If you would rather not give it just say so and I’ll finish this” Brain cried out; not a warrior’s call to battle, but a child’s weeping, and turned around to try to run away, but Harry yanked him backwards grasping the back of the chainmail, kicking him lightly in the stomach so the warrior rolled a couple of times on the ground, coughing once the movement stopped.

“Is the answer really that bad? If so, we have nothing to talk about” Harry said harshly as he slowly advanced closer, his sword pointed at the defenseless enemy. He wasn’t going to strike him, but it may be enough to make him cooperate.

Looking like a wounded, caged animal, Brain tried to stand up but failed, so he moved backwards still sitting until his back hit the wall.

“I’ll tell you! I don’t understand why it’s so important but I’ll talk, just, just don’t...”
Stopping at a reasonable distance, he listened attentively to the tale, verifying the truth of the words since Harry was meeting the warrior’s wary gaze.

Not an adventurer because Brain had wanted to fight humans, training to beat Gazef one day. Not with the Nobles because they wouldn’t ask for such service often enough… so he chose to become a mercenary. All this because he had wanted wipe away his earlier defeat at the hands of the Captain-warrior.

The man in front of him was neither good nor evil. If Harry had to classify him, he would give him a -50 in the Karma scale. Letting out a soft sigh, he kicked the katana towards Brain, telling him to leave this ridiculous path. He watched him run hastily towards the entrance, the back unprotected as he advanced with all the speed his legs could muster.

If Harry found him again in a similar situation, he would take it as a signal that the man really wanted to meet Neuronist. Jogging towards the end of the cave, he found Shizu with a small group of women that looked relieved, their nightmare finally over. The bodies of the other mercenaries were distributed all over the space.

Guiding the kidnapped women towards the exit, the first thing Harry saw were the first rays of sun illuminating the clear sky. Sighing, he was glad the day was finally over.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Sup?

Brain is actually strong, but he’s way too focused on the “kill at one strike” strategy rather than “play with them until they die” thingy Clementine had. Neither could kill Harry, but the crazy bitch at least had a more imaginative arsenal of martial arts for this very reason haha. And yes, Harry helped a couple of drug dealers xD

School’s been good, nothing I can’t handle. You know, my way of writing is weird, kinda like write the idea or initiate drafts even if those won’t happen quite yet. When inspiration comes, I write and just make it fit afterwards.

Dunno if this is a good thing or bad, but it means I already have half of the next Children-guardians! omake. Hope to get it ready next week.

Feel free to do whatever, I’d suggest the fav, follow, kudo, and comment sections~

See ya later!
Harry could swear over his life, he had only taken his eyes from them for a minute.

A minute. 60 seconds. *No more.*

So, how exactly had this happened?

One moment they were playing “Freeze” amiably, laughing when Harry caught them and teasing when he didn’t. Harry even made sure all of them “won” the same number of times, so they wouldn’t feel sad or tease the “losers” overly much.

Then, why in the seven layers of hell were they fighting?

It wasn’t even a fair battle, but more of an “Everyone against Cocytus” thing. The kids surrounding the trembling insectoid menacingly as they spoke indiscernible things, the sounds overlapping in such a way Harry couldn’t really get a whole phrase. Not only were they speaking at the same time, but some words were mispronounced, so he only got “How could you” and “Idiot!” among other things.

“*[Malice Dispersion]*” he said pointing at Cocytus, a strong shielding magic that protected the target from creatures that had negative karma appearing around him. Cocytus, Sebas and Victim were the only guardians with positive karma points, so this should suffice for the time being.

“What the heck is going on here?” he looked disapprovingly at the bunch of kids, which were torn between looking regretfully at the floor and exchanging looks between them. No one answered though, so he sighed and walked closer to the still trembling Cocytus, picking him up. The cold insectoid just trembled with more intensity in his arms, imitating a Chihuahua quite well.

“Hey kiddo, look at me” Harry waited until he raised his head before continuing “Can you tell me what happened?”

Silence greeted his question, Cocytus’ jaws opening and closing without really saying anything. Harry got the impression that if the insectoid could cry, it would.

“I’m not mad, I just want to know what happened” he said softly, trying to comfort the distressed kid as he softened his expression. Under his gentle breath, the small guardian in his arms finally answered with a whisper of “I’m sorry.”

“…It’s ok kid. What happened little one?” Harry started to move unconsciously, swaying slightly from side to side as if he were lulling a baby.

“I b-broke Hadrian-sama’s box. I’m really sorry! Really sorry!” Cocytus finally answered, hiding his face in Harry’s chest.

Looking more attentively at the floor, he could see some shards of black porcelain dispersed near his nightstand, some sharp, irregular pieces way too close from where the twins were standing. Shit, he hadn’t noticed since the floor was dark as well!
He used [Mass fly] on the bunch of kids that were looking at Cocytus with a mix of envy and confusion, probably thinking the guardian was being rewarded instead of punished for his misdeed. The spell only worked on living beings, so he was sure they wouldn’t get cut by the remains of the jewelry chest Harry used to keep small, invisible-for-all-but-him items.

A simple reparo fixed the chest, before he levitated the items only he could see from the floor and towards the container. Once he was done he gently lowered the other guardians, and knelt to let Cocytus on the floor too.

“It was an accident, there’s no need to worry. I already fixed it, see?” he said pointing at the chest that looked good as new “I want you to be more careful though, that could have hurt someone” he reprimanded slightly before addressing the rest of the guardians.

“And you, if something happens I want you to tell me, don’t try to deal with it on your own. I’ll handle the situation, yes?” the others nodded slightly, looking unsatisfied at the whole affair.

“…Cocytus, as punishment for breaking my box, you won’t be able to choose a game for the next round” He said with mock severity “Maybe then you’ll be more careful”

The small insectoid nodded with acceptance, much calmer now that he had received a penalty. The others looked better too, quickly forgetting the whole ordeal as Aura’s turn for choosing arrived.

She choose Hide and Seek, and the random role-defining sticks designed Harry as the seeker (pun intended) so he went towards the nearest wall and covered his eyes, counting slowly and loudly for half a minute. It was only when he turned that he realized his mistake.

He hadn’t told them they couldn’t leave the room.

Shit.

So much for keeping it a secret. Maybe if he cheated, he would be able to find them before others noticed? With this in mind, he took from his bag an enchanted compass, which was practically a point-me spell but with a larger area of effect for locating something.

Thinking who would be the most troublesome if left alone, he said “Shalltear” out loud; intent on running the instant the little arrow stopped its spinning. The little vampire had been having difficulties controlling her strength, and only Harry’s watchful eyes had been keeping at bay the potential accidents among the group of children.

Before the arrow stopped completely he heard a soft, surprised “He’s cheating!” come from the closet. Halting mid-step, he quickly turned around and opened it, Albedo staring up at him with big doe-like eyes, her little hands covering her mouth as she realized her mistake.

Well, Harry admitted it had been a good idea. With the whole Nazarik as a hiding base, he hadn’t even considered the possibility of them actually staying in the room. Catching Albedo, he carried her to his king-size bed, telling her to wait there until he brought the others.

Albedo didn’t seem to pay much attention to his words though, too busy rolling around delightfully as she giggled in his bed, until she was trapped in the covers like some sort of small burrito. Harry really wanted to take a picture, but didn’t have the time for that right now… the memory would have to suffice.

“[Heaven’s eye]” he said as he turned around, watching the room carefully. This magic allowed the user to see over long distances, giving them the ability to see through solid objects, thereby allowing
He didn’t seem to have such luck however; his presidential room appeared to be empty. Sighing, he used [Thought Projection], a type of Magic which allows its user to create a psychic copy of his body. This Magic can work even over great distances, allowing the user to essentially be in two places at once, but the copy was intangible like a hologram, used merely for communication and observation.

The projection would watch over Albedo, so even if it couldn’t physically interact with her at least Harry would know if she started to make trouble. Getting out of the room, he closed it and placed locking and silencing charms on it, before resuming his search for Shalltear.

He caught her on the 6th floor, hiding among the forest. Her little legs were as fast as ever so he had used magic to catch up with her, which got him a small cry of “Not fair! That’s cheating!” before he picked her up, which caused a delighted cry as red eyes looked happily up at him. After that she seemed to grow shy and hid her face in the crook of his neck, giggling softly.

Using the ring to go back to his room, he left her in the bedroom, told her to behave, and promptly left as he searched for Mare. He had an inkling of were the little boy may be, so he teleported directly to the library.

The boy was sleeping under a table. How could he fall asleep so fast? it had been hardly five minutes since the game began. Smiling softly at the little guy Harry crouched to pick him up, carrying him slowly and carefully as he tried not to wake him. Once he was standing he nodded in greeting at Titus Annaeus Secundus, the librarian that was watching the whole ordeal silently but with interest, before making a shushing gesture at him. The librarian answered with a nod, mouthing “I won’t tell” without actually saying the words.

Harry was glad only the librarian had seen him, the magic caster’s personality and thinking were quite aligned to his very own, since it was the only NPC Harry had meddled with in such matters. Going back to his room, Albedo had fallen sleep, still trapped in the cocoon of covers, while Shalltear talked animatedly with the Projection-Harry. Placing Mare on the other side of the king size bed, he covered the boy before leaving once again, this time searching for Demiurge.

He had to blink a couple of times when he found the small demon demanding answers from his subordinates in the 7th floor, questioning the security measures that had been installed in Nazarik since the first week in this world. Demiurge hadn’t noticed his presence quite yet; focused as he was on the information they were giving him, and only turned around once the others halted in their explanation.

The expression was very much like a deer caught in the headlights; diamond-like eyes opened so wide even the servants exchanged surprised looks, which was understandable really, considering Demiurge almost never opened them. After that the demon predictably tried to run away, so Harry apparated in front of him, saying “caught” as he picked up the child.

“Why were you asking about the security system?” Harry asked curiously at the kid that seemed to be silently sulking, an adorable pout on his face that was immediately erased at the “aww” whisper Envy let out.

“Hadrian-sama asked me to do it, and I don’t remember if I did. I wanted to be sure!” the child said with determination, looking up at him with a little frown as if daring Harry to reprimand him. Harry just sighed and patted his head, chuckling at the way the metal-like tail straightened up like a startled cat’s would, before it began to sway lightly.
Turning to look at the fidgeting servants he asked them how many people had seen the small (I’m not small!) demon, closing his eyes in resignation when they answered with a short “The whole floor, most likely. He said it was a spell?”

“…I’ll explain later. As for now, please act accordingly in his absence (Why? I’m here) and don’t mention it to anyone outside the floor” receiving nods from the kneeling area-guardians, Harry finally apparated to his room, placed Demiurge on the floor with an instruction to “stay here” and left to catch Aura.

Aura was a ranger and it was noticeable, Harry wouldn’t have seen her if not for the compass he was using to track her. Jumping out of her hiding place in the upper corner of the Spa resort in the 9th floor, she already had put some distance between them; so much in fact that Harry wouldn’t have caught her if not for the very obvious destination she was running towards. The exit.

“Awww~ Hadrian-sama got me!” she said with mock sadness before giggling, kicking her legs in the air as he caught her with an arm around her waist. Harry couldn’t really answer though, since a problem was developing from bad to worse in his bedroom.

Quickly apparating inside the room, he used his unoccupied arm to levitate apart the girls that were fighting over his bed, his Projection’s memories telling him it started because they both wanted to sleep over his heart in the “sleepover” he had promised. The Projection had been unable to calm them down with just words.

Sighing tiredly, he bent down to leave Aura on the floor, her worried face directed to the two now crying girls suspended on thin air. He placed Albedo and Shalltear gently on the floor and checked for any injures (they didn’t have any) before giving a speech of “Fighting is bad” and “I’m so disappointed”.

As punishment he made them stand together, placing a circle of [Non aggression area] around them. Any battles developing in said area would be useless, since all damage would be automatically changed to zero. It was Ritual magic, and Harry’s own version of a “get-along” shirt, since only two adults (or three children) fitted in the small area of effect.

“Stay there and think about what you have done” he said to the loudly sniffing girls before straightening, his lower back popping unexpectedly. Harry sighed, feeling very old and tired all of the sudden. He couldn’t sleep quite yet tough, Cocytus was still missing.

Walking around the floor following the compass, he lets out a relieved sigh when he sees the long tail of the insectoid peeking from under a set of curtains in one of the guest rooms, probably thinking the logic “If I can’t see you then you can’t see me” was absolutely flawless. Cocytus let out an unmanly yelp when Harry caught him but didn’t put much of a fight other than struggling weakly in his arms for a short moment before accepting defeat.

Harry walked slowly towards his room, yawning once they finally arrived he left the last guardian gently on the floor and deem it was about time they got to bed. To avoid fights he determined the order in which they would sleep, placing Albedo and Shalltear on both ends of the bed to reinforce their punishment. He ignored the sad puppy looks and positioned the rest at random, using the sticks that had designated him as seeker in the last game.

In the end, the sleeping order from left to right was Albedo, Cocytus, Aura, Harry, Demiurge, Mare, Shalltear. He hoped they didn’t move much in the night, because the space in the bed was just enough for all of them. Just for precaution, he placed cushioning charms on the floor before closing his eyes, Morfeo claiming him almost immediately.
The first day had finally ended.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Children drain all the energy you have! They’re quite dementor-like if you think about it… if they drained energy instead of happiness and souls, obviously.

Anyways, all I could think about was a burrito Albedo, and them running all around Nazarik with a distressed Harry behind them, so this was the result haha. I don’t have children, but some cousins are small and God, they somehow manage to be cute and infuriating at the same time.

Would you like to see a situation reflected in Children-guardians? Don’t hesitate to tell me on the reviews! I may add it to the Omake’s continuation if I like it and fits with the idea I have for them.

As always, thanks for reading & hope you liked it. Updates are going to be more scarce sadly, since both school and work consume most of my days.

See ya!
Chapter 14 Black Powder

The assassin he had assigned to the rescued couple came back as he was reaching the Adventurer’s Guild, when Harry was ready to report about the mercenaries and the women he had found. For this reason, he didn’t hear the assassin’s report until much later, once he and Shizu were back at the hotel.

“A burning village you say?” Harry asked incredulously at the arachnid assassin. That married pair had survived one strike of bad luck only to be homeless at the next. According to the report there had been no survivors, and the pair was going to try to reach another village they knew of after camping for the night. Harry’s instructions had been to protect them only until they arrived at the original destination however, so the assassin had left them at that and returned.

“The smoke was dark and toxic, probably the cause of death for most villagers”

“Hmm… think about nothing but that burning village until I count to three, ok? One…” he started as he looked directly into the assassins eyes “two…” he could see it, the flames devouring a village that was oddly surrounded by walls, it looked more like a military base than anything really, with six watchtowers standing tall around it “three” he said breaking the gaze at the same time he heard a last thought of “What was that about?” from the assassin. Thanking him, Harry told him to return to his usual, invisible position before frowning pensively at the floor.

The whole scene was quite suspicious; he wasn’t sure what to think of it. He decided to send the shadow demons at the lowest bars, since he always got a nice amount of information that way, before he and Shizu went out to meet with Peter’s silver group.

Most deemed it weird, that an adamantita team would go out to a bar/restaurant with a silver group so regularly, but Harry felt more at ease learning about this world from them than with the Guildmaster and the Magician Guild's head of the kingdom. His little mistakes didn’t have much repercussion this way and they had been nice enough when they first met in the cemetery.

Going to a new bar none of them had visited before, both teams talked amiably for a long time before something strange began to happen. They had had some beers before changing to water, since they didn’t want to get drunk but would like to stay chatting a bit longer. This was a common ritual for them, so Harry was surprised when the silver group started to act as someone heavily intoxicated would, laughing at random, stupid things.

“Hahaha Jameees! hahaha your eyes are blue!”

“…yours too”

“HAHA I KNOW!”

Curiously enough, this only happened after the second glass of water. Harry tuned out the giggles and… well, idiocy of the silver group, giving Shizu a confused look.

“Did the water have something?”

“It was mixed with a substance I don’t recognize” she said in her usual deadpan voice, nodding once
at him. He raised an eyebrow, wondering why she didn’t bother to say anything before dismissing the issue, deciding to talk with her later and focusing on the situation at hand.

So they got spiked drinks. That would explain why only the silver group was affected, both Shizu and himself had immunity against poison. Considering this, Harry had mixed thoughts about how he should react. On one hand, he had a heavily intoxicated group of friends that were laughing and pointing at random things, Woodwonder was already on the floor, his heavy form obstructing partially the entrance, and the other people in the bar were looking at it as if if this was normal. Actually, they seemed to be giving odd looks at Shizu and himself, as if they were the ones causing the unnecessary ruckus.

…On the other hand, Harry could abandon them and investigate what the hell had caused this to begin with, but they may get hurt without supervision… ugh, he didn’t really have a choice. Placing a muffliato only around him, he ordered the assassins to stay and gather information, two among the commensals, one in the kitchen and one in the storage they were sure to have, the last one with instructions to take a sample of each stored good and bring it back.

“Please forgive my impertinence Hadrian-sama, but that would leave your high person without guards…”

“Shizu is with me, there’s no need to worry. I’ll retire for the night once I take care of them so nothing should happen” Harry would dump them at the Adventurer’s Guild, thinking there may be the safest place for the intoxicated idiots.

“Understood. Please excuse us” they left after bowing, so Harry took down the muffliato and looked at the silver group with resignation. Peter was singing very off-key along with Lukrut, their arms around each other’s shoulders as they swayed from side to side with a dumb smile painted on their faces. Woodwonder was still on the floor, mumbling something and laughing as he pointed at the ceiling, while Nynya was telling very bad jokes at an unamused Shizu. Now, the issue was how he was going to take them to the Guild’s building without using magic, since even with Shizu’s help it as two against four…

Letting out a tired sigh, he took his unfinished glass of water and emptied it in a smaller container he always carried for appearance’s sake, since he didn’t really need any substance. Having collected his sample, he let the empty glass on the table before standing up

“Take Nynya and Peter, I’ll get the other two”

“Understood” much to Harry’s chagrin however, the pleiade carried both adventurers, placing them easily over her petite shoulders in a manner one would a sack of potatoes. The rest of the people in the bar were gaping incredulously at her strength and even the intoxicated ones let out surprised gasps at the image. So much for getting out unassumingly.

Mentally shrugging in defeat, he did the same with Lukrut and Woodwonder, the voluminous adventurer letting out a delighted short laugh before screaming “Awesome! Can ya’ lift me higher? I wanna touch the ceiling”

“Don’t try my patience” was Harry no-nonsense answer before he got out of the bar, Shizu following after him. After that they ran using the roofs of the buildings, since they would have dragged too much attention in the roads, even if the quantity of people was significantly smaller since it was around midnight.

It couldn’t have been that long, but Harry let out a relieved sigh nevertheless when they finally arrived at the large building that represented the Guild. They left the unconscious bodies in one of the
unused meeting rooms, placing them uncaringly on the hard floor. The inebriated talk was simply
terrible, so they had paused on their way here to knock them out before continuing.

Closing the door of the meeting room with a soft click, they went back towards the hotel’s room,
were Harry questioned

“Why didn’t you mention anything about the water?”

“James-san ordered me to act according to the restrictions settled. Detection of toxins was not among
the allowed abilities I could show”

That… was right and so very wrong at the same time.

“You cannot show them, correct. But it doesn’t mean we can’t take advantage of them… what we
need to do is use them discretely, to keep our adventurers persona at the same time we use every bit
of information in our favor. That’s how infiltration works” Harry passed the time telling tales as
examples for most part of the night, even going so far as to use illusions to demonstrate his point.
Snape and Pettigrew were just a few of the mentioned names he used to explain about infiltration,
both in their favor and against them.

By the time the Shadow demons and Assassins came back, the sun was beginning to come out.
Harry handed over the contaminated water, and told the assigned assassin to go with Shizu to
another room so they could identify if any of those was the source.

Once they left, Harry focused on the Shadow Demons, listening attentively to the reports, tidbits
of conversations transforming in pieces of a greater puzzle, relating in some way or another even if
Harry had yet to understand the whole picture. The last piece was given by Shizu however, when
she showed him a small pouch that contained the very same dark powder the married pair had had.

So they had been drug dealers. Harry wondered why he hadn’t heard anything about one of the most
famous drugs in the Kingdom. Later in the morning, he and Shizu went back to the adventurer’s
Guild and requested a meeting with the Guildmaster, were he used the events of the previous night to
inquire freely about the poisonous substance.

By the time the reunion came to an end Harry had learned about the extent of the problem, and by
Merlin it was huge. Ignored by the higher ups since the users didn’t become violent, not even in a
“bad trip” and the ignorance of the villagers that believed it didn’t have harmful, secondary effects
lead to the massive propagation of the drug.

This was probably a work of the Eight Fingers, a criminal syndicate writhing about in the darkness
of the Kingdom. Sebas had sent a report about them not too long ago, but the information they had
was very little to actually understand the magnitude of their secret rule.

Harry sighed and looked up at the sky wondering if he should do something about that before
quickly dismissing the idea. Every society had their underworld, so he would just ignore the whole
thing for now, until they got more information. He and Shizu were leaving the Guild’s building
when whispers of a conversation reached him

“He’s really handsome!”

“Shhh he’ll hear you”

The young woman that had spoken first just giggled in response before sweetly saying “I’m hoping
he does”
Harry ignored them and went on his way, by now quite used to the giggles of the ladies and the envious stares of the men. There had even been customers that had been antagonizing towards him due to their crush on Shizu too, those cases were always entertaining.

-Time break-

Two weeks after that, Harry was walking around town disguised as a normal citizen, when he saw a crowd of people jamming up the road in front of him.

The sound coming from them was either vicious cursing or mocking laughter, accompanied by the sound of something striking something else. Cries along the lines of “Someone’s going to die” and “Better get the guards” rose up from them.

He was about to change paths when he saw the familiar figure of his butler part the crowd easily, trying to reach the center. He must have wandered farther away than intended, for him to encounter Sebas on town. He was curious about the intent of the Dragonoid however, so he ended up walking towards the crowd, cutting through it effortlessly at the same time he placed a notice-me-not charm on his person.

He stopped once he could see the center of the crowd clearly, were several unkempt-looking men were kicking and stomping on something. Sebas moved on without a single sound, stopping only when he was within arms’ reach of the men.

“Fuck you doing, old man?!”

The men stopped to snarl at Sebas, moving to circle him threatenly. Due to this, Harry could now see what exactly they had been kicking around all this time. It looked like a boy. He was curled up on the ground and bleeding from his face, seemingly unconscious after being brutalized for so long, but he still looked like he was breathing.

Sebas had a blank expression on his face as he asked:

“I don’t know why you’re doing this, but don’t you think it’s time to stop?”

“Hah?! This punk got his food all over my shirt! How could I let that slide?”

One of the men pointed to a spot on his shirt, judging by the blush and the slight movement they made even when standing it was fairly obvious they were drunk.

“Public safety in this city is quite bad.” the butler said calmly before glaring daggers at the leader of the small group “Begone.”

“Ah? The fuck you say, old man?”

“I’ll say it again - begone.”

“Damn geezer!”

The boss-like man flushed red and clenched his fist — and then he collapsed limply to the ground. Sounds of shock came from all around them, including the four remaining men. Harry had seen the punch clearly of course, but the crowd of humans simply didn’t have the capacity.

“Do you still wish to fight?” Sebas quietly said.

His calm and strength cut through the men’s intoxication. They backed several steps off and
chorused an apology before grabbing the unconscious leader and fleeing. Sebas did not bother watching them and instead went over to the fallen boy.

The butler seemed to hesitate for a second before kneeling down; touching lightly the immobile boy’s back and infused a bit of ki into him. That should be enough to ensure his life at least.

“...Please take this boy to the temple. His ribs might be broken, so please take care when loading him onto a board for transport, and don’t shake him too much.”

Sebas ordered to a random man before leaving, the crowd moving out of the way with each step the butler took forward.

From where Harry was standing he could see several people following the dragonoid, which stroke him as odd. Had Sebas and Solution run into trouble? They would have reported if that were the case, right?

Just as he was thinking this an oncoming message interrupted him. He quickly placed a muffliato around him, worry grasping his heart as the voice of Solution reached him

“Is that you, Hadrian-sama?”

“Solution… so there’s been an emergency” He answered at the same time he began to walk to follow Sebas, if they needed help Harry might as well apparate them to Solution’s location.

“Yes.”

“What happened?”

There was a small pause, as if Solution was actually hesitating before she answered

“Sebas-sama may have betrayed us.”

He paused on his tracks momentarily before forcing himself to continue walking, shock numbing him for a minute before he frowned in confusion

“…that’s a heavy accusation, what has caused this line of thought? Do you have proof?”

“Yes. Although, it might not quite count as proof…”

He listened to Solution intently even as he turned around and went on the direction opposing Sebas. While he wanted to follow the butler he figured it would be better for everyone involved if he instead used remote surveillance to check on him, now that he knew what the emergency was about.

Once Solution finished her tale Harry couldn’t help but sigh tiredly.

Really Sebas… just what kind of trouble had you caused?

Chapter End Notes

I’m not dead! And I would like to remain that way so please don’t kill me. I haven’t had the time to continue this fanfic, university and internship just don’t let me any free time but this chapter was already written (at least half of it) so I got enough time to finish it.
Hope you liked it; we’re already on the fifth novel! How about that? Time sure flies when you’re having fun.

For those wondering I don’t have writer’s block, far from it! I have at least 8 pages in a Word document that focuses solely on ideas for this fanfic. I just don’t have time #sadreality

Also, thanks to the readers that had added this story to their communities, either small or big I can’t help but feel honored that my story was included and recommended in them.

As always, you’re free to do whatever, my suggestion of favs, follows, reviews and kudos remains the same.

See you around!
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 15 Sebas’ Test

Harry decided to go back to Nazarik, while Shizu stayed back in the hotel in case their adventurer’s persona had visitors.

“Nigredo”

“Yes, Hadrian-sama!”

“Don’t lose sight of Sebas, not even for a moment. Report immediately if something major happens inside that filthy brothel”

“Understood, Hadrian-sama”

From what little he had seen on surveillance before leaving that task to Nigredo, Sebas seemed to have recruited Brain Unglaus and a young boy Harry didn’t recognize for his self-appointed mission of destroying that slavery-brothel.

Truth be told, Harry didn’t believe Sebas had betrayed them, not only because the game-like function on Nazarik’s throne room didn’t mark him as an enemy, but also because Sebas hadn’t really done anything he wouldn’t do on normal conditions.

Based on the report he had gotten from Solution, the butler had found a human on the street and had brought her back to the mansion he and the pleiade were using to parade as wealthy nobles from a faraway land. The butler had justified her presence saying that she should be useful for their cover once healed; to act as a servant in their mansion, seeing as it would be strange with just him working alone for Solution in such a big place.

The woman, apparently named Tsuare, paraded as a maid for a short time before her past as a slave affected them; since a group of guards led by Stafan Hevish and Succulent turned up accusing them of involving themselves with slave trafficking, and having bought Tsuare as a slave.

These men demanded them to pay a heavy fine and turn over Tsuare to their custody, giving the speech in such a manner that it was apparent they were corrupted guards; people working on behest of the criminal group that Sebas had saved Tsuare from.

Which in turn, prompted the butler to go to that brothel, killing everyone inside with the intention of crushing this criminal group to prevent any further trouble. Brain and the young boy seemed to be supporting him.

Harry couldn’t help but sigh tiredly, the suspicion placed on Sebas was mostly due to the fact that he had refused to report the presence of the human, not even when trouble had arisen for his mission, and was quite obviously attached to her. In the eyes of the rest of his servants, the Dragonoid had placed his own interests before Nazarik’s (something Harry couldn’t really deny) and was thus placed under suspicion of betrayal.

The butler’s personality was like that though, always willing to help, Harry had known that when he had chosen him to go undercover to get information of the Kingdom. Then again, he had thought it
would be something like helping old ladies to cross the street or giving some coins to the poor.

Not something like rescuing a slave and messing around with what was probably part of the Eight Fingers criminal organization, an underground society they knew little to nothing about and that could compromise the whole information-gathering operation.

He sighs for what seems like the tenth time, and chooses to simply go check on him once the butler returned to the mansion he shared with Solution. Just as he decides on that, there’s a knock on the door, the maid accompanying him goes to answer before turning back to him.

“Demiurge-sama requests for a meeting”

“Let him in” he answers immediately from his position seated behind the desk, his features composed to hide his surprise. He was about to call for a reunion to inform the guardians of his decision regarding Sebas.

“I apologize for the intrusion Hadrian-sama” the demon says before bowing “Thanks for accepting my request”

“There’s no need of an apology, please rise.” he waits for the demon to do so before continuing “I assume this visit is related to Sebas”

“Yes”

“What do you want to discuss?”

“If I may give a suggestion, I think it would be better if we handle him”

There’s a small pause where Harry studies the serious form of the demonic guardian before he shakes his head slightly in negative.

“Thank you for sharing your thoughts, but there’s no need. I’ll determine Sebas’ loyalty once I see him”

“Hadrian-sama, please forgive my insistence, but if Sebas has betrayed Nazarik it would place you at risk-“

Harry raises a hand to stop the guardian’s explanation, since he received a message from Nigredo’s surveillance.

“What is it Nigredo?”

“Sebas is finishing off the last humans; I estimate he’ll arrive back at the mansion in half an hour from this point”

“I see. Thank you for informing me, continue with the surveillance until I order otherwise”

“Yes!”

Once the message ends, Harry looks back at the demon that seemed quite determined to get his point through. He wasn’t going to convince him, huh?

“…You wouldn’t have come without a plan already devised. Share it with me and we may reach a compromise”

“My sincere gratitude” the demon bows once again before starting his explanation. The plan is
paranoid, and somewhat cruel to Sebas, but Harry couldn’t deny it was probably the most effective way to prove his loyalty.

Harry didn’t need that to be convinced though, some legilimency would be enough for him, but in the end he decided to agree with Demiurge’s idea so the rest of Nazarik could be assured as well, so everyone could leave all this behind.

“Hmm… very well, we’ll follow your plan for the most part. There’s something I’d like to change…”

They discussed back and forth for a short moment before reaching an agreement, and leaving to make the preparations before the time was up.

- Time break –

Harry watched from his position in the room as the door in front of him opened, slowly revealing Sebas’ figure accompanied by Solution.

They were in one of the biggest rooms of the mansion, and had been waiting for the butler to arrive for some minutes. Inside the room there were 4 NPCs, Cocytus was the one closest to the door, positioned at the throne’s right. The insectoid’s figure was tense and ready to move at any second.

To the throne’s left Demiurge stood tall, watchful eyes posed on the only entrance of the room as he analyzed Sebas’ position. On the other hand, Shalltear was calmly standing behind the throne, looking almost uninterested in the whole affair if one could look past the harsh, killing stare that described her intent.

Seated on the throne was Pandora’s Actor, who had currently taken the image of Harry’s own body, and was supposed to act as a decoy in the odd case the butler really tried anything.

Harry in the meantime was on Shalltear’s shoulders, in the form of a small white snake, and was watching the whole scene unfold in front of him. He could have turned himself invisible, but had decided against it because he didn’t want to demonstrate to his servants that he could elude them at any time. The simple thought of imagining their panic… no, it was better this way.

Besides, he owned one to Shalltear for the unintended punishment he had given. Her face as he decided what his hiding spot would be had been absolutely radiant, even if Albedo’s had been anything but.

“Please forgive my lateness. I am deeply sorry to keep you waiting.” Sebas says a little to steely before bowing, still close to the room’s entrance.

“Don’t worry about it; I was the one that did not communicate my arrival in a timely manner. Please enter.”

“Yes.”

Sebas’s head was still lowered as he responded to the solemn voice. He looked up, and then slowly stepped forward. The room felt tense, and Harry could actually sense the carefully concealed hostility and killing intent the others were emanating, but was unable to call them off due to his serpentine state.

“I think you should stop there.” Demiurge’s relaxed voice rang through the air and halted Sebas in his tracks, in the middle of the spacious room. It was an appropriate distance, but still too far away from the throne so Pandora was not on the butler’s attack range. At the same time, the distance was
the ideal range for Cocytus the warrior to launch an attack on Sebas. Solution had followed the butler into the room and was now guarding the door.

The Dragonoid seemed to have noticed all of this, since his posture was incredibly tense, and the old face looked slightly strained.

“Sebas—” Pandora spoke calmly in Harry’s own voice, at the same time the staff of Ainz Ooal Gown hit once the floor “Do I need to explain why I am here?’”

“...No, there is no need for that.”

“Then, while I did not receive a report from you concerning this matter, is it true that you picked up a human?”

When they had rehearsed this in Nazarik, Pandora had actually said something like “picked a cute little pet” but that was not an expression Harry would use to speak about someone, and had told the NPC as much.

There was a brief pause before Sebas answered with a hurried “—Yes!” as if afraid he had taken too long to answer.

“...A little slow on the reply.” Pandora answered coldly with Harry’s voice before continuing with “Then, could you explain why you did not report the matter to me? When I sent you to the Royal Capital, I ordered you to record any occurrence, great or small, in exacting detail and send it to Nazarick. After all, it is difficult for one person to determine the value of information collected. I doubt you omitted a single detail when submitting your reports. Am I correct?”

“Yes. It is as you say.”

“Then, Sebas, Why did you not submit a report on that matter? I wish to ask why you disregarded an order from me”

“Certainly not! I simply believed that there was no need to trouble you with a report concerning such a small matter, Hadrian-sama.” Sebas hurriedly answered.

The excuse was not enough to explain his actions. All at once, the murderous intent increased, coming from Cocytus, Demiurge, Shalltear, and Solution. Sebas looked rightfully terrified and, when Harry used slight legilimency, he discovered it was due to the thought of being executed as a traitor.

Dying for Nazarik and the Supreme beings was the highest honor, but dying as a traitor was an unbearable shame. That was the only thought that filled Sebas in that moment.

“...In other words, all this was an exercise of your foolish judgement... Is that correct?”

“Yes. It is as you say, Hadrian-sama. Please forgive my foolish mistake!”

“I see... I believe I understand now.”

Sebas’ head was still lowered in apology, sweat covering his whole face now.

“Solution, please bring the human in question”

“Understood.”

The door quietly closed behind Solution as she moved to carry out her orders. Harry could almost see the gears on Sebas’ head moving at top capacity, probably trying to search for a resolution that
would keep everyone involved happy. He shakes his serpentine’s head in empathy before sliding over Shalltear’s shoulders and towards her right arm, ignoring the shudder this seemed to cause, and curled around her petite wrist. He wanted to be closer to meet the woman that had caused such a ruckus.

There was knocking, and then the door opened. As expected, there were two women there, Solution and Tsuare.

“I have brought her.”

The woman gasps in surprise and fear when she sees the odd appearances of the guardians in the room. At the same time, Harry raises his reptilian head in both, surprise an interest. The face looks familiar, very familiar.

The Guardians’ displeasure was intensified as Tsuare made her appearance, and the hostility was almost palpable now, from everyone except Demiurge, who seemed to have caught Harry’s small reaction to her presence.

“Cocytus, Shalltear restrain yourselves. Learn from Demiurge’s good example.”

As the words echoed through the room the change was immediate, since all the hostility directed at Tsuare had vanished. After reprimanding the two Guardians, Pandora in disguise made a motion to beckon her over.

“Enter”

As though controlled by that word, Tsuare took step after step forward on trembling legs, stopping once she reached Sebas’ side. Cocytus shifted his position to stand behind Tsuare, awaiting orders.

Demiurge glared coldly at Tsuare “Kne-” he begins before the sound of the staff hitting the floor interrupts him.

“Its fine, I’m surprised she did not faint on the spot.” Pandora says before shifting slightly in the seat “As praise for the courage to face me without fleeing, I will forgive the rudeness she has shown to me, the ruler of Nazarick.”

“My sincerest apologies.” Pandora nodded magnanimously at Demiurge’s apology, before focusing on Tsuare once more.

“Allow me to introduce myself. I am Ainz Ooal Gown, the master of Sebas.” For everyone outside Nazarik, for everyone other than the NPCs, that was Harry’s name. The idea was to spread it after all.

“Ah... I, I am…”

“It is fine, Tsuare. I know little about you, and I have no interest in learning more. Stand there and remain silent. Soon you will know why you have been summoned. Now then…Sebas, I told you not to attract attention with your actions, did I not?”

“Yes.”

“And despite my clear instructions to you, you got yourself into trouble because of this meaningless woman, am I wrong?”

“No, you are not.”
The word “meaningless” made Tsuare shudder, but Sebas only answered the question and made no other response. Harry was tempted to go to the throne’s left arm; he wanted to study the woman more closely. The face was quite similar, but he wasn’t quite sure…

“At that time… did you not think you were ignoring the orders I had given?”

“Yes. My thoughtlessness has displeased you, Ainz-sama. I shall reflect upon my sins, be more careful in the future, and I shall not make the same mistake ag—”

“Very well.”

“Huh?”

“It’s fine. People are not perfect, and mistakes are to be expected. I shall forgive this trifling mistake of yours.” Sebas’ relief was apparent, but before he could begin to express his gratitude Pandora spoke once more “However, mistakes must be rectified”

Sebas gulped “…What… do you mean…”

“Hm… what I mean is that I expect you to eliminate the source of your mistake. You are the butler of Nazarick, and one who stands at the head of the manservants. If you do not handle the matter appropriately…” said Pandora, with emphasis in the word “eliminate” it was obvious for everyone in the room just what exactly that entailed.

Sebas exhaled. Then he took in another breath.

“Sebas. Are you someone who obeys the orders of your Master? Or are you a man who believes that your will alone is righteous?”

“This-”

“I do not need your answer. Show me with actions.”

Sebas closed his eyes for a moment before opening them again. His hesitation brought displeasure and hostility from all the other NPCs, tension filling the room once more before Sebas seemed to reach a conclusion. Harry focused on the butler’s eyes to read the surface thoughts, not surprised in the slightest with his findings.

I’m the butler of Nazarick and nothing else beyond that. My foolish hesitation had brought about these consequences. If I had pleaded with my Master earlier, the outcome might have been different. All this is my fault.

Sebas’ loyalty was as strong as ever, even if the decision was a hard one to make. For Harry, this was enough, but remained immobile as the rest of the plan unfolded in front of him.

The gaze of the Dragonoid was made of steel as he turned to face Tsuare, who only smiled understandingly before closing her eyes in acceptance.

Sebas’ movements did not waver as his hand formed into a fist, and then he struck at Tsuare’s head, seeking to grant her the mercy of an instant death.

Only to be blocked by Cocytus.

“What are you doing? Why are you interfering with me?”

“Stand down, Sebas.”
Sebas, who was about to deliver another punch, returned to a neutral position at those words. Tsuare opened her eyes insecurely before trembling, tears rolling down her cheeks even if she didn’t dare to make a sound, not even a soft hiccup.

“Cocytus. Was that blow intended to take that woman’s life?”


“Then I declare that Sebas’ loyalty is no longer in question. Thank you, Sebas.”

“I would not dare!” Sebas bowed, his face stiff.

“Does anyone here have any objections?” When no one answered Pandora nodded once and continued “Very well. Then, let us move on to the next item.”

“Thanks to the efforts of Sebas and the others, I feel we have gathered sufficient information. There is no reason to linger in this place. We shall vacate this property and return. Sebas, we’ll decide Tsuare’s fate later. I would prefer not to kill her, but I cannot guarantee that, please keep it in mind.”

Sebas looked like he wanted to say something, but in that moment Pandora stood up, hitting the staff on the floor once more.

“There’s something I must address before we continue. You’re dismissed for now” Pandora said looking directly at Sebas before using [Greater Teleportation]. The acting was almost flawless if you ignored the overdramatic movement he had given at the end, right before leaving.

For a moment, Sebas stared dumbly at the spot where Pandora used to be before he came back to his senses. Harry mentally agreed, that had been a very rushed exit.

After that, Sebas took the still shaken Tsuare out of the room full of guardians, insisting she needed to rest.

“It’s possible that Ainz-sama might summon you once more, given the circumstances. I hope you will be ready for that.” Demiurge said when Sebas was about to leave the room, but the butler didn’t answer verbally, giving only a slight nod.

Once the pair is outside the room and the sound of steps cannot be heard anymore Harry’s form turns momentarily into smoke before reappearing as his usual self in the center of the room.

“Please wait outside so you may enter together, he will find it odd otherwise” the NPCs agreed before leaving the room, while Harry takes a seat on the throne. He had inkling on what the identity of the woman may be, but needed to confirm it before deciding on what to do with her.

Not too long after a knock is heard, everyone entering before kneeling in front of him.

“You may rise.”

The five of them straightened up at once, all looking at him.

“Let’s get down to business. Demiurge, I appreciate your suggestion and encourage you to express what you must on situations like these, but keep in mind that the decision I reach in the end is final. This just goes to show you were worrying too much. I didn’t believe for a moment that Sebas had betrayed us, I verified it myself in the Throne Room.”

“My deepest apologies. And I am grateful that you would accept my pointless suggestion, which
contradicted your own judgement.”

“That’s fine, I can relax when I know you are paying attention and checking, Demiurge. Besides, you made that suggestion because you were worried about me” he nods once at the demon in appreciation before turning to address the butler “Now then, Sebas, about how to deal with that human girl…”

Sebas’ body went stiff from nervousness before answering with a forced “Yes, how shall we deal with Tsuare?”

“I cannot let her go, since she has seen Nazarik’s guardians… so I shall alter her memories before freeing her somewhere. Hmm… she will need some money though; we should give her a small bag just in case-” He doesn’t finish that sentence, however since Demiurge chosses that time to speak up

“Hadrian-sama, I feel that killing her outright would be more convenient. There would also be fewer things to worry about.”

Solution and Shalltear nodded at Demiurge’s suggestion, even if Sebas seemed to panic slightly at the prospect. Killing her was not an option though, not if she was who he thought.

“I would rather not, since her death is not absolutely necessary” he answers pensively, and is about to order Sebas to fetch her before he’s interrupted by the demon.

“I understand… Then how about having her work at the ranch managed by my subordinates?”

That… would probably traumatize her for life, considering the amount of torture the demon probably inflicted on the “bipedal sheep” he used to obtain skin for parchment. No, that was not-

“Hadrian-sama.” Merlin, it was almost like they were interrupting him on purpose.

“What is it, Sebas?” He conceals his displeasure however, since the butler is already in a delicate position, he didn’t want the others to think he was mad at him specifically.

“If I may, I would like to have Tsuare work for us in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick.”

Silence descended upon the room, not even Harry had thought about that possibility. He focuses his interested gaze upon Sebas, before asking

“What merits are there in doing so?”

“To begin with, Tsuare can cook. In all of Nazarik, only the head chef and the sous-chef can prepare food, excepting Yuri and the others. After considering the future needs of Nazarick, I feel that it would be better if we had more people who could cook. I also feel that it would be very beneficial to test the ability of humans to work in Nazarick. It would set an excellent precedent to show that even inferior lifeforms like humans can render service unto Nazarick. In addition—”

“Ah, I get it. I understand, Sebas.” He stops the rambling before it gets out of hand. He was curious though, was this petition made because the butler wanted her to stay? Or was it done because she had told him something on the matter? While Harry wasn’t going to kill her, bringing her to Nazarik was not in his plans either.

“But Hadrian-sama, can she really prepare food which is worthy of Nazarick?”

Sebas glared resentfully at Demiurge for a moment, answering before Harry could make any input.
“I am compelled to point out the shallowness of Demiurge’s thinking. Since she can already make basic dishes, that implies she can learn other cooking techniques from the head chef if she but asks. We cannot simply look at the present, but must consider the future.”

“Then I would love to have her help prepare food in my ranch. Making mincemeat is hardly a trivial task.”

“I—”

The two of them bickered back and forth, and Harry couldn’t help but think about a pair of siblings. That was the kind of quarrel that was usual amongst family members, her sons Albus and James had been just like that.

“Are. You. Quite. Done. With. This. Squabbling? You. Stand. Before. Hadrian-sama!” speaks Cocytus in a warning tone. That was something her small Lily would have done too, always the mediator in the fights his two sons used to have. Even the part where he was used as a threat! Oh yes, his punishments were always worse than just going to the room without dinner or forbidding quidditch. Even a howler from Ginny was preferred over his more serious scolding.

As he reminisced on those happy memories he mildly noticed the other two halt in their ever-escalating quarrel, looking up at him for a moment before their faces blanched in unison.

“Forget your servant’s rudeness in your presence, Hadrian-sama!”

“Your servant deeply regrets forcing you to witness his foolish behavior!”

The two of them bowed in apology, but all Harry did was smile warmly at them, memories of a past long due still in the front of his mind. How long had it been since he called them to visit? He should use the resurrection stone one of these days, just to say hello…

“Ah, it’s fine. I’d rather you to fight with arguments than get in a physical battle. Are you finished now? Have you said what you wanted?” That was always his take when his children threw tantrums, just let them express whatever they needed to until they were ready to listen.

The demon and the dragonoid just exchanged a look in embarrassment before nodding, seemingly at loss of what to say. Harry smiled at them to calm them down before sighing, coming back at the topic at hand.

“I understand the point you’re trying to make Sebas. That being said, I wish to see that Tsuare girl once more before deciding a course of action. Bring her to me.”

“Eh? Ah — yes! Your servant understands!”

Sebas seemed puzzled for a moment before leaving immediately to fetch Tsuare, which was understandable really, considering he had just seen her a moment ago. Harry tells the others to move to the sides before the butler comes back, so the woman may not feel so much pressure.

“Ainz-sama, I have brought her here.” swiftly shifting back to the use of the “official” name, Sebas entered with the woman, both of them stopping near the entrance, only coming closer at Harry’s signal.

“Welcome, Tsuare. I apologize for interrupting your rest, but there’s something I need to know from you. I’d suggest you don’t lie or hide relevant information from me, since that would end poorly. Do you understand?”
The woman swallows nervously before nodding, unable to utter a single word.

“Then, my question is: Tell me your full name.”

There’s a long pause, but Harry waits patiently until a small whisper is heard

“Tsu-Tsua… Tsuareninya Veyron…” Yes, she was the person he had suspected her to be then.

“I see… then, Tsuareninya, do you have any living relatives?”

Her eyes open wide before her mouth closes on a thin line, probably thinking he was threatening her family. Harry doesn’t get to correct her before she answers with a single “Yes, I think so… I’m not sure”

“If any are still living, would you like to be reunited once again?” She gasps, and seems on the verge of asking something before she stops herself, looking at Sebas and then back at him for a couple of times before looking down.

“I-I don’t know…”

“I’ll be frank then, since your sibling is one of the few people with a talent in E-Rantel I’m aware of her existence.” he ignores Tsuare’s surprised look and continues with “That being said, you have three options. One is to come and live in Nazarik, my domain, under Sebas’ responsibility. But be aware that you would find no other humans there. I do not know if it is a suitable place for you to live… On the other hand, you may choose to accept the fortune I will give you, and live the rest of your days in a distant human domain far away from this land… or you may take the money and live with your sister.”

“I, I wish to live with… Sebas-sama.” she said after a short moment.

“Even if that meant not seeing your sister ever again?” his words make her shiver before she nods once in agreement, even if she seems saddened. She seemed to have quite a crush on her rescuer, and Harry suspected it may be reciprocated by the butler.

Letting her stay in Nazarik may not be so bad then. Who was he to separate a happy couple?

“…very well. Listen, my servants!” Harry shifts immediately to his commanding persona, the one used to delivering orders on battle. Everyone immediately snapped to attention, Tsuare hurriedly trying to imitate them.

“I guarantee the safety of Tsuareninya in the name of Ainz Ooal Gown. For the time being, Tsuare shall be a temporary maid who is directly subordinate to Sebas. Sebas, tell everyone in Nazarick that Tsuareninya is under our protection and that she will be working alongside you.”

Everyone except Tsuare bowed as one at the end of his order.

“Does anyone have any objections to my decision?”

“None at all. Your word is law in the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick. However, I feel many will not understand why we have welcomed a human being to this blessed land of ours. How shall we explain this to them?” was the swift answer of Demiurge, Harry nods in understanding at him before responding

“Then, Demiurge. Tell them that I have decreed this. If anyone feels otherwise, they are free to look for me. I will explain it to them.”
“Your servant understands. I have no further questions.” When no one else spoke up Harry nodded once again before continuing.

“Then let us confirm our course of action. We will vacate this property, Sebas, Solution and Tsuare will return to Nazarick after they have taken the necessary steps to withhold their reputation as nobles. Understood?”

Everyone bowed in silence. Tsuare looked around and hurriedly bowed as well.

“Everyone else, let us return now to Nazarick” He said as he opened a [Portal] Cocytus, Demiurge and Shalltear coming after him.

At the next day, Sebas and Solution were about to leave to bid farewell to the nobles they had met, with Tsuare standing at the door of the mansion when a shout of “SISTER!” reached them.

A young boyish girl no older than 15 ran her way towards them, ignoring the shouts of “Nynya, wait!” of the males she was traveling with, silver plate-adventurers.

Solution shows her displeasure openly, since it fitted with her disguise as a wealthy woman, while Sebas only tensed. Were these adventurers going to cause difficulties? What would their Master think of this, since Tsuare had already posed a problem once before?

Just as Sebas was worriedly thinking this, both he and Solution let surprised gasps when the other group approaches them. They are not surprised by the silver group, but by the pair of adamantite adventurers that came behind them.

CZ Delta stares at them blankly, without giving any reaction, while Hadrian just smiles calmly at the scene.

“I apologize for my teammate, he’s being searching for his sister for a long time-“ Peter halts in his explanation when he notices the Noble Lady’s attention is not with him, and gives a knowing look to Harry, as if expecting them to flirt at any moment.

Once they introduced to each other, Sebas and Solution invited the whole party to their mansion, and talked as if they were making connections while the siblings spoke in a separate room. Their talk was mostly done by Harry and Solution, keeping their respective covers in check as they chatted amiably.

Time goes on, and after a couple of hours or so, the siblings come out of their separate room. Nynya looks like she had been crying the whole time, with tear marks still on her face as she bows down to Sebas and Solution and thanks them profusely for helping her sister, saying they were indebted to them. Tsuare doesn’t seem to be fairing any better, red eyes scanning the room briefly before focusing on Nynya once more.

“My sister is happy. That was the only thing I had always wished for her” Nynya says when she straightens up

Another hour goes by, now with Nynya leading the conversation before the adventurers take their leave. The silver adventurers are in the doorstep as they wait for the siblings to say their goodbyes, while Harry places a muffliato and notice-me-not charms around the Nazarik members.

“They cannot hear what we say now, you may speak freely” he said to them, knowing they were probably wondering what this was about.

“Hadrian-sama, if I may inquire about your motive…?” Sebas said; confusion laced in his words as he looked expectantly at him.
“Once Tsuare goes to Nazarik, she will most likely not go out for a while, so this was their last chance to meet and bid farewell. Nynya and her group had helped me learn much about this new world, so this is their prize” He answered with a warm smile on his face, there was nothing better than to see a broken family reunited again.

Sebas nodded once in understanding before giving him a true smile on return.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Aaaand that was it! Man this chapter was long, but really entertaining too.

And just like that, we’re on the 6th novel. We sure move fast huh? I wanted to include Climb and Brain’s story too, but the chapter was long as it is, so I guess I’ll touch that topic on the next chapter.

Happy Season of updates! Man I missed my good old hobby of writing this past few months. Hope you enjoy them before I have to go back to the busy schedule.

As always, thanks for reading, hope you liked it and see you again soon!

Regards~
Chapter 16 Six arms

The siblings talked without end on the doorstep, so it was quite obvious they didn’t want to leave quite yet. Sebas and Solution had an itinerary to keep up however, so Harry gave them his word that Tsuare would be protected in their care, a free service from the adamantite adventurer’s group since they had abused of their hospitality for so long.

Sebas and Solution agreed easily before leaving, the butler giving one last look at Tsuare before turning around to follow Solution. Peter’s group leaved momentarily as well, going to the market to buy potions and other necessities for a mission they had scheduled on the next day.

“Ah, I apologize for all the trouble James-san”

“No worries. Shizu and I didn’t have anything scheduled for today”

The boyish girl straightens up from her grateful bow, and nods once at him happily before leaving to speak with Tsuare again. Solution had left them stay in the house in their absence, so the siblings were in another room while Harry and Delta stayed in the entrance, the reception room that was more than equipped to accommodate at least 10 people comfortably. Harry was seated in one of the large sofas, calmly reading one of the books Nfira had lent about potions before he sensed movement in the vicinity.

More precisely, just outside the mansion.

“Hmm seems we’re going to be ambushed” Well, since that slavery brothel was part of the Eight Fingers, he supposed it made sense for them to try to get revenge so soon. That was one of the reasons he had stayed to begin with.

When he had returned to Nazarik after Sebas’ trial, he had whished out loud to know more about the criminal organization known as the Eight Fingers. It had been little more than a whisper, but Demiurge had immediately straightened and given a report on everything he knew about it.

The huge amount of information the demon had gathered in only two weeks in the Capital was astounding, it was enough to cover the secret locations the leaders had; enough for them to attack this underground society.

Since Sebas had mindlessly meddled with them, they may cause trouble later, so he had decided to attack this night, before they had a chance to do anything to react. Demiurge was in charge of leading the simultaneous attack on each location, and had reunited quite a few of the stronger NPCs of Nazarik for his task.

The demon didn’t know of Harry’s presence inside Solution’s manor, nor was he aware of Harry’s own deductions.

Such as the attack on Tsuare.

Having dealt with shady characters for most of his unending life, Harry had enough experience to notice the patron, the inescapable thought all “villains” seemed to have. If you hurt us you and
everyone you love have to pay!

Unsurprised by the ambush, he and Shizu went further inside the mansion, until they reached the door that led to the room where Nynya and Tsuare were speaking. With a thought, his armor was replaced by his magic-caster clothes, so he placed silencing and repelling charms over the door. They would not hear the ruckus that was about to happen, and if they got too close to the door they would suddenly change their mind for whatever reason and stay there. After that, he placed concealing charms on Shizu and ordered her to go outside; not a single person was going to escape.

Once that was done he changed back to his adventurer persona, and waited patiently for the intruders to reach him. The fight that began as soon as they were on his field of vision was a short one, the men falling unconscious faster than they could process what exactly was attacking them.

In the end, between him and Shizu, they got 10 people from the criminal organization. Forcing one awake, Shizu used the stored spell they had in a low-level parchment [*Puppeteer’s Palm*] which was quite similar to a weaker version of the Imperio curse.

The man regained consciousness with a shudder, eyes unfocused as if he were drunk, before he began to answer the questions that confirmed Harry’s hypothesis. These men were assassins trained by Six Arms, the strongest combatants of Eight Fingers, and had come with the objective of kidnapping Tsuare.

Looking down at the enchanted man, Harry smiled darkly for a moment before turning to speak with Shizu, starting to form a plan of his own.

**-Time break-**

It was a lightless street, a quiet alley shrouded in darkness. Those not skilled with night perception would need the use of magical items to see anything in the almost absolute obscurity.

Near the lonely alley was a road that led to a great building, surrounded by imposing walls, which sealed it off from the surrounding area. It felt like a prison, or a fortress, with magical lamps installed on either side of the door.

In the middle of the dark alley, crunched behind a few containers were two men. One was Brain Unglaus, a skilled warrior that was almost on pair with Gazef Stronoff himself, the strongest man of the Kingdom. At his side was Climb, the personal bodyguard of the Golden Princess of the Re-Estizé Kingdom, Renner. Climb was a young man with short blond hair and blue eyes, and was wearing a pure white full plate armor given to him by Renner, equipped with a broadsword and a shield.

Both men were crouched, guarding silently the suspicious building until they saw a man in full armor walk calmly towards it.

“Isn’t that an adamantite adventurer? Why is he here?” Climb asks quietly to his silent companion. Brain doesn’t answer, but his form tenses at the same time his hand suddenly grips the Katana at his waist. Climb reaches for his sword in response, frowning with worry at the whisper of “That monster” that falls from Brain’s lips.

“Do you think he’s part of them?” Climb asks worriedly. The Six arms were all on level of adamantite adventurers, but this was far worse since the man wore the official medal, which meant the criminal organization had successfully infiltrated the Adventurer’s Guild as well.

“No… he can’t be. Unless he’s really good at acting, I can’t really imagine that man…” Brain
whispers before tensing even more, the blue eyes of the adventurer now fixed on the two of them. Climb and Brain were some distance away from the building in order to observe it, and they were hidden in the darkness and behind the containers. Under normal circumstances, it would have been quite hard to find them. While the adventurer might have looked in their direction by chance, Climb was completely certain that was not the case this time around.

The armored man jogged over with an abnormal speed, moving so fast that he seemed to be teleporting every time they blinked as he closed the distance to them. Surprisingly enough, the armor he wore didn’t make a single sound as he moved, which meant it was enchanted to be perpetually silent, just like Climb’s own armor.

“Brain Unglaus, nice to see you again” the adventurer says softly once he reaches them, stopping only a few meters away from them. The adamantite seemingly ignores the attack position of the man he addressed before turning to look at Climb “This is the first time we meet right? I’m an adamantite adventurer, James” the blue eyes are soft, relaxed even on the tense atmosphere.

“Ah, n-nice to meet you. I’m Climb” he says simply, not sure on how to react to the unexpected presence of the adventurer “Please forgive my rudeness, but why are you here?” he had not let go of his sword, on guard since Brain was still grasping strongly his own Katana.

“I was contracted by Lady Solution and her butler Sebas Tian, to rescue someone” he gasps in surprise at the familiar name, Sebas-sama had contracted this adventurer? Why, since he was as strong as one himself?

He had met the butler when he saw him defend that poor boy from the drunken gang of men, and had felt so impressed that he decided to follow him once he retreated, to hopefully learn more about him. Once he caught up with the butler, he asked him to teach him how to fight, wanting to become stronger so he could protect better the princess, Renner.

To his surprise, Sebas readily accepted to train him then and there, so he took a stance before the butler suddenly unleashed a killing intent so strong that paralyzed him completely with fear, mind numb with pure, unaltered shock. He barely moved out of the way of the oncoming fist, adrenaline fueling his system as he surpassed momentarily his physical limitations.

Brain had come out from his hiding position after that, and not to long after the three of them had fought together against a few assassins on the alley, before going together against the Slavery brothel on that same afternoon.

“I-is that so? Sebas-sama hired you?” he tried to hide the incredulity from his voice, but didn’t really manage to. Having witnessed the strength of the butler first hand, he wondered why he would hire a third party to do something he was more than capable of doing himself. As if reading his mind, the adventurer answered with

“Well, it was Lady Solution really. She wanted an expert on the matter, I believe” Ah, that made more sense, maybe she hadn’t wanted to risk Sebas. It would be a single man against a whole building full of people after all. He couldn’t speak up, however, since the adventurer, James, continued with

“Now is my turn to apologize, but may I ask why you’re here?” the eyes are a little harder now, as he shifts slightly to a defensive position. Catching the hidden message, he shakes his head in negative before raising an arm to stop James, “We’re not with them! We were planning to attack that building which was owned by Eight Fingers, so we were lying in wait here.”

“...Just the two of you?”
“No, there’s several others behind us.”

“I see,” James said quietly. In that moment, the thief that was part of his group returned before halting mid-step at the sight of James. The thief was an ex-adventurer; he had been orichalchum before retiring not too long ago.

“James-sama!” the thief said before smiling “You were recruited for this mission too?” they seemed to know each other, since the adamantite relaxed a little as well.

“I was contracted by a Lady to rescue someone in that building. What about you?”

“Ah, the royalty contracted me to help attack that building, but is impossible really.”

“Oh? How so?”

The thief explained that they had expected a member or two of the Six arms, but the harsh truth was that all of them were gathered inside that building. Once the thief finished his explanation he turned to look at him and Brain, as if he had forgotten they were there.

“This is James-sama. This person has worked with me before I retired. He is a friend and completely trustworthy, so please do not worry.” He says with conviction, having accurately deduced the reason of their silence.

“I see” Climb answered, letting go of his sword. Brain also retired his hand from the handle of his katana, much more reluctantly. James seemed to notice this, and his voice was soft when he addressed the experienced warrior “If you have changed your path, I’m not your enemy Unglaus. I can promise you that much”

The air felt tense, the two men staring each other quietly for a moment before Brain relaxes slightly, nodding once at James.

“I see... I understand. Thank you.”

“No, please don’t worry about it”

With a more relaxed atmosphere now, the thief nods in satisfaction before he turns to address the adamantite adventurer once more “James-sama, Five of the strongest fighters in Eight Fingers, called Six Arms, are in that building... Can you defeat them?”

Climb knotted his brows as he heard the thief’s question. The Six Arms were each the equivalent of an adamantite-ranked adventurer, surely taking five of them on at once was impossible. However, he seemed to be the only one thinking this, since neither Brain nor the thief looked surprised to see the gentle nod of James.

“It shouldn’t be a problem. I’ve been told about their special abilities, and am prepared to face them”

Climb looks with worry at the adamantite, wasn’t he too full of himself? He directs his questioning face to his two companions, but only gets understanding looks from them.

“No, he’s not bragging. That man really is that amazing.” the thief says with a smirk “Brain Unglaus thinks so too, right?” he said looking to the other man. Brain smiled bitterly to the thief and nodded.

“Yes, this man is strong enough that Gazef and I couldn’t beat him even if we went at him together.”

“That, that’s really... no, if what you said is true, then it would be amazing...” It was hard to believe,
but maybe James was as strong as Sebas-sama was.

“Then, James-sama… if you don’t mind, could we count on your assistance?” The thief asks hopefully. The plan upon discovering the presence of the Six arms had been to retreat, but if this man helped them, someone maybe on par with Sebas, then they may have a chance.

“Of course. I came to save Tsuare, after all. Leave Six Arms to me, then.”

“Then I hope you will come at them from the front and draw their attention, James-sama. We will use that opportunity to infiltrate the place. While we cannot possibly replace you, please allow us to help rescue Tsuare-san on your behalf.” the thief says, being the one that knew the adamantite better, it was only fitting that he was the one to request assistance.

“Just as well, it would help me greatly since Shizu will take a while to arrive”

“I understand. We will definitely rescue her safely. Then, who will be going in? I know the original plan was to have everyone infiltrate and it was a good idea…” the thief turned to ask him and Brain. Discussing it for a short moment, they decided that only the three of them would infiltrate, since they had a limited amount of [Invisibility] spells.

“In that case, we’ll be going in first; please wait a while before making your move, James-sama.”

“I will be counting on you.”

James bowed his head slightly to them, which startled them all. This was because they were sort of using him, to carry out their own mission.

“No, please don’t worry about it. The truth is we came to attack this location. In fact, we’re very grateful that you’re willing to deal with Six Arms for us, James-sama.” the thief says hurriedly, clearly uncomfortable.

“Then we are helping each other out, are we not?” The man smiles gently at them, without a hint of resentment or malice in his voice. Climb stood up, his heart at ease.

“Then we will be falling back first, to have the others cast spells on us.”

**Hadrian**

He watched them leave, his vision easily seeing through their invisibility spells. It had been quite a surprise to find them here, but he was at ease with them, not worried in the slightest that they may fail in their mission of rescuing Tsuare.

That was because she was safe and sound behind Nazarik’s walls. The woman they had supposedly taken had been Solution in disguise, and could leave at any time she wished, since stealth was her specialty. Just in case, he had sent arachnid assassins and shadow demons to every floor of the building, awaiting orders to act.

He waited in the alley for a few minutes before walking calmly towards the main gate. The gate was lattice-shaped, so he could peer through it, but the trees within prevented him from seeing too far inside.

“Oi, you’re not the old man— “a voice starts hoarsely, before the man that stepped out from among the trees halted in his tracks, falling unconscious from Harry’s quick blow. He had noticed the presence from the very beginning, so he didn’t bother with pleasantries and passed over the guard and down a path in the yard.
Considering this yard was the property of a criminal organization like Eight Fingers, it did not feel particularly gloomy and the vegetation was neatly trimmed, as though they had a skilled gardener taking care of things. He felt eyes on him as he walked down the path, but decided to ignore them since they didn’t react at all to his presence.

After a short while, a vast space which looked like a training area unfolded before his eyes. There were several bonfires blazing away merrily, and bright red firelight illuminated the surroundings.

There were about 30 people here, with many men and several women among them. While they seemed momentarily surprised to see him, the expression didn’t last long before morphing into wicked smiles, crude and intoxicated with violence, certain of the prospect of victory.

In the middle of the training area were the strongest men of this place, the Six Arms. There were only four at the moment though.

One of them wore a hooded robe. The robe was black, stitched with a bright red flame pattern below the waist. He didn’t feel any life coming from under the hood, which meant that the nickname of ‘Undying’ was not merely metaphorical, but that this was a true undead being; hence the name Undying King Davernoc.

Their sole female was dressed sheer silks, and looked to be agile. She wore gold bangles on her wrists and ankles, which rang with crisp metallic sounds as she moved. She had six scimitars at her waist, and was known as ‘Bloody Scimitar’ Edstrom.

The next man was dressed in a cotton suit. He also wore a gold-stitched jacket, like a matador’s, and a vest. His weapon was a thin sword whose blade seemed to be extending from a rose blossom, and was known as ‘Thousand Kills’ Malmvist.

The final man was ‘Void Cutter’ Peysilian, who wore a suit of unadorned full plate armor, and his sword was securely stowed within its sheath.

There were four of them in total. Their leader Zero was not here, probably waiting somewhere to make his appearance. The one missing, Succulent, had been arrested by Sebas’ group the day prior, so he wasn’t present either.

The four of them advanced on him, while the others moved to encircle him.

“You’re not the gramps we were expecting. Was he too afraid to come himself?” Malvist, the matador, is the first to address him, a sadistic smirk on his face.

“Well, he’s got survival instincts then, unlike you, a stupid adventurer that has come by himself. Why else do you think you could pass without trouble? There’s no way you’re leaving alive.” the only woman of the group taunts, arms crossed as if disappointed.

“We’ll take care of that old man later then. We’ll kill you first.” the undead whispers with a hoarse voice, expression unknown since it was hidden under the cloak.

“We have to subdue you with force and kill you, otherwise we’ll be in a bad state. Look over there, there’s bigwigs from all over gathered. They came to see the old man defeated, but a suicidal adamantite is not bad either.” comes the serious voice from under the helmet of Peysilian. He had pointed at the balcony on the third floor, where a smaller amount of people were seated as if ready to see a show.

“What a warm welcome” Harry answers simply, standing still with one sword in each hand “Is the man called Zero here?”
“Ah, yes. He will deliver the final blow, isn’t that an honor?” Malvist answers mockingly, doing a small circle with his thin sword while it was pointed at Harry’s chest.

“I see… then, let us start the play. Please come all at once, I would rather not waste time”

“…You talk big, human. You’ll discover soon, death follows me wherever I go” the undead said with a deadpan voice. Harry snorted, mentally speaking with his old friend.

*My my Death, why are you following this man?* he thought mockingly, receiving an immediate, unamused answer *I assure you I have better things to do*

Harry chuckled, his enemies exchanging a look before directing their affronted stares at him.

“You must be feeling cocky because you had an easy time with the adventurers, huh? But since you’re an adamantite, I guess we can attack in pairs. Just to make sure you witness real power.”

“If that’s your decision” Harry said with a light shrug “Let us end this, shall we?”

He stepped forward, moving at a lightning speed towards the undead, the Elder Lich. His swords cut easily through the being, which was unable to defend against the strike or evade it. In a matter of seconds, without so much as the time to move, Davernoc’s head went flying, his life extinguished as Harry activated the special property of his chosen weapon. Holly magic.

Well, he had been expecting an undead of higher level, but since he already had the specialized swords with him, he figured he might as well put them to good use. The magic on the swords caused Davernoc’s body to vanish, the many magic items he had equipped clattering uselessly to the ground.

Even when the people encircling him were frozen in shock, the Six Arms could still move. As expected, they were capable warriors; only people who had been through numerous life or death battles could do such a thing.

The woman, “Bloody Scimitar” Edstrem, activated the enchantment on her weapons [**Dance**] her six scimitars left their sheaths on their own, moving in accordance with their masters’ will as they floated mid-air as if held by invisible warriors.

Her fighting style was to focus on defense, while the five other swords launched attacks on their own. This was a barrier of blades, so stepping into this cage meant certain death.

However, by the time the scimitars were leaving their sheaths, Harry was already in front of her, his sword chopping her neck with impossible speed. Her head fell to the ground with a soft thud, fresh blood spurting from her neck as her body collapsed.

But even when this happened, the five scimitars still hung in the air, which meant she had yet to process her own death, and that her brain was still somewhat functional. He had read a study about that somewhere, that it took a few seconds before the severed head lost all consciousness.

That being the case the five scimitars, still obeying her will, sliced through the air towards him. He counterattacks against the blows, putting so much force behind his own strikes that it sends the scimitars flying away, a few of them cutting the people surrounding them by accident.

“Well, I have to admit that’s a good fighting spirit. To think you would continue to fight even with your head severed…”

Her mouth opened and closed, her expression in despair as she looked at her own headless body before her eyes finally stopped their movement. The only sword still in the air fell lifelessly to the
ground, never to move again.

“Come on, attack with me! Let’s get him together!”

A voice which sounded like a shriek came from the man in full plate armor. “Take, take, take my, my [Void Cutter]!”

Harry narrowed his eyes at the armored man, ready to apparate away if necessary. His guildmate, Touch Me, had a trump card, a strike that cleaved through the very fabric of space-time itself… and while it was obvious that the person before him could never reach that level, even an imitation of that technique might be able to hurt him.

“Void Cutter” Peysilian.

His nickname was derived from the fact that he had a mysterious technique where he could draw from a one-meter long scabbard and bisect a foe over three meters away. As Harry saw the move unfold in front of him, he let out a soft, relieved sigh when he saw it didn’t actually cut through space. Instead, the blade sword was flexible, looking more like a metal whip than a sword if one ignored the sharpened end. He saw clearly as the whip fell at ridiculous speeds over his head, clearly meant to cut him in two. He sidesteps slightly to the right, avoiding the blow without trouble.

“Metal whip would have been more accurate.”

“Yeeart!”

With a strange, bird-like cry, a rapier lanced out at Harry.

“Thousand Kills” Malmvist.

His main weapon, Rose’s Thorn, was enchanted with two magical properties. The first was “Fleshgrinding”. In the instant the sword struck its foe’s body, this fearsome magic would twist the surrounding muscle and tissue. The effect was to rip and tear at the flesh around the injury site, leaving hideous wounds. The other was “Master Assassin”. That enchantment enlarged wounds and made even the slightest scratch a severe injury. On top of that, the blade was smeared with a lethal concoction of many poisons. Malmvist had prepared this because he was not originally a warrior, but more of an assassin, so a single scratch from his weapon could be fatal.

Harry didn’t dodge however, blocking the vicious weapon with one of his swords. He didn’t budge, not even a little, so the effect was similar of that of a child running with all his might towards a wall. Malmvist bounces back, almost losing his balance before quickly regaining it.

“...Wh-what?”

“Alright, my turn.”

In the next instant, Peysilian’s head exploded in a curtain of blood, since Harry had thrown one of his swords directly at the center of the helmet, were the eyes would be.

“Come back” he orders simply, the sword approaching at high speed before stopping in his awaiting palm. The red ribbon that adorns the handle of the sword falls off, but before it can hit the stone floor, Malmvist hooked it away with the tip of his slender blade, snatching the thin material away. Harry raises an eyebrow at the action, not really understanding what his opponent was aiming for.

“What… are you trying to do?”
“This is it!!! This must be the magic item that’s making you stronger!!!” The voice of the man sounded broken, fearful eyes staring unblinking at him.

It was a normal ribbon actually. It was tied to the handle simply because it had been an omen for good luck in the world he had obtained the swords from.

“…Yeah ok, whatever lets you sleep at night” he says calmly before striking at the man. Malmvist crumpled to the ground, body cut in two. Fighting had been becoming easier and easier, as he practiced and tried to get used to fights without magic. He had tried to learn a few Martial Arts too, but sadly found himself unable to use them… he didn’t get how they worked quite yet.

He was getting out of track. Straightening up, Harry whistled softly, looking directly at the balcony on the third floor. It was a signal for the awaiting assassins and demons to seize the people within the building, who had witnessed this tragic scene from their higher seats.

“I imagine they possess useful information, so do not kill them. Now then…”

He glanced icily at the people surrounding him, all of whom were frozen in place.

“Ten seconds should suffice for the rest of you.”

Once everything was taken care of in the training area, he let the assassins and demons search the place, while he sent [Message] to Solution, asking if the human team had reached her yet.

“I doubt they know I am here. One of the pathetic scoundrels took the maid uniform, and I heard about the usage of illusions…”

So they made someone else parade as Tsuare? What a coincidence.

“Hmm I see. Get out of there and catch up with me in the subterranean, they probably placed the fake Tsuare there.”

“Understood”

Harry jogged towards the entrance that leads to the dungeons, watching the little compass he had used to make sure the other group really was there. He waits until he sees Solution, still disguised as Tsuare, walking up to him, calm even when she was only wrapped in a simple blanket.

Nodding once at her, Harry received a [Message] from the assassins that the building has been secured, so he opened the small bag hanging on his neck and pulled up his invisibility cloak. He tells Solution to hide using her stealth, while he covered himself with the old, inherited cloth.

He descends the stairs, assuming Solution is following him, and walks for a short while before reaching the hallway where a fight was unfolding.

One the closest side of the room was Climb and the Thief, who were entertained staring at the battle their teammate was handling. Near them was the dead corpse of Succulent, who was wearing Tsuare’s maid. So the man had been the one to impersonate Tsuare? it was unfortunate he was already dead; it would have been entertaining to see him fighting while in maid uniform.

On the farthest side of the room two men were fighting, one was a buff bald man, with a body bulged with muscles. His face looked like a boulder, and he was covered in animal tattoos. Judging by his appearance, he was probably one of the Six Arms, and the leader of the Security Division, the mightiest being in Eight Fingers. His opponent was no other than Brain, who seemed to be defending his ground quite stably.
Harry observed silently from his position in the entrance as the clash between blade and fist produced the echoing of crashing metal. The two men fought without pause, in an exchange that didn’t really allow for hesitance.

After a minute’s worth of exchanged blows both sides were unharmed. As a result, a look of genuine respect bloomed on Zero’s face.

“Unglaus… You’re pretty good. You’re the first man who’s endured my attacks for this long.”

Similarly, Brain had a respectful expression on his own face.

“Same to you…” Brain looks like he wanted to say more, but Zero interrupted him with

“There’s a fight waiting for me on the first floor though, so I’d best get a little serious.”

Brain’s silent answer to those words was to sheath his sword and lower his stance. Harry had seen that posture before; when they had battled, it was the same stance Brain had assumed before trying to finish their battle with a single hit. Could it be that it was his trump card? He hoped not, otherwise his attitude back then…

Zero’s immediate answer to Brain’s position was to jump well back. He opened up the distance between them with superhuman agility.

“Edstrem can deploy a sword barrier. Your move isn’t exactly the same, but it’s also a barrier of blades, no? Enter casually and you’ll be cut in half, am I right? Still… from what I can tell, that move of yours only allows you to respond to your opponent, and you can’t use it if you don’t take a stance.”

Zero punched the air. It seemed to be a meaningless move, but that iron fist actually generated a shockwave which buffeted Brain’s body.

“So all I need to do is attack you from a distance and I win. Or do you have some way to cut a distant foe?”

“No, I don’t,” Brain answered honestly. “If you’re going to fight like that, then I won’t use this move.”

“Brain Unglaus. Is this your ace in the hole?”

“Indeed. This trump card of mine has only ever been... defeated once, from the front.” Merlin, he was a terrible person then. He had taunted him because he thought Brain wasn’t taking him seriously, how was he supposed to know?

“How boring. So someone else already defeated it once? Then this will be the second time.”

Zero slowly pulled his fist back, taking a stance of his own. His body was covered in animal tattoos, and those tattoos began to glow faintly. Brain, on his part, remained still. While Zero appeared to be as still as a statue, he did seem to be accumulating power, like a string longing for the right moment to be unleashed.

Harry had seen enough. He owned one to Brain for insulting his pride as a warrior, however unintentional that had been. He steps back for a moment, taking off the cloak and making a motion to Solution before speaking:

“—So you were here after all.”
The effect is immediate, all the people in the room turning to look at him. Even Zero and Brain, who should not have turned their eyes away from the enemy, did the same thing.

“What? What’s this? Did you sneak in like these people?”

“No. I defeated your colleagues and then I came here.”

“...Nonsense, utter nonsense. They might not be a match for me, but they’re still warriors whom I gifted with the title of Six Arms. How could you have made it here unscathed?!”

“I won’t waste breath explaining something you won’t believe” he says nonchalantly, advancing slowly into the room.

“James-san! The Tsquare-san over here is a fake! Succulent took her form with an illusion! You need to go rescue her!” was the worried shout of Climb, as if suddenly remembering they were supposed to rescue the woman. Ah, they really were too inexperienced.

“Thank you for your concern, but there’s no need to worry. I have already rescued her; she was elsewhere in this building.”

He turned to look behind him, Solution standing shakily in the entrance as she imitated Tsquare.

“Ah!”

Climb hurriedly looked down at Succulent, focusing on the seemingly irreparable maid uniform that was soaked in blood, with a huge rip in it.

“Pay it no heed, it’s simply an outfit after all” He said to calm the kid down, even as he thought he should recover it later. Not only because it had been made by a friend in the guild, but also because he knew magic that could track the owner based on their belongings. It would be troublesome if Nazarik was found thanks to a forgotten cloth.

“Oi oi oi, you’re actually ignoring me for idle chit-chat… you lot are pretty relaxed, aren’t you?”

Zero had been facing Brain since just now, and so he could not move carelessly. Now, he finally changed his position and glared hatefully at Harry.

“I’ll ask you again, what happened to my people?!”

“I killed them all.”

“It, it can’t be! How do you expect me to believe that!?!?” Zero’s furious cry resounds in the empty hallway, but all Harry does in response is shrug, taking the handles of his swords as he steps further into the room. Zero seems to realize that he was telling the truth, and his eyes darken as he practically growls.

“...Brain Unglaus. I’ll fight you later. I’m going to show this man the power of Six Arms!”

“Mm, got it. Try not to die right away. Still, I don’t think there’ll be anything left for me to do.” Brain answered as he shook his head in sympathy. Oh come on! He hadn’t been too harsh in their battle back then...probably.

“Bullshit!” Zero shouted at Brain before turning his head to face him “And you! You’ll pay with your life for that nonsense you spouted!”

If only the man knew he was surrounded by shadow demons... Harry could see them clearly, and
shook his head slightly at their silent question *Can we kill this fool?*

Zero seemed to think he was mocking him tough, since he furiously took a stance, his tattoos glowing. From the information Demiurge gathered, this man was a Shaman, someone with a skill which allowed one to be possessed by animal spirits, through which he could gain those animals’ excellent physical attributes. It could only be used a limited number of times in a day, but basically resulted in a physically superior animal using the fighting arts of a human being.

Based on the report, Zero would conserve his strength on normal conditions, by only activating the power of one animal at a time. Right now however, the man in front of him was activating all of them at once. Harry didn’t know if it was because the Shaman subconsciously understood that he could not be underestimated, or because the man was so mad he was planning on going in a rampage. Whichever the case, Zero had used them all: the leopard on his feet, the falcon on his back, the rhino on his arms, the bull on his chest, and the lion on his head.

An explosive power seemed to flood from the man’s body, like a bomb that had been laying at wait for an opportunity to burst.

“YEEEEEEEEAAAAARRRT!”

He expelled the burning power from inside him before stepping forward; coming directly at Harry was a straight punch with just a fist. There were no feints or fancy moves; just a simple punch. However, the power within that fist beggared belief, since it was the addition of all the shamanic and monk-type skills the man possessed, and that was without mentioning the magic items he was sure to have.

It was so fast that even Zero seemed to have a hard time controlling it. Harry cursed softly before letting go of his swords, the weapons falling to the ground at the same time he took the hammer Shizu had lent him.

“—Ah!” He heard a young voice shout, Climb’s probably, as Zero moved to reach his position. The power within him moved perfectly, fully accumulated and focused, and he threw a powerful straight punch with his right fist.

He never got close enough to deliver it though, since Harry hit the floor with the hammer, using just enough force as he tried not to collapse the whole room. The effect is similar to an earthquake, making Zero loose his balance as he tripped at high speed.

Had Sebas been here, the butler would have probably taken the blow without problems, but the reality was that Harry was not a specialized warrior, but a wizard. He was only this good at physical battles due to previous experiences in other worlds.

So he takes advantage of the moment, stepping forward as he raises the hammer over Zero’s upper body, before letting the weapon fall a second time.

A gruesome sound of cracking filled the air. Zero fell to the ground, his skull pulverized and his neck and spine shattered, as though he had been crushed by a several-hundred-kilogram weight.

The room was silent.

“Thanks for the warning” he said simply to Climb, who blinked incredulously at him while mumbling “—Wha… ah. Er… yes.”

“In any case, since we’ve rescued her, I think it might be best to retreat now.”
“Ah, no, ah, are the other members of Six Arms… really…?”

“Yes. I killed them all. There were on adamantite level so I could not go easy on them, you see?”

“Is, is that so. Well, there’s nothing to be done about that. Ah, please don’t beat yourself up about it.”

The three of them simultaneously looked at the corpse of Zero on the ground. None of them could bring themselves to say, ‘You’re lying’ which amused Harry to no end.

“In, in any case, let’s get the troops to search this building.” Climb says, trying to move forward. At his words, approving looks appeared on the face of Brain and the thief, and they nodded. Harry didn’t care either way, since his servants had already finished their own evaluation.

“Shall we head outside?”

“Right, let’s go, then.”

Harry walks towards the disguised Solution, who is still supporting herself on the wall near the entrance, feigning weakness. Harry offers an arm for support, and Solution’s happiness seems entirely real as she takes it.

They walked in silence, the others on guard as if expecting an ambush, but Harry already knew the building was empty. It’s not like he could say that though, so he remained silent until they finally reached the gate.

Only to halt once he stepped outside, eyes wide as he took in the scenery in front of him.

“A wall of fire?” Brain muttered to himself.

Harry clenched his fists as he saw a wall of fire over 30 meters tall, encircling a district of the Royal Capital. It looked to be hundreds of meters long.

“What should we do? I think that’s the warehouse district, who’s in charge of that?” The thief asks to his teammates, obviously speaking about their own mission.

“Blue Rose’s leader, Lakyus-sama… I’m judging this as an emergency, so we’ll abandon all our objectives and fall back to the Royal Palace as directed. After that, I’ll be counting on you all for advice on how to proceed.”

“That’s probably the best course of action… ah, James-sama…” The thief says uncertainly, asking with his gaze alone if he would accompany them.

“I will take her to a safe place to finish my mission. Once that’s done I’ll go towards the Royal Palace, if you accept my help of course.”

“Of course James-sama! Thank you for your help” The thief is obviously relieved at the prospect, bowing in gratefulness.

“Please pay it no heed. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I will be taking my leave.” He tries to keep his voice calm, but his heart feels as if someone was squeezing it, fear, confusion and anger taking hold of it.

*Please tell me you have nothing to do with this, Demiurge!* Was the desperate thought as he leaved the human group behind him.
AUTHOR NOTE:

And that’s it, the longest chapter so far with 7K words. Neat!

Still on the 6th novel I’m afraid. This one is one of my favorites, so I think there’ll be at least another couple of chapters regarding it.

Anyways, thanks for the reviews! I love the support just as much as I love to write! Also, special thanks to reviewer Mokamiharu, for letting me know about the mishap in the levels of the Black Scripture. I’m not really good at guessing that sort of thing or the level of the magic so I sometimes exaggerate. Thanks bud!

Readers, feel free to be my unofficial Beta’s and tell me any inconsistencies and the like you find in the story. There are always opportunity areas in everything after all.

My note is long enough so I’ll leave it at that. Thanks for reading, hope you liked it and see you soon in the next chapter! Au revoir~
Omake 3: Small part 2

There wasn’t much to do on the Catacombs, it was dark and Harry perceived movement around them, even if he couldn’t really see anything before Shalltear made whatever was out there go away. Bored, he tried to entertain himself a little watching and comparing the length of the pointy rocks that were in the cave-like ceiling. Walking as he did this wasn’t a very good idea though, so he tripped a couple of times, the hand that was still holding his own always quick to help him.

“Oh, I know!” Shalltear exclaimed before she bent down to pick him up, one arm under his knees while the other supported his low back “This way you can look at the ceiling all you like!”

She sounded very proud of her idea, and seemed happy to carry him around… Harry had wanted to protest, because he wasn’t baby, he could walk on his own, he was probably too heavy for the girl that wasn’t really that much older than him.

But instead of saying any of those things, all that came out was a soft “ok” because whether he wanted to admit it or not, this was the first time someone carried him like this, and he had always wondered what it would be like, because he had seen other children being carried by their parents sometimes… So he inspected the ceiling, oddly happy at the situation.

They stayed like this until they arrived at Shalltear’s room, where a thick, sweet fragrance hung in the air. The girl had told him to cover his ears, so Harry couldn’t really hear anything as she led him into a room with a small white table, and a couple of delicate white chairs around it. It had porcelain tea cups placed in front, filled with a bright red liquid, and the scent of tea filled the air. Harry knew this was prepared beforehand because he listened as she spoke with someone when they were crossing some sort of unstable hanging bridge, the instruction “not to look down” still in his mind.

They drank tea amiably, and the girl explained that she was a vampire and had no trouble carrying him around so Harry shouldn’t apologize for that, which leads them to a whole new conversation where she explains her species, and the ones of the other people he had met.

“That’s really cool Shalltear! You all are!” Harry keeps singing praises, awed by the amount of abilities and strengths the vampire just described to him. She blushes and giggles, obviously happy to continue her explanation.

Once tea time is over she takes them out again, now exploring the second and third floor. There’s nothing much to see, but he’s now entertained by Shalltear’s conversation as they walk hand in hand towards the 4th floor. She seemed very interested in his stories too, about Hogwarts and the way he had learned magic; it seemed to be a new concept to her, the fact that he had been born weak and had gotten stronger with time.

“You were not?” Harry asks in confusion, looking up to her.

“I was created by the Supreme beings to be how I am, so I have never been different” was her proud response. She tells him this applies to everyone here, so he can’t help but feel a little sad for them. Wouldn’t they have trouble learning new things? If they had everything from the beginning, they would not understand how it was like to struggle to learn something, right?
Just as he’s thinking this they finally reach the 4th floor, where he sees nothing but a giant lake, and a few pointy rocks around it. The difference is huge in comparison with the floors Shalltear keeps safe, since this place seems calmer and is better illuminated.

“Ah, Gargantua is the guardian of this floor, but being a golem I don’t think it can serve as guide for Harry-sama… so I’ll continue to be! Would that be acceptable?” she seems to shine with glee as she states this, so he only nods at her, not even sure of what a golem was and why it couldn’t guide.

It’s difficult to walk over the pointy rocks however, so he hesitantly raises his arms in a silent plea that is immediately answered by Shalltear’s arms. He’s disappointed that they can’t swim in the giant lake, since is part of the “defense” of the place, but is happy to learn there’s a swimming place on the 9th floor.

Shalltear points out the defense mechanisms of this floor, something she didn’t do with her own, and the details are so interesting he loses track of time, finishing the tour quite soon as they walked around the giant lake. Harry is still in her arms when they cross the portal to reach the 5th floor, where the giant insect, Co-cy-tus was waiting for them.

Harry had had trouble with the names, but had done his best to learn them as Shalltear explained their species and strengths back in her room. He still had to say them slowly though.

This floor is cold, nothing but white snow surrounding them in the huge area. Harry shivers for a moment before his clothes get warmer by themselves, so he looks at his long sleeves in wonder for a second before looking up at the giant blue-gray insect.

The jaws were opening and closing without really saying anything, and his four arms moved up and down slightly before staying still once again. What was that about?

“Hadrian-sama” Cocytus quickly kneels in front of them, but his eyes are focused on Harry as he continues “May I carry you on my shoulders?” the tail is moving like an excited puppy, so he laughs merrily before nodding, the vampire placing him down reluctantly for a second before he’s immediately picked up again.

The height of the insectoid is much greater, so Harry lets out an excited “ohh!” as he sees the snow surrounding them. The shoulder he is sitting on is wide enough that he’s not afraid of falling down, so he moves his legs slightly as he points at a big sphere in the distance.

“What’s that? It looks really cool!” he knew logically that the sphere was big, but he still extended his palm as if to catch it within his small hand.

There’s a pause, where the giant insect doesn’t say anything at all, only swaying the large tail and flexing the arms as if celebrating something.

“Co-cy-tus? Can you please tell me what’s that?” he places a small hand over the cold head of the guardian, which seems to bring him back to the present. The giant insect sighs, releasing a cold breeze before answering

“That. is. where. I. live. Would. you. like. to. visit?”

“Yes please!”

The guardian carrying him moves easily on the snow, somehow managing to walk over it even when Harry was sure they were heavy. They should be sinking in, but were not… maybe the level of snow was not as high as it looked? When Harry saw it, he thought he would get covered whole in the
snow, which was part of the reason he had agreed so readily to be carried around.

He also liked the feeling of being carried, even if he admitted it to anyone but himself.

He’s distracted from those thoughts when they get closer to the snow globe, since now Harry could see six crystalline icebergs surrounding it. They passed them without pause however, going inside Cocytus home without a second thought.

The walls, ceiling and furniture seemed to be made out of ice, which made him think of a museum rather than a regular home. It looked very pretty, and was big enough that the giant insectoid could move around without hitting anything.

They came to what looked like a conference room, where some ladies were setting a few pastries and tea. The ladies didn’t seem to be human either, with bluish-white skin and black hair, their dress was a pure white as they set up the refreshments in the small table. The cold claws of the warrior hold him carefully from the waist, placing him down reluctantly with a sad sigh. Harry didn’t want to tell him he had already had tea with Shalltear, so he sipped slowly at the cup before starting to chat with the giant warrior.

He started to ask about the floor he guarded, since it seemed to be empty, but had been too big for him to really see anything.

“Other than my home, there is only Nazarik’s prison” as soon as the words were said Cocytus tensed and closed its jaws abruptly. The image of Hagrid mumbling to himself “I shouldn’t have said that” came to mind, which made him giggle a little.

“Can we go?” he asked jokingly to the giant warrior, a small teasing smile on his face as he watched the insectoid move uncomfortably on his seat. The jaws opened and closed in quick succession, and he seemed to be looking everywhere but him, as if searching for the right answer.

Feeling slightly guilty, he took a small bite of the pastry before adding “Don’t worry; I don’t really want to go.” All the tension leaves instantly the giant body, so he smiles shyly in apology before asking “Can we play in the snow for a while?”

At the affirmative answer he smiles happily at him, glad for the excuse he had not to finish the tea in front of him. Feeling playful, he stands up and starts to jog towards the entrance, yelling without looking back at the still seated insectoid.

“Come on! come on! catch me!” he taunts as the entrance got closer and closer. The first step he takes over the snow has him sinking down however.

He had been right, the snow covered him completely.

He raised his arms and tried to go back to the surface, coughing slightly once his head was out of the snow. It probably looked funny, since only his head and arms were on the surface, the rest of his body still trapped in the snow. He felt cold for a moment before his body got warmer by itself, as if he was surrounded by a thin magical skin that protected him from the harsh weather.

“Ahh. Hadrian-sama!!” a couple of claws dug slightly in the snow until they found his torso, picking him up slowly until his whole body was free from the snow, hanging in the air. Cocytus seemed to inspect him in slight worry before sighing, bringing Harry closer to the cold chest.

Now, Harry liked to be carried around, but not like a baby! A giant arm was supporting him, the back of his head was over the joint of the arm, his back over the forearm, and his legs were hold by the huge claw. Another giant arm was petting the snow away from his clothes and hair, which made
him feel embarrassed, so Harry hid his blushing face with his arms, wiggling to get free of the stable grip.

Cocytus seems to understand, because he puts him down on the entrance of the snow globe, apologizing. Harry wasn’t an expert at reading emotions, but he felt worry at the depressed posture of the warrior.

“Co-cy-tus? It’s ok, that was a lot of fun!” he said as energetically as he could. Stepping closer, he used both hands to hold one of the claws of the lower arm, since he couldn’t really reach the insectoid’s wrist.

Leading the warrior inside the globe again, he made him sit down on the sofa-like furniture made of ice before sitting at his right side. Once he was comfortable, Harry started to ask for stories, which seemed to raise Cocytus’ mood a lot. He puffed up his chest and began to speak about a spar he had had against Albedo and Sebas, describing it as best as he could.

Harry didn’t know who Sebas was, but didn’t ask since the insectoid seemed happy to tell the tale, so he only made small, excited sounds in the right parts of the story. Eventually, the warrior finished the tale with a satisfied nod, crossing the upper arms over his chest.

“You are really strong!” Harry said sincerely, which seemed to make the warrior puff even more. It was really funny, so he decided to add “You like to train a lot, right? Even when you’re already so strong?”

“Indeed! Since. Hadrian-sama. is. an. outstanding. Magic. Caster” Cocytus said enthusiastically, uncrossing his arms as he looked directly at Harry “Hadrian-sama. needs. a. skilled. warrior. to. guard. his. body. therefore. I. will. take. charge. of. that. task.” seemingly excited, the insectoid stood up, determination oozing in waves as he raised his four arms, looking upwards at the ceiling as if responding to a challenge “With. me. around. nobody. will. be. able. to. get. close. enough. to. threaten. my. Lord!”

Harry didn’t know what exactly the warrior was imagining, so he only looked at him in awe as he continued.

“Ohhh… That. is. correct. I. am. very. strong. I. will. not. let. weak. enemies. like. that. near. the. Young. Master. Hmph. Come. if. you. are. not. afraid. of. death!”

Cocytus’ arms were moving as he fought imaginary enemies, which made Harry giggle and clap eagerly, thinking he was playing around. The sound seems to bring him back to his senses, the movement stopping suddenly as he straightened his posture.

“…Cough! Ahem. Then… I. believe. training. Is. Important” he said softly, avoiding Harry’s gaze as he placed a claw behind his head. Harry nodded at him, agreeing completely.

“You can forget a lot of things if you don’t practice them” he said with conviction to the warrior. “I had trouble learning so many spells, so I had to create a place to keep them”

Cocytus turns his head slightly, obviously not getting his example.

“Yeah, like, in my mind. I had to make a special place for them” He said, imagining the part of the mind palace were he kept that knowledge stored. The warrior still looks confused, so Harry admits defeat and lets the matter drop. He was very bad at explaining things, so maybe once he grew up again he could do it better.

“Mmm, anyway, I think you’re right” he said lamely, now it was his turn to avoid the curious gaze,
clearly embarrassed.

Cocytus doesn’t pressure the issue, seating down beside him again before he continued to tell a few stories about people Harry didn’t know anything about. He tries to pay attention at first, but starts to get sleepy after a short while. Harry doesn’t know how or when, but he falls asleep curled against the warrior’s side, not waking up until the following morning, oddly warm in the floor made of snow and ice.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Aaaand there you go! If I’m sincere with you this was quite difficult to write. Mostly because I couldn’t think of anything fun to do in catacombs full of undead. Seriously, it’s a writer’s miracle they could get pass those. I honestly thought about abandoning small-Harry but had a few reviews requesting it so, here we are haha.

Anyways, thanks for reading, we’ll move forward in the story next chapter~

See ya’ around!
Chapter 17 Demiurge’s plot

Once Harry was sure there was no one in the vicinity, he brought Solution to the Great Forest of Tob in side-long apparition, where the slime regained her usual appearance. Getting rid of the armor that protected him, the wear was replaced with his magic caster clothes, elder wand in hand as he quickly placed anti-information charms on them both before apparating close to Nazarik’s entrance.

He orders Solution to go inside, passing a hand through his already misbehaved hair as he tried to deduce what was going on. Demiurge was ordered to attack the criminal organization, rob them blind since having more resources was always welcome, and that was it. It was supposed to be a small cleansing of the weaker parts of the criminal organization while the leaders’ lives where momentarily spared in hopes of getting information. Neuronist had certainly been excited at the thought of new guests.

But no matter how much he thought, he couldn’t pinpoint a reason for Demiurge to use such a spell. He recalled the way the crimson fire spat tongues of flame towards the sky, as though it aimed to burn down the heavens, and the wall of flame swayed like a veil encircling the city. Why would the demon use [Flames of Gehenna]? Pondering this, he was preparing to leave Nazarik’s grounds again when the soft sound of buzzing reached his ears.

Glancing up, his attention was immediately taken by the sight of Entoma, as the maid flew towards the graveyard-like entrance that led to the first floor of Nazarik. A massive insect had adhered to her back, acting as her wings since she seemed too weak to do anything other than lying limp, like a puppet whose strings had been cut. Her human disguise had been broken, so her insectoid form was revealed for everyone to see as she descended, slowly coming closer to the ground.

“Entoma?! What happened?” his words are laced with worry as he quickly moved, raising his arms to catch her before lowering her slowly onto the grass. He stayed knelt at her side, waiting for her answer, but she seemed unable to use her voice, the sound ‘giii giii’ was the only thing that could be heard from her.

What could have happened that left her in such a poor state? Using healing magic on her, he monitored her status until her Health-bar was filled again, before helping her stand up. The insect maid looked everywhere but him, before she used her insectoid legs to manually craft the humanoid appearance he was used to seeing. It was a curious sight, since the humanoid skin was of a material similar to the shell of an egg; it was like seeing a puzzle being slowly completed.

Now that he remembered, Entoma didn’t like to show her true form to others, nor did she like her true voice. Figuring the lack of answer was because of that, he impatiently summoned the creature [I wish for a Lip Bug] just as she gave the final touches to her human disguise. The small creature fitted in his palm, tilting the anthems at the air as it awaited orders. This kind of insect eats the victim's vocal cords and steals the voice, giving the ability to use the stolen voice to its current wearer, so Entoma took it gratefully when he offered it.

“MY dEEpEst GrATtituDE” was the rough, distorted answer before she placed it on her throat, the only part of her that was still insect-like before it was covered by fake human skin.
“Please don’t worry about it” he said curtly before frowning slightly once more, growing serious 
“Entoma, report in detail what has happened in the last hours. Don’t omit anything”

“I would not dare, Hadrian-sama” Entoma answers as she kneels in front of him. The new voice is a 
little too sweet, like a mermaid’s symphony, but at this point he was glad it was a female’s voice at 
least. With his luck, he wouldn’t have been surprised to hear a grave, masculine voice come from the 
petite maid in front of him.

Nodding at her, Entoma began recounting the events that had come to pass. Starting from the 
moment she had been summoned by Demiurge, she related what the Guardian had planned to do, 
er her role in the demon’s plan and the encounter with the other adamantite team of the Kingdom ‘Blue 
Rose’, when she had been about to leave the residence of one of the leaders in Eight Fingers. Her 
voice gets an odd mix of shame and rage as she describes the last event, and how she had found 
she was at disadvantage when one of the members had used the insecticide spell against her.

"Who used it against you?" his question is laced with slight anger, since Entoma had not been the 
one to initiate the confrontation; the adamantite team was guilty in his eyes for the whole affair. To 
think he almost lost one of the Pleiades this night…

“The others called that brat ‘Evileye’; she was the strongest among them”

“I see” he saved that tidbit of information among the rest, before asking her to continue. The tale 
reaches its end with Demiurge’s appearance, saving Entoma and allowing her to retreat while he 
stayed behind to play with the Blue Rose team. His rightful anger is calmed down with that last 
phrase, actually replaced by pity. He sincerely hoped they had met their end without much suffering, 
since there was absolutely no doubt the demon had killed them all.

Asking her to raise, he pats her head a couple of times before insisting on her rest, since the night had 
been quite eventful for the level 51 pleiade, and she would still be involved in the last part of 
Demiurge’s scheme. He stayed under the night sky until her petite form disappeared in the entrance 
to the first floor, before sighing with utter relief, glad he hadn’t lost one of his dear servants.

Could NPCs be revived in this world? Logically, the wand of resurrection should work on them as 
well, but this world was anything but logical. If he couldn’t use a sword without equipping his 
armor, then there was no way to tell what was possible and what wasn’t using only logic.

He hoped an experiment regarding NPCs resurrection would not be necessary for a long time.

There was no use in delving on that now however. He needed to go and stop that foolish demon 
from destroying the whole city. With this last thought, his wear was replaced by his usual armor, 
before turning on his heel to apparate away.

He had come to the Royal Capital a couple of times before, but was still grateful for Shizu’s presence 
to guide him. The Guildmaster had contacted her to request their presence in the reunion that was 
about to begin, so Shizu had waited for him in the main entrance before leading him into a corner of 
the Royal Capital that was lit up by torches, as though it were broad daylight.

Entering a cramped room packed of all adventurers within the Royal Capital, he took a quick glance 
around, identifying more than a few familiar faces; the thief, Brain and Climb being only some of 
them. Climb stood at attention in the corner, as if guarding the great doors that led deeper into the 
Royal Palace, while Brain stood in a more relaxed pose at his side, arms crossed over his chest as he 
laid his weight on the cold, stone wall.

They seemed to have been waiting for his arrival, since the moment he entered into the room Climb
knocked twice at the wood doors, which prompted them to open. That being the case, he only could nod in acknowledgment at some people before focusing on the new arrivals.

Stepping from the great doors was a small group of people, at their head was the leader of the adamantite party ‘Blue Rose’, Lakyus. He recognized her by the description he had heard about her in his missions, mainly due to the famous Demonic Sword Kilineyram that was tied on her back, its surface was like a stretch of night sky, speckled with sparkling stars. He had heard plenty about it from Peter’s silver group, since it was one of the four Swords of Darkness used by the Dark Knight of the Thirteen Heroes.

Close behind her was the Golden Princess Renner, along with the Guildmaster of the Adventurer's Guild. Then there was another member of Blue Rose he didn’t recognize, a petite woman that had a slender body figure and dressed herself in light clothes and armor. He supposed she was one of the infamous assassin twins. At the end of the group was the strongest warrior of the Kingdom, Gazef Stronoff.

"Ladies and gentlemen, to begin with, I'd like to thank you for being able to be present for this emergency meeting." The room quietened down when the Guildmaster began to speak, addressing the adventurers with a serious expression on his face.

"Normally, the Adventurer's Guild would never interfere in national affairs. However, this is an exceptional case. The Adventurer's Guild has decided to cooperate fully with the Kingdom, in order to quickly resolve the problems facing us. The princess will relate the details to us, so I pray you will be quiet and listen."

The Princess slowly advanced, flanked by the members of Blue Rose and Gazef Stronoff.

"I am Renner Theiere Chardelon Ryle Vaiself, and I am deeply grateful that everyone here was able to respond to the extraordinary summons issued tonight." Harry heard a few dreamy sighs come from the adventurers behind him, probably captivated by her beauty. Her appearance made him think briefly of Fleur, with long golden hair and blue, innocent eyes, but other than wondering if veela-like creatures existed in this world, he thought nothing of her.

"Normally, I would render duly deserved praise upon all of you, but as time is of essence, let us get straight to the point. Tonight, a portion of the capital has been surrounded by a wall of fire. The flames are more than thirty meters in height, but it ought to be an illusion of some sort, because touching it does not cause harm. According to those who have contacted it, the fire does not have heat, or impede movement. Moving past the firewall should not pose a problem either."

At this, the lower-ranked adventurers breathed sighs of relief. Considering Entoma’s report, Demiurge had used it not only to drag attention towards him, but also as a perimeter of sorts so the lesser, summoned demons knew they could not leave that area. Harry was internally grateful the guardian had opted to use illusions instead of the real thing; at least the damage done was not so critical this way.

"The mastermind behind this incident is known as Jaldabaoth, an extremely powerful and vicious demon. Blue Rose has already confirmed that there are low-ranking demons on the other side of the firewall. They seem to be acting entirely on orders from their superiors." Lakyus nodded to Renner as she said that, confirming the veracity of her words.

"Does that mean all we have to do is defeat Jaldabaoth?" Renner turned to acknowledge the speaker, an adventurer with a mithril plate upon his neck.

"That might be an oversimplification, but fundamentally, that is true. However, what I wish to ask of
all of you is to defeat this devil's plot. We have information that suggests that he is here to seize a

certain magic item which is on its way to the capital."

The news sparked a disturbance among the adventurers, realizing that the region encircled by the
firewall included the warehouses and shophouses that made up the capital's economic heart. Harry
was curious of which item Demiurge would use to justify his attack, before dismissing the thought.
That was the least of his concerns; he needed to have a serious talk with the guardian soon, before
this mess escalated even more.

"...How did you come by this information?"

"It was stated by Jaldabaoth himself." the mithril adventurer seemed to want to ask another question,
probably wondering on the veracity of the demon’s words, but was interrupted by another, silver-
plate adventurer

"How strong is that Jaldabaoth you mentioned? I don't remember hearing or reading about him. It
would help us if you could tell us his difficulty level."

Adventurers rated the strength of the monsters which they encountered by their difficulty ranking.
The higher the number, the stronger the opponent. However, it was an unspoken rule that one should
not rely too heavily on difficulty rankings, since the strength of monsters varied even within their
own species. Thus, it was not a value that was frequently used, but it was a simple way to explain
things to a group like this.

"...200." answered the captain of the Blue Rose party.

"Aye?" Everyone who heard Lakyus' voice had the same reaction.

"Jaldabaoth’s difficulty ranking is estimated at 200 or more."

"Hah??"

Everyone aside from Lakyus was speechless. That much was expected. Even the highest-ranking
orichalcum adventurers would only rate around 80 on the difficulty rankings. Although one could
still triumph over a foe ranked roughly 15 points over oneself, trying to do the same with an enemy
ranked almost twice as high as oneself was nothing short of laughable.

As if the difficulty level of the demon was not shocking enough, Lakyus stepped forward with a
stern expression on her face, continuing her answer with a heavy voice "I shall speak of what I know
as my group's representative. My comrades and I encountered this demon, Jaldabaoth… they were
killed by him—"

The death of adamantite adventurers brought a new kind of shock to the whole room, stupefied
silence reined for a short moment before she ended her statement with a few words.

"—With a single blow."

Chaos broke out from her statement. The pinnacle of humanity, the Adamantite-ranked adventurers,
killed by a single blow? The murmurs of the whole room only rose in level with their unaltered
panic. Harry let out a relieved sigh however; somewhat glad Demiurge hadn’t tortured them to death.
Sure he was mad at them for harming Entoma so severely, but in the end they were but simple
humans, so it was to be expected that they would prejudge her and deem her an enemy. He made a
mental note to order that all future assignments for outside missions were to be given in pairs, so this
event would not be repeated either by himself or any of the Floor guardians.
"Do not be afraid!" Lakyus' voice resounded clearly through the mayhem, silencing the room instantly. "Certainly, Jaldabaoth is powerful. I can vouch for this, having faced him with nothing to show for it but defeat" at this, Lakyus bent down her head slightly, before straightening with newfound determination. So Demiurge had spared the leader of the adamantite team? How odd, the demon was anything but forgiving, let alone merciful. He wondered what would be the motive behind such action when the light-green eyes of Lakyus focused on him.

"But there is no need to worry. There is a man who can do battle evenly with Jaldabaoth! The demon himself has shown fear at his mere name. From the third adamantite-ranked adventuring team that was recently founded in E-Rantel of the Kingdom—" the adventurers behind him were stepping back, isolating him and Shizu as the leader of Blue Rose turned a raised arm towards them, as if presenting them "The leader of The Marauders, the Hero James-san!"

_*Good heavens Demiurge, what exactly did you tell them?*_ The demon’s acting must have been quite impacting, because he could actually sense the hope Lakyus was placing on him with nothing but her gaze alone. Exclamations of awe and wonder filled the room as the other adventurers focused their attention on him and Shizu.

Nodding at the whole room in greeting, he turned his gaze to meet that of Lakyus’ silently asking her to continue with the briefing. Nodding at him in understanding, she clapped once to refocus the attention on her once more, before continuing to speak.

"We have a warrior who can stand against Jaldabaoth. Everyone, rest assured that we are not picking a fight we cannot win. Please turn your attention towards Princess Renner; she shall explain the details of the operation."

Renner started to explain their devised plan then, how the guards and adventurers would make a bow-shaped formation, serving to make the demons spread out, thinning out their defenses so the main combatant, Harry, could break through them to reach Demiurge… or rather, "Jaldabaoth"

“But isn’t that too much for only two adamantite adventurers? What about Blue Rose? Will they be going in with James-san?” One of the adventurers interrupted Renner, looking expectantly at Lakyus.

"...Our battle strength has been greatly depleted with the loss of three of our members. While they have been resurrected, their recovery is too slow for them to be of help in this combat. Tina and I will join the battle line and fight, but James-san and Shizu-san will have to clear the path to the center themselves, with a few magic casters as backup” she looked at him when she stated this, so he nodded in understanding, hiding his surprise regarding the resurrection.

Did she have the item to resurrect? Or did she use a spell for it? What were the limitations? The academical part of him that always sounded remarkably like Hermione ran a thousand of hypotheses, but he squashed it in order to focus on the situation at hand.

"Wait a minute! Are you saying James-san is going to fight that difficulty 200 monster by himself?"

"Exactly. That's why I said we'd just be getting in the way."

"But that's not the same... you said 200? Are you kidding me? Are all adamantite-ranked adventurers that strong?"

"If only. Even we’re ranked around 100 at best."

"Then... then how the hell are we even supposed to win?!"
The adventurers looked around, holding their breath. The room fell into a depressive mood, everyone's morale had plummeted, and there were murmurs about abandoning the whole thing and fleeing the capital.

In that moment the Guildmaster was the one to step up, stating that Harry’s adamantine team had actually completed another mission with a difficulty level of 160 and had come out unscathed. Huh, he wasn’t aware the evil sealed tree had had such reputation, it was no wonder he had been promoted to adamantine after its defeat.

That brought a wave of cheers from the adventurers, seemingly restoring some of their fighting spirit. A few of them turned towards Gazef then, asking for his assistance in the oncoming battle, but the Captain-Warrior simply stated that he was in charge of defending the royal family, and thus, could not leave the Royal Palace.

There was a discussion after that, hostility against the nobles and particularly the royals filling the air, but Renner calmed them down with only a few words. She seemed to be a very capable leader, he admitted mentally, as the plan was wrapped up and the briefing finally ended.

...And Harry’s hell on earth began.

During a mission like this where parties had to work with each other, it was only sensible to make introductions, in order to secure assistance and support for each other. One would certainly prefer to aid someone they knew rather than a stranger. With this in mind, each and every adventurer in the room had come to introduce themselves to him and do small chat about their adventures and so on. The higher-ranks took most of his time, while the lower-ranks only looked admiringly at him and waited with hitched breath for their turn to shake hands. All in all, it was a terrible déjà vu of the first years after Voldemort’s defeat, but he endured through it the best he could, hoping to gain some connections from this whole mess.

His torture was thankfully interrupted by Climb, who came towards him to request a word. Apologizing to the adventurers with a slight bow, he left Shizu with them so she could represent his adamantine-team, and followed the white-armored knight into another room.

“I firmly believe Sebas-sama could help us in this formation, since he is a man with overwhelming fighting power. Would it be all right to ask for his aid? If you two were to work together and helped each other, I am sure you would be able to defeat any demon that showed itself, no matter how powerful it was!” Ah, that was right, this young man had met Sebas before.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t have any means to contact them. Lady Solution was about to return to her natal country, so I’d imagine they are on their way back right now. Even if we manage to contact them, I doubt the butler would lend us aid since he has to protect his Lady.” his answer seems to deflate Climb’s hopes, but he was sure the young man would not insist on the matter. It was a situation he was familiar with after all, since he was the bodyguard of the Princess Renner, his priority would always be her safety, over everything else.

Going back to the main room, he didn’t have to suffer for long before said Princess came back, stating the words that would mark the beginning of the adventurer’s mission.

"Then, everyone, I beseech all the gods to allow everyone here to come back alive and victorious... our hopes rest on all of you, or rather, on James-san. May fortune favor you."

He was briefly introduced to the magic casters that would be aiding him from afar, before he and Shizu were sent towards the wall of fire.
Crossing through said wall, a silent world spread ahead of them. The streets were the same as those of any other in the capital, if you overlooked the fact that there was no presence of human life and many of the residences had been destroyed. Judging by the lack of blood and corpses, he supposed the habitants had been taken somewhere. He hoped to arrive on time before many citizens were lost as causalities on Demiurge’s scheme, since the alternative would be more difficult to forgive.

Harry advanced almost on automatic as his swords floated in front of him, killing the hellhounds and other low-demons so fast it was almost imperceptible for the only witnesses of his battle, the magic casters that were supposed to be aiding him. Truth be told, after seeing the fighting style of that woman, ‘Bloody Scimitar’ Edstrem, he had wondered if his swords could follow the command “Fight”, feeling mildly surprised when they could.

It seemed to be limited to mimic the owner’s original abilities however, so it was quite lacking since fighting in close rank was not his specialty. He considered gifting them to one of the floor guardians; maybe on Cocytus’ hands the twin swords would be more efficient.

Thinking about this, he was unaware of the incredulous gazes of those staring at his ‘fight’ thinking he had decided to use his final, strongest move. The floating swords were like having at his side another adamantite-adventurer, and he wasn’t even a magic caster. Surely he couldn’t get more powerful than that.

Moving around unarmed was not a wise move however, fake fight or not, so he had taken out his secondary weapon: An emerald spear named “Atomizer”, with runes inscribed all over the handle and blade. It had a pair of razorblades at the sides, so it could be used as an Axe if needed, and the rear end was wrapped with a short chain. Emitting bolts of electrical energy, the Atomizer was a weapon capable of manipulating the constituent molecules of any object or living creature, so the effect was similar to being able to completely disintegrate the target.

According to Cocytus’ tests, it only worked with creatures that had a level lower than 50, or objects with a certain quantity of data in them, but he could affirm with absolute certainty that any nation in this world would consider it a national treasure. He had taken it in hopes of bluffing his way out of situations where it was hard to believe his party of two members had made the job by themselves, so he could lower any suspicion on his person by blaming the results on his weapon.

“It’s not like I was strong enough to kill a Dragon, it was thanks to my faithful weapon I was able to win in such a manner” was the hypothetical scenario he had imagined when he had chosen this weapon for his adventurer persona.

Not like he was planning on using the strongest ability of his spear either way. For this battle, he was only going to use its electrical properties, working like an overpowered [Dragon Lightning] so it was equivalent to a 6th tier spell. In that regard, the spear was capable of emitting electricity that could ‘jump’ to any nearby enemy, creating a sparking circuit of instant death. It was more than enough to kill the winged demons above him, while Shizu’s arrows and the useless magic casters killed the ones that were too far away from his raised spear.

After a short while, only the arrows persisted, the low-ranked spells that had been illuminating the sky were nowhere to be seen. How odd, had they decided to lend help to another group? Or had they been ambushed by the demons? He couldn’t lose time aiding them, so he hoped it was the former and continued to advance towards the heart of the surrounded region.

Just as he decided on that a new demon descended from the sky. It was roughly three meters tall, and its muscular body was covered in reptilian scales. The creature had a long tail that resembled a snake; bat-like wings on its back and a head like a goat’s skull, the eyes were beacons of bluish-white fire in
empty black sockets that focused on him as it raised its gigantic maul with a war-cry.

Was Demiurge trying to put on a show? For whom exactly, if there were only himself and Shizu in the nearest area? Not dwelling much on the reasons behind this small battle, he rotated his spear a couple of times in front of him before lowering the tip to the ground. Instantly, the runes called down an orbital strike, a beam of concentrated energy that fell from the sky with a detonating thunderous sound. If he had to qualify it, he would rank it among a 7th or 8th tier lightning spell.

The huge creature perished in an instant, so Harry continued his stride almost uninterruptedly. A shout of pure joy rang out from somewhere behind him however, so he halted to look briefly at the source. The figure flying towards him was that of a petite female. She stopped just at his side, panting softly even when she had not made any physically taxing exercise. She was covered with a blood red robe and had an uncanny mask which hid her face.

“James-san, no… James-sama! Please permit me to lend you aid!” that was a fan-girl’s voice, there was no mistaking it. Even when it was slightly distorted, he would recognize that special high-pitch anywhere. Hiding a shudder at the unpleasant memories, he decided to continue walking at the same time he talked with her.

“And you are…?”

“Ah, please forgive my poor manners! I’m known as Evileye, part of the Blue Rose adamantite team” he felt a pang of left-over anger at the name, but let it go almost immediately since she had already paid for it with her life.

“Is it really alright for you to be here? Lakyus did mention that someone recently resurrected would need to get complete bed rest, and even then they would still feel drained” that would explain her light panting, if she was forcing herself onto the battlefield.

"I am Evileye, a woman of legend. No matter how powerful my enemy is or the unfavorable circumstances—I must fight! Since you’ve cleared this path so well I was able to save more mana, so I’m sure I’ll be able to assist, James-sama!” the voice sounded determined enough, so he nodded at her from under his helmet before focusing in the surroundings once more.

Oddly enough, the low-ranked demons had stopped their advance; he hadn’t encountered a single one after the giant’s defeat. Sharpening his senses, he ordered the floating swords to “Fly above me” as he tightened his grip on the spear’s handle. Since the hoard of enemies had stopped, they should now be close enough to…finally!

"I see him."

Looking ahead, one could see the masked demon standing in the center of the plaza, making no attempt to hide himself. Upon noticing their approach, Demiurge bowed elegantly, tail moving slightly from side to side before curling at his ankles.

"A trap..." was Evileye’s soft whisper as she clenched her fists, shivering slightly at the sight of the Floor Guardian. He wondered curiously in which manner Demiurge had killed her in their last confrontation, but decided to leave it for another date. Taking pity on her, he moved slightly to hide her behind him, before taking a defensive position.

"You must be the one they call Jaldabaoth” to his surprise, Demiurge didn’t show any hostility towards him, and instead bowed his head and placed a hand over his heart.

"My, my, such an honor you pay us this night. Might I inquire as to your noble name? This one, as
you have accurately addressed, is known as Jaldabaoth." that was the demon’s style all right. For a moment, he worried the guardian was being a little too friendly with him, since they were ‘enemies’, but then supposed he had acted this way with the Blue Rose’s members as well; if only more mockingly.

"How formal. My name is James, I am the adventurer that shall defeat you." without breaking eye contact with Demiurge’s form, he directed his unoccupied hand towards the swords floating above him, and pointed at them with his index finger before lowering it towards Evileye’s form, muttering “Protect”. The swords descended to take a defensive pose in front of the petite female, as if held by an invisible warrior.

Lowering his voice, he spoke to both female companions “I’ll leave any other enemies for you two, Shizu and Evileye… please work together so we all may return triumphantly. Neither of you is allowed to perish in this fight” the last phrase was directed to the presences hiding in the nearby buildings, knowing they could hear his words perfectly.

"Understood, James-san" the neutral voice of Shizu was the last thing he heard before he kicked the ground, immediately parrying and countering Demiurge’s extended claws. The guardian had used [Aspect of the Devil: Razor Sharp Claw] so the devil’s claws had become elongated, stretching beyond eighty centimeters.

“Four of them?!” he heard the far-away panicked cry of Evileye as the Pleiades finally came out to confront them. Narberal, Lupusregina, Entoma and Yuri, all four maids were still wearing their usual uniforms, and had only placed masks to hide their faces from the enemy. He felt like chuckling at the frightened exclamation, but didn’t risk stepping out of his hero role.

The spear let out a discharge of energy every time it collided with the devil’s claws, but Harry knew such low-level magic didn’t harm the Guardian in the slightest. The demon was acting as if it did however, flinching away from the spear as he jumped back to put some distance between them.

"Truly spectacular. Crossing blows with a genius warrior like yourself might have been a mistake on my part. In that case… [Aspect of the Devil: Tentacle Wings]”

Wings sprouted from his back, but the feathers covering them were abnormally long, evoking the appearance of tentacles. With a smooth movement, he casted forth a hail of feathers towards him. Every feather had tips razor-sharp that were capable of slicing cleanly through muscle and bone. It was only for show however, since something on this level wasn’t even a treat to him, so he simply pointed the spear forwards as he used an electrical chain to completely neutralize all targets at once.

“Was that all? Then here I come, demon!” closing the distance in a blink, Demiurge was blown a good distance away, with a sound that did not seem like it could have come from a body of flesh and blood. The demon crashed into a house, with him following close behind him as he raised his spear threateningly.

Once inside the house however, both of them halted. Ignoring the scattered splinters, he straightened his posture and walked off towards another room, with Demiurge following calmly behind him. The small living room they arrived at had a small table, two chairs, and Mare.

He refused Mare’s offer of taking a sit, which prompted the young elf to raise and stand at Demiurge’s side. Gesturing for Demiurge to remove his mask, he did the same with the helmet, placing it in the table along with the spear.

"Am I right to assume this room is secure?" he asked, knowing eyes already analyzing the anti-information magic he had sensed around the property.
"The words spoken here are for our ears alone." the demon affirmed, so he nodded in satisfaction before focusing completely on the Floor Guardian.

"Well, then. Entoma has already given a summary of your plan, but I would like to hear the details from you."

"Very well" Demiurge said calmly, bowing his head as he started his report “This operation has three main objectives. To begin with, the objective of attacking the warehouse district was to secure the wealth and goods within and transport them to Nazarick. To facilitate this, I had Shalltear open [Gate] in front of the warehouses, and let Pandora's Actor handle the matter of transportation."

Taking so much in a single attack was going to cause an economical mayhem, but he admitted it was a very profitable objective. Depending solely on his adventurer’s profit had been complicated, so he didn’t hesitate to praise the demon’s good thinking. The impact this would have on the Royal Capital wasn’t nearly as important as Nazarik’s benefits after all. After hearing the usual speech that he was only fulfilling his duty, he simply nodded with a knowing smile and asked him to proceed with his report. He always ignored the NPCs when they assured him no thanks were needed, simply because he knew how happy it made them to hear it.

"The second is to cover up our involvement in our attacks on the hideouts of the Eight Fingers in the area. As you have no doubt surmised, a direct attack on the Eight Fingers' hideout would arouse suspicion. If we are unlucky, it might even lead to the exposure of Sebas and his contacts. As such, we expanded the area of operations in order to make others think our true aims lay elsewhere.”

He had suspected as much, so he simply nodded and asked curiously which object was “Jaldabaoth” trying to obtain.

"Please take a look at this, my Lord."

Demiurge gestured, and Mare brought in a bag, which he opened. Inside was a statue of a demon with six arms, and in each claw was grasped a different kind of jewel. A strange, pulsing light radiated from within.

He remembered this item. Ulbert had created it in an attempt to imitate a World item, each of those jewels were imbued with the spell [Armageddon - Evil], a 10th tier spell that summoned a demon army. Although it could summon a massive amount of troops, each individual demon was not very powerful, and they were hard to control, since they had a tendency to go berserk at the worst possible moments. The normal usage capitalized on the fact that the summoned demons were not allies by default, so they could serve as live sacrifices for certain rituals and skills.

"Though this item was created by Ulbert-sama, I feel it would be best used here." No, not really, that was a bit too much for a world like this, were a 7th tier spell was considered a legend. Six jewels with 10th tier spells were going to drive them mad with fear. Besides, it was plain to see that Demiurge was reluctant to give up a possession like this, since it was a relic of his creator.

“No, there’s no need to use that. If I recall correctly, Momonga saved it…” reaching his hand into his inventory, he accioned a certain item. The object he withdrew looked similar to the demon statue Demiurge had prepared, but its hands only held three gems, and it looked cruder in general. The spell contained was different as well, since Ulbert’s idea had been different at the beginning, so he hoped it would not scare them too badly.

"You may take this as a substitute. Ulbert made it as a prototype and he wanted to dispose of it, but Momonga choose to keep it instead.”
"How could I expend your treasures for my own schemes, Hadrian-sama?"

"Hm? On the contrary, I’m sure Ulbert would be happy this failed experiment was put to good use. You’re free to take it, Demiurge, this is yours. Use it as you see fit."

"This is... how can I express my gratitude to you for gifting me with such a wondrous magic item?" The question seemed directed to himself, since he chose to kneel on the floor, placing a hand over his heart as he proclaimed undying loyalty once more. Mare, seeing him, frantically knelt down beside him.

"We Guardians were created by the Supreme Beings. As such, until the very moment of our extinction, we shall be utterly loyal to them. Even so, you have not only bestowed your mercy and care upon us in abundance, but you have even given into my keeping such a valuable treasure... although, I, Demiurge, have already sworn my complete and undying loyalty to you, permit me to once more offer my faithful service unto you." As expected, the demon’s speech radiated respect and loyalty, he almost felt bad for the slight reprimand he was going to make.

"I’m happy to hear that, I shall look forward to your loyal service. Now, please stand up. There’s still more to your report, isn’t it?"

"Ah, indeed! My sincerest apologies!" Demiurge raised again, and Mare returned to his standby position.

"Then, as I said earlier, Jaldabaoth targeted the hideouts of the Eight Fingers, and then proceeded to take control of the Kingdom's warehouse district. Seizing the resources of the warehouses was also an aim. Naturally, this device created by Ulbert-sama will be found in one of the hideouts’ coffers."

"Most certainly. And what about the last objective?"

"Yes. I have already transported roughly half the humans within this firewall into Nazarick. There are many uses they can be put to, and the blame for this will fall squarely on the demon Jaldabaoth."

That was, precisely, what he was afraid he would hear. Taking the area surrounded by the firewall into consideration, there should be more than 10,000 people here. Sighing tiredly, he ignored the demon’s expectant gaze and asked about something he didn’t really want to know.

“An estimate of the quantity of deaths since the beginning of this operation?”

“...Around 2,000 counting civilians and adventurers” Ignoring the confused look the demon was sending him, he nodded with a serious expression and continued to ask.

“Any survivors that have not been transported to Nazarick?”

“Yes, one warehouse was used to keep a few civilians, randomly chosen to survive this ordeal. They are around 500”

“Everyone else was sent to Nazarick, regardless of whether they were male, female, young or old, correct?”

Feeling vaguely upset at the way Demiurge could so easily and casually answer affirmatively; he took a deep breath and exhaled heavily. It wasn’t as bad as he had thought it would be, but he still needed to clarify his point.

“Demiurge” the grave voice he used had the Guardian tensing up; even Mare that had not been addressed and was just standing at his side trembled slightly. “I admit, this is something I should have
explained sooner, but please pay close attention. The meaningless death of innocent people is not something I find pleasing.” he was unaware of the way his magic was flaring up, so he only raised his hand to ask for silence when they made an attempt to speak. He was not finished yet.

“While I have no issues if said people have done something to go against myself or the Great Underground Tomb of Nazarick, the slaughter of those that can be considered “pure” are to be avoided in the future. And if they are absolutely necessary, then they shall be slain swiftly and without suffering. Everything has limits, after all.” he said coldly. He was tempted to snap at him by saying My patience, for example but chose not to say it out loud, trying to keep his temper in check. The demon seemed to have sensed his bad mood however, since he bowed deeply, apologizing profusely for his lack of forethought in said matter.

Only then did he notice the slight tremor on the objects around him, and called back his magic with a thought. How careless of him, but at least it could be explained by the “fight” he was having with the demon, if anyone had happened to sense it.

“The civilians in Nazarik are in the prison?” seeing the hesitant nod of the demon, he let out a relieved sigh.

“Very well, there’s something I can do to change their situation then. Mare, rely my orders, the people imprisoned are not to be hurt, keep them sedated if possible”

“Y-yes, Hadrian-sama!”

“Also… if I recall correctly, Shalltear is around in the rooftops, right?” seeing the demon nod, he proceeded to vanish his armor, using Djinn magic to make an illusion of the white-armored knight he would need in his plan.

“Contact Shalltear, tell her to knock out this person and bring it to Nazarik. He is to be placed with the others and not to be harmed in any way”

“Understood, Hadrian-sama” the demon said with a low bow, still with tense shoulders. Trying to dispel some of the anxious atmosphere, he asked about something he already knew.

"On another matter, were these demons summoned from Nazarick?"

"How could I? No, my lord. Those were merely the summons of my Evil Lords. After a day has passed, they can be called forth again. The net loss to Nazarick is zero."

"Is that so? Well thought.” nodding approvingly, he deemed they had made enough time here.

“Then, let us put an end to this battle. Before I drive you off, could you damage my armor? It will be more convincing if I bear the signs of a hard fight.”

Demiurge nodded, and proceeded to attack the conjured armor, being careful not to beat it out of shape so he could re-equip it again without issues. Nodding satisfied at the new appearance of his equipment, he wore it again before taking the items he had left over the table.

"Then, shall we begin? Demiurge, I'll leave the battle damage to you."

"Assuredly. Mare, send the signal. It will be an earthquake, like the last time."

Evileye

Suddenly, a person was blown through the air as a building collapsed. He bounced several times on the floor, tumbling head over heels before grinding to a halt. She didn’t need to breathe, being a
vampire, but still held her breath as she saw Jaldabaoth’s figure unsteady on his feet.

She knew the adamantine adventurer James was on another level completely, considering the ease in which he had killed that huge devil with a single spell from his spear. Seeing Jaldabaoth, the terrible demon that had killed her, wounded so badly however, made her think the man was less of a human and more like a Godkin.

She shivered at the memory, how Jaldabaoth had played around with her until her mana depleted completely, before wounding her lethally with a short, sadistic laugh. If not for Lakyus’ arrival, she was sure she would have been tortured to death, but as it was, she had simply died due to blood loss.

Coming back to the present, the evil maids she and Shizu had been fighting against had halted as well, seemingly as focused on the others’ battle as she was. Looking around, she finally spotted the warrior standing where the body had come flying from.

The grey, usually shining armor was heavily damaged, making it clear just how intense their duel had been. Even so, the man standing there did not waver in the slightest, showing the adamantine's clear superiority in comparison to Jaldabaoth, who was getting to his feet.

"Well, that was fun. It’s been so long since the last time I could have a serious battle… in the past, I used to overpower all my opponents in melee combat, so I didn't feel anything, but now I feel like a battle maniac. Would you mind showing me your full strength now?"

Telling one's opponent to use their full strength was a grave insult, but seeing just how strong the adventurer truly was, it made sense for him to be overjoyed with the chance to face an opponent that required his full strength.

"Then, please allow me to do so." Jaldabaoth had probably understood it as an insult, and so he repaid it with exaggerated, sarcastic politeness.

"I shall come at you seriously as well, Jaldabaoth."

With those words as the signal, the two of them clashed in the middle of the plaza. Their exchange was like nothing else she had ever experienced in his 200 years of life. His high-speed, consecutive attacks were deflected by extended claws, even if the electrical property of the weapon seemed to affect the demon slightly.

James leapt back in a grand, soaring arc, jumping so high she thought for a moment he might have been using the [Fly] spell. In the moment where he was at the highest point, he hurled his emerald spear at Jaldabaoth, the weapon flying so fast that all she saw was its green trail seared into her vision as it headed for Jaldabaoth.

"—[Aspect of the Demon: Hellfire Mantle]."

As the spear struck, a roaring flame blazed up from the ground, and a massive shockwave erupted from Jaldabaoth.

“Kuh!”

In order not to be blown away by the titanic displacement of air, Evileye crouched down and tried to weather the storm. Fortunately, because she wore her mask, she was able to keep her eyes open during the tempest.

Looking ahead, she saw as the spear disappeared from the demon’s feet, appearing in James’ hands as he charged Jaldabaoth again, but the demon was ready to receive the attack. His body was
wreathed in flames, and as James swung down on him, Jaldabaoth caught the spear with both hands. While the weapon didn’t seem affected by the fire, the armor James wore started to melt.

“Hmm, so you’re able to melt a metal like this… the ability has gotten stronger.”

Since it was an armor favored by an adventurer of the highest caliber, it must have been made of an amazing material indeed, but Jaldabaoth could still summon fire that could melt said steel. In spite of that however, James could still talk casually to him, seemingly unaffected by the deadly flames.

“—These two are incredible.”

Evileye was terrified. She already knew how strong the two of them were, but her body was still trembling uncontrollably.

“It is as you have surmised. The fire-type damage was strengthened by a special ability.” On closer observation, the flames wreathing Jaldabaoth had a blackish tinge to them.

“Hellfire, is it?”

“Just so. Even a being protected with fire immunity will not escape unscathed, don’t you think?”

For the first time in their battle, James tried to take a step back in retreat, but Jaldabaoth would not permit it. Pulling on the trapped spear, the demon closed the gap, launching a flurry of blows at the adamantite adventurer. That attack could have slain a human being in an instant, but James expertly evaded them all, letting go of his spear as he jumped back to put some distance between them.

The trapped weapon disappeared from the demon’s claws; landing on the adventurer’s awaiting hands as he drew a circle with the tip of the spear.

“Electricity may not be the best choice in this battle. That being the case [Icy Burst]!” A portion of the runes that adorned the weapon had been glowing a bright yellow during the battle, but those were turned off as another part of the handle lighted up with a blueish radiance.

A wave of frigid air rushed forth from the spear, dropping the surrounding temperature instantly. Although it seemed as though the cold could even freeze fire, Jaldabaoth’s hellfire burned hotter than normal flames. Still, for a moment, the heat was suppressed.

“What was that? You are able to use different elements with a single weapon?” Jaldabaoth’s surprised exclamation reached Evileye’s ears.

“Since I can’t use magic, I made up for it with my faithful weapon. Granted, it’s a tool that lets me use a high-level spell three times a day, but without skills to power it up, it should be nothing to you.”

The dialogue between the two of them beggared belief. It made her recall something Gagaran, a member of the Blue Rose, had said once. When warriors put their lives on the line, sometimes they would be able to fully grasp the thoughts of their opponent, and it would create a feeling as though they were close friends who had known each other for a long time. At that time, she had wondered what she was talking about, but now…

"Maybe she had a point after all."

She felt slight jealously at the closeness between them. The man in the gray armor, which had lost its shine due to its melted surface, and the demon whose tuxedo had been shredded by countless sharp blows. The two of them, who had dueled each other in a domain beyond the grasp of humanity,
seemed like old friends to Evileye.

"Your power is unparalleled."

"Indeed, so is yours, Jaldabaoth."

"In that case, might I make a proposition?" Tilting slightly the head, his low hum seemed to be enough confirmation for Jaldabaoth to carry on.

"If I concede this battle and the victory to yourself, perhaps we can both take a step back from the edge? Or rather, to be more precise, I will withdraw myself from this incident, and I hope you will cease your pursuit of myself."

"Are you kidding me!" She was taken out of her thoughts by the demon’s proclamation. For someone who had filled the capital with this much chaos and death, a plea for mercy and forgiveness was nothing short of shameless. However, a calm voice accepted Jaldabaoth's proposal.

"Very well"

Under her mask, Evileye stared with wide eyes at James. She could not understand why the adventurer, who was in such a superior position, was accepting Jaldabaoth's terms. Sensing Evileye's confusion, Jaldabaoth shrugged his shoulders. Much as she hated to admit it, he looked quite stylish while he did it.

"It baffles me why James-san…n would bring an air-headed woman like yourself along. A moment's consideration should reveal why he accepted my proposition. In order to bring James-san here, and to keep others from interfering with our battle, you committed a lot of your friends and allies to the fight, did you not? Did you really think they would be enough to keep the demons from intruding into this conflict?"

Evileye felt as though she had been impaled through the spine with an icicle.

"The demon army is always waiting for a chance to assault the capital."

It was the worst-case scenario. Although Marquis Raeven was patrolling inside the capital with his troops, she honestly could not believe he could deal with all the demons Jaldabaoth had in store. A similar conclusion awaited if the demons started taking hostages from throughout the city. But if they defeated Jaldabaoth here—

"Even if you kill me, do you think they will vanish? I have but to give a single mental command and my infernal hordes will immediately begin rampaging through the city. Granted, their numbers might be somewhat diminished... but how many casualties do you think they will cause in the time it takes to kill them?"

So they either let him escape, withdrawing all his troops, or he died while taking everyone else down with him. With the capital's population as hostages, their circumstances were not even. It was truly a manipulative and cunning offer.

That being the case, she could see why James had grudgingly accepted Jaldabaoth's proposal. Indeed, he had no other choice.

"Then, since this outsider has accepted it as well, I will begin my withdrawal, though it is a shame I could not recover the item. I pray we will never meet again."

"The sentiment is mutual, Jaldabaoth." The demon laughed under his mask, gathering the maids
around him before they vanished using a high-tiered teleportation spell.

"They're gone..."

Evileye floated in the sky, her eyes looking to where the wall of fire had been. Nothing was left; only a slightly livelier patch of the night skyline. Filling with an overwhelming sentiment of excitement, she quickly returned to the ground, breaking into a run with a joyous cry towards James. He turned towards her with tense shoulders, probably due to the recently ended battle, but she ignored it and leapt through the air towards him.

And he sidestepped.

…Eh? She had meant to hug him, but in the end nothing but air greeted her. Instead of falling face-first into the ground however, she used her vampire reflexes to turn around, arms going around his midsection due to her size. Well, it wasn’t the tackle-hug she had intended, but she still got to hug him in the end. He had probably sidestepped as a mere reflex after all.

"You did it! You won! You won! As expected of James-sama!"

"I...thank you, but could you please? I may not act like it, but I have sustained injuries" the soft voice was calm from under his helmet, but that explained why he had flinched at the hug. How embarrassing! It had been her mistake.

Stepping out of his personal space, she bowed to apologize for her thoughtless action, even if she couldn’t help but feel satisfied. *I win as long as I hug him* she thought smugly, admiration quickly turning into a crush. She would love to get to know him once things were calmer.

Suddenly remembering the weapons she was carrying on her back, she took the handles before turning towards James once more.

“I’m very grateful you have lent me your swords, without them I’d not have survived” she said as she gave him both blades, remembering how many times they had interceded in the fight against the demon’s maids. He nodded, stating he was glad they had been of use, before taking them. Swords back on their sheaths, he tapped the rear of the emerald spear against the ground a couple of times, the weapon shrinking until only a small chain remained, which he tied on his right wrist.

Since the main combatant had put away his weapons, the battle for the capital had officially ended. From behind her, the sound of ringing steel could be heard, so she turned around to the source of the sound.

Before her was a group of people. They were adventurers and soldiers and—

"Is that the Warrior Captain? With everyone else?"

Beside Gazef Stronoff were Lakyus and Tina. Gagaran and Tia were there too. Everyone was covered in grime, a testament to the vicious battles they had fought to get here. They looked around at the aftermath of the intense battle that had taken place here, and then, with an intake of breath, they all looked at James.

Sensing the meaning of that gesture, Evileye whispered to him.

"James-sama, lead us in a cry of victory."

The adventurer hummed, taking out one of his swords as he whispered “Seriously? Ah, how nostalgic…” before thrusting it toward the sky.
"UOOOOOOOOOOOOHH!"

In the next moment, everyone in the plaza raised their fists to the sky, shouting in celebration of their victory. In everyone's mouths was the name of James, the hero who had saved the nation.

In that cheerful moment, only Brain and the Thief had noticed Climb’s disappearance.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Well, I had been waiting for an opportunity to use the favorite phrase of the light novels: ‘people falling like puppets whose strings had been cut’. I'm happy it finally fitted somewhere hahaha

RIP to all the summoned creatures Cocytus used for his tests with the spear. I imagine the warrior asking for creatures from varying levels until he found one that didn't die immediately. Poor creatures indeed.

Also, before you comment on it, remember that while the Djinn magic is blocked, Harry can still perform some of his original magic so long it doesn’t require the use of the elder wand. So losing control of it due to his temper is still possible.

In the end I didn’t need the world-domination plot as I thought I would, so I’ve edited the chapters concerning it. Sorry, sorry~ I don’t think there’s any need to re-read them tho, the changes made were minimal.

Oh well, this is the longest chapter with 9.5K words, so I hope you liked it. Happy new year everyone! Hope your 2018 is filled with new experiences and fandoms. The second season of Overlord gets aired this January! Aren’t you excited? I can’t wait!

Thanks for reading, and also, a million of thanks for those that leave me reviews, I love to read them. Some made me correct/realize mistakes, some made me laugh, some inspired me with new ideas, and some simply stated their opinion, either positive or negative. Thank you!

See ya’ around and welcome to 2018!
Children were machines with love tanks that needed to be fulfilled quite regularly. Especially when you were sleeping peacefully, even more so if you were tired as shit.

It was probably around 3 a.m. when Harry felt something poking his face insistently. He frowned a little and tried to ignore it by turning his head in the opposite direction, but it obviously didn’t help. Giving up, he opened his eyes slightly, more asleep than awake as he begrudgingly searched for the source of his predicament. The first thing he saw were Mare’s mismatched eyes, the elf was face down (at least from his perspective) having crawled his way through the pillows and was blinking tearfully at him.

“I d-didn’t mean to wake y-you” the small elf whispered. Harry’s instinctual answer was to say something like ‘You were poking me, what exactly did you think would happen? Brat.’ but the grumpy words never left his lips, since Mare began to hiccup, tears now running down his cheeks.

No no no sobbing no!

Quickly placing a Muffliato around Mare and himself, he looked around and sighed in relief when he saw the others still sleeping. Moving very slowly he sat up, turning from the waist up so he could take the crying Mare and place him in his lap.

“Shh shhh why are you crying?” the kid was hugging him quite strongly, crying in his shirt loudly. Thank Merlin for the Muffliato.

“N-nightmare”

“Hmm… do you want to talk about it?” the elf shook his head in negative, still hiding in his chest, so Harry stayed silent and simply made comforting circular motions in the tiny back, the other hand over the small head, humming softly.

Harry was starting to fall asleep again, nevermind that he was seating when the little elf finally released his grip, small hands cleaning the slightly red eyes before looking up, blinking at Harry in a matter that was totally awake.

Please no.

“Can we play?” was the totally serious question, the hopeful stare now shining with energy.

No we can’t, is 4 a.m., everyone is asleep and I’m so tired I think I could sleep over a pointy rock.

“Sorry bud, it’s a little bit too early for that. Can you go back to sleep?”

“I’m n-not sleepy” The little brat had taken quite the nap during the afternoon, so this was sadly Harry’s fault for allowing it.

“…you have to try. Lie down and try to fall asleep again”

“But, w-what if the nightmare c-comes back?” Huh, so that was the real reason.
“Are you sure you don’t want to talk about it? It may help” Harry hadn’t even finished that phrase when the kid shook his head, saying “NO!” quite loudly. He was surprised to see the normally shy elf express himself so stridently, but that was to be expected given the circumstances.

“Ok, ok, that’s ok too” he waited for the elf to calm down again before saying “we all are here together. Nothing bad will happen I promise”

“…p-pinky promise?” Harry mildly wondered where the elf had learned that small piece of human culture, before mentally shrugging and accepting; sealing the contract with the small finger.

The little elf looked much better already, even if he was still way too awake for Harry’s liking. Hugging the small child again, he hummed the few lullabies he knew from heart; managing not to fall asleep before the kid did. After that, he levitated the child carefully towards his place between Demiurge and Shalltear, having to move the vampire’s arm so the elf actually fitted in the reduced space.

Once that whole ordeal was done with, he took down the muffliato and lied down again, sleep greeting him the moment his eyes closed.

Harry slept soundly after that, and didn’t wake up again until much later when he felt movement, more specifically, that of a kid waking up. Harry was still too tired to do shit however, so he subconsciously tried to put the kid back to sleep by giving soft pats on their back and humming. Had he been more awake he would have thought this better, since his humming was waking up the others, but at least the one he was patting was falling asleep again. Harry let out a tired and relieved sigh, and was beginning to dream again when he felt even more movement and the squeaky noise the mattress made when someone stood up. Opening his eyes in resignation, he blinked sleepily at the room.

He had a hand over Demiurge’s back and the demon was snoring slightly over his torso, so he figured the little demon had been the one that woke him up first. Aura was sleeping soundly, taking the space that was meant for two children. Albedo had changed from being at the end of the bed to sleeping across their feet, and seemed quite comfortable… wasn’t Cocytus supposed to be between them? Turning his head to the other side of the bed, only Mare was still sleeping, since Shalltear was standing right at the side of the bed, looking at him guiltily.

Harry brought his free hand to his lips, making a shushing motion before whispering “Don’t move” towards Shalltear. The little vampire giggled softly before nodding, a complicit small smile on her face before it was covered by her tiny pale hands.

Where the heck was Cocytus? Harry thought it over for a few seconds before checking the only place left of his bed; over his head. True enough, the insectoid was sharing the big pillow Harry was using. He let out an amused smile at the position Cocytus was sleeping in, curled up with its tail wrapped around himself like some sort of cat.

Glad everyone was still either sleeping or in the room, he summoned his wand and casted Tempus, surprised to see it was actually 10:21am.

Deeming it was a decent hour to have breakfast, he slowly sat up, waking Demiurge in the process as he stretched. The little demon rubs his eyes sleepily, before looking around as if searching for his glasses. Harry accios them from the nightstand, giving the item to him before addressing the bunch of children.

“Wake up kids, aren’t you hungry?” he asked softly as he gently shook Aura awake. Once the young elf was standing sleepily out of the bed, he was free to get down as well, finally able to shake
awake the other children.

The last one to wake up is Cocytus, being the harder to reach since he was in the middle of the king-size bed. The smallest kid is stretching four arms when Harry’s curiosity gets the best of him, asking about his change of sleeping position.

“It was too warm” said the insectoid softly, not looking at him. Ah, he had forgotten to take into consideration the characteristics of his species…he would have to remember it next time.

“It’s ok kid, you’re not in trouble. You can sleep there from now on” he clarified gently patting the insectoid’s cold head, before walking out of the bedroom with the bunch of children behind him. He couldn’t help but think in a line of ducklings following their mother.

Chuckling at the mental image, he sent a [Message] to Sous-chef, asking him to bring ingredients for a large breakfast to his room. The rooms of the Guild members were designed as a presidential suite; with a large bathroom, a bar, a piano room, a master bedroom, a guest bedroom, a kitchen for a personal chef, a dressing room, and many other really unnecessary rooms. Right now, it was going to be the first time the personal kitchen was used, since he wanted to keep the situation as unnoticed as possible.

The mushroom-like NPC arrives in a matter of minutes, so Harry goes to receive him since he hadn’t let any of the maids in. Normally, the regular maids would take turns to follow him during a whole day, but he had ordered them away for these few days, much to their chagrin.

Sous-chef stares with utter disbelief at the children guardians, so he gives him a short explanation on the situation at hand, putting emphasis on the short durance of the spell and the request of silence regarding their small status. The NPC nods in understanding before starting to cook, fulfilling all of their demands swiftly. Even with such a broad menu, they find themselves eating in a matter of minutes, seated in the small dinner room present in Harry’s personal chambers.

He keeps an eye on the kids during the whole meal, making sure they are grasping the utensils right and that the food gets mostly into their mouth and not over the table and floor. It’s a little complicated with such a large amount of children, but it was not as bad as it could be if he hadn’t magic. Levitating food and passing things down the table with wandless magic was certainly helpful.

Truth be told, they didn’t really need to eat, but Harry had felt nostalgic as he remembered his first family, so he had wished for a regular breakfast since he knew he wouldn’t be able to have one once they were back to normal.

Once they had all eaten Aura asked for lollipops, which was immediately supported by a chorus of agreeing children. Harry was still eating though, so he asked her to go to Sous-chef to ask for some.

“Ok. Do you want one too?” Distracted with Cocytus’ small mess, he answered distractedly with a “Sure kid” as he cleaned the insectoid’s claws and helped him hold the fork right.

The elf ran enthusiastically towards the mushroom-like NPC, standing in her toes at the same time she made hand motions for the elder to bend down.

“Can you give us lollipops? One for Hadrian-sama too, he was too shy to ask for one himself so he sent me to do it” was the worst attempt at whispering Harry had ever seen, since he could hear it all the way from across the room in his sitting position. What the heck? She had offered it to him! The little elf wasn’t finished though, because it continued with her supposedly discrete voice “He didn’t want to ask because he’s an adult. Don’t say I told you, but—“
“Ahem! Aura come back please, you haven’t finished your vegetables yet!” he yelled mildly embarrassed before chuckling to himself. Oh, how could he have forgotten? Young kids could embarrass their parents so very easily. Why, he recalled this one time James had—

“Here you go, Hadrian-sama!” the young elf interrupted his thoughts as she offered the lollipop to him, the others already eating theirs. Oh well, he would have enough time to feel nostalgic and act like an old man later. Thanking Aura with a few pats on her head, he finished his candy with a single bite before standing up to thank sous-chef, requesting him to come back in the afternoon.

Accompanying the mushroom-like NPC out of his room, he renewed the silencing charms around the whole area before coming back to the dinner room. Stopping the small mayhem only small children without supervision could produce, he vanished the rests of food without a second thought, before asking the kids what they wanted to do.

Listing off a few options, in the end the majority had chosen to play in the forest with the creatures Aura supervised. Opening up a [Gate] he made sure to avoid the part of the floor that was occupied by other Nazarik denizens, so he let the children explore around at their leisure, with the condition of staying in the clearance and not going too far away.

Everything was well for the first couple of hours, until a small mishap from Shalltear had one of the Tob-Bears accidentally hugged to death. The creature disappears with a ‘Puff’ sound, as the distinctive ashes of the fire-type monster fall to the ground. Consoling the depressed vampire while calming down a furious Aura had not been easy, but he had managed in the end. If anything, he was glad it had been one of his [Summoned] creatures and not one of Aura’s original ones, since it would have been disastrous otherwise.

So, now they were having a funeral, because Harry couldn’t convince them not to have one, even if the animal in question was nothing but ashes now. Once the ‘ceremony’ had ended, he hoped to dispel the depressive aura by distracting them with something else. As such, he transfigured their clothes into swim suits, telling them to go have fun in the lake that was in the middle of the clearing.

Since swimming had been out of bunds, the children immediately ran towards the ‘forbidden’ lake, hopefully forgetting everything about the small accident of before. He walks at a more sedated pace after them, changing his clothes for a swimsuit as well, but instead of getting in fully he just sits down at the edge, his legs moving slightly underwater as he kept a watchful eye on the bunch of cute brats.

The water level had been forcefully adjusted with Harry’s magic to an appropriate level, so he didn’t worry overly much as they played and swam around the lake. It was not like any of them could die by drowning, but his parental instincts wouldn’t allow him to be careless regarding their safety.

Movement suddenly halting, he felt his body tense as their mischievous eyes focused on him, before a whole war started on who could throw more water at the other. Harry found himself forced to participate, so he threw aguamenti left and right as he avoided the ‘attacks’ of the kids, jogging around the lake. He threw cold water at most of them, making them yelp at the temperature, and hot water at Cocytus since it was the only thing that made him react. Their attacks almost never reached him however, since they were using only his hands to throw water, so he transfigures a few fallen leaves to give them water guns and even the playfield.

They play around the clearance for quite a while, alternating between jogging, evading and countering the water attacks of the others, until the game reaches its end with a final, undiscussed winner. Harry and the kids were all pathetically defeated when Mare got serious and used elemental magic to create a wave, the water coming from nowhere as it flooded the whole clearance without a
second thought, the few creatures that were in the vicinity running away from the mayhem.

A few minutes of panic later, he let out a relieved sigh once he noticed everyone was alright and laughing, congratulating Mare for winning. Deeming he had had enough heart attacks for the moment, he instructed them to get out of the lake, drying them up with a swift wand movement before changing their clothes back to normal. Opening up a [Gate], he was the last to go through, guiding them towards the dining room for a quick meal.

It was a repeat of breakfast, but now with the children talking amiably as they laughed and joked with each other. He supervises the lot of them as he eats silently; a warm smile on his face as he recalled times long past.

Once lunch ended, he decided to play something calmer, so he improvises a few games regarding equilibrium and slow movements. It feels like some sort of Yoga, but with a lot more talking and less humming. The children got tired of it quite quickly though, so in the end he settles for playing Musical Chairs.

The first attempt at playing it was terrible. The chairs simply hadn’t been designed to hold a full tackle from the competitive children, so they broke down on the first round. He waved his wand to repair them, adding a few runes for resistance before trying to play a second time. The game is repeated a couple of times before pausing for dinner, with the winners being Aura and Shalltear respectively.

When the final meal of the day was over, he congratulated Sous-chef for a job well done before dismissing him, taking the bunch of brats back into his bedroom. It was too early to go to sleep however, so he sat down in the floor with the children surrounding him, deciding with an amused smile the last game of the day.

The game of ‘this little piggy’ wasn’t supposed to be this intricate, but he was having so much fun. Basically, Harry would say the beginning using his own hands for the story-making and let the children complete the phrase, which was proving to be quite imaginative for them. Up until now, he got quite varied responses, from “trained wolves in the park” to “Got eaten by a plant”, and his personal favorite “went away to check everything was ok” from Demiurge. The little demon had been restless since they finished dinner. It didn’t seem to matter how many times Harry said he got it covered, everything was fine and that they were not under attack, all the kid ever did was look inflexibly at him.

In the end he picked up the stubborn kid and placed him on his lap, thinking he may as well end the game to tell a story. Using magic to illustrate his words, he spoke about wards and magical shields in the simplest way possible, explaining to the awed children a little about what he had done with the wards around Nazarik. Once that was done he shifted the images to tell an adventurous tale, giving a kid-friendly version of a few adventures the Golden-trio had had in his first life.

He focuses on the fun parts of course, like riding on the dragon’s back as they escaped from the ‘bad guys’ of the bank, or the tests they had overcome to reach the philosopher’s stone. With every tale, he uses Djinn illusory magic to make a small show, the figures being like a 3D hologram as the made-up characters moved, flew and fought in accordance to the story. Every time he changed to another tale, he would pick up a different kid and place them on his lap, so everyone had their ‘turn’ at passing time with him.

Once everyone had been with him at least once, he called it a day and transfigured their clothes into pajamas. After that, he decided the sleeping order at random, with Cocytus being the only one that had a designated space in the pillows above them. In the end, the sleeping order from left to right was Demiurge, Aura, Albedo, Harry, Shalltear, and Mare. Redoing the cushioning charms on the floor,
he slept with the two little girls cuddling with him, the top of his head oddly cold due to Cocytus’ proximity.

And thus, the second day was over.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

And that was it! If it were canon, Harry wouldn’t be so tired just because he had a busy day, but I wanted to represent the parent’s view when they take care of small children, so that’s why the beginning was written like that haha.

My respects for those that deal with small children on a daily basis, you never get bored with those little balls of energy near you. I only see my small cousins once per month or so, but is still taxing as hell.

Either way, thanks for reading and hope you liked it :) Not sure how often my updates will be, since I’m back at work now, but I’ll try to keep it reasonable.

See ya’ around~
Chapter 18 Aftermath

Hadrian-sama was truly a benevolent leader. While he felt infinitely grateful of said fact when it was directed at Nazarik’s denizens, he couldn’t grasp why said generosity would be directed at the low, pathetic creatures that conformed the human race. He really couldn't understand his insistence towards protecting these lower life forms, but who was he to question a decision of a Supreme Being?

If they had any use, then it would make sense. The Baleare alchemist family, for example, was useful for performing the experiments regarding potions, helping them discover new ingredients and methods as their investigation in Carne Village advanced. But he couldn’t see any advantage in releasing the human prisoners he had taken from the Royal Capital. All he could think about was that, for some unknown reason, Hadrian-sama cared for their safety.

Maybe if it had been other Supreme Being, like TouchMe-sama, then he would have expected such reaction; but said manner of thinking had been completely unexpected. As such, he had failed to fulfill his Lord’s wishes, since he had not taken into account his gentle nature.

Still, caring for pathetic humans…. what was this feeling? …No, that couldn't be possible. He was a Floor Guardian and the creation of the great Ulbert Alain Odle-sama, there was nothing to be envious about regarding such low creatures. He simply held negative emotions towards them for being the reason behind his first, and hopefully last, reprimand. That was all.

Where were these thoughts coming from? He mused distressfully as he walked towards the prison in the 5th floor, even if he didn’t portray any such feelings. Being a NPC, he had no way of knowing their incomplete descriptions had been filled out with the personalities of their creators, and that Ulbert had been particularly weak to the feeling of envy. The reason for the conflict between Touch-Me and Ulbert had been, in fact, due to Ulbert’s jealousy towards Touch-Me, since the latter enjoyed of better circumstances in real life.

Still contemplative, he tensed at the memory of Hadrian-sama’s anger, feeling worried for having disappointed his Master in such a manner. Was there any use for subordinates who could not carry out their duties satisfactorily? And if the last of the Supreme Ones were to disappear with disappointment ... Demiurge froze with fear at the thought of this.

The purpose of the residents of Nazarik was to serve the Supreme Beings; they own their existence to them. Their creators, their gods, they had been allowed to exist for that purpose, and only for that. What use was there for them, if they disappointed their only remaining leader?

He had, thus, offered as volunteer to fix the situation, deeming it was the best he could do to redeem his actions. He had received Hadrian-sama’s instructions regarding the plan to free the prisoners; and with that in mind, Demiurge tamped down his uneasiness with an iron will. His Master had ordered him to act, and he could not resist that command.

Placing the mask he had used for the character of Jaldabaoth on his face, he opened the door that led towards the containment cell. He felt slightly better at the cries of fear and panic his mere presence caused, but ignored them for the most part as he raised the Glaive his Lord had conferred to him for
this action. Using the incantation kept within the weapon, the 6th tier spell [Control Weather] was activated, clouds forming at the top of the ceiling of the cell room. Before it could start to rain however, he took out a small vial with potion, saying out loud the code to activate the time-related destructive spell on the flask before throwing it at the center of the clouds that were only beginning to take form as a storm.

As instructed, the potion that came from his Master’s original world was mixed up with the water naturally contained in the clouds, before the rain started to fall over the prisoners. The de-memorizing mixture should be enough to assure the details of Nazarik would not escape with them. According to the experiment he had made on a single prisoner, the people affected would lose a week of memories due to the concoction.

Closing the door, he waited for the mixture to take effect on the prisoners, before sending a [Message] to Shalltear so the vampire could open a [Gate]. Opening slightly the door, he used his passive skill [Domination Mantra] to order them to go into the opened portal. Since the room held a large amount of people, it took a while before all the prisoners were gone, but he supervised the operation silently from the small gap at the entrance, until the last one of them had left the chamber. Once there were no more citizens within the room, he opened the door completely and walked towards the furthest wall, the hard soles of his leather shoes clacking loudly against the ground as the echoes faded away into silence in the large, empty cell.

Opening a metallic door that led to another compartment, he bends down to grasp the back of the collar of the white-armored knight, since the male contained within was still unconscious, under the spell [RIP] courtesy of his Master. He drags the male human carelessly towards the gate before throwing him unceremoniously through it, doing it a little too harshly as he expressed few of his pent-up emotions.

The only reason the knight had been transferred into a different room was because they needed him to lead the freed people back, so his memories would need to be intact. They had made sure the human was unconscious for his whole stay at Nazarik, so he wouldn’t be able to provide information about them once he woke up.

That was it. Whether they made it back alive or not, it was up to them now. He sincerely wished they would however, if only because Hadrian-sama would be happy with that outcome. Tail twitching with a feeling he refused to recognize, he left the cell room as he thought pensively in different plans to redeem for his mistake, before deciding to follow the most logical one.

Failure was not an option; he must show a result that clears his previous failure.

Meanwhile, at the other side of the [Gate] the unconscious body of Climb collided against a wall of stone, the only part of the structure in ruins that remained standing, since the ceiling and other walls had fallen down many years ago. His fingers twitched once, twice, before the last remnants of the sleeping curse lifted, and he was conscious enough to feel the pain that was caused by the harsh collision.

The rays of sun bothered his closed eyelids, so he frowned slightly before opening them begrudgingly. His body feels drained, as if he had just woken up from a coma, and his back hurt from the impact. As soon as he is capable of forming coherent thoughts however, he stands up in a quick, ungraceful movement, his last memory coming to the front of his mind.

He and Brain had been leading the survivors through the battlefield, with the thief being in the back to make sure no one stayed behind, when something had collided against him at great velocity. All he saw was a blur of white before he lost consciousness, darkness eating away his vision.
Seeing he was not alone, he turned his sword towards whatever was surrounding him, before noticing the attire of the people around him. They were citizens… What the hell was going on? Lowering his weapon, he asks to the closest people if they knew anything about their current situation, but only got confused, disoriented looks.

“I was buying dinner. Why am I here?”

“Tell me about it. I was discussing with my wife…”

“Where’s my daddy?”

Several voices overlapped each other as they spoke at the same time, their confusion turning into worry at the unknown situation. Climbing the wall he had collided against, he stood upon it to get a clearer picture of his surroundings. He could see an immense amount of people was reunited in the clearing, all of them discussing agitatedly with each other.

Turning towards the nearest male, he asked if he remembered anything about what had happened after the demons took them away.

“Demons? What demons? I was at a bar… were you with me? maybe you drank too much?”

What…? How could he not remember? Had the memories been so traumatizing the mind of the male had pushed it back to the point of forgetting it ever happened? He asks to the people closest to him, but instead of looking rightfully fearful or in shock, the only thing that greets him are disoriented looks.

No one seemed to remember anything about the nightmare they had miraculously survived. Whatever that white blur had been, Climb assumed he had been taken by the demons as well. Still, he couldn’t understand what was happening, why were they in a clearing? He would have expected a sacrificing ritual, a torture chamber, or appearing at the heart of an active volcano or whatever hideout Jaldabaoth had. But everyone was seemingly fine and the day was ironically warm and clear as if there was nothing wrong in the world.

What was the objective in any of this? Was Jaldabaoth getting their hopes up because it would be more entertaining to crush them that way? But if that were the case, he wouldn’t have needed to erase the memories of the citizens… why was he the only one that remembered though? No matter how much he delved on this kind of thoughts, he couldn’t get closer to the answer.

The demon’s evil thinking was something he couldn’t begin to understand. That being the case, it didn’t matter whatever plot Jaldabaoth was planning, his duty was to lead this people back to safety. The mission his Princess had bestowed upon him was to rescue the citizens of the Royal Capital, so he would follow his orders and worry about Jaldabaoth’s plot at a later date.

Making up his resolve, he shouted to drag the attention of the people, but only managed to receive it from the ones that were closest to him. Truly, they were simply too many, there was no way he could possibly guide them all to safety. Traveling with such a huge group posed a lot of problems, since they could easily attract the attention of predators, and there wasn’t any food or refugees for all of them…

But he still had to try. Looking around at the large, empty plain surrounded by a permanent fog that blanketed the whole area, he could see a few old buildings scattered around and in ruin, much like the single remaining wall of the structure he had used to get to a higher position. Filling with dread, he recognized exactly the location they were at. The Katze plains.
Numerous undead beings were rumored to inhabit this land, spawning naturally due to its use as battle ground in the annual war against the Baharuth Empire. It was inevitable that due to the high number of casualties sustained by both sides every year, the place had become a hot spot for undead creatures to spawn. This ranged from zombies to skeleton warriors and even Skeletal Dragons.

It was common knowledge that in places where the undead gathered, more powerful undead were born. When these more powerful undead gathered, even more powerful undead would appear. This chain of events would continue naturally, like a spiral, constantly spawning ever more powerful undead beings. If left alone, it was potent enough to destroy an entire city, so it was known as the "Death Spiral."

This was the reason high-ranked adventurers would be sent to lower the undead population at periodical intervals. Only mithril and upward could be recruited, since another trait of the plains was that the fog that surrounds it registered as a lifeform, so performing detection magic against undead was useless in this area.

But no adventures had been sent this past couple of months; which meant the undead population would be at its peak.

This was bad, such a large concentration of living people was going to attract the undead’s attention, and once that happened many citizens would fall prey to ambushes from the undead spawn. He really hoped the rumors regarding an infamous Elder Lich who haunted the plains on a Ghost Ship were just that; rumors. There would be no hope it they encountered such a high form of undead, said to sail among the mists that forms around the plains…

In a way, it was both, lucky and unlucky to be here. Unlucky for all the reasons he had previously considered, but lucky because the civilians were usually recruited for the war, since the only way their nation could resist the Baharuth Empire was with numbers.

As such, most of the citizens present had fought here at least once, and thus were able to recognize their surroundings and the danger that lurked within. Climbing over the wall once more, he uses the higher position to his advantage, calling for attention a second time. The nearest are the only ones that look up at him, so Climb asks them to pass down his message to the people that was further away.

He could do this! For Renner-sama!

Meanwhile, in the Royal Capital, they were still many issues to solve once the battle with the demon ended. Since Jaldabaoth had affirmed to be searching for an item, the Warrior-Captain Gazef had guided the investigation group through the warehouses, until they found a very disturbing magic item. The Magician’s Association was still analyzing and investigating it, but considering the fact that it had been imbued with abnormally powerful magic and the information Jaldabaoth had let slip, it seemed likely that it was the item he had been searching for.

As a result, the Adventurer’s Guild had gathered strong veterans in order to stand watch over the item until they figured out how to dispose of it. Gazef, being the one that had found said item, was naturally involved in guarding it, and right now was his turn of standing on the warehouse’s back entrance.

The Warrior-Captain frowned in unconcealed fury as the feeling of impotence got a hold of him. It was so annoying, the fact that the Eight Fingers could not be punished for bringing this item to the capital…

The magic item which had led to the tragedy in the capital had been found in a warehouse that was
positively linked to the smuggling division of the Eight Fingers. That being the case, they should have immediately moved to destroy them, even the nobles would not oppose such action, since their lands had been at jeopardy as well. However, there was a crucial reason why they could not do so, and only a few people knew about it.

They had started searching for the item because Jaldabaoth had leaked information about it. That being the case, the demon might have been counting on the humans to find the object his troops could not, which was why that information had gotten out in the first place.

Since everyone understood the implications of that leak, they had suppressed all information about the artifact, and as such, it could no longer be used as a reason to attack the Eight Fingers. He clenched his fists at his sides, feeling powerless at the situation. Trying to distract himself with other matters, he attempted to speak with Brain, who had been assigned to guard the item along with him, but the ex-mercenary remained silent as if he had not heard him, with a pensive look on his face.

Since Climb’s disappearance, Brain had been acting even more distant than usual, but that was to be expected. He probably felt guilty for not been able to interfere in the young knight’s kidnapping, even when it had happened in front of him. The devastated face of the Golden Princess when she received the notice had only made things worse for him.

And then, there was also the ungratefulness that came from the few citizens that had survived the nightmarish ordeal. They had heaped blame and scorn on Brain, muttering phrases like “Why did you only save us” and so on. They had taken their anger -at the loss of their families, at the loss of their wealth- and poured out the bowl of their wrath upon him. They would have probably turned against Climb too if the male hadn’t disappeared, but as it was, Brain had been the main figure in the rescuing mission. Even knowing the citizens did it because they didn’t have anyone else to blame, Gazef couldn’t help but curse at their attitude.

Couldn’t the citizens see it was nobody’s fault but Jaldabaoth’s? That Climb and Brain had risked their lives in rescuing them? Considering Brain’s group had been the one to deliver the final blow to that mighty demon in order to save them, the inhabitants should have realized just how much effort they had put into fulfilling their mission. The demon they had encountered was on a completely different level from any of the others, with a snake-like tail, bat wings and a goat skull for a head, it could have beaten him or Brain with strength to spare, had they fought against it alone. In the end, it was only because all of them had worked together to wound it that they had been victorious.

And after that life and death struggle, the only thanks Brain had received were the aforementioned complaints. Why were the people so fast to point accusing fingers at their helpers? If it wasn’t for his presence, Gazef was sure the few citizens present in their immediate surrounding would throw harsh words at Brain.

He was taken out of his dark musings when the sun reflects on something, or rather, someone as an armored warrior walked towards him, his sides flanked by two females. The smallest was talking to no end, looking up at the male adamantite adventurer, while the other girl stared expressionlessly at their interaction, tilting her head curiously but not participating in their conversation at all.

“-you sure? You did the Kingdom a great favor; it’s only natural that his Majesty wishes to convey his gratitude to you-“ was the broken sentence of the petite female, the magic caster he recognized as Evileye from the Blue Rose adamantite team.

“I simply completed a request as an adventurer; it’s nothing worthy of a king’s personal attention. To be honest, everyone who took part in this battle should receive accolades as well. This was a battle fought by the Kingdom’s Adventurer Guild as a whole” The hero that had defeated the terrible demon Jaldabaoth, James, said with a polite voice, stubbornly humble on his victory.
The conversation seems to end at that, at least for the moment, since they were close enough to him and Brain now. Gazef was about to greet them, but not a word leaves his lips since Brain’s hopeful shout cut through the air.

“Have you heard anything? Found anything?” the ex-mercenary asked, bolting from his resting position as he all but leaned forwards with an expectant gaze. The blue eyes of the male adamantite adventurer seem to sadden for a moment, before James shakes his head in negative.

“Nothing at all. Even the tracking magic of the Magician’s Guild Master doesn’t seem to be enough to locate him” They were, of course, talking about Climb, that young boy that always trained so hard in the mornings, even when he had no talent at all…

Princess Renner had refused to give up on her knight, for even if Climb had died, he could be resurrected by Lakyus if his body was preserved enough. Needless to say, this meant time was of essence. She had hired all the highest ranks among the Magician’s Association, even going so far as to contact their Leader, in hopes of finding Climb before it was too late.

“I… see” was the disappointed sigh of the ex-mercenary.

“I’m sorry Unglaus, I wished I could deliver good news” James seemed sincere as he stated this, sending a sympathetic look at Brain before continuing “But the truth is, I’ve just come to bid farewell. I’ll be returning to E-Rantel shortly”

There was something odd in James’ voice when he said that, but Gazef didn’t have time to dwell on it, as the adamantite turned towards him.

“This is the first time we meet right? I apologize for the late introduction. Is an honor, Captain-Warrior Stronoff, I’ve heard numerous tales about you.”

“An honor? Nonsense, you have far surpassed me James-sama” he said smiling good-naturally “If anything, I’m the one that feels honored to meet you–then, remembering the scene were the adventurers of all classes had reunited around James to make presentations, he felt the need to justify his impoliteness “Ah, I should apologize for not coming to greet you before the battle, it was a great discourtesy from my side–”

“None at all, is understandable someone with your title would be busy with other matters.” James interrupted him, making a dismissive motion with a polite smile.

“Stronoff-san must have been terribly busy with his assigned duties” although said emotionlessly, he could sense some layer of annoyance in the adventurer’s companion, Shizu, but the leader of the adamantite team simply patted her head a couple of times before adding “It’s fine, really.” which caused the female to utter a soft, cute “Uwahh” as if embarrassed, a small smile on her face.

If Gazef kept apologizing it would be an infinite, repetitive circle of “I’m sorry” and “no problem” so he decided to let the matter rest at that, changing the course of the conversation.

“For how long will you be staying James-sama? If possible, I’d like to inquire about the details of the battle from your perspective” information-gathering was the best they could do, to prepare in case that devil came back. While Jaldabaoth had stated that he would not attack again, due to fear of James’ battle power, it would be foolish to disregard a possible retaliation from the defeated enemy if the adamantite warrior choose to move away from the Kingdom. Adventurers were free of alliances like that, being able to migrate from one country to another without holding any ties.

“Now is my turn to apologize Stronoff-san, there are magic casters that have been tasked to help me
return to E-Rantel and they are already waiting for me” with a small, apologetic bow of the head directed at Gazef, James turned to Evileye suddenly, as if stricken by an idea “Ah, but Evileye-san was able to witness some of it. Would you do me a favor and explain a little to the Captain-warrior?” he asked gently, lowering his gaze towards the mask the petite female always wore.

“Eh? Oh, sure, sure…” the voice of Evileye sounded slightly disappointed, as if she didn’t like the thought of staying behind “After I accompany you to send you off”

“Thank you, I’m sorry to trouble you with my request” a small smile was directed at the short female, along with a grateful nod.

“Not at all! Please don’t worry about it!” she answered hurriedly, moving both hands from side to side as if to dispel something. Evileye was known for being cold, the kind of person that said the undisguised truth on every topic whether others liked it or not, so it was amusing to see her act so juvenile.

Smiling at the scene in front of him, he felt slight regret that his source of information was going to get away, but it wasn’t like this would be the last time they met. Maybe one day with more luck, he would be able to hunt for more information about the demon Jaldabaoth.

He had wanted to request a spar as well, but it would have to be at a time and place where there were no witnesses, so his reputation and the one of the adventurer would not be compromised by the result of the battle. While it was clear Gazef would lose, he still wanted to train and improve, testing his strength and techniques against a stronger opponent.

“It can’t be helped. Well then James-sama, please take care of yourself. Thank you for saving this city, I am very grateful that you have helped to protect the Royal Capital.” James smiled knowingly at this, the kind of smile that let you know there was something more to the picture, but he couldn’t really understand what exactly had triggered such reaction. Deciding to muse it over at another date, he turned towards Evileye, thanking her for her time and expressing he would be waiting for their reunion once everything was calmer. She nods at him dismissively, before turning her head towards the male adamantite adventurer once more. Oh, so it was that kind of relationship—

“I wished I could stay longer in the Royal Capital” James said apologetically as he extended his hand to shake Gazef’s in farewell, accidentally interrupting his line of thought. He then turned towards the silent ex-mercenary, who had observed the interaction with almost vacant eyes “Brain, they still have a few days. Give them time and don’t lose hope, I’ll get in contact with you if I hear anything about their findings”

“Yeah… yes. Thank you” Brain seems to get out of his stupor, but was far from being his usual self “If only James-san were a magic caster instead of a warrior…” he whispered softly, as if speaking to himself. James nods at him, expression saddened once more before patting Brain’s shoulder in a comforting manner with a muttered farewell.

A magic caster? That was right, if they could contact Ainz Ooal Gown! but he had no idea where to search for such an extraordinary individual… still, he could comment his suggestion to Princess Renner or the King. Maybe the Magician’s Guild Master would be able to locate a fellow magic-user more easily than it was to locate Climb. With that last, determined thought, he watched as the group of adamantite adventurers got further away from the warehouse he and Brain were warding, silence reignning over them once more.

He couldn’t do this! He could not! Climb cursed as he destroyed another Skeleton Warrior, the people running in panic as they scattered away like disturbed ants.
It had been alright at first, the veterans were in charge of guiding the way back to E-Rantel, that was the closest populated region, while Climb stayed back to ensure no one was left behind. The large number of people had attracted the attention of the undead beings sooner than he expected though, the creatures bringing with them terror and death.

It would not be so bad if the citizens had any sort of weapons with them, if there were not children and elders among the group, if they were organized and had multiple leaders to guide them and confide into.

But as it was, the people were running away from the group of undead beings, pushing against each other in their attempt to escape from the oncoming horde as fast as possible. In such situation, it was inevitable that some people would lose their balance and fall down, and it was similarly unavoidable that they would not be able to rise again, dying as the rest of the citizens ran over them.

“Haaaah!” a male shout was heard as one of the lowest undead, a simple, unarmed skeleton was defeated with a shovel. There were a few among the group of people that had managed to conserve tools for gardening, for cooking, and so on, and while those were no weapons, they could still defend themselves a little. This group was a minority, but the group of undead beings that were attacking them was not that big either. It should be tolerable so long they didn’t encounter anything nastier.

And so, with Climb at the center, he killed as many as he could before they reached the people behind him, focusing on the stronger branches of undead and leaving the basic ones to the somewhat-armed citizens. One after the other, after the other, they (Hah!) kept (guh!) coming!

The only positive thing he could think of in such a dire situation was that at least the people was running towards E-Rantel, instead of dispersing in random directions. At that pace, some would be able to reach the fortress, alert the guards that were there, and some help would be sent. They were not too far away from the city.

That was the only thing he could hope for, because if they didn’t… if help didn’t arrive soon… he didn’t know what would happen. While he was ready to abandon his life for the sake of the mission Renner-sama had conferred to him, how many citizens would really survive once the small line of defense was defeated? A third of the original amount?

He brought down his sword again, defeating another Ghoul. This was a kind of low-ranked, scrawny undead that was little more than skin and bones, but possessed sharp yellowed claws at the end of their limbs. This kind of creature was used to attack in groups, so it was the tenth or so ghoul that Climb defeated, but he never failed to make a face of disgust as the creatures spread a dirty fluid similar to bile instead of blood when he cut through them.

Resist, we only need to keep resisting. Help will arrive.

Just as he thought this with as much self-conviction as he could muster, the earth shook slightly. It was not an earthquake, the tremor too weak for that, but the vibration on the ground was repeated constantly, almost at determined intervals.

It was…like steps. Approaching steps of something really, really big as whatever was out there came closer. The mist was thick, so they couldn’t see that far away from their defensive line as they waited with a feeling of dread to discover their new, stronger enemy.

Climb’s eyes opened wide with shock once the creature- no, creatures, were close enough to their position, the armed citizens behind him taking steps back as their survival instincts practically screamed for them to leave.
It was not only one, but two Blood Meat Hulks. While the entity that stood five meters tall was only capable of attacking with brute force, the undead possessed regenerative abilities to make up for it. Facing a single one of this large, bulky undead with fresh red muscles and fats was difficult enough that a Mithril-ranked adventurer group would have troubles, and now there were two of them striding towards their defensive line.

An orichalcum team may have been barely enough to win against the two creatures, since these undead could only be defeated when faced with physical attacks on par with their unnatural strength, but there was no one with such ranking among them. Even Climb, who was the strongest and better equipped of them all, only considered himself to be a Gold plate, if he had been an adventurer that is.

"Step back, focus on the lower branches of undead and don’t let them advance towards the others. Keep moving back until I have defeated the Hulks” There was no way he could win against one of them, let alone two, but they needed to stall for time. If these huge, carnivorous undead were to reach the people that was escaping, more than half of the survivors would perish in a horrible, painful death.

He needed to focus on their legs. Even if Climb could not defeat one, let alone two of them, all he needed to do was impede their movement, so the people escaping to safety would have more time. This was all he could strive for, for the sake of the citizens, for the sake of the mission the Princess Renner had bestowed upon him.

With a war-cry, he ran towards his imminent death, heart beating a mile per hour as he prepared his sword to fight with all his might. Once there was about a meter of separation between them, the earth beneath his feet trembled like an earthquake, the heavy steps falling with a thunderous sound. Anyone would have fallen, but he managed to keep his balance as he took aim at the giant ankle and —

"Haaah!"

Climb brandished his sword. Since the Blood Meat Hulk was still walking forward, the enemy's own speed was converted into a weapon that would tear at the edge of his sword. That was the reason he had calculated his strike, waiting for the undead creature to move.

In the instant the meat and the sword collided however, a massive impact ran through the weapon and into Climb's arms. He felt as if his arms had dislocated, so he used all the strength he still had and managed to hold the sword in his hands, but the pain spread throughout his body. Whether it was his muscles, his tendons, every part of him ached from the exertion to which he had subjected his body.

His feet planted firmly on the ground, they left two ditches in the surface as Climb was dragged backwards, before he lost his balance and fell painfully over his back.

"Gwaaargh!"

Climb breathed hard, and watched helplessly as the other Blood Meat Hulk looked down on him, the giant body coming closer to his limp, unmoving form. A chill that had nothing to do with the temperature filled his body, fearfully shaking as he came to terms with what would happen to him. He tried to raise his sword, so at least the massive foot that was about to trample him would be injured, but in that instant, the creature stepped back with a painful cry, huge arms raising to his face as if to protect it.

Climb tried and failed to move, before he finally could sit up shakily and slowly, forcing his back to stay into a slightly crouched position since he just wasn’t capable of straightening. The arm that held his weapon was broken, since it had withstood the blow, but he considered himself lucky that the
sword had not broken as well.

Blinking several times to get rid of his blurry vision, once he was able to distinguish figures again he stared in disbelief at the unmoving Hulks. Both creatures were standing still as they swayed their massive arms around their heads, in a manner similar to someone that was trying to dispel flies.

Why? Why did the monsters halt in their attack?

“That’s enough!” a resounding, familiar male voice was heard through the whole clearing, as if coming from the sky above them “Citizens of the Royal Capital, do not move! Your life is not endangered anymore!”

As the words echoed around him, a rain of thousands of arrows came from the heavens, their tips glowing with magic as they killed effortlessly all of the low-ranked undead beings Climb and the others had been fighting against.

There was no doubt; the presence of the adamantite group was the reason he had managed to survive. The Hulks were reacting to the projectiles as well, swaying their arms with a pained cry as they tried to protect themselves from the magically imbedded arrows, their injuries not healing themselves as they were supposed to.

A warrior’s cry was heard not long after, a male figure dropping from the top of a ruined building and landing on the ground without a sound, completely ignoring the extreme height of the fall as he descended in a matter of seconds.

Once in the ground, a single thin sword was launched at the giant undead, surely such a weapon was not the best to fight against-?

SPLAT!

The massive head exploded in a curtain of blood as the heavy figure fell down with a resounding thud, the ground shaking considerably due to its weight.

H-how in the heavens?! How much strength did the adventurer have to achieve such a thing with a thin sword?!

The weapon flew back to the awaiting hands of the adamantite warrior, as the male leaped high towards the remaining creature. The massive arms are too slow to impede the attack of the adventurer, so its throat is pierced without resistance, in a manner a knife would cut effortlessly through butter.

The moment the blade comes in contact with the undead, a slash travels so fast down the massive body that Climb’s eyes were completely unable to follow the movement, but the result was undeniable. Cut in half vertically, the creature falls down with a rain of blood and inner organs, the smell of something rotten reaching his nostrils.

In less than a minute, both creatures had been defeated.

The remaining citizens, upon seeing the threat annihilated, cheered and cried in joy, raising their arms in celebration.

“Follow the path that has been marked by the arrows and your safety will be guaranteed” was the statement of an expressionless, female voice. The people recognized who was talking to them, so they began to form some lines, walking calmer as they adjusted to the settled path and concentrated on a single point before advancing. Compared to the dispersed formation of before, this was much
more manageable, easier to control in case any other creature decided to strike at them.

“Is everyone alright there? Do you need any healing potions?” the adamantite warrior James shouted at what remained of the defensive line, jogging closer to them. Not a single drop of the monster’s blood had fallen on his person.

“T-that’s—!”

“Ohhh James-sama! he came to save us!”

“My son told me about him—“

Various exclamations and snippets full of admiration came from the people that had fought along Climb, finally relaxing in the presence of the pinnacle of humanity, an adamantite adventurer. Some sat down, succumbing to the tiredness and injuries the battle left on them, while others laughed in relief before letting go of their improvised weapons.

“No one seems to have sustained heavy injuries, I’m glad” James said in a relieved voice towards the brave citizens, before focusing on Climb’s more distant form “Climb! You’re alive! You really made a lot of people worry, you know?” the adamantite reached his position in nothing but seconds, immediately giving him a once-over to assess his injuries. Upon seeing Climb’s lamentable state, James offered a healing potion at him, the blue liquid swaying slightly with the movement.

Should he accept the item? Truth be told, he could not even consider this as a total defeat. For him to be defeated, it would mean that he had fought, and he had not even been close to fighting. Fresh blood flowed from his bitten lip as he tried to refuse the potion with a slow, small shake of the head. With the movement however, an intense pain flared up from every part of his body, something he tried to suppress so James would not notice.

Needless to say, he failed completely at it.

“Climb, don’t be stubborn. Drink” the tone had changed from friendly to commanding, the kind of voice one would expect to hear in the middle of the battlefield as their general delivered instructions. Almost on automatic, he followed the directive and swallowed the liquid in one-go, immediately relaxing once the potion took effect. He was not completely healed, but he could now move without issues. Climb let out a relieved sigh, which turned into a chuckle once James patted his shoulder in a very soft, friendly manner.

“Glad to see you’re ok” the voice was back to its kind tone, blue eyes genuinely relieved as they looked at him. Climb smiled at him sincerely, glad that not only did the back-up arrive on time, but it had been the best they could have asked for.

“J-James-sama, how did you find us so soon?” he asked with a raspy voice, not yet recovered from the arduous fight he had had.

“I was leaving E-Rantel when I saw a few people running towards the gates. The panic was evident in their mannerism, so I stayed to listen to them just to make sure E-Rantel wasn’t going to be invaded”

Upon hearing the answer, Climb couldn’t help but laugh freely, thanking all the deities he could think of for the good luck that not only let him stay alive with few, non-fatal injuries, but that let the vast majority of the citizens survive as well.
“Come on then, let us go back to city” James began to walk away, with nothing but a small head-motion that seemed to say ‘follow me’ directed at Climb as he approached the defensive line, congratulating the citizens for their good work.

In the end, the people accommodate for a few days in E-Rantel, as they recover physically and emotionally of the unplanned fight in the Katze plains. After that, little by little, they go back to the Royal Capital, reuniting families and friends alike as the newcomers learned their home had been attacked by demons.

On everyone’s lips were the names of Climb, James, Shizu, as well as other well-known characters like the Captain-Warrior and Princess Renner. Everyone sang praises to their heroes, their saviors that had helped the citizens of the Royal Capital not only once but twice.

No one knew why the kidnapped citizens had been stripped from their memory, nor did anyone know why they had appeared in the desolated clearance near E-Rantel. At least, that was the case until one night, after everything was settled and a resemblance of peace had been regained, the item the demon Jaldabaoth had been searching for disappeared from its hiding, top-security place, the dead body of Gazef Stronoff and their guards lying limp around it.

It was clear for those that knew of the existence of the item, that a powerful demon had arrived infiltrated among the survivors that came back to the Royal Capital.

Extra:

Harry walked calmly towards his office; taking a slight deviation he knew would make him cross paths with the demonic Floor Guardian.

“Don’t kneel.” is the first thing he says upon seeing the NPC, waiting for the other to stand still before continuing “Thank you Demiurge, using Nazarik’s POP undead to ensure most citizens survived was certainly a nice touch” he had recognized the naturally spawned creatures the Great Tomb of Nazarik created daily, since he had felt the connection that designated them as allies. The undead had not been summoned by Harry, but any member of Nazarik could order them around without issues.

Patting the demon’s shoulder in a grateful manner, he dismissed the sixth- or was it the seventh?-apology the Guardian muttered in response, smiling at the loyal and worried NPC as Harry reassured, also for the seventh time, that he had been forgiven. As if to comfort the distressed devil, Harry declares that Demiurge can keep the recovered item a high-level summoned demon had regained, an action Harry had taken in order to justify Jaldabaoth’s actions in releasing the kidnapped people.

Dismissing his now much calmer servant, he continued to stride towards his room. Harry seemed to unconsciously search for friendly contact, if the amount of soft pats he had given during the last few days was any indication. He wanted someone he could speak normally with...

Decision taken, he chose to hang out with Death for the remaining of the day. The immortal being may act childish and teasing, but he was still the closest friend he had, the only one he could speak freely with not only about this world but about many other, long past experiences.
AUTHOR NOTE:

Aaaand that was it! So, I took the de-memorizing idea from “Fantastic Beasts and where to find them” film, which was quite an epic scene in the movie and ranked among my favorites.

Oh, and before I forget, Demiurge is mostly bothered by Harry caring about deaths/safety of people he has no connection to, since he considers it a threat somewhat. Not only him, I think any other Floor Guardian would have thought as much, thinking the outside-world was kind of stealing their Lord away from his rightful home even when everything inside Nazarik is obviously so much better.

Also, I forgot to mention it last chapter, but from this point forwards things will differ more from the light novels. I don't have anything set in stone except for the ending, the very last chapter, so let’s see how things turn out in the end. Wish me luck!

Hope you liked it and see ya’ around, even if not as soon as I’d like to.

…What follows is just an author’s rant and has no relevance to the story. Feel free to skip the next words; you’re not missing anything important.

Truth be told, I had wanted to change so many things when I started to write. But when I arrived to the Lamp chapter, basically the first plot-important chapter that was completely different from the light novels, I got so many negative reviews~ so, being my first story, I got scared and back-pedaled at an amazing pace, with thoughts like “Nope, not ready to write original things yet, fuck it let’s stick to the original plot. That’s bound to be easier…”

Now, that I’ve written… not more stories per se, but at least more chapters, I feel confident enough that even if it ends up badly, at least I’d have had more fun doing it. So, let’s see how it turns out shall we?

Thanks for those that stayed following this story, I don’t know if I’m imagining things, but I could swear I lost quite a few readers in the last chapter! haha how sad, but it can’t be helped. If there are a few that liked it, then I’ll keep writing and publishing it, instead of writing to myself like I was used to.

Writing is a really relaxing hobby after all.

*Words in this chapter: 7.6K = 16 pages in Word.
Aura and Mare had been excited when they received Cocytus’ [Message] saying he was on his way with Hadrian-sama to visit the 6th floor. After a whole day their turn had finally arrived! Aura was moving restlessly, shifting her weight from side to side, while Mare grasped his divine item strongly, feeling nervous. He hoped they would not make any mistakes.

The portal that leads to the 5th floor is finally activated, Cocytus walking from it slowly accompanied by the sound of a child’s delighted laughter. Not seeing Harry-sama anywhere, they turned their incredulous gazes towards the source of the sound. Indeed, the small magic caster was hugging the warrior’s long tail like a koala, laughing as it moved from side to side, upwards and downwards.

“It’s like a mechanical bull!” was the joyous shout of the kid, between exclamations full of excitement and laughs. What was a ‘mechanical bull’? Aura and Mare shared a look, not really understanding the meaning of that phrase. After a moment, Cocytus moves his tail until it’s in front of him before lowering it slowly, almost reluctantly, on the floor. Understanding the game was over, their currently small Master lets go of the appendage, before turning his emerald gaze towards them.

“Hi Aura! Hi Mare! What are we going to play at?” He seemed excited; smiling brightly at them as he moves restlessly, just like Aura had been a moment ago.

“Hi Harry-sama!” Aura takes the lead, seeing as her brother was too surprised to react accordingly. “Whatever you wish is ok! Do you have any games in mind?” she asked, crouching slightly while placing her hands on her knees as she looked at him.

Their small Master seemed unable to stay still, moving excitedly as he turned his gaze in all directions, probably trying to decide on something, before he seemed to grow impatient by his own indecision.

“Is there a fun way to see your floor?” he asked tilting his head slightly, which made him look absolutely adorable.

“A fun way? Mmm well, we can ride one of my pets to see it faster, would that be ok?” she answered, thinking about Fenrir, a giant black wolf with bright fur and crimson eyes, or Quadracile, the six legged chameleon that was perfect for infiltration–

“Ohh! Can they fly? It’s been so long since I flew around! Do you have any hippogriffs? I miss Buckbeak sometimes…” she was kind of lost at the quick pace her young Master was using to speak, rambling in his excitement. What was a ‘buckbeak’? It sounded like a name, so she guessed a hippogriff? But she didn’t have any of those! What should she do?! Something that could fly, something that could fly…

Her expression became worried for a moment, before deeming that a dragon may be able to suffice. Ah, it wasn’t a hippogriff like her Master wished though, maybe she should go outside to hunt one? But she had never seen any in the Great Forest of Tob, and going too far away could pose problems later–
Aura did a lot of weird mannerisms as she overthought the innocent request of small Harry, his excitement all but fading at seeing her pass a hand through her golden locks indecisively. Turning towards Mare, he makes a motion for the elf to bend down before whispering “What’s wrong with Aura? Did I say something wrong?”

“O-of course not, Hadrian- um, I mean, er, Harry-sama” Mare brought his staff closer to him, mismatched eyes looking nervously at the ground as he tripped with his words. Harry thought it was kinda weird for a boy to be wearing girl’s clothes, but if he liked them then it was ok. He certainly would have liked to bring Mare to the Dursleys, if only to see how they ramped about the abnormality of it all. It would have been entertaining.

“Just Harry is ok” he replied almost automatically, why did they insist on adding the other word? He was Harry… just Harry. He decided to insist on that later though, since the female elf was still mumbling under her breath in apparent anxiety.

“Hey Aura… is everything ok? It’s alright if you don’t have any”

“Ah! I apologize profusely Harry-sama, I’ll go out hunt one next chance! Ah, um, in the meantime, would…a dragon… suffice…?” the last phrase was said hesitantly, with an uneasy smile as she brought a hand to the back of her head apologetically.

“A dragon! Yes, yes, yes, that’s much better than a hippogriff!” he all but shouted, jumping in excitement without moving from the same place, which seemed to make Aura relax again “Where is it? Is it invisible? Is it hidden? Where do you keep it? What does it eat? Do you only have one?” he shot a torrent of questions at the overwhelmed elf, who didn’t seem to know which one to answer first. In the end it didn’t matter though, since Harry took her hand and started to guide her towards the dragon, never mind that he didn’t know where it was resting at “Is it over here? I really want to ride over a dragon!” he speaks without looking back, both elves following behind him.

“Oh, no no, is over there actually, but I can make it change places if you want— ”

“Over there then!” Harry accidentally ignored her question, too excited to think on anything other than meeting with the giant, flying reptile.

After a short while, they get to the middle of some sort of stadium, where Aura whistles in a specific rhythm. He doesn’t have to wait for long before the sound of wings reaches his ears, the creature appearing not long after. It was really big, with silvery blue scales and long, pointed horns. It landed on its rear legs, standing momentarily on two paws as it let out a mighty roar, before going all four and lowering its gigantic head at them.

“How cool!” he exclaimed, standing on his toes as he tried and failed to see the top of the dragon’s head. Then he turned to look at Aura expectantly, which made her grin wide before she guided him and Mare towards the dragon’s back.

Mare and Aura stop just at the sides, looking at him expectantly as if waiting for something. Harry looks at the high, unreachable back of the reptile before turning around and frowning slightly at the siblings. He didn’t really understand why they weren’t moving. Were they teasing him?

His small frown seemed to scare them a lot though, Mare letting out a shaky “Eh-ehhhh?” as he clutched his staff as if it were a plushy, while Aura exclaimed worriedly to the heavens “I knew it! Harry-sama really wanted a hippogriff!”

Confused at their reactions, his frown quickly disappears as he looks between the back of the dragon and the elves a couple of times before admitting begrudgingly “I… I’m too small. I can’t reach it”
pouting at having to admit it out loud

“Can you please help me…?” he wasn’t certain anymore, maybe they didn’t help him because they didn’t want to ride the dragon at all?

He shifted uncomfortably at the thought. He had been so excited… he had forgotten to ask what they wanted to do. He had been selfish.

With the people that had been so nice to him, he hadn’t thought on what their own wishes could be. Yesterday had been like that as well… they always did the things Harry wanted to do.

Feeling overwhelmed by the thought, he began to hiccup, looking sadly at the ground with tears running down his cheeks as he cried for his mistake.

“AHHHH HARRY-SAMA!!! I APOLOGIZE PROFUSELY, PLEASE TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT AND I’LL IMMEDIATELY GO GET IT!” was the sudden cry of Aura, looking at him like her whole world was falling apart in front of her, and she was unable to do anything to prevent it.

“Y-YES, PLEASE D-DO HARRY-SAMA!” Mare seemed to be like a mix of self-hate and panic, as if something he had done had caused the death of someone close to him.

Both elves were crouched in front of him in an instant, seemingly wanting to cry as well because their eyes were unusually shiny. Seeing just how worried and sad they were only served to make Harry cry harder, even if not a single sound comes out of his trembling lips.

“I-I’m sorry. I’m really sorry” he said with a soft hiccup, looking up at them with watery eyes “I didn’t ask you w-what you wanted to do, it’s ok if you don’t want to ride a dragon with me… w-we can do something else—”

“No no no tha- that’s not—!” was the panicked cry of Mare, before he was interrupted by his sister’s louder cry.

“Of course we want to go with you Harry-sama! Being with you makes us incredibly happy!” this didn’t seem to convince him at all, so Aura continued “We are glad to have an opportunity to spend all day with our dear young Master, we are happy to be able to give you anything and everything you ask from us!”

That… that sounded a lot like something a house elf would say. Were they like that? Wanting to do everything in their power to make their masters happy?

“I’m sorry, I made you cry. Please don’t be sad…” he whispered, raising his small hand towards the single tear that had escaped Mare’s watery eyes, as if trying to clean it.

“No no no tha- that’s not—!” was the panicked cry of Mare, before he was interrupted by his sister’s louder cry.

“Of course we want to go with you Harry-sama! Being with you makes us incredibly happy!” this didn’t seem to convince him at all, so Aura continued “We are glad to have an opportunity to spend all day with our dear young Master, we are happy to be able to give you anything and everything you ask from us!”

That… that sounded a lot like something a house elf would say. Were they like that? Wanting to do everything in their power to make their masters happy?

“I’m sorry, I made you cry. Please don’t be sad…” he whispered, raising his small hand towards the single tear that had escaped Mare’s watery eyes, as if trying to clean it.

“W-we are the o-ones that should be a-apologizing! Making our young Master c-cry is unforgivable!” the gentle action seemed to make Mare feel worse, since more tears were released to travel his round, tan cheeks. Aura wasn’t fairing much better either.

“Is that why you are sad too? Because I’m sad?” seeing their synchronized nods, he felt even guiltier, since he had been the cause of their negative feelings. Couldn’t he do anything right?

Harry couldn’t keep apologizing though; if they really acted similarly to them… an image of Dobby appeared briefly in his mind, before he thanked whatever deity was out there that they were not as intense as the house elf had used to be.
Cleaning his own tears with the sleeve of his arm, Harry breathed deeply, if a little bit shakily, a couple of times before calming down. Looking at the still crouched and worried figures in front of him, he showed them a small smile before opening his arms hesitantly towards them.

“…Can I have a hug?” Both elves act like a single being, moving in complete synchronization towards him. This way, he receives a hug so warm it reminded him of Mrs. Weasley’s, which made him sigh happily in the middle of the Harry-sandwich, closing his eyes as he returned the hug. He waits until the elves had calmed down too before letting go, taking each twin by one hand as he gently brought them closer to the giant reptile.

“What is its name? Is a he or a she?” he asks to Aura, trying to keep her mind away from what just had happened. She seemed to know this, so she smiled back at him before answering “It’s a he, his name is Leragon”

“Nice to meet you, Leragon” he says patting the side of the reptile, in a manner so soft the dragon probably didn’t even feel it. Considering this, Harry was surprised when it let out a soft rumbling, the scales vibrating slightly under his palm. He chuckled at the dangerous, fire-spitting dragon that was acting like an oversized cat, purring as he patted it gently.

“Can we go then?” he asked in a better mood to Aura, who nodded before turning towards her brother with a meaningful look.

Mare uses his staff to make the three of them [Fly], their feet leaving the ground slowly as they floated towards the dragon’s back so they were seated on its wide neck, with Harry at the lead, Aura behind him and Mare at the end. It was odd, since Harry was sure the elves could have simply jumped to Leragon’s back. They were probably trying to be amiable, doing things the same way Harry did.

“Up Leragon! Fly around the whole 6th Floor— Oh, but calm you hear me? Like an exploration!” The dragon roars softly as if in understanding of Aura’s order, before raising its massive wings, taking off from the ground in a single, probably graceful movement as it flew towards the clear sky.

“This is awesome!” Harry’s field of vision is filled with nothing but the Dragon’s head and the clear, beautifully warm sky. Even if it was only an illusion of it, it was very nice. He forgets completely about the sadness and guilt he had felt not too long ago, even forgetting the company that was seated behind him as the Dragon stopped flying vertically to gain height, starting to fly horizontally in a much calmer manner.

Looking at the ground underneath, he is reminded of the Forbidden Forest with so many creatures roaming around the land, and a giant lake in the middle of a clearance that was at the end of the forest. There’s a giant tree that stands tallest than any other, and the coliseum they had just left behind —

“That’s where we live, Harry-sama! In the big tree over there” Aura said from behind him, pointing at the tallest, giant tree that could easily be as tall as a building with 3 floors. “Would you like to see it after we end the tour?”

“Yeah I’d like to! And, um, do you have food? I’d like to eat a little too, if possible” It was really weird since he didn’t feel hunger, but he still craved to eat if only because that was his idea of a normal day.

“Ah- um, Mare! Call Sous-chef so he comes to our home in 15 minutes!” she practically orders to her brother, who lets out a single, stuttering “Y-yes onee-san!”
Harry is not paying attention to their interaction though. The dragon was flying just above the lake now, and Harry had a sudden moment of inspiration. Passing his right leg to the other side of the massive neck, he stayed seated with both feet hanging from the same side, waiting for the reptile to be just over the middle of the lake. The moment they reach that place, he slides off in a single movement, laughing in absolute joy as he descended quickly towards the middle of the lake.

“HARRY-SAMA! MARE QUICK! MAKE HIM FLY!”

“Y-YES! [FLY]!”

He lets out a disappointed sound when his body doesn’t reach the surface of the lake, his fall growing slower until it halted completely when he was just a few meters above it. He wills for the magic surrounding him to dissipate, unconsciously activating a skill that allowed him to reject a spell coming from a third party once per day, so the effect stops and he ends up falling face-first into the water.

He swims around a little before going back to the surface, waving cheerfully at the twins that had jumped from the dragon’s back and were falling towards the lake as well. Ignorant of the couple of heart-attacks they had just suffered, Aura seems to get his mood before her brother, so she lets out an excited howl before diving gracefully into the lake to swim with him. Mare, upon seeing her sister’s reaction seemed to relax, but continued to fly down slowly with magic while grasping the skirt’s end so it would not go upwards.

Aura comes back to the surface with a genuinely happy laugh, motioning for Mare to come swim as well once her brother’s feet reached the ground.

“Eh? B-but…”

“Come on Mare! Don’t you want to play too?” Aura asked from her position in the warm lake, arms over the edge of it as she stared up at Mare

“U-um is not like I don’t want to. I j-just can’t really… um, I don’t have any…”

“Oh, is it because you don’t have a swimsuit?” Harry asked. Mare nodded nervously at him, looking at the ground regretfully. It served to bring attention on just how different the twins were, since Aura had chosen to dive in with the same clothes she had been using.

Harry could try to transfigurate the elf’s clothes into one, but was hesitant. Using magic while trapped in this small body was not the best option… it was harder to control, since his magical core was more unstable. Looking at Mare’s sad gaze however, Harry decided to give it a try.

“Here, I’ll make one for you” Harry reasoned out loud before calling to him the elder wand, pointing at the male elf’s clothes as he did his best to transfigure them into something a diver would use, except with short sleeves and shorts that rested just above the knees.

Mare blinked at his new outfit once before smiling at him, so Harry let out a relieved sound. Not only the transfiguration came out alright, but the male elf had liked it too. Unbeknown to him, Mare would have used whatever design he had chosen, if only because Harry had been the one to create it.

The male elf let his staff on the edge of the lake before giving a small jump, falling like a ball in the otherwise calm water. Now that both siblings were with him in the lake, Harry let out a mischievous smile as he decided to start a water-battle, throwing water at them and generally trashin around the lake as he swam back and forth.

He doesn’t keep track on how long they stayed swimming around, but after a while the game ended
when Harry apparated out of the lake, throwing at them the water-version of a fiendfyre. The spell ends up being weaker than intended though, which made him internally groan in frustration at his unstable magic, but both elves still laughed out loud before admitting defeat. The twins were now outside the lake as the wave his spell caused had thrown them out of it.

Still chuckling, Aura asks him if he wants to go eat now, so Harry nods wholeheartedly at the suggestion.

“How are we going to dry up?”

“Don’t worry Harry-sama, it will be really fun!” Aura said mysteriously before bringing her fingers to her mouth and whistling. Not too long after that, a couple of two-meters high, white fluffy beings hopping towards them.

“Angora Rabbits…?”

“They are very cute, aren’t they?” Aura stated with a giggle before she instructed the giant rabbits to lie down on the grass. Before Harry could ask her why she had called rabbits of all things Aura jumped over the rabbit’s back and started to roll from side to side with a delighted laugh, effectively drying up since the fluffy fur acted like a towel.

That… that looked like a lot of fun actually!

With an excited grin, Harry followed Aura’s example with an unoccupied rabbit, rolling around with a joyful cry. He laughed until he ran out of breath, his hair standing up at all sides due to the action. The fur of the rabbit was too fluffy and soft, it would be very easy to fall asleep if stayed still for long enough.

He wanted to eat however, so he rubbed the belly of the giant rabbit in thanks (which made it move its long rear legs as if wanting to scratch something) before sliding down from it. Aura was combing her hair, since it had been standing on all directions much like Harry’s own, and Mare was picking up his staff from near the edge of the lake.

Aura comes towards him with the brush, to help him get his messy locks down. While Aura stood behind him to help him comb his hair, Harry summoned his wand to undo the transfiguration of Mare’s swimsuit, something that was much easier to do since he only needed to take the sealing magic from the enchanted cloth.

By the time all is done Harry is more than impatient to go grab something to eat, so he takes both siblings by the hand and starts walking in the middle of the trio towards the giant tree, which stood out near the end of the forest. They walked through a path of smooth stones, flanked by plenty of different green plants that seemed to be very well cared for.

Harry lets out an impressed sound upon getting nearer to the giant tree. Now that he was closer, he could see it was really wide, the size of a house really. A man that had a mushroom for a head was waiting for them just outside the tree, with a metallic cart full of food at his side.

“Hi Sous chef! Give me a sec, I’ll open it from the inside” Aura said with a quick salute to the mushroom-like male before jumping to the nearest branch of the giant tree. She stood upon the branch for a second, before continuing to go upwards as if she were jumping over stones in a river. Her movements were fluid and natural as she went higher and higher with an ease born to experience.

After a short while, having gone up to 20 meters, she suddenly stopped jumping and walked closer
to the body of the tree, disappearing through it as if absorbed by the wood.

“D-did you wait f-for long?” Mare asked to Sous chef, seemingly uncomfortable in the silence. The male responded with a dismissive shrug, along with a quiet “Not much”.

It was difficult to tell where the mushroom-like head was looking at, but Harry could feel the weight of a gaze on his person, so he guessed the male was watching him.

Knowing the answer regarding the waiting was a lie, and that it was his fault for playing around in the lake, Harry asked the male chef to crouch down to his level before patting his shoulder apologetically. He had meant to pat the round head, but in the end decided not to since he didn’t know where the eyes where… if the chef had any that is. *How confusing!*

Sous chef insists that he didn’t wait for long, but before Harry can’t really call him on it the sound of approaching steps reached them, before Aura arrived hastily with a loud ‘Pang’ sound.

“Sorry for the wait!” part of the tree opened, the hole being door-shaped with Aura in the middle of it. Going in, the interior was huge, with a large pillar in the center and a spiral staircase going up around it.

It was a cozy home with wooden furniture. The walls were not painted or papered, but were also made of natural wood, the same that also adorned the ceiling and the floor. It transmitted a feeling of peace and tranquility, and although there was not a single view from the outside, the rooms were equipped with camouflaged light windows that let in the warm sunlight to illuminate the interior.

Beyond the stairs was the living room, the kitchen, the passages in several rooms, the spiral stairs that continued upwards, and the door that led to the outside, which had been used to enter this place.

"Welcome to our home!” Aura said extending her arms towards the ceiling in a dramatic entry, before bringing her hands behind her back as the sole of her feet swayed up and down “Let me give you a brief tour of our home. Our house is ... well, if we consider it as the first floor, then it has three floors. Our rooms are on the second floor and the third floor has some guest rooms and the balcony; this apartment has the kitchen, the bathrooms, the toilets, and so on, so we live on the first and second floors.” she finished the explanation with a playful grin, before turning her gaze towards the mushroom-like male “Do you need to use the kitchen Sous chef?”

“Yes, I only brought the ingredients with me. May I take your orders?”

The adult male is surprisingly fast in preparing their food, bringing their perfectly-cooked orders with elegance. The sound of dishes clinking was all that could be heard once they began to eat, before Harry got bored of the silence and asked for their hobbies.

“Hobbies?”

“Something you do for fun, something you like to do”

“Hmm~ well, I tend to spend more time outside than inside this tree. I mean, instead of sleeping in bed, I prefer to invoke one of my pets and sleep with them! it feels great when their coats tickle, so normally the only person in the tree is Mare” Aura said happily, turning to look at her brother at the end of the phrase.

“I like t-to read in my room, Titus-san normally recommends me v-very good books” it was the first time Mare smiled without looking nervous or uneasy, so it seemed to be very important to him.

“You should get out more, walk under the sun or something” Aura chastised her brother.
“I d-don’t really like to move that much, so I, um, like to s-stay in my room…”

“Ugh, just look at him. When he has nothing to do, he just sleeps and sleeps and sleeps, oh, and lowers the temperature in his room to the minimum, and then hides under his covers and doesn’t move at all. Every time is my turn to stand guard, the only thing he does is sleep in his room all day! His idea of getting up early is at noon, and he does the same thing when we patrol— “

“It’s ok if it makes him happy” Harry interrupted with a shrug, which seemed to stop Aura’s fondly exasperated rant “What kind of books do you like to read?”

Mare’s mismatched eyes seem to sparkle with excitement as the male elf starts to speak, now without stuttering for the first time since Harry ‘met’ him. Some of the literary titles he actually knew of, while others were new to him.

“You’re so nerdy! It’s difficult to believe he holds second place among the Floor Guardians, eh?” Aura exclaimed while patting strongly Mare’s shoulder, laughing at the way her brother shivered.

Second place? Hmmm… Shalltear had told him something like that… the vampire was on first place in terms of skills in general, and Mare was second with the devastating area-attacks. Then there was Cocytus, then Albedo, and whoever Sebas was—

“I j-just like to read…”

The conversation goes on like that until everyone had eaten breakfast. They continued the exploration of the floor by ridding a big, black wolf, which made Harry infinitely happy since he liked to move at high speed.

It is around midday when Aura and Mare accompany him through the portal that leads to the 7th floor. As soon as Harry arrives, his eyes open wide at the clashing difference between floors; there was no sign of anything green in the immediate area.

It was a world whose air seemed to glow with red light. Crimson lava flowed like a river, with numerous bubbles in the currents bursting as they reached the surface. Harry wasn’t aware of it, but there should have been a fire-elemental damage field effect in place here, but since that effect had been temporarily suspended the area was merely hot instead. However, despite the word ‘merely’, this was not a place where the living could easily survive. The scorching air would easily strip throats and skin of their moisture in seconds. Even freshly beaded sweat would instantly vaporize into steam, causing a steady accumulation of fatigue.

Harry felt incredibly hot for an instant, before the thin layer of magic that had protected him from the cold in the 5th floor activated in this one as well. Demiurge is standing still as he waited for their arrival, hands clasped behind his back and tail swaying slightly from side to side.

“Welcome to the 7th Floor, Harry-sama” the demon greets with an elegant bow. The action lets Harry see better the smoke clouds that hung low and heavy in the air, the outlines of several demons shadowing them as they flew around.

“Hi De-miur-ge” Harry greets slowly and carefully, since his name was the most difficult to pronounce (although Cocytus held 2nd place on this). Walking closer to the man in suit, he extends a small hand in greeting, which seems to surprise the other slightly before he complied, bending down to shake Harry’s hand.

Harry looks around the floor in curiosity, attention immediately taken by the meandering flow of a river of lava. There was something moving just beneath the surface, a gigantic, writhing creature that
moved as if swimming.

Noticing his attentive gaze, Demiurge smiled and extended an arm to present Harry to the creature, apparently an Area Guardian. It was a giant, abyssal slime called Guren.

Said slime slides out of the river of lava, ‘standing’ at least 7 meters tall over them as it waved an arm-like thing at Harry. It didn’t have any eyes or defined features, it was simply a slimy, oval red ball that seemed to be perpetually melting.

“As a creature optimized for combat, its fighting ability is easily on par with the Floor Guardians” Demiurge stated on Guren’s behalf, which made the upper part of the slime bend as if nodding. Harry got the impression that the area guardian felt prideful, even if he couldn’t really be sure due to the lack of expressions on the melting-like surface.

“Nice to meet you Guren” walking closer to the slime, Harry patted him a couple of times, which made the surface shiver like jelly. Even once he had stopped petting it the melting surface was still trembling, which made him think of a purring cat. Giggling, he looked up at the top of the slime’s… head? (Well, he supposed that’s where it would be at least) when an idea reached him.

“It would be fun to slide down from that height!

“De-miur-ge!” Harry exclaimed with excitement at the tan demon that had stayed at his side, emerald eyes shining with energy as he looked up at him “Would the lava harm me?”

“The river?” Demiurge brought a hand to his chin pensively, meditating his answer. Truly, his Master’s skills and items protected him to an extent against fire-based attacks, but there was a high chance that the lava would hurt him however slightly.

Refusing adamantly to take an unnecessary risk, he looked down seriously at him while answering with a firm “It is possible. I apologize, but please don’t get too close to it”

“…Oh” he can feel his inexistent heart break at the disappointed expression that adorns the child’s face, which shattered completely his resolve. It actually made him rethink if there was really no way to safely do what he wanted.

Harry-sama quickly recovered however, and shot another hopeful question “Then what about surfing? It’s ok so long I don’t touch the lava right?”

What was the meaning of ‘surfing’? Demiurge made a complicated expression, trying to deduce it for a short while before he reluctantly admitted his ignorance. Harry-sama didn’t seem to mind the question at all, jumping on the same place in excitement as he happily elaborated further.

“You stand on a special board and ride it over a wave in the ocean! Right now though, I’d like to use one to slide down Guren, if that is ok with you?” his currently small Lord turned to ask gently to the area guardian, which made the slime nod enthusiastically at him.

…What was he supposed to do? Harry-sama seemed very excited by the idea, but he couldn’t let him endanger himself like that. Then again, if the kid did that sad expression one more time he would end up agreeing mindlessly, which wasn’t good either.

He needed to compromise now that he still had a clear mind.

“…It should be fine, if I may be allowed to accompany you” Demiurge reached his conclusion after thinking for a short while. He was a demon and thus, had an almost complete immunity against fire. It would be fine so long he didn’t let Harry-sama get in contact with the lava.
“Of course!” the enthusiastic shout of their small Master is everything Guren needs for confirmation, bending down so the superior part of his body is over the dry surface. The excited child looks around impatiently as if searching for something, before taking a coin out of his pocket. Summoning the wand Demiurge was already used to seeing, Harry pointed it at the coin, its figure expanding and enlarging until it was a long and narrow board.

Picking up the improvised board, the child ran towards him with a joyful cry of “Here! Try this surfboard out! I think this can stand to the lava”

Looking curiously at the now named ‘surfboard’, he obediently took it before approaching the river of lava, lowering the object slowly into it. He waits for a few seconds before taking it out again, surprised to see it was actually undamaged.

“Neat! Let’s go, let’s go!” the kid takes a hold of his free hand (although ‘fingers’ would be more accurate, since Harry’s hand is too small) to bring him closer to the slime, which made Demiurge chuckle at his impatience.

Guren is still too big for someone Harry’s size however, so the demon used his metallic tail to hold the surfboard, before requesting permission to pick up the child. Harry nods his agreement, raising his arms so it’s easier to carry him.

As such, with one arm under his knees while the other supported his back, Demiurge hopped gracefully on the slime’s head. The demon remains standing even as Guren straightened to his full height, stretching out elastically to be even taller as the slime easily tripled its usual height.

A grand total of approximately 20 meters down to certain doom awaited them. It was even more dangerous-looking since the smoke covered their field of vision, so the river of lava had disappeared from sight.

Maybe it was better to avoid risking his young Master after all? No, he couldn’t really retract now—

“How cool!! You’re awesome Guren!” Harry exclaims sincerely, which made the surface under Demiurge’s feet tremble as the area guardian practically purred in happiness “Do you know how to surf, De-miur-ge?”

Was there any reason his young Master said his name slowly like that? If it had the purpose of sounding cute, he admitted the effectiveness behind the reasoning—

“De-miur-ge?” Harry repeated, tilting his head slightly to one side.

Yes, it had to be done with that purpose. Most definitely.

“I do not know, but I assume is simply a matter of maintaining balance, is it not?” since a small hand was grasping his shoulder for balance, Demiurge removed the gloved hand that was on the slender back in order to take the tip of the surfboard, placing it on Guren’s head.

“Um, yes? …It should be ok, since you have a tail it will be easier for you” the child said insecurely, seemingly to convince himself more than anything. It made him internally scoff, how difficult could it be?

Moving until his polished shoes are over the board, he returns his free hand towards the child’s back protectively before crouching slightly, counting out loud slowly to build up excitement.

“One… two… three!” inclining downwards the tip of the surfboard, he let gravity do its work as they quickly gained speed, descending fast in a zig-zag form over the body of the slime. A joyful
laugh fills his ears, which made him show a real smile he rarely ever displayed, even laughing along with him for a very short moment.

He was glad no one but Guren was present however, if simply because he didn’t want to admit (unless ordered to) that he was moving his tail from side to side like crazy as he tried to keep steady over the thin board. Knowing how something worked and actually doing it were different things, but he was proud of the fact that his young Master probably hadn’t noticed since his arms weren’t moving unnaturally.

It was a very good result for his first time ‘surfing’.

They reach the river of lava soon enough, so Demiurge straightens up upon arriving to it, quickly trying to reach the edge of the canal. In the end he needs to jump slightly however, since he didn’t know how to stop their movement without making it abrupt. The surfboard is abandoned in the river as the soles of his shoes touch firm ground with a couple of steps, tail moving one last time to help him keep his balance.

“That was real fun! Again, please, please, please!” the kid in his arms exclaimed while laughing, hair oddly combed back due to the wind. Smiling wide at the childish enthusiasm, he gently nodded before using his tail to take the surfboard out of the river, Guren bending down once again so they could repeat the process.

In the end, they only stop repeating said activity once Demiurge encounters his Evil Lords waiting for them at Guren’s side, near the edge of the river. It seemed they had gotten impatient of waiting for him to arrive with their currently small Lord.

Saying goodbye to the saddened area guardian, Demiurge smiled in amusement at the resentful stare Guren sent towards the Evil Lords. He would have to talk with the slime, the last thing he needed was for Guren to drag the impatient, level 80 Evil Lords into the quicksand-like lava in revenge.

Guren was an effective Area Guardian since he was a virtually-invisible opponent when inside the river of lava. The slime did not need to breathe, could hide its body in the magma, and defeating it with normal methods was nearly impossible.

Even if it was a playful revenge, it would most likely result in at least slight damage for the Evil Lords.

Looking at the currently-condemned-to-doom beings, he saw them greet their small Lord by kneeling, to which the child reacted with a frenetic dismissive motion of his tiny hands before asking them to stand up again.

There were only three Evil Lords at the moment, Envy, Greed and Wrath.

Envy was a feminine-looking monster with a crow head, dressed in a tight-fitting outfit that had raven feathers on the arms and legs. Greed was a male demon that wore a full plate armor open at the chest, with a pair of black bat-wings on his back and two horns protruding from its temples. And lastly, Wrath, with the appearance of a fearsome demon with fangs protruding from his mouth and his body covered in scales. He has stout arms and sharp claws, as well as flaming wings and a snake-like tail.

He lets the area guardians talk with their young Master for a while, who seemed to be currently asking about Wrath’s wings being covered in flames. Demiurge limits himself to supervise their interaction, only coming closer once the child shyly asked if he could eat something.
“Of course Harry-sama, if you would be so kind as to follow me” walking with short steps instead of his usual long strides, he made sure the small child didn’t have troubles keeping up with his pace, the Evil Lords walking behind them.

Harry looked around in curiosity as they walked, but the smoke didn’t let him discern much other than the river of lava and the dry, infertile path they were using to walk on. Soon enough though, he could see a cluster of randomly-strewn white columns ahead. It looked like the remains of a Grecian-style temple, but the columns were scattered like they had violently collided with each other, and the statues of various gods had been smashed. The ceiling had been broken down, and the pieces were lodged in the ground.

It resembled the ruins left after the demons attacked the temples, destroying the sacred refuge of the believers. Desolation permeated the entire scene, but Harry thought it was fitting for a ‘demonic’ atmosphere. It didn’t look out of place at all.

“Please come this way.” Demiurge’s rich voice interrupted his thoughts. The demon seemed to have expected his request for food, probably a tip from the elf twins, so the man in suit had a buffet prepared over a large table that had no chairs around it.

Maybe the Guardian hadn’t been sure of how many people were going to dine? but just as he thought that some lizard-like demons entered with the missing chairs.

Harry is the first to take a seat as the ‘guest of honor’, seemingly following some sort of formal etiquette he didn’t know anything about. He didn’t worry much however, since the demons seemed to know he didn’t like excessive formality now, the dinner was fairly normal.

Besides, he was distracted by the food, since it looked absolutely mouth-watering.

Similar to the breakfast he had with the twins, they eat in peaceful silence until Harry broke it with a curious question.

“De-miur-ge, can you do something special with your voice? It has a magical feeling to it” Demiurge halts in his elegant eating, smiling at Harry from his position at his right.

“Yes, it is a skill called [Domination Mantra]. It allows me to order around beings with a level lower than 40 without difficulty” it sounded like an incomplete explanation, but considering the tan man was a demon, Harry decided he was ok with not knowing the details.

“It has a nice ring to it” Harry admitted, taking another bite of his food before completely changing the topic “Shalltear told me everyone in Nazarik had been ‘created’. Where you born by the same person that made this floor?”

Upon hearing his question Demiurge was all smiles, speaking with pride and happiness as he answered with "Indeed. This land, this dominion was designed and created for me by Ulbert-sama, so it contains everything I need to perform my function. Although it may appear as ruins for the naked eye, many things are hidden within it. These tumbled ruins are the true expression of Ulbert-sama’s love.”

Demiurge spread his arms during his explanation, and if they had not been eating the demon would have probably insisted on showing around his home. Huh, that explained why all Floor Guardians had been happy with Harry's request of getting to know their floors.

They have been made with love by their creators.

Harry smiles at the excited demon, feeling somewhat smug at having been able to crack the
composed attitude of the man in suit. He keeps asking around the parts of the 7th Floor he hadn’t seen, something Demiurge is more than happy to explain, adjusting his glasses with a toothy smile that showed the tip of his fangs.

One topic leads to another, and by the time everyone has finished up eating the Evil Lords were talking about the general skills and races of those that inhabited this land.

Harry didn’t want to be rude, but he was starting to feel sleepy.

He was still trying to listen, but he was blinking more often, his eyes closing on their own accord before he jolted awake and apologized.

Upon seeing this scene, Envy makes a soft, cooing sound at their small Master, while Wrath and Greed just exchange a knowing smile. Demiurge is the one to stand up however, picking up the sleepy child so his messy hair is resting on his shoulder, mildly wondering what place would be good enough for Harry-sama to sleep in.

Deciding to take him to one of the rooms that were hidden in the seemingly ruined temple, he covers the already-sleeping child with a thin sheet before leaving the room as silently as he could.

The second day was already over.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

The twins were so fun to write hahah constantly double guessing if they were doing things right or not. Actually, scratch that, this whole chapter was very fun to write! I had been itching to arrive to Demiurge’s part, so I’m glad to finally post it. It’s curious how the Floor Guardian that was the most difficult to write became the easiest to.

This omake ended up larger than the others, with 7.6K words (or 16 pages in Word) but I regret nothing haha! Specially Demiurge cracking down at a child’s begging face, that was an absolute must. Also, obviously 20 meters are not dangerous at all for them to slide over, similar to the time Harry jumps from the dragon's back hahaha they are just overprotective~

On another matter, before I forget to clarify, I received a handful of comments regarding the italics, so I’ll slowly start to correct it, maybe 2 or 3 chapters at the time. It’s going to be somewhat confusing for the new readers but oh well– this is the format I’ll manage from now on.

Thanks for reading, hope you liked it and see ya’ around! And for those impatient, here is a little teaser of the last chapter of the ‘Small’ Omake series.

Now that he thought of it, the vampire hadn’t mentioned it.

“Miss Albedo?” he asked, raising his head so he could meet her golden eyes as they kept walking hand in hand “What is your race?”
The hand grasped by Demiurge seems to tighten a little at his question, but the pretty lady just smiled sweetly at him before answering “I’m a Succubus”

“What is that?”

Her smile seemed to widen at his question.
First Meetings

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 19 First Meetings

“…Care is strong word. Although I understand why you would think that” Harry said with genuine surprise when Albedo asked him about his decision regarding Demiurge’s prisoners. Her beautiful golden eyes had looked at him with worry and puzzlement before she bowed low, stating that she wished to know more of his real thoughts, in order to avoid any future mistakes.

The fact that this conversation was happening just after the weekly meeting of the Floor Guardians made him wonder what exactly Demiurge had said. This was not the time to dwell on it, however.

“Although my order of avoiding needless deaths of those ‘innocent’ remains, it was not my only motive. You are right in requesting a clearer explanation of my reasoning Albedo” Her tense shoulders immediately relax at the comment, even the wings seem to loosen more around her hips as she straightened, nodding with a calm smile.

“Thank you for your infinite patience. We will work harder to understand your orders without need of wasting your precious time with an explanation!”

“Hm? No, I would actually rather you come to me whenever you are having doubts or just want to be sure of something” The mess caused by Demiurge’s plan had happened because he had trusted the Floor Guardian to do a good work without much of his intervention, so he only gave him a general target and left him free to plot.

The result was, quite obviously, a situation he wanted to avoid in the future.

He had thus, lifted the aforementioned freedom he had previously allowed. Not like it was something commonly done in Nazarik, but Demiurge and Albedo, along with the ones that had missions on the exterior, had been given more liberty in the way they dealt with their assignments. Now though, he requested any plans to pass under his scrutiny first before implementing them, which increased his workload a lot. There was no way around it however, so he accepted the increment of sleepless nights without complaint.

Hell, he was even taking more time to complete the ‘missions’ of the Adventurer’s Guild just so he could focus in reviewing Nazarik’s documents. Albedo’s administrative work was something to praise, having done it by herself up until now.

Marking the page of the document he had been reading as ‘approved’, he organized the bunch of papers before leaving them on the ‘completed’ pile. Laying back in his seat, emerald eyes were completely focused on the Guardian overseer as he finally began his explanation.

“Well then, let me explain my reasoning. Tell me Albedo, does the term ‘Player’ seem familiar to you?”

“Beings that stand on par with the Supreme Ones… Nazarik was attacked once by them, the invaders were able to reach the 8th floor before perishing” her pupils grow dangerously thin as she stated this, a fury barely held at bay as she thought of how their Sanctuary had been disturbed by the filthy people of the exterior world.
“…Yes, that invasion was organized by players.” Harry had never given much thought to the memories the NPCs had of the time before the activation of the runes, when they had yet to be sentient. Tilting his head in curiosity, he couldn’t help but deviate slightly from the topic.

“What do you know of that particular invasion? Other than the fact that they failed to surpass the defenses of the 8th floor of course”

“The Floor Guardians of the levels 1st to 7th remember having died, although the details are lost to them. Since the Throne room was not reached I did not participate in said battle, and only am aware of it due to the comments Tabula Smaragdina-sama and Herohero-sama made while in my presence” her response was done with a serious voice, brows slightly furrowed as she tried to recall details she had no way of remembering. It was more than Harry expected, to be honest.

Worried that the NPCs may have traumatic memories of their deaths, he continued to ask “What is the impression of the other servants regarding that battle? Have they told you anything?”

By this point Harry wasn’t surprised by their ‘Please let us work to death’ attitude. He just wished it wasn’t such a prominent feature in all NPCs.

“Hmm… Does everyone think the same?” He just needed to be sure no one was distressed or something of the sort–

“Yes, Hadrian-sama. Although I’ve heard some of the regular maids also… are afraid to an extent, of the exterior world. The outsiders were close to befouling the Throne room; the Sanctuary made by the Supreme Beings… it fills them with rage and fear”

“Oh? That is understandable, although I must admit such a thing repeating itself in this world seems unlikely. That specific invasion was an alliance of eight guilds, players and mercenary NPCs, which made their army a grand total of one thousand five hundred people.” Recalling the invasion only ten of his comrades had witnessed, he let a feral grin adorn his face at the memory “And they were completely annihilated. Ah, that event made our Guild a legend! The Great Tomb of Nazarick defeated the largest military offensive organized by players in the server's entire history”

He laughed wholeheartedly at the pleasant memory, even if reconstructing their home had been a very costly pain in the ass; no one had dared to cross them after that particular display of power.

“As expected of the Supreme ones!” Albedo’s smile is so wide it threatens to split her face, her palms clapping at the same time her wings flapped once in joy “I’m infinitely thankful for the knowledge you have shared with me, Hadrian-sama!”

Harry gives her a real smile, which made the succubus blush before he cleared his throat to go back to her original inquiry.

“Well, that was not an answer to your question, was it? Coming back to the topic at hand…The reason I bothered to save those humans is very simple, at least for those knowledgeable of the Players’ manner of thinking.” he lets an understanding expression adorn his face, interlacing his fingers above the desk’s surface before continuing “Most Players can relate, in a sense, with the human beings; to the point where most would wish for their safety. To avoid any unnecessary conflicts with other such Players we may encounter, I’d like to keep human deaths to a minimum”
Albedo’s eyes open wide at this bit of information, which was completely understandable. Everything inside Nazarik, from the design of the floors to the descriptions of the NPCs, had been made with the thinking that heteromorphic creatures were evil, a natural enemy against humans. The fact that all players were in fact human and would not really wish them harm was something no NPC would ever imagine.

“I understand. As expected of Hadrian-sama, the simple thought of trying to get closer to your level is nothing but impertinence from our side.” Albedo’s voice was reverent as she bowed in respect, hands clasped elegantly over her stomach “If I may bother you once more with my ignorance, is there any specific trait in the ‘players’ that would not abide to such thinking? Any special characteristic at all?”

“Hmm… heteromorphic beings would be the most likely to dislike humans, or be uncaring on their well-being. Although the chance of that happening is not so large” Maybe in due time, once the original, human personality of the player mixed with the one of their character’s description, the sense of empathy or justice may end up atrophied. Djinn weren’t particularly evil, but even if they were Harry’s occlumency would protect his mind from being overridden by the description of his avatar.

“…Does that apply to our Masters as well?”

“They are a special case, I think some would be more than others” he let his answer be purposely vague, and continued with another matter before Albedo could make any more questions “There is also, another important reason of why I let them go however.”

His expression turned serious as he stood up from behind his desk, walking around it to approach the Guardian Overseer.

“Let’s make a hypothetical scenario. You don’t know who I am, you have never seen me before, and you know absolutely nothing about me. Which race am I?”

Albedo made a conflictive expression, before closing her golden eyes and lowering her head in apparent resignation as she muttered softly “…Human”

Only beings very specialized could be capable of seeing through illusions. There were even fewer players and NPCs that could see through shapeshifting commonly used by the doppelgangers. The Djinn used both, making the illusions used upon themselves reality once they combined it with the shapeshifting. As such, an opponent would need to be heavily specialized against both forms of concealment to be able to spot him by his race with nothing but a simple look.

As it was, only three people out of everyone in Nazarik had such ability, and it was not anyone of the Floor Guardians. Himself, Nigredo, and Titus Annaeus Secundus (the head librarian) were the only ones specialized enough.

“Which level do I have? Am I strong?” he continued to question, slowly approaching the succubus that seemed to find the ground quite interesting, her gaze focused on a single spot as she answered reluctantly.

“… An estimate 40”

The Djinn were shape shifters, and one of the few heteromorphic creatures that could play with the aura of power they portrayed, as it was part of their infiltrating features. It was one of the benefits from the class [Jack of all Trades].
“Do I seem like a threat?” he stopped just in front of her, crossing his arms as he watched Albedo intently to get her reaction.

“…No”

“Now, what would happen if beings like me were among the prisoners taken to the 5th Floor?” Albedo raised her head; eyes open wide as realization struck her “Damaging Nazarik from the inside would not be entirely impossible, would it?”

“The enemy would have bypassed half of Nazarik’s defenses!” her vertical pupils are thin, an ocean of gold divided by an almost inexistent dark line, and her wings trembled in apparent apprehension as she pictured an infiltration that they would have brought upon themselves.

“Exactly. Taking such a large amount of prisoners is a foolish risk if there is no one there to verify this. The prisoners Nazarik has held until now have been verified by me, and they are never such a large number since it would be easier to make a mistake”

Realizing just how greatly Demiurge’s plan could have harmed the holy grounds the Supreme Beings had created, Albedo apologized on his behalf, bending by the waist in a deep bow that made her raven hair slide down from her shoulders.

“Don’t worry, there were no negative repercussions this time around. Back then I didn’t have enough time to explain this fully to Demiurge, so please let every Floor Guardian know about this in your next meeting.”

Truth be told, it was not like Harry forgot or didn’t have time to explain that to Demiurge, but he felt it could wait since the demon felt guilty enough as it was. The NPCs reacted quite strongly every time they made the simplest of mistakes, so telling him that he could have brought an invading force to Nazarik would have been… distracting. They had a fake-battle to complete back then, so Harry simply hadn’t wanted to risk it.

But since Albedo asked, he surmised that band aid would have to be removed sooner or later either way, so he explained fully the situation as he saw it.

“Understood, Hadrian-sama” her form was tense and she had yet to straighten up from her deep bow, so Harry looked at her with sympathy and patted her head a couple of times in reassurance.

“I’ll be counting on you” he said softly, turning around to return to his desk, ignorant of the happily surprised expression Albedo made as she straightened “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a letter to write”

Meanwhile, in a comfortable bed inside the Royal Palace, the Captain-Warrior Gazef Stronoff felt ridiculously weak. His body hurt so much he couldn’t move, not even to raise the tip of a finger. Even a simple action like opening his eyes was terribly taxing.

“I think he is regaining consciousness!” a loud barked shout that was a little too grave to belong to a woman resounded in the room.

“Not so loud Gagaran, he is still delicate” the voice he barely recognized as Lakyus’ reached him, seemingly closer to him than the other had been.

“W-what…?” he tried to ask, but his hoarse voice was almost inaudible. He tried to open his eyes to see who was in the room with him, but only managed to open them slightly before they got watery, so he closed them again. Ugh, they burned.
“Don’t force yourself Stronoff-san. You should rest more.”

“Yeah, although a resurrection spell wasn’t needed in the end, you were on the very edge of death! The only survivor really—”

“Don’t be insensible; those were part of his group of warriors.”

“Ah, you’re right…”

He was unable to focus on the rest of their conversation; his head was beginning to hurt just by the effort it took to be awake. With closed eyes that had tears on its corners, he tried to recall what had happened. The last thing he saw… a small girl, no older than three had approached them, requesting assistance to search for her mother… but before his men could answer her expression had twisted, a cruel smirk splitting her face in two before she sprinted towards them so fast it was more like a rush of wind than anything.

Then there was blood and screams—

“W-where!” he cried, had he had any energy left he would have sit down in his bed at least, but as it was his shout was more like a whisper, his shoulders simply trembling as he tried and failed to sit up. “Where is she?!”

A hand pushed down his right shoulder, Lakyus’ voice reaching him once more “I don’t know the details, but the item Jaldabaoth had been searching for disappeared.” Gazef wanted to yell, but the only thing that came out was a terribly dry coughing fit. Someone raised his head and helped him drink water, something he was glad for, but he couldn’t really say anything else before Evileye’s voice reached his ears.

“You’re still too weak to do much, so I’ll put you to sleep again [Count Sheep]”

Gazef felt darkness eating out at his consciousness, his mind falling silent in a calm sea of dreamless sleep.

It is only two days afterwards that he is recovered enough to move, so he is sitting down in a meeting room with Blue Rose’s adamantite team, Climb, and Brain present in the room. The Princess Renner had wanted to come as well, but Gazef had requested her not to, since he was not yet recovered enough to really wear with pride the title of Captain-Warrior. He just couldn’t bring himself to show his face to the royal family yet, not when he was still like this.

“Renner’s hypothesis regarding the infiltrated demon is true then” Lakyus said once he had ended his explanation regarding those events.

“Yes, that was the case. We let our guard down since it was a child…” Gazef said with a regretful expression, hands clenched over the table’s surface.

“Not to be rude Captain-Warrior, but do you know why that demon would let you live?” Evileye said frankly, much to the chagrin of her comrades. Her cold observation didn’t bother him though; he had wondered the same thing upon waking up.

“It didn’t”

“…Huh? But no resurrection magic was used on you—”

“No, my life was saved by Ainz Ooal Gown again” Gazef said with a grateful smile. He really hoped the Magician’s Guild Master could find that person; he needed to thank him properly—
“Who is Ainz Ooal Gown?” Tina, one of the assassin twins asked to the rest of the room.

“A compassionate magic caster, he saved Gazef in the past” Brain said, recalling the conversation he and Gazef had had after the Captain-Warrior found him in an alley “What do you mean he saved you though?”

Gazef smiled bitterly at that, lying back on his chair as he crossed his arms over his chest “Ainz-dono gave me a powerful item. I didn’t use it in my battle against the Theocracy, and when I tried to give it back to him he refused to take it… he said it would come in handy in a dire situation” seeing his explanation was not enough for the gathered people, he smiled with regret at having lost such an useful item before clarifying “No matter how much damage the user takes, that person would still live on. It only works once though, so it disappeared when used”

“So the deathly strike of the demon…” Climb started to say, Gazef responding with an affirmative nod in confirmation.

“Was not so deathly, it only left me at the verge of death”

“You can say that again, even the medics of the temple said you were dead until they noticed your almost inexistent pulse—”

“Seriously, the Mass of Muscle should think before speaking— “Evileye interrupted Gagaran, sounding annoyed.

“Said the Shorty that asked about his survival in the first place—”

“Calm down you two, this is not the time” Lakyus reprimanded them slightly before focusing on Gazef again “And this Ainz character gave you this? What did he ask in return?”

“Nothing at all” he barked a laugh at her skeptical expression, insisting that had really been the case.

They discuss about this for a short while before ending the meeting, since there were other matters to attend to.

Since Gazef was still recovering, he would go back home early today, and retake his position as Captain-warrior tomorrow.

Upon arriving at his home, he ate something light before going directly to his bedroom, feeling more tired than he was willing to admit. Before he could prepare to go to sleep however, a soft knock was heard on his window.

…Why the window instead of the door?

Feeling rightfully wary, he got closer to the window with slow, silent steps, his dominant hand on the handle of his sword before he used the free one to open up the curtain with a single, harsh movement. His precaution was not needed however, since it was not a human being but a bird, standing still on his window before using its beak to knock at the glass again.

Gazef would have dismissed it if it had been a simple bird, but it was a Nachtkrapp. It was a kind of magical bird that could put living creatures to sleep when threatened, using a combination of sleeping spores and ‘singing’. Fairly harmless, but it was unusual to see them during the day since these avian beings were nocturnal.

The raven-like bird tilted its eye-less head questioningly, before knocking on the glass once more. Confused, he opened the window hesitantly, but the bird didn’t go inside his home. Instead of that, the Nachtkrapp let out a short, impatient chirp as if admonishing him for taking so long, before
raising one of its claws to him.

…It had a letter tied to it.

Not knowing what to do, he took the letter with slow motions since he didn’t want to scare the magical bird. Once the Nachtkrapp is freed of its package however, it chirps once more at him before flying off, two pairs of large wings flapping soundlessly as it flew towards the clear reddish sky. The sun was already beginning to hide for the day.

Gazef watched the bird leave before looking down at the letter with puzzlement. What kind of communication method was this? Who would send a letter to him? Opening it up, he let out a surprised gasp upon reading its content.

Greetings Captain-Warrior Gazef Stronoff

I trust this letter reaches you in good health. Do forgive me if this message arrived at an inconvenient time, but the matter I wish to address is quite important.

I have noticed a Magic Caster has been trying to pinpoint my location, as well as attempting to use other survey methods on my person. On normal circumstances I would have let this impertinent individual know their endeavors are not welcome, considering they are an invasion to my privacy, but upon investigating further I have successfully identified the transgressor.

It is the Magician’s Guild Master of the **Re-estize Kingdom**. Theo Rakesheer.

I consider his attempts at using divination magic upon my person a hefty offense. Although I do admit, I may be misunderstanding the situation due to lack of information.

As such, to clarify this matter, I will be coming to the Royal Capital of the Re-estize Kingdom on the 4th Day of the Lower Fire Month. If you could receive me on the main gates that lead to the Royal Capital it would be most welcome, since I would like to listen on your opinion regarding the best way to solve this delicate matter diplomatically.

If you agree with my petition, please write your answer in the reverse of this letter. Similarly, if you are unable to receive my visit, please let me know so I can act accordingly upon arriving to the Royal Capital.

Best of regards,

Ainz Ooal Gown.

For a terribly long moment, Gazef didn’t move. He didn’t dare to breathe, nor blink as he stared at the contents of the letter with shock and disbelief.

*His suggestion of locating Ainz-dono had caused this*?!

And worse, the phrase regarding a diplomatic solution was little more than a gentle threat, a silent ‘or else’ practically written at the end of it. Making such a strong magic caster an enemy had not been his intention at all, and the last thing the Royal Capital needed now was another negative impact.

He needed to solve this, and fast. Getting away from his window, he racked the house in his hurry to find something to write with, but once he finally found a fountain pen the tip remained unmoving, hanging just over the paper.

…what was he supposed to answer?
Gazef would receive him of course; there was no doubt on that. But apologizing for his lack of thought while admitting he had been the one to make that suggestion… what would that cause? Could it even be considered as a good reason?

No, the motives didn’t matter at all. He needed to prepare some sort of compensation for the trouble he had mindlessly caused, but what could he offer to such a powerful person? Someone that could gift valuable items as if those were something he could get easily?

A meeting with himself and the Magician’s Guild Master, Rakesheer, was a must. Maybe including the Adventurer’s Guild Master, Ainzach, would work as well…

Then a thought struck him. When he had mentioned the name of Ainz Ooal Gown to his King, the elder had smiled in gratitude, stating that he would like to meet such a remarkable person to thank him personally one day, for saving his strongest warrior and personal guard from certain death.

A meeting with the King was not impossible, and it would help smooth things out and prepare a good compensation. Deciding that was his best bet at the moment, he carefully folded the letter before placing it along his weapon. He would need to check this out first thing in the morning.

A whole day after Harry sent the letter to Gazef, he was walking in the hallway that led to his office when he felt his breast pocket grow warm. Taking out the previously blank paper, he smiled satisfactorily at the Captain’s lengthy answer before using the ring of Ainz Ooal Gown to teleport directly to the treasury, since he would need to rehearse this with Pandora’s Actor before sending the NPC out to role-play.

A week after that, a couple of days before Gazef would host Ainz Ooal Gown, several people reunite in the Adventurer’s Guild. The Marauder’s adamantite team, the Adventurer’s Guild master Ainzach, and Gazef Stronoff are present in this small briefing. James and Shizu looked around the room with inquisitive eyes, immediately assessing everything within. Their gaze looks particularly longer at all the entrances, both doors and windows, and objects that, under unfavorable circumstances, could be used as weapons. This was an almost inherent attitude of warriors whose survival instinct was at its highest.

Ainzach is the one to direct their meeting, stating this was a personal petition from the Royal section of the nobles, even if it was one that was not supposed to be widely known by others. The objective of this meeting was to make a simple request: they wanted James’ verdict regarding Ainz Ooal Gown.

“What is Ainz Ooal Gown?” the male adamantite adventurer asked with confusion, an ignorance that would have meant a terrible disrespect to the magic caster they would be accommodating in just a couple of days.

“Not what but who” Gazef explains tensely. James seems to know he would have made a grave mistake, an understanding gaze made his blue eyes open wide for a short moment before he bowed his head with a silent apology.

This entirely human mistake actually made the other people in the room relax however. The leader of the Marauders was strong, polite, humble, and merciful, the list of qualities just went on and on. James was a little too perfect to be normal, which made most of the people that have met him feel inadequate and search for mistakes or faults, something that would make him more human.

Knowing he could still misunderstand things was certainly welcome for them.

“Don’t worry, that’s the reason we are having this meeting” Ainzach said with an easy-going smile,
chuckling at James’ conflictive expression.

“Thank you. I must apologize however; I don’t think I’ve fully understood. Do you want my team to be present as bodyguards?”

“No, that’s Stronoff-sama role as the Captain-warrior, his duty is to preserve the security of the Royal Family. What we need is your impression of this magic caster, Ainz Ooal Gown. Although our objective is to avoid any conflictive situations with him, we would like a warrior’s evaluation just in case… you know.” In case conflict is unavoidable, was the unuttered end of that phrase.

“Wouldn’t the Captain-warrior be enough to achieve that?”

Gazef is the one to answer that question, serious eyes staring at James as he stated without an ounce of hesitation “No, it needs to be James-sama. This is because, if my memory doesn’t fail me, the aura Ainz-dono displayed was… on pair with the one of Jaldabaoth.”

The male adamantite adventurer straightened up in attention at that, frowning slightly in worry before he crossed his arms over his armored chest.

“I see… In that case, a timely evaluation is a must. Still, how will I meet him if I won’t be present in your gathering?”

“We were considering you could cross paths in the Royal Palace, just as I guided him to meet the King. Would a glance be enough to evaluate?”

“…It should give me a heads up regarding his difficulty level, that much I can guarantee. Other than that, I will have to depend on the recounting of the meeting” James answered towards Gazef, who nodded once at him in understanding “Pay special attention to his manner of thinking, the dangerous thing of a Magic caster is not only the arsenal of spells, but his tactics. It would be better if we could anticipate his movements, if it comes from bad to worse”

“Indeed, that is the conclusion we have reached as well”

“Will Ainz-sama be accompanied?” Shizu questioned this time, tilting her head cutely to the side. That… that was a good question actually, no one had really considered that.

Ainzach and James turned to look at Gazef at the same time, who seem to be contemplative.

“…By the same guard I met probably, a completely armored woman. Ainz-dono didn’t specify in his notice however.”

The briefing continues like this for a few minutes, defining the details of the ‘casual’ encounter between James and Ainz so it would come out as naturally as possible. It was a risky plan, and it could end up bothering the magic caster as they tried to manipulate their brief encounter, but in the end it would not be more than a single glance.

What could go wrong?

They waited with bated breath, anxiously preparing until the day finally arrived. Gazef stood still as a statue in the main gates of the Royal Capital, tense as he reviewed the plan in his mind over and over again—

The sound of massive wings is the first thing he notices, then the approaching shadow of something huge, and the scared shouts of the Guards that were positioned in the fortress. Looking up directly at the source, Gazef couldn’t really blame them.
A dragon was flying down towards them.

It wasn’t any kind of dragon, but a Frost Dragon, which were essentially natural disasters once they reached a certain age. Many monsters became powerful when they lived for a long time, but dragons specially had the reputation of being superior specimens, and in many cases they would be classified as a being on a completely different level.

Considering it was an adult dragon, even the weakest of them would be classified around 140 on the difficulty level by the adventurers. With all certainty, one could not survive a battle against it and its freezing breath.

Gazef took out his sword, ready to move in case it attacked, but he halted upon noticing there was something in the dragon’s back. A humanoid silhouette… oh God, it surely wasn’t?!

His theory is confirmed when the light-blue dragon lands just out of the main Gate, surprisingly silent before laying down submissively, its whole body touching the ground as if trying to appear as small as possible.

The smiling Ainz floated down from above the Dragon. He must have been using some type of magical effect, given the way he hovered slowly defying gravity. He thought it was the famous spell [Fly], but after considering that Ainz Ooal Gown was a powerful magic caster, he concluded that it must be a superior version of that spell. Although how superior it was, or what type of spell it was, Gazef didn’t know.

This was the first time Gazef saw the powerful magic caster without his mask on. Emerald eyes looked impassively at him, a polite smile on his aristocratic face that could pass off as a noble’s, while the unruly raven curls remained mostly unperturbed by the wind.

Immaculately dressed in an emerald robe, the cloth seemed to be of the highest quality, with intricate, golden ornaments at the cuffs and neck. It didn’t have a single crease or stain in it, which made Gazef wonder how he managed it while riding a dragon of all things.

"It's been a long time since our last encounter Stronoff-san" a calm voice reached his ears at the same time Gazef made a signal to the panicked guards not to attack. The last thing they needed was for someone to launch arrows at Ainz and his… pet?

He knew the man had tamed a basilisk before, so Gazef really shouldn’t be so surprised by the dragon, but he still felt awed. The respect he felt towards the magic caster only grew, and in spite of the delicate situation, he smiled sincerely in welcome at him.

“Indeed Ainz-dono, please allow me to bid you welcome to the Royal Capital” he bowed in formal greeting. There was no one but the dragon accompanying him, which was a very good signal in Gazef’s opinion, recalling the dangerous feeling the armored woman, Albedo had displayed. He hoped the magic caster wanted to resolve things peacefully as well.

The man chuckled, nodding cordially before answering “If I may be truthful, I’ve wanted to visit the Re-estize Kingdom for quite a while… although I wished it was under better circumstances” the emerald gaze was not focused on Gazef, evaluating the surroundings with critical eye while humming interestingly “Has something happened recently?”

Gazef tensed at the question. They were still out of the Royal Capital, since they had yet to move from the main Gate. How had he known they had been attacked recently, if he hadn’t seen anything…?
“Pardon my words, but you seem quite… well, your strength seems to have diminished. I assume you had a recent fight where you were heavily injured?”

Oh, that’s what he meant.

Truth be told, no matter how much time he slept or how many potions he took, his body always felt heavy, and he noticed his movements were slower when he trained. He got tired more easily as well…

“Ah, you’re right Ainz-dono. I had a fight I would not have survived if not for the item you allowed me to keep. I’m infinitely grateful for your generosity back then” he bowed again, this time lower.

Regardless of the unfortunate circumstances, he was still relieved to have been able to properly thank the powerful man. He straightens only once Ainz-dono accepted his thanks, emerald eyes looking inquisitively at him.

Thinking that keeping his guest in the main Gates for so long was rude from his part, he moved sideways, extending an arm welcomingly.

“Sorry for the delay, please allow me to show you the path to the Royal… Palace?” Ainz had come closer to him with a pensive look, seemingly ignoring his words.

“…A demon”

“Eh?”

“You fought against a powerful demon”

“Wha— how—?”

“Hm? you are bearing a demonic curse” he said simply, as if anyone could have determined that, as if it was obvious “That kind of curse eats out the living force of the victim, limiting movements and increasing considerably the energy needed to perform simple tasks” Hah? no wonder he always felt so heavy—

“Let me lift it for you, [Greater Heal]” Gazef couldn’t even react to the news before the man casted the healing spell at him. He felt immediately the change, as if the gravity around him was lighter. He moved his arms experimentally, blinking in wonder at how energetic he suddenly felt, before smiling wide at his guest.

“Ainz-dono, are you attempting to drown me in debt? To think you have saved me for the third time!”

The magic caster laughed lightly, dismissing the issue with a gesture “No need, you are already helping me by being my guide Stronoff-san. Shall we enter?”

“Of course. I just— ah, about the dragon…?”

“Oh right” Ainz said lightly, acting as if he had forgotten the dangerous creature was still there before turning around to address it “You can go back Hejinmal, I’ll call for you once I’ve finished negotiations in the Royal Capital”

“Your servant understands, if Your Exalted Majesty feels it is fine, then naturally your servant has no objections” the dragon said submissively, moving slowly as if trying to appear less dangerous, before flying off. It was quite a strong impression considering the powerful voice that emanated from its
gigantic jaws, Gazef was, in a word, amazed upon seeing such scene.

A dragon, one- if not the most prideful of creatures, addressing a human as ‘Majesty’. There were no words to describe how impacting that was.

Gazef’s shoulders relaxed once the frost dragon disappeared in the cloudy sky. There were no other people in the vicinity, since the secondary Gate had been opened to register the visitors for this special day, something he was now very glad for.

How would the citizens react upon seeing the impacting arrival of someone as powerful as Ainz Ooal Gown? Riding a dragon to arrive to the Royal Capital…

Shaking his head to dispel the distracting thoughts, Gazef started to walk towards the Royal Capital with Ainz in tow, showing the districts and main buildings around them without delving deeply in the particulars. If Ainz knew Gazef was being careful in case conflict arose he didn’t show it, actually making small chat and asking irrelevant questions. The magic caster didn’t pay any mind to the few guards they encountered, not even when their gaze followed Ainz’ movements with surprise and fear.

It was obvious for even the less intelligent of guards that the magic caster accompanying Gazef was anything but common. Their instincts screamed at them to behave, to avoid any possible conflict with the man that displayed such a strong aura, how was the Captain-warrior even standing under such pressure?

It was not like Gazef didn’t feel the powerful aura. It was as he remembered, on pair with the one of Jaldabaoth’s, but the demon’s was noticeably evil and unholy, while Ainz’ was simply authoritative and heavy, which made it easier to bear.

They kept walking deeper into the Royal Capital, passing through one of the twenty enormous circular towers that surrounded the Royal castle, The Valencia Palace.

The path to the Palace is not a long one, but he felt anxious upon arriving at the huge building. The Palace was roughly divided into three wings, and he had just entered one of them. This was the largest of the three, where the Royal Family attended their honor guests.

The Palace was very well-lit, collecting light from the outside in a brilliant display that seemed to make the interior sparkle. The polished hallways were free of litter; practically spotless, in fact. Along the clean and spacious hallways were the elite soldiers assigned to guard duty in the palace. They stood resplendent in their full plate armor — they were knights.

The Knights of the Baharuth Empire were commoners recruited and trained into professional soldiers. In contrast, the Kingdom’s knights were usually third sons of landed nobles or others who could not otherwise inherit the family estate. However, the Crown paid them very highly, and so only first-rate swordsmen were accepted for membership. Not even the nobles could sneak in through backdoor connections.

The best way to describe them would be “the King’s personal guard”.

Gazef nods at them in greeting, an action they mimic tensely upon noticing his guest, their watchful gaze mindful of every little movement the magic caster did.

_Not even the King’s guards could stand Ainz’ presence huh?

The Knights are mostly positioned near the entrances, so they stop encountering any after a couple of hallways. The sound of their small talk echoes in the otherwise silent passage, before approaching
steps are heard mixed along with their voices.

James and Shizu were walking towards them, being guided out of the Royal Palace by Climb. On their chest shone a commemorative medal, much to the chagrin of James.

“What excuse will we use to justify our presence in the Royal Palace?” Gazef grinned evilly at the question, which made James tense guardedly.

“Well, his Majesty still wishes to convey his gratitude to your adamantite team…”

They had discussed it for a long while, but James had been unable to find another valid excuse that would allow him to enter the Palace. In the end, he had no choice but to begrudgingly agree to receive accolades, something that amused Gazef to no end.

Now was the moment of truth. On normal circumstances James, as a guest of honor would have been guided to another exit, so he didn’t cross paths with the one appointed to come afterwards.

But this was a deliberate movement, and James knew etiquette was going to be slightly twisted for this purpose.

Climb moves close to the wall before stopping completely, the adamantite adventurers stopping behind him to let Gazef and Ainz pass at their side without issues. I wasn’t necessary considering the width of the hallway, but it also showed respect at Ainz and his higher status.

That much was according to plan.

What was not supposed to happen was that Ainz would stop following Gazef, looking with undisguised interest at James. The adamantite warrior tensed under the scrutiny, eyes fixated on the other.

The difference between the two of them was prominent, day and night staring each other down without neither side wavering. James was taller by a couple of inches, and his complexion was somewhat buff, unlike the lean, physically-untrained body of the magic caster that looked petite at his side. They walked differently as well, the warrior’s movements were precise and not a single motion was ever wasted in unnecessary, fancy gestures. Ainz was more laid-back, walked slowly as if he was little more than a tourist, taking in his surroundings with polite interest instead of the careful awareness of James.

The most important difference was their aura however. James was more approachable, a warm, friendly feeling that invited others to talk to him without fear of rejection, prominent even over the strong aura the warrior displayed. Ainz’ aura on the other hand was oppressive, as if the gravity around him was heavier, and he seemed to be indifferent, almost cold when looking at people he wasn’t already associated with.

The warm sun and the cold moon were trapped in the same hallway, silent for an infinitely long moment before Ainz finally spoke.

“How curious… a strong adventurer that doesn’t reside on his own country” the magic caster said with a quick glance at the adamantite plate hanging over the armored chest of the warrior “It makes one wonder on the reason you stay in the Re-estize Kingdom.”

Ainz was not the first to inquire about this. James was so strong he would be the ace in the sleeve of any country, much like the way Gazef was considered to be the triumph card of his own nation. Considering this, why was such an amazing man working as an adventurer in another country? No matter who asked, or how many times they insisted, all James ever did was smile thinly and say “I’m
looking for someone” without delving into any details. His place of origin and past life were a mystery as well.

“...I— ah, I apologize, if I may know your name?” James asked warily with tense shoulders, but still neutral enough that it would not cause any animosity on the other.

“I am Ainz Ooal Gown” the magic caster said regally, in a manner a king would “Would you happen to be James? I’ve heard quite a few tales about you these past months.”

“You would be right” James nodded curtly at him, seemingly contemplative. Blue eyes were looking at Ainz indecisively, as if weighting his options, before he seemed to make up his mind and bowed in greeting “Pleased to make your acquaintance. If I may be allowed to intrude on your schedule, would it be alright if we met at a later date?”

That wasn’t according to plan at all. Climb was looking apprehensively at their interaction, while Shizu remained calm as usual, as if having expected this outcome. The again, she had such a good poker face it was hard to tell what really went inside her head.

Ainz tilted his head slightly with curiosity before nodding with an inviting smile. “Sounds interesting, I’ll send you a [Message] to discuss the details once I’ve handled my previous compromise.” The emerald gaze travels to Climb and Shizu briefly, wishing them farewell before turning towards Gazef again.

“Shall we continue?” The hell was that? What had just happened? Gazef wanted to stay and interrogate the male adamantite adventurer, but was unable to for obvious reasons.

“Of course Ainz-dono, please follow me” he gave one last look at Climb’s group before continuing to stride in the hallway, the magic caster walking at his side with a tranquility he envied. Emerald eyes looked up, contently inspecting the light coming from the magical lamps on the ceiling, which were using the spell [Continuous Light]. Gazef was answering his questions distractedly, still too shocked to do anything else as he thought on the scene he had just witnessed over and over, without coming to any conclusion at all.

Gazef keeps walking the path he was familiarized with, until they finally arrive at the great doors that led to the Throne, with five Knights flanking each side. He knocks at the door a couple of times, waiting for a short moment before one of the servants came out to meet them.

“I apologize for the delay, His Majesty, The King Ramposa III Andrean Ield Ryle Vaiself is ready to welcome you, please follow me” the servant bows, and the great doors open slowly from the inside as if attempting to be dramatic, calling for attention to the richly adorned Throne room.

Ainz didn’t seem awed at all, or surprised by anything inside the Palace. The magic caster gave off the feeling of being inside a normal house while he was used to life in a manor; in other words, the carefully neutral feeling of someone that was trying not to offend the other party by saying “I’ve seen better”

... This is very unsettling.

The room that greets them is circular; with people inside already waiting for their arrival. The golden throne is magnificent, standing tall in the middle of the room as the King Ramposa III studied everything from his higher seat. At each side are a small gathering of the most powerful nobles of each faction.

The Kingdom was divided into the Royal Faction and the Noble Faction, the latter of which was
composed of a coalition of three of the nation’s Six Great Nobles. The power struggle between them left the Kingdom’s situation in a very precarious state. Some even felt that the only reason the country had not yet fallen apart was because of its yearly wars with the Empire.

Counting both factions, a total of six people were reunited in the circular room, standing to see their guest with interest. Around the room, close to the walls, were men standing at attention in strategic places that would allow them to protect anyone inside the room in a timely manner.

Gazef’s position as Warrior-Captain was because many people opposed his knighthood, and so the King created a new appointment for him. Since then, the group of elite soldiers that he had picked and trained personally was known as Warriors. These are the men currently warding the room with watchful eyes.

Even my men seem wary at Ainz’ presence.

They were much calmer than the Knights however, since the magic caster had helped them survive the battle of Carne Village.

Gazef bowed at Ainz from their position near the great doors, stating that his role as a guide had ended, before walking near the walls of the circular room until he stood at attention at the King’s side, just in front of his troop of warriors that were positioned at the beginning of the staircase that led to the throne.

Ainz walks calmly over the red carpet until he is in the middle of the room, the place that was as far away from everyone gathered as physically possible.

“Your Majesty this is the Magic Caster known as Ainz Ooal Gown” the servant that had walked behind Ainz presented officially with a short, elegant bow.

“Ainz Ooal Gown, it is really splendid that you have chosen to visit the Royal Capital. I am Rampossa III Andrean Ield Ryle Vaiself, King of the Re-estize Kingdom” the ancient voice was soft, but still resounded clearly in the silent room. The King’s head was sprinkled with white hair, his emaciated body couldn’t be described as healthy, and his facial expression was also quite poor. The hand that held the scepter was thin as a branch, and the crown on its head looked quite heavy. After a reign of thirty-nine years, the King was now sixty years of age.

“I am truly grateful for such a warm welcome Your Highness, Rampossa III” Ainz greets with a formal short bow, instead of kneeling as the nobles expected. Their faces fill with contempt at the action, but the King just smiles benignly at the magic caster.

“I have heard quite a beautiful story from my Captain-Warrior, of a disinterested man that placed himself in danger on behalf of those in need. I am grateful for your actions in Carne Village, Sir Gown” The King’s words were full of praise, causing many of the people of the Noble Faction to scoff softly. None of them had wanted to admit Ainz in the Palace, but since the King, the highest authority in the land, had given his approval, nobody else could object to it.

Once Gazef had reported the events of Carne Village, the King and the Royal section were the only ones grateful. The noble section had begun to make disparaging statements about this Ainz Ooal Gown, muttering things like ‘A problematic and suspicious individual’, ‘An eccentric person who did not even dare to reveal his true face in public’, ‘A magic caster with a strange name’. Eventually there were even some who expressed the opinion that he had organized this attack to promote himself.
Gazef had to control himself to not show his anger. He felt ashamed for not being able to say a single word in defense of his benefactor who was criticized in this way. Of course, there was a good reason for this. It was because the nobles who were cynical with their benefactor had one thing in common: they all belonged to the great group known as the Great Noble Faction.

Although they were in the presence of the King, this palace had also become an extension of their dispute, a battlefield for two opposing factions. Because of this, being of the Royal faction and also a confidant of the King, Gazef did not want to respond calmly. He knew that with his clumsy way of speaking he had no chance to successfully discuss these nobles, so it was necessary to avoid opening his mouth so as not to give others the opportunity to use his words against him.

But Ainz didn’t seem to mind the unfriendly stares, nodding in acknowledgement at the King while politely dismissing his good deed. Now that he thought of it, in that aspect, the adamantite warrior had a similar attitude—

“Although I am grateful for your kind words, I would like to delve into the main reason behind my visit. Regarding the Magician’s Guild Master of the Re-estize Kingdom, Theo Rakesheer…”

The King directs a look at a particular man, who steps forward from his position in the Royal section, where Rampossa had asked him to stand at.

“That would be me Sir Gown. I am aware that my actions can be interpreted as hostile, but I swear over my life that my only objective was to create a communication canal that allowed us to interact freely with one another” stated Rakesheer, bowing deeply in an apologetic manner.

The King is the one to finish, speaking softly. “Sir Ainz Ooal Gown, my subordinate has done something discourteous. The sins of the vassals are those of their lord, and as such I beg your pardon. I hope this issue can be resolved with a rightful compensation”

But Ainz’ answer surprised everyone in the room, Royal and Noble faction alike.

“No, there will be no need for that”

It was a firm rejection.

Ainz had focused completely on Rakesheer when the magic caster spoke, nodding in understanding at him before turning towards the King.

“I am capable of using magic that allows the user to detect lies. There was none in Rakesheer’s answer” emerald eyes turn briefly to Gazef at the end of that phrase, as if Ainz knew he had been the one to place the request with the Magician’s Guild master “As such, I will forgive this small mistake and let this matter rest, there is no need for compensation of any sort for a misunderstanding so feeble”

Stupefied silence reigned over the circular room, but the powerful magic caster simply smiled before continuing.

“That being said, I would like to seize this opportunity to make a proposal, if Your Majesty allows for it?” The King didn’t move for a short moment, before nodding regally from his seat over the throne.

Nothing was going as they had predicted, just what—?

“I would like to extend my hand in friendship, as well as those under my rule—“ under his rule? Was he a Lord of sorts? “—and propose an alliance with the Re-estize Kingdom when your country
faces that of the Baharuth Empire in the annual war.”

_Hah?!_

“…I apologize Sir Gown, for I am not aware of your title. If you could clarify your position on your natal country…?” Ainz smiled confidently, as if having expected that question.

“I am a _Monarch_” that— that would mean every single rule of etiquette had been broken, an insult to someone as high as a King, treated as a simple Sir “Although my land may be small in comparison, my domain enjoys of great military strength.” _Ohhh fuck, abort, ABORT! the whole plan was wrong to begin with! The man had arrived riding a dragon goddammit!_

Ainz smiled with amusement, as if he could hear Gazef’s thoughts, before continuing to speak.

“I would like to offer my aid in the scheduled fight your nation goes through year after year, as it no doubt impacts you heavily”

“… and what would you gain from this alliance?”

“An equivalent compensation” Ainz’ smiled invitingly, opening his arms as if in welcome “I will offer to lend my strength so the Baharuth Empire doesn’t dare to strike again, this covers any conflict that arises not only this year, but in the next decade”

_That sounded too good to be truth—_

“In exchange” Ainz continued ruthlessly, ignoring the shock that was engulfing the whole room “I will ask only for the city of E-Rantel and its immediate surroundings”

**Chapter End Notes**

**AUTHOR NOTE:**

I consider it quite confusing when an author goes on and describe all of the skills and powers in the first chapter. I'm always like "Yeah cool, but why is that important?" I think it's easier to read and understand when it gets applied to a situation. That's why the description of the Djinn was as short as possible; it only had the purpose to get you to know the necessary tidbits. Specifications such as these could wait until needed.

For those that have read my other story, now you know where Albedo's request of a head-pat comes from, even if Harry himself never realized haha. For those that are not aware, I’m writing another story in this x-over section, feel free to check it out~

Oh God I started to correct the italics of the first chapters, and it’s so very embarrassing to read again those chapters of the story. It is terribly obvious that I was a novice… ughhhh the sentences look so broken and weird, although in a sense is good to see I’ve improved however slightly. I guess it’s like looking at a drawing you made as a child and understanding mom was only been amiable when telling you it was a good work of art. I couldn’t even read them again passing the second chapter. I just selected everything, turned off the italics and left as soon as I could. Ugh.
Anyways, thanks for reading, hope you liked it and see ya’ around!

Chapter was of 9.5K words = 21 pages in Word.

FAQ1: Harry gave an item to Gazef remember? “one would ensure the man survived with 1 HP no matter the blow he took”

FAQ2: Even when adventurers are not to interfere in national affairs, is something commonly done when the enemy is either something different from human or if it doesn’t involve the enmity of another human country. That’s why James was involved, since Ainz is supposed to be a hermit of sorts. (HA!)
Chapter 20 Preparations

“And what would you gain from this alliance?”

“An equivalent compensation” Ainz’ smiled invitingly, opening his arms as if in welcome “I will offer to lend my strength so the Baharuth Empire doesn’t dare to strike again, this covers any conflict that arises not only this year, but in the next decade.”

That sounded too good to be truth—

“In exchange” Ainz continued ruthlessly, ignoring the shock that was engulfing the whole room “I will ask only for the city of E-Rantel and its immediate surroundings”

What ensued following that declaration could only be described as a political mayhem; one where all the people present started to whisper to each other and the room was filled with unintelligible murmurs and affronted words.

The King Rampossa III was apparently speechless however, the only person apart from the Warriors that remained silent after that unexpected declaration. The magic caster, Ainz, seemed unperturbed by the reaction of those present in the Throne room, until a certain phrase resounded particularly loud among the Noble faction.

“Just who does he think he is? He can’t just come and—“ the end of that phrase was swiftly interrupted by the authoritative statement of Ainz, who had turned his head to face the Noble, frowning with cold annoyance.

“Silencio.” he said accompanied by a small, elegant motion of his hand.

And the whole room felt silent in an instant.

The Noble continued to move his mouth as if he was still speaking, but no sound came from it. The others in the room mimicked the action, panicking when they finally understood their voice had been stolen by whatever spell the magic caster had used.

Wasn’t the use of magic supposed to be followed by a colorful light? Just what kind of magic was that?!

The guards held their weapons more strongly, moving minutely closer to Ainz as they silently expected to receive a signal from the King, or from Gazef, to attack.

Rakesheer on the other hand seemed to be excited at the presence of new magic, like a child in a candy store, moving his mouth incredibly fast and touching his own throat in wonder as he tried to comprehend what had happened.

There was a silencing spell that negated every sound on a small area, but such a thing was normally very specific. In most cases, it was typically used to make armors move silently on infiltrating missions, but it didn’t hinder the ability of speech of the user. That’s how precise this spell was.
There were not any recorded cases of it being used in a whole room, even more so considering how large the Throne room was and the number of people it currently held.

The body of Rakesheer glowed lightly a couple of times, as the man tried to get rid of what he probably considered as a debuffing spell, but in the end the silence remained unperturbed. Since the Magician’s Guild Master could not surpass it, it meant Ainz’ spell was a high-tiered one.

The King cleared his throat, eyebrows slightly rising when he noticed he was still able to produce sounds, and raised an elderly hand regally.

“Please calm down.” the old voice resounded in the otherwise silent room with a touch of finality, which made the affected nobles practically glare at him. The sense of hostility increased in the room, almost like a physical presence that weighted over everyone’s heads, but the King had no choice but to ignore it as he turned to look at the magic caster that was standing in the middle of the room.

“This spell…” Ramposa began to say with an impassive face, even if it didn’t conceal his worry completely.

“Is not permanent.” Ainz nodded at the King, ignoring everyone else in the room, the guards that were slowly approaching him included “I just needed them to be silent and listen, for I will only say this once.”

If Gazef thought the room couldn’t feel tenser, he was oh so very wrong.

But the powerful magic caster seemed to be immune, for he only arched an eyebrow elegantly and said “I may not have expressed myself correctly, since you don’t seem to understand at all. I will participate on the next war, whether I am your ally or your enemy, is up to you to decide.”

A sense of power radiated from Ainz at the end of that phrase, as though he were giving off burning heat. It was so palpable Gazef wasn’t surprised when the guards, his own men, took the smallest of steps back as if fearful that a single movement would bring the wrath of the being in front of them.

“No matter the decision you take or in which side of the battlefield I am, my goal will still be the same.” Ainz continued expressionlessly, looking directly at the King “I will request the land of E-Rantel and its immediate surroundings.”

“… For what purpose?” The voice of the King Rampossa was soft, desperately trying to comprehend the main reason this unexpected situation was happening.

“Because it rightfully belongs to us.” that statement caused the tension to increase exponentially, but was now combined with confusion. Ainz seemed to notice this, for he simply nodded in understanding before elaborating further “Or used to, at least, a few centuries ago before we retreated to our home. We were content with our quiet lifestyle, keeping mostly to ourselves, until the exterior world perturbed that harmony recently.”

…That statement was strange.

The Re-estize Kingdom had been established 200 years ago, after the Demon Gods had destroyed the country that used to be situated before. This was truth for many Nations, so most historic documents only had documentation on the last two centuries, while anything prior was little more than rumor or legend.

For Ainz to have been residing there before the foundation of the Kingdom, it would have to be…

…Ah.
So Ainz was not human. Either that, or he had managed to somehow slow down his aging like it was rumored Fluder Paradyne had done. Another option would be for Ainz to have entered into a coma-like state, in which case it would explain why he only got out when an alarm was triggered.

It was highly probable that Ainz and his people had hidden away to survive the Demon Gods’ attack, only coming out to investigate when something from the exterior world came too close to them.

Ignorant of Gazef’s thoughts, Ainz continued his explanation after a small pause, having let his words sink in for long enough.

“…When the presence of the invading force that was coming closer to Carne Village awakened us, to be precise.” Ainz said lightly before turning to look at Gazef, which made him tense so much he was sure he could successfully pass off as a statue. “I didn’t mention it back then, but I was aware he could successfully pass off as a statue. “I didn’t mention it back then, but I was aware there were soldiers in the vicinity, simply because some triggered the wards we have around our property. That’s the reason I went out to investigate in the first place.”

“…Ainz Ooal Gown-dono” the King answered for Gazef, something he was incredibly thankful for because he didn’t know how to answer properly to that “Does that mean your… domain, is currently residing on my Kingdom’s lands?” Rampossa had seemed to struggle momentarily for the right word to use, but in the end had settled for ‘domain’ with nothing but a single pause to show for it.

“That seems to be the case, yes.” Ainz answered the King’s question, tilting his head slightly as if asking why that would be relevant.

“In that case, we can arrange a mutual consent. If you were to describe where exactly your domain is located, we may reach an agreement—“

“I apologize, but that is not up to negotiation.” Ainz interrupted with a tone of voice that left no room for arguments “I simply came out of courtesy, no… out of respect; for the companions I made back in Carne Village. If I am honest, I would rather fight along with the Kingdom than against it, which is the reason I came here to offer my alliance. Nevertheless, I will respect the decision you take regarding this delicate matter.”

‘And become an enemy if you wish me to be’ those words were left unsaid, but still managed to get across quite clearly.

Ainz smiled comprehensibly at the King, whose age seemed to have duplicated in the last few minutes, and spoke one last time with a calming tone “I understand this is not something you can decide on immediately of course. I will give you two weeks to discuss the matter with these gentlemen. Once you have reached a conclusion, just send an official messenger to Carne Village and call for my full name, I will send a vassal to retrieve your answer.”

He bowed his head lightly towards the King in farewell, before muttering parting words towards the others as well. Once that was done, the powerful presence Ainz displayed increased even more for a short moment before the magic caster disappeared from within the room.

The aura that had frozen everyone in their places was finally gone.

For an infinitely long moment nobody moved, before Rakesheer whispered tentatively, surprised to see his voice had come back. The Nobles were the next to test out their voice, shoulders relaxing slightly upon finding they had regained their ability to speak.

Gazef took his gaze away from the Nobles to look up at his monarch, who seemed suddenly
exhausted, the old gaze still fixed on the place Ainz had been standing at until just a few seconds ago.

Since the curse silencing them had been lifted, the room became noisy once again with an exchange of whispers.

"Did that… man at least specify what he was asking for?" Marquis Pespea, one of the Nobles that belonged to the Royal faction, whispered to his comrades. The Noble seemed to have hesitated at the use of ‘man’, probably wondering if such a person could even be considered as human. The others had probably reached a conclusion similar to Gazef’s, wondering on how such a man could be older than 200 years old.

Marquis Blumrush simply huffed in response “He only said ‘Immediate surroundings’ as if we could decide with that.”

“Does it matter however? Can we really fight if he forms an alliance with the Empire?" Marquis Raeven interjected as the voice of reason, speaking with astounding calm all things considered.

The Noble’s lips thinned in annoyance, but no one replied.

Until this date, neither nation had suffered significant damage, but that was because the Empire never used all its strength. If they intended to destroy the Kingdom, there would be no need to camp on the Katze Plains and wait for Kingdom forces to arrive after all.

The forces of the Re-estize Kingdom were composed of militias, while the forces of the Empire were composed of professional soldiers and had a hierarchy of Knights. It was obvious which nation possessed a more powerful military force.

Because of this, the Kingdom had to mobilize twice the numbers of the forces of the Empire, which at the same time made the army require a greater quantity of provisions. There was also, the fact that the invasion of the Empire coincided just in time with the harvest. With the lack of labor in the villages, the result was that the harvest was delayed.

Gazef and a few other nobles who could still use their brains recognized that the reason why the Empire used that kind of method was because they wanted to exhaust the national forces of the Kingdom. Once the national strength became too weak, the Empire could invade the Kingdom with all its might…

That had been the case at least. But now, considering the wild card known as Ainz Ooal Gown, how much worse would it be if that magic caster participated in the battle as their enemy?

The answer was obvious.

A massacre.

So why were the Nobles not seeing it? Gazef was exasperated, barely refraining from shouting at the foolish aristocrats who believed that their own power could exist perpetually.

"Could he be someone from the Empire with the goal of infiltrating our ranks?" Is infiltration even necessary for a country like the Empire?!

"Ah, I heard that the Empire had an academy of magical casters, so that's quite possible."

"The names of the people who live in the Slane Theocracy consist of a proper name, a baptismal name and a family name; would it be possible for that name to be a pseudonym?" That’s not
important; this is not what you should be discussing right now!

"Hmph! Maybe we should consider killing him?" Everyone turned their incredulous gaze towards the man who had spoken, Marquis Bouollope of the Noble faction. "What can one man do? If he flies, we'll shoot him down with bows. The same if he attacks from far away. What can one magic caster do? Those stories of magic casters who change the battlefield by themselves are just that, stories!"

Hearing this, Gazef could not remain silent a moment longer, even if he did his best to keep his voice neutrally courteous.

"Wait a moment please. That way of thinking is really imprudent—" Gazef gave his opinion in an attempt to make the man see reason, which made several of the nobles offer obvious looks of displeasure.

"—That magic caster claimed to have great military strength." Marquis Pespea interrupted Gazef, knowing that the statement of the Captain-Warrior would not be well received by most Nobles.

"Anyone can make a claim!" How could Boullope say that after witnessing Ainz’ mere presence?!

"There is also that silencing spell he used." Raeven’s voice imposed silence on the others, blue eyes narrowing apprehensively before looking away from the Nobles. "Rakesheer, which tier would that magic be classified as?"

The Magician’s Guild Master, Theo Rakesheer, turned his surprised gaze away from the parchment he had been furiously writing in, looking at Raeven with uncertainty.

“I tried to cancel it many times without success… I would classify it as 5th or maybe 6th tier.”

So high!

The Nobles whispered against each other upon hearing Rakesheer’s answer. The most intelligent understood that it was a big deal, since that would place Ainz on the same level as that terrible magic caster, Fluder Paradyne of the Baharuth Empire. Some Nobles on the other hand simply looked confused at the statement, not really getting why that was considered strong.

Even if Fluder Paradyne was the famed magic caster of the Empire, rumored to be able to use magic of the 6th tier, nobody really knew how powerful he really was. That was because he had never taken part in the Empire’s wars, nor had he used his magic to rout the armies of the Kingdom.

While the 6th tier of magic was impressive, exactly how impressive it was remained to be seen.

The nobles were not magic casters, but had probably only been told about magic as part of their education. Many of the Kingdom’s nobles thought little of Fluder, thinking of him as nothing more than a poster boy for the Empire’s propaganda. The nobles who had little contact with magic-users like adventurers were even more likely to think that way.

Marquis Bouollope was one of them. To him, magic casters were little more than stage magicians. Of course, the priests he turned to when he was sick or injured were a different matter.

“Hmph! We are still speaking about only one man! Our troops are—” Bouollope began once more, only to be interrupted by another Noble.

“—I don’t think that’s quite right. They can be quite hard to deal with if they use flying magic and attack with area-effect spells. Long-ranged attacks can be quite damaging as well.”
Those severe words were spoken by Margrave Urovarna, whose head of white hair and wrinkled face conveyed the stern dignity of a senior individual. As the oldest of the six Great Nobles, he was a clear contrast with the young Marquis Boullope.

“I believe we don’t have all the facts. Stories are embellished to draw attention, and after the facts are exaggerated, the stories are well-removed from reality. This only gets worse when bards spread stories heard from other bards.” Marquis Pespea said neutrally, neither on favor nor against any decision.

“However, if they could gather a lot of magic casters that could use [Fireball]—” another Noble started to say, only to be interrupted by Boullope.

“And how likely is it that they’ll be able to gather a whole group of people who can use [Fireball], hm, Captain-Warrior?”

Having been suddenly addressed, Gazef didn’t have much option but to answer tentatively.

“I… don’t think it’s too likely.”

[Fireball] was a 3rd-tier spell. It would be impossible to amass a large number of magic casters who could use that spell, even if one had the magical academies of the Empire.

“Then, isn’t that the answer? Magic is a good weapon, but no matter how powerful he is, one man cannot change the battlefield! You—forgive me—the Captain-Warrior is a perfect example. While nobody can match yourself in a duel, even you can’t slay tens of thousands of people in one go!”

He was right. Gazef could not find anything to rebut Marquis Boullope’s argument.

Those tales of slaying ten thousand men with a single spell were dubious at best. Even that granny, Rigrit Bers Carau of the Thirteen Heroes, could not accomplish such a feat.

Could it be that he had not met a truly amazing magic caster, but was simply clueless?

However, the disquiet still lingered in Gazef.

“…Then, what if it was a dragon?” Gazef said firmly, trying another argument.

“Captain-Warrior… that magic caster is a human. Why would you even bring up a dragon?” Gazef took a breath to start explaining how exactly Ainz had arrived to the Royal Capital, but didn’t have a chance to speak.

“In the first place, there’s no point mentioning dragons when we’re discussing humans! I don’t know what you’re all thinking, being so afraid of a measly little magic caster—” Boullope spoke harshly, turning his sharp gaze to glare at Gazef, before looking at the Royal Faction sitting on the other side of the table. “As nobles of the Kingdom, you should be ashamed of yourselves, cowering at the sight of his shadow!”

“Ainz Ooal Gown-dono arrived riding a dragon.” Gazef hurried to say before anyone else could interrupt him.

“…He did what?!”

Relieved that his words finally seemed to reach them, Gazef began to explain what he had seen just a few hours ago.
Dragons. Masters of the sky, capable of producing powerful breaths, with scales that were almost impenetrable, and possessing a physical skill that was by far superior to any human. As the dragons get older, they are even able to use magic, and since these winged creatures had a long lifespan the wisdom they could end up possessing could humiliate even the wisest of men.

There was no way the Nobles would be able to look down on them, right? There should be a limit of how conceited they can be.

He even took the opportunity to remind them of the Basilisk he had seen before in Carne Village, and…

“…He easily wiped out one of the Six Scriptures… and although he said he didn’t kill them, it would be a bad idea to make an enemy of someone with such power.” Gazef finished in a serious manner, waiting expectantly for the Noble’s comments.

There was no way they could dismiss Ainz as a threat now—

“...In that case, it should not pose a problem so long we attack before that man can call forth his monstrous pets.”

*For God's sake—!!*

“…Enough.” the King, who had been witnessing the exchange with tired eyes finally interfered “We have deviated from the main topic long enough. Right now we need to decide whether to comply with his request or not.”

"Well... if your Majesty says so..." The nobles did not refute, temporarily holding back their personal opinions. Gazef showed a look of gratitude to the Monarch to whom he had sworn allegiance, which was met with a tired nod.

And so the discussion began. And with each passing minute, it only turned worse and worse.

The sad truth was that the Re-estize kingdom was divided in two: the Royal faction and the Noble faction. Currently, the only thing keeping both working together (or at least tolerating each other’s presence) was the constant, annual war with the Baharuth Empire. The King had talked to Gazef about this, so it was more than a simple supposition, it was a terrible *fact*.

Considering this, Gazef was worried that, if they formed an alliance with Ainz Ooal Gown, the war would end and the Kingdom would no longer have a reason to stand together. His home, the land he had sworn to protect as the King instructed; would fall down from the inside in a civil war.

“—damned Gown!”

…then again, the hate and wariness that had been focused on the Empire seemed to reside now on Ainz Ooal Gown.

After all the disputes of power coming endlessly from both factions, his heart and mind were exhausted. However, Gazef did not let this show on his face as he remained silent, standing just behind his Monarch.

The Nobles had been discussing back and forth for a while now, without reaching any conclusion at all. Some believed Ainz was more bark than bite, while the more knowledgeable in magic believed it was better not to antagonize him.

…although they only meant that the Kingdom should let it pass this time only, while they reunited
information to properly confront Ainz later and recover the lost land.

Gazef really hated politics.

Just as he thought the discussion would finally be postponed for the next day, a knock was heard from the main door of the Throne room. One of his warriors went to open the door, before hurriedly coming to Gazef’s side.

“Captain, may I have a word?” the warrior muttered hurriedly, clearly worried.

Finding Gazef's gaze, the King nodded gently as an indication. Having gotten permission from the King to leave his side for the moment, Gazef walked to the other side of the Throne room. This chamber was wide enough to hold a small party, so this distance was enough to speak privately while completing his job as guard.

Gazef could not go out of the room without leaving the Monarch without his bodyguard after all, so this was a fair compromise.

“Captain, a letter was delivered at the front stage… it is not addressed, nor signed, but the way it arrived it’s unusual.”

“How so?”

“It— er, it came tied to… the leg of a Nachtkrapp.”

Oh no.

His men understood the implication of that particular communication method. Gazef had told them about it after all.

“And the message?”

“It’s only a map, with an area delimited…”

Ah… so that was the reason Ainz had not specified his demand. It was true that it was better done with an actual map, but the timing was odd.

Shouldn’t it have arrived at the same time he disappeared?

Then again, maybe the delay had happened due to the odd communication canal, since no guard would expect a Nachtkrapp to deliver a letter. They had probably tried to scare the bird away or something of the sort before noticing the parchment it held.

Nodding to the man, Gazef took the high-quality parchment and opened it, confirming it was nothing more than a detailed map before going back to deliver it to Rakesheer. That way, if there were any spells or harmful substances in it, the spell caster would be able to detect and nullify them.

When Rakesheer found none, he placed the map on the middle of the small table the Nobles and King were sitting on. The parchment was large enough for it to be read by everyone present, without need to take it and pass it hand by hand individually.

The area Ainz was requesting was actually… very small. It would make his territory a Nation-State, situated just between three countries: The Re-estize Kingdom, the Baharuth Empire, and the Slane Theocracy.

Now with that question answered, the discussion began anew, completely eradicating Gazef’s hopes
of letting the matter rest for another day.

Sighing internally, he knew this was only the beginning of a long, dreadful day.

****************************************************************************************************

“James-sama! James-sama, please wait!” Climb exclaimed as he jogged after the adamantite adventurer, who hadn’t said anything after their brief encounter with Ainz Ooal Gown.

“…I know you want me to explain, but that is not something I can do right now.” James muttered softly without looking back at him, walking with long strides towards the Palace’s exit. Climb wanted to insist, but figured that maybe the adventurer was keeping silent since they were still walking in the hallways, passing a few Knights now and then, who could listen to their conversation.

A place without people may be better for this.

So Climb remained silent, following behind both adventurers as he temporarily forgot he was the one that was supposed to be leading them out of the Palace. It didn’t take long for them to step out of the building, so Climb waited a little longer to make sure no one was around before inquiring once again.

“James-sama, what—“

“I told you I can’t.” James actually turned this time to look at Climb, with a serious but conflictive expression “Not yet… I know I ask for too much, but please give me time. There is something I need to sort out before I can share this with anyone.”

The blue gaze was almost pleading, for him to understand, to not question any further. Considering everything the adamantite adventurers had done for him and for the Kingdom, Climb couldn’t do anything other than nod in acceptance, swallowing the worry and confusion that was threatening to consume him.

James and Shizu had proven time and time again that they were trustworthy, that they were people that cared for the well-being of those around him and tried to help others the best they could.

If Climb could not trust them, then who could he trust?

With that determined thought in mind Climb straightened up and nodded, standing still just out of the Palace as he watched the adamantite adventurers leave, doing his best to ignore the uneasy feeling on his gut.

Shizu and James walked by the less transited parts of the city, as had been planned, before stopping at a pre-secured location. Once inside the building, no one would be able to use divination magic on them, and no spy could hope to trespass the wards Hadrian had placed around the property, as it was a mix between Yggdrassil magic and his original magic.

Just in case, CZ evaluated the surroundings before moving from their position near the entrance, but the building was effectively empty except for the shadow demons hiding on the walls and ceiling.

The adventurers walked down to the basement before activating their respective portkeys, which brought them directly to the Sixth Floor, right in the middle of the zone covered in circular runes. A soft, tingling sound echoed to indicate their arrival, designing them as allies for the Golems that were warding opposite directions of the circle.

Jumping lightly to avoid stepping over the second and third layers of runes, which were meant to
bind any intruders, Shizu and James finally felt secure enough to let their act drop.

“The Captain-Warrior’s face!!” Pandora exclaimed, bending over in an exaggerated expression of amusement as he returned to his usual appearance “Although Climb was also panicked, don’t you think my fair lady~? I really liked their expressions!”

He pointed dramatically to his face as he finished the sentence, trying to emphasize his comment. CZ looked at him with her usual deadpan look for a short moment, before bringing up her hand to cover her mouth and releasing a soft “Uwahh...”

“Please don’t respond like that.” Pandora said in a sing-song voice, dragging the vowels as he shrugged his shoulders in a playful manner.

“…But I have no choice but to respond that way to disgusting things…” CZ answered simply before walking away towards the passage that led to the upper floors, probably intent on reporting to Albedo their successful mission.

Pandora raised his arm to accommodate his military cap, not answering CZ’s comment. He busied himself inspecting his uniform, making sure his jacket was hanging from his shoulders at just the right angle, that his cuffs were perfectly buttoned and that the badges that adorned his uniform were not crooked.

He only stopped his inspection once he felt CZ had left, so he was now accompanied only by the Golems. Clicking his heels once and straightening up, he finally decided to use the ring of Ainz Ooal Gown his Master had gifted him, teleporting to the area he was meant to guard: the Treasury.

Truth be told, Pandora’s Actor was quite confused by the attitude of his comrades.

Hadrian-sama had given him permission to go out of the treasury, in fact, his Lord had actually instructed him to travel inside Nazarik, since Pandora was meant to cross reference the knowledge he held with the actual condition of it.

So he checked the traps he knew should be in place, met his fellow NPCs and talked to them, doing his best to see for himself the truth as he already knew it. As expected of his creator, Momonga-sama, everything was as Pandora already knew it should be.

The only thing that perplexed him was the way the others reacted to his presence. It varied depending on who he encountered, but for some reason people tended to look… coldly at him.

No matter how much he thought on the subject, he couldn’t really understand why he wasn’t well liked.

With his manner of speech, expressions, style and appearance, he should be coming off as SUPER COOL! Besides, Pandora was created by a Supreme Being just like most of them, which meant that he was perfect just the way he was.

Pandora wouldn’t change anything, his appearance, his clothes, his personality; all of it was as it was meant to be, as it had been defined by the one and only Momonga-sama.

So he ignored the way most servants would try to avoid crossing paths with him, even if it did hurt somewhat within.

But in the end none of that mattered. He had been created with a specific role in mind, he was an Area Guardian, and there was no one within Nazarik that could do what he did.
‘Hello Pandora, how have you been?’

And that was proven by the numerous visits he received from Nazarik’s Lord, Hadrian-sama. He, along with the Floor Guardians, were the only ones that didn’t seem to find Pandora’s presence unpleasant.

At first, the visits were meant to help Pandora role-play successfully as needed. Sebas’ test of loyalty was only the beginning, and, very deep inside, he admitted to be grateful for the butler’s foolishness.

Without him, Pandora wasn’t quite sure what would have happened. But since that occasion had him interpreting the magnificent role of being in Hadrian-sama’s shoes, his Master had admitted that there would be times where Pandora would have to impersonate him, which meant he needed to undergo a special training.

An actor needed details of the characters they impersonated after all. This meant that, since Pandora was to impersonate Hadrian-sama, he needed to know more about the way his Master thought and reacted.

During the first sessions, Pandora limited himself to act, and Hadrian-sama would only correct him on the details. The way he talked, the way he walked, the expressions, the tone of voice, all of it was criticized thoughtfully. It made Pandora very happy, since not only was he improving his acting skills, he was also learning (although very little) about his Lord.

He really thought he couldn’t be happier.

But then, as the sessions advanced, such a simple explanation was not enough for him to understand the difference between reacting this or that way. With this in mind, Hadrian-sama actually began to explain a little about the reasoning behind his actions and decisions.

‘But why?’

And Pandora began to question them. Up to this date, the Area Guardian still didn’t understand how such a simple question had surprised his Master so much.

‘What do you mean?’

‘Why choose that path? Wouldn’t it be better to—’

His Master remained silent during his whole speech, as he explained an alternative that, he considered, also fitted Hadrian-sama’s pattern of decision-making.

‘Are you… questioning the plan I have devised?’ the question was soft spoken, more than mad; his Master seemed simply curious, even expectant to some extent.

So, naturally, Pandora straightened and clicked his heels together, answering firmly while saluting in a way a soldier would.

‘Yes! Momonga-sama always said that every plan had blind spots, and that the people that could spot them should always speak up!’ That particular phrase had been followed by a frustrated speech, as Momonga-sama spoke to no one in particular while pacing within the treasury, how the most recent raid would not have failed if Luci ★ Fer had actually said something.

Truth be told, Pandora wasn’t particularly fond of that Supreme Being. He would die for Luci ★ Fer and follow each and every order he gave, but if Pandora was ever forced to choose between him and another Supreme Being, he would go with the latter.
His relationship with Lupusregina was specially strained for this very reason.

‘Wonderful! Absolutely wonderful!’ his Lord had exclaimed with an expression Pandora identified as genuine happiness. He could recognize it like the back of his hand, having practiced it numerous times already.

This moment marked the end of the acting sessions, and the beginning a new role as an adviser of sorts. When Pandora asked for a reason, he was told that no other servant ever questioned anything.

‘If I say white is black, then is black. Do you have any idea how frustrating that is?’

But Pandora still had a duty to complete within the treasury, which was one of the reasons advice was only provided when his Lord came to visit him. Hadrian-sama had also mentioned something along the lines of ‘Albedo would get mad’ but Pandora wasn’t sure if he heard right since it had been almost inaudible.

To be honest, Pandora had never felt lonely while guarding his area, deep within the treasury. He certainly loved to administrate the items, equipment, weapons… ah, to classify them and keep them on pristine form! It was his job, and everything he could ever ask for, he felt something was amiss when he was away from the treasury for long periods of time.

But when he started to have regular visits, his job became even better.

So what if the other NPCs didn’t like him? The Floor Guardians always took his opinion in consideration, and Hadrian-sama always smiled at him, calmly and sometimes amused, but he smiled nevertheless.

It was alright, so long Hadrian-sama and the Floor Guardians were within Nazarik, he didn’t mind getting the cold shoulder from most of the other servants. He could ignore them just fine.

It was during one of those visits when Hadrian-sama told him about the events to come, and how the warrior persona he had constructed, James, was meant to meet with the magic caster he truly was, Ainz.

Pandora had naturally assumed he would be roleplaying as Ainz, since that was the reason he had practiced so much, but Hadrian-sama had shook his head and instructed him to go as James.

‘I will be using my own magic after all, and you can only replicate Yggdrasil spells.’ was the reason behind said decision. Pandora argued against it; and his Master smiled knowingly before countering each and every argument in a debate that lasted only a couple of minutes.

If he recalled correctly (and he most certainly did), Pandora had only ‘won’ an argument once in the last few months since this all began.

They discussed the details the rest of the afternoon, having a short session to practice the new role as James he would have to play, before deeming it was good enough to fool the people Pandora would have to interact with, since none of them were particularly close to the adventurer persona.

He couldn’t wait to receive his Lord’s evaluation! It was going to be a positive feedback, surely!

With this happy thought in mind, he began to clean the trophies and re-organize them all over again.

**************************************************************************

…This was beginning to get terribly dull.
Harry yawned for the third time as he watched the debate come back and forth. The Noble section seemed adamant that Ainz was not really *that* threatening and that it should be plausible to kill him if they gathered enough, strong forces. The Royal section on the other hand voted to comply with his demands, at least until they saw Ainz fight against the Empire so they could assess his weaknesses and counterattack. Some even mentioned the possibility of him dying on the battle against the Empire, which was deemed unlikely but still commented on.

Even when Carne Village was brought up and the Nobles considered sending a troop to question the villagers about Ainz, in the end it was rejected since they were aware Ainz lived quite close to that village, and there was no way he wouldn’t notice the Kingdom’s envoys.

*Dull.*

*Very, very dull.*

Harry had increased his aura exponentially before calling it back and becoming invisible, so everyone rightfully assumed he had left the Throne room. Harry had then, added repellant wards to avoid bouncing with another person accidentally, as well as silent and odorless ones.

He had stayed to judge the Kingdom’s reaction, but from everything they had discussed, there was nothing he hadn’t already considered and planned for. Each and every scenario was already taken into account.

Bored by the tedious talk happening over the table, he chose to walk over to Rakesheer’s position, who was still writing down madly over a parchment. This was the sixth page he had written, and it didn’t seem to be going to stop anytime soon.

He examined lazily the page that was heavily stained by ink, reading over theories upon theories of how Harry’s spell worked and its classification. Rakesheer was writing about both, the “debuffing spell” that silenced people, and the “Adivination magic” or “Faith magic” that detected lies. It was wrong on almost every aspect, but it served to show the difference between the magic of this world and his original magic.

Harry was actually quite surprised the Nobles and the King were not worried about his “lie-detecting” skill. He had mentioned it with the objective of stopping them from making a stupid decision after all.

Didn’t they think Harry would notice a fake-alliance using that? It was Legilimancy and it did much more than detect lies, but he had determined that should be enough to discourage any back-stabbing proposals.

Not like it seemed to be working though. Poor idiots.

Figuring nothing of importance was going to happen, he finally decided to apparate away out of the room. He was curious about the inner structure of the Valencia Palace, so he strode calmly among the halls while thinking about the next course of action.

From what he had witnessed, the Noble faction seemed much more problematic than the Royal faction. None of them were perfect of course, but the first one was definitely much more… suicidal, quite intent on dismissing ‘Ainz’ as a threat.

Should he send the, recently acquired, Eight Fingers on them?

One of the positive results from the whole “Demon invasion” to the Royal Capital was that the heads of the eight divisions were now under Nazarik’s control.
Nobles or not, the underground society was powerful enough to override them on their own… hm, but that would be a waste of resources. No, it was better if the Eight Fingers focused on their investigation on the Empire.

The main benefit of that specific, shady organization was to provide him of information after all. It was particularly good since it had ties not only within the Re-estize Kingdom, but also on the Baharuth Empire and, to a lesser extent, The Slane Theocracy. Other close-by countries were still out of reach however, like the Holy Kingdom and the Republic, so the need to improve on the intelligence network was still there.

With this in mind, Harry confidently decided that the Nobles didn’t matter in the slightest. Their only impact was the weight of their decision on whether to ally with him or not, and Harry had already done what he could to try to sway them to his side.

He really would rather fight against the Empire than the Kingdom however, mostly because while the Empire could recover from the loss without much difficulty, the Kingdom would certainly end up completely devastated.

The inner structure of the Empire was much more stable thanks to the ‘Bloody Emperor’, Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix, who had established an absolute monarchy by purging many of the nobles. The young man was smart enough to get rid of the useless Nobles, who were in turn replaced with commoners that were actually capable of performing their functions.

The great violence used during this purge caused people to give him the nickname "Bloody Emperor" but still, the benefits were easy to see, since under the young Emperor's rule the Empire had continued to gain more and more prosperity. They had also established a Magic Academy that was widely known among the human nations, and engaged in various magical research projects to improve the life-quality for the Empire's citizens.

Compared to the Kingdom, which was falling apart from the inside… well, it was obvious which Nation had the advantage.

Besides, the objective of this alliance was only to gain territory in a legitimate manner, so he was being empathetic by supporting the weaker nation.

“Originally the E-Rantel region was the domain of the King Ainz Ooal Gown. The Kingdom of Re-Estize is illegally occupying this territory and must now return it to its proper owner.”

That was the message Harry was trying to portray, and it could be done regardless of which Nation became his ally. An alliance with the Kingdom would end up in a mutual beneficial union, and the land would be delivered willingly without much loss for the Kingdom. An alliance with the Empire on the other hand would end up with the Kingdom’s sound defeat, even complete extermination was possible, and the land would be delivered simply because the losing side couldn’t do anything but comply with the winner’s demand.

The secondary objective was also quite promising: to perform a striking introduction for the Imperial Court Wizard of the Baharuth Empire, Fluder Paradyne.

The old man was considered to be the strongest wizard of the Empire, rumored to be comparable to the Thirteen Heroes. More than that however, Fluder had a personality that could be described as interesting.

Rakeesher had talked with ‘James’ about Fluder a couple of times, describing a man that cared very little about politics or social standing, and whose main passion (or obsession, depending on who
described it) was to learn as much magic as he could. He had already surpassed the usual, human lifespan, with a rather incredible age of 268 years.

Fluder should not be very difficult to sway, if Harry displayed high-tiered magic… and this way Harry would have a nice source of information to learn how the magic of this world actually worked.

The spells were the same as those in Yggdrasil, but Harry wanted to understand how the people in this world learned of them, how did they use them, how did they administrate their mana in order to use it as efficiently as possible. Would it be similar to the way Harry had learned magic in Hogwarts?

If done correctly, that information would prove to be useful for strengthening Nazarik, as well as his future Nation. While those on Level 100 could probably not get much stronger than that, those that could still level up may be able to learn a thing or two.

He was brought out of his musings by the sound of a cane hitting the floor, as the King Rampossa III walked down the hallway and towards Harry. The King had injured his knee in the last war and sometimes lost his balance, but still managed to walk regally without any aid.

"... The strength of the nobles is necessary to repel the invasion of the Empire, if their advice were to be rejected abruptly, this country could split in two without needing the intervention of the Empire." the King said softly, seemingly speaking to no one in particular. Gazef, who was walking just behind Ramposs, simply bit his lip in response.

Had they taken a decision then?

Just as he thought this, the King suddenly halted in his walk, eyes focused on something behind Harry. Turning around, Harry could see as Renner walked towards him, accompanied by Climb.

"Father, Captain-warrior."

The King smiled at Renner, who ran towards him with light steps, and nodded at Climb who was bending down in a deep bow.

"It seems that the meeting has finally ended." Renner said softly, tilting her head lightly to the side.

"Yes, there were many issues to discuss."

"Then it was like that, Father… If you would like to share the source of your distress, I may be able to offer counsel." she said tenderly, smiling sweetly at her father.

Her ideas were not a trivial matter.

One of the reasons she was known as the 'Golden Princess' was because she had an agile mind and an admirable spirit. Not only had she established renowned institutions, she also proposed new laws, mostly focused on helping civilians in the lowest part of society. Moreover, it was not simply charity, but social welfare policies that gave civilians who were willing to help themselves the opportunity to be self-sufficient.

Although there were obstructions on the part of the nobles who did not want to reinforce the position of the civilians, and almost all the established institutions were dissolved, the wide range of people who knew about this and the people who were benefited, all held in high esteem the efforts made by the Princess. Harry personally considered she would have made a better leader than any of the Nobles and Royal family combined, if simply because she seemed to have a good head on her shoulders.
"Then I will listen carefully when we return to your room." the King nodded at her calmly.

"However, father, now is the time for your daughter to walk. Climb and I will walk around and then we will return."

Hearing that the Princess indicated that her walk was more important than an argument with the King, Climb’s expression stiffened. Harry watched the interaction with keen interest, eyes focused on Renner.

There was something… about her. He couldn’t really pinpoint it, but it was odd. She was smarter than she let on, sure, but it seemed to be combined with something else…

"Is that so? Then go, and once you get back, come and see me in my room to discuss this."

"I understand. Come on, Climb."

"Excuse me."

The King just stared silently as the two of them left, only advancing once they were gone. Harry looked at the men briefly before turning around to walk down the path Renner and Climb had used, still thoughtful.

He followed the pair closely, but the Princess’ behavior was as sweet as it always seemed. Harry was tempted to stay, to hear Renner’s opinion about the ultimatum he had given to the Kingdom, but in the end there was no more time left to spare.

Tearing his gaze away from Renner, who was picking flowers while humming, he shrugged uncaringly before apparating back to Nazarik.

He was probably not missing anything important either way.

The two weeks he had given passed in the blink of an eye, and no answer had arrived. He thought it odd, since a lack of answer could be passed as refusing an alliance with him, but just as the sun was about to hide on the last day, his wards were finally triggered by the Royal envoy.

Harry activated the Mirror of Remote View to check upon the new arrival, the Messenger was seemingly riding a horse that was beyond exhausted, and the man wore a panicked expression on his face as he got closer to the Village.

…Ah, he had forgotten it took about five days to arrive on conventional ways from the Royal Capital. Essentially, Harry had only given them a week to decide, while the rest of the time would be used to deliver the message. Harry had gotten so dependent on instantaneous, magical travel, he hadn’t even considered it… Poor guy really.

The messenger muttered out loud the name of Ainz Ooal Gown the second he got close to the Village, out of breath as if he had been the one running instead of the horse, looking around agitatedly. Why was the man so scared? The day had not ended yet.

Fifth, one of the regular maids, walked towards the Royal herald calmly from seemingly nowhere, as she had been the one appointed to receive the message once the sensory wards were activated. The envoy visibly relaxed upon spotting her, so Harry assumed he had been worried about arriving too late.

After exchanging pleasantries, Fifth returned to Nazarik using the portkey Harry had given her, while the envoy gave the horse to a villager so the poor animal could rest, before the man went
towards the Chief’s house to request a bed for the night.

Harry stopped using the Mirror after that scene, reading a few more documents and approving most of them until Fifth finally arrived at his office. The portkeys brought all NPCs to the sixth floor after all, and there were no shortcuts if the NPC in question didn’t know how to use [Gate].

Fifth came closer after he gave her permission, using both hands to deliver the Kingdom’s message while bowing down. Harry took it and thanked her, before unrolling the high-quality parchment.

…Was this the result of Renner’s intervention? If so, Harry could only recognize her efforts.

Letting out a satisfied smile, he left the parchment on the desk before standing up and striding out of his office.

He needed to prepare for the oncoming war after all.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:
Hi again! I’m not dead, just have been busy with Real life– very, very busy!

Welp, for those that have read my other story, I guess you can now see the scene where Harry speaks with Pandora (Chapter 5) in another light right? My poor little egghead! This was based on canon actually, in one of the Pure Pure Pleiades! episodes, so… yeah. Poor little thing. I really want Maruyama to write from his POV!

Truth be told, I wanted to include the war on this chapter too, but it is already long, with 8.9K words = 21 pages in Word, and I’m also missing Fluder’s POV and the backstory James is going to come up with!

So I ended up splitting it (I already have bits of the battle, so next chapter shouldn’t take much time to finish… probably). Wish me luck please, maybe then I’ll have it ready for next month haha.

On another note, regarding the romance request I received in a couple of reviews... oh dear readers, if only you knew how many times I’ve tried! But every time I see those parts in my drafts I’m like "That doesn't make any sense" or "What is that? Is it supposed to be romance? Because it is a terrible, awful attempt if it is" and end up deleting the whole thing. So no, sorry but my stand of no pairings remains.

Why write insinuations of it when I know I can’t write romance? Easy to answer, I thought I could.
I wrote this story in such a way that would not allow me to change my mind and suddenly remove all traces of it, this because I wanted to “force myself” to write romance since I know I suck and wanted to be better at it… Needless to say, it backfired spectacularly. Another reason was that I wanted everyone to be in-character, and let’s face it, Albedo is not the same without her love-induced craziness.

So now the result is this story! Sorry about that, really… but oh well, no use crying over spilt milk.
Thanks for reading and hope you liked it! Next chapter is going to be very interesting~ See ya’ later, dEBB987.

P.D. Special thanks to Daruvael and Rosedraquia ‘cause I really loved their reviews! Love ya buds, seriously. <3 You motivated me to keep writing~ May free-time and inspirations always be on your side dear fellow authors!
Chapter 21 War (part 1)

It had been two months since the expected declaration of war came from the Empire, and now it was the season which turned one’s exhaled breath white.

In villages all over the Kingdom the work had transited from outdoors to indoors due to the cold, so few people ventured outside now. This was true even for the adventurers, who gave the impression of working all year round.

Although there were cases where hungry monsters suddenly appeared in villages and there were emergency requests to fill, there was less to do for the most part. Because of that, adventurers considered this something like a season of rest, and channeled their energies into training, recreation or their side businesses.

That said, the Fortress City of E-Rantel wasn’t like that right now. It was filled with life and activity. The countless people gathered were shabbily dressed. Most of them were commoners, but their numbers were astonishing: there were around 250,000 of them. These many villagers had been gathered here for the battle against the Empire.

Loud battle-cries rang out everywhere. Few of them were shouted in earnest, but most were gripped by the fear of the coming battle, as they trained to distract themselves from the nagging worry that they would not be going home after this.

The wars with the Empire were a yearly occurrence and, as a result, many people had been broken down by them. There were those who laid down in unobtrusive niches, others who vented their frustrations by snapping at those around them, while a few sat down and hugged their knees in despair. They had no fighting spirit at all and only wanted to return home alive.

The older they were, the more likely they were to do this.

This was the true face of the Royal Army, and this scene was reflected all over the city.

To begin with, they had been rounded up by force. Then they were told that they would have to risk their lives in bloody battle for no gain to themselves. Even if they managed to return alive, they would return to a wasted harvest, and their lives would be very difficult.

For the villagers, this was no different from a drawn-out execution.

Logically speaking, it would be difficult to house and feed 3% of the Kingdom’s population within a single city. However, E-Rantel was the frontline of the wars with the Empire, and had been designed to accommodate the Kingdom’s military might.

After several battles with the Empire, the city had been prepared to handle 250,000 people with ease. Their storehouses were massive, and were probably the largest buildings in the city. The supplies kept pouring into those storehouses, one packed wagon after the other, and the unmotivated people looked fearfully at those carriages. It was as though they were staring at death slowly creeping towards them.
Everyone knew what was going to happen next.

This was a large-scale transfer of rations, which meant the war with the Empire was soon going to begin.

In the past, their battles had been fought during the harvest season of autumn. This war would be fought in winter, requiring expenditures for things like firewood, warm clothing and other items which had never been needed before.

As if the fear the war brought wasn’t enough, the fact that they would have to fight under these conditions made it even worse. The gathered people could only pray to their respective Gods, as their commanders began to reunite them on predefined groups.

The militia was to begin their journey towards the battlefield; the Katze plains.

In the meantime, in a secured residence near E-Rantel, the King and two men were gathered, discussing the last stages of the battle that was about to begin.

“How did it get like this…” Rampossa III whispered worriedly, as his tired eyes ran through the document he held.

“If the Empire continues its yearly attacks, the chances of the Kingdom collapsing from within will be quite high. Keeping taxes as they are will cause a lot of people to starve to death, and if we reduce taxes, we won’t have enough to fund our policies.” Marquis Raeven said heavily, summarizing out loud the report.

Ranpossa placed his hands on his forehead, covering his face.

This was the result of years of saber-rattling with the Empire. By the time they realized the Empire’s aim of paring away at the Kingdom’s strength, it was far too late.

“Your Majesty…” Gazef whispered, saddened at the situation the Kingdom was facing.

“How… disturbing. If we’d known earlier… if only we’d dealt with this before the nobles had fully split into their factions… how foolish.”

“Certainly not, your Majesty. I feel trying to address it would only have caused the Kingdom to split into two and triggered civil war, and the Empire would have taken advantage of our weakness to invade and conquer us. The conditions that led to this situation are the result of the previous Kings’ inaction. It’s impossible for one generation to erase the accumulated sins of all its ancestors.” Raeven said firmly, reassuring the King that there had been no way to prevent it.

“I just want to leave a decent Kingdom to the next— to my children.” Although the King spoke slowly, every word was laced with powerful purpose.

“Then… is this not the chance to do so? With this alliance, even at the high cost of losing part of our land, should we not strike a telling blow to the Empire so we can win a few years of peace for the Kingdom?”

“That is certainly possible, since that Magic Caster has accepted our terms of alliance… if he is as powerful as we predicted, we may save the country from falling into chaos.”

The King knotted his brows, and Gazef’s heart ached.

Losing E-Rantel and its immediate surroundings was a heavy hit for the King, since those lands
belonged to the Royal Family, it meant that the King’s power was going to be reduced, while the Nobles’ would remain untouched.

But if this alliance prevented more wars from developing, the Kingdom would be able to recover however slightly, passing from a critical situation to one that was not so precarious. It wouldn’t fix all their inner problems, but it would at least give them time. The alliance was the action of a King, forced to extreme measures to save his country.

Then, just as it seemed this oppressive atmosphere would last forever, Marquis Raeven spoke once more.

“I apologize for my curtness, but we can’t waste time here, so let’s get this over with quickly.”

Although his face remained as cold as that of a snake’s, Gazef could sense human emotions within him, as well as qualities that he could bring himself to admire.

*I was a fool to not have seen his true nature beforehand. Am I really so bad at reading people?*

With regret in his heart, Gazef recalled the meeting in the King’s chambers before they left the Capital. There had been five people present; King Ranpossa III, Gazef himself, Third Princess Renner, Second Prince Zanack and Marquis Raeven. The things which the last two had said filled Gazef with surprise, shattering his set-in-stone preconceptions about the court.

In particular, learning that the man Gazef despised as vermin was actually the man who worked hardest for the King shocked him beyond description.

“I seem to be constantly causing trouble for you, and my daughter, Marquis Raeven.” Ranpossa III lowered his head to the seated Raeven, a sincere expression on his face.

“Your Majesty, please don’t do that. I only regret that I didn’t take action earlier.”

“Marquis Raeven, allow me to apologize to you as well,” Gazef said as he bowed deeply. “I was deceived by surface impressions and harbored disrespectful thoughts about you without understanding your true intentions. Please forgive this foolish one.”

“Captain-Warrior, there is no need to worry about that.”

“Even so, if I am not punished for my foolishness, it will stick like a thorn within my heart.”

Raeven seemed incredulous for a moment, shaking his head lightly from side to side before dictating Gazef’s punishment.

“I understand… then, from now on, I shall not address you as Captain-Warrior, but as Gazef-dono. Consider that a token of my respect towards you.”

It was a punishment that didn’t even count as a one, so Gazef replied with sincere gratitude.

“Many thanks, Marquis Raeven.”

“Think nothing of it, Gazef-dono. Then, let us begin discussing the direction in which the Kingdom will go from this day forth...”

Raeven continued to speak about the dark future that awaited them for many hours to come. As such, it was only once that meeting ended that Gazef could leave the secured residence, walking among the busy streets of E-Rantel while covering his head and shoulders, as to not drag attention.
Gazef slowly scanned his surroundings.

The soldiers, shouting as they ran back and forth — they were the citizens. They were the people of the Kingdom, who came from villages all over the country to fight this war. They didn’t look too reliable as soldiers however, since their hands were meant to hold hoes and shovels, not lances and swords.

Protecting them should have been the duty of the ones who ruled over them.

If they handed E-Rantel over, they would be hurting the people who lived within the city, just like the King said. **However—**

Gazef recalled the image of Ainz Ooal Gown he had seen that day. The Magic Caster had returned to Carne Village just after dusk, with no sign of having fought a hard battle.

That was right. That man had easily defeated the enemies which had utterly decimated Gazef and his troops.

Truly, he didn’t have any trouble imagining him as a King, it was a title that suited his peerless form of that day.

In addition, Gazef had a hunch. Although it stemmed purely from his warrior’s instinct, he would be willing to swear that the uninjured Ainz he had seen return to Carne village had the faint scent of death rising up from him.

It was not so much that they had fled, but he had “let them flee”.

Because of that, Gazef trusted more his instincts over what Ainz had actually said. There was no basis or evidence for this at all, since the bodies of the Sunlight Scripture were nowhere to be found, but they were most certainly dead.

“…I don’t get it…”

He was a magic caster who could annihilate the foes which had defeated Gazef, and he could do so without a scratch.

How powerful was he? Certainly, he was several levels above Gazef and his warrior band.

What would happen if a being like that appeared on the battlefield and used his magic?

When two magic casters used magic of the same tier, the stronger magic caster would naturally be able to bring forth a more powerful spell. Considering that, what horrors would result if Ainz Ooal Gown were to cast a *[Fireball]*?

Whenever Gazef tried to imagine it, he ended up with a picture of dead people wearing the Empire’s armor. Without doubt, they would expire in one hit with just a single spell from that great magic caster, Boullope’s words be damned.

If it was a fire spell, they would become charred corpses. If it was an ice spell, they would become frozen corpses. If it was a lightning spell, they would be electrocuted corpses. No matter what perspective he tried to take, all he could come up with was death.

However, that sort of thinking might be too naïve. What if that man ended up using magic he had never seen before?
“Ahhhh… at least he is on our side and not against us.” Gazef breathed out with relief.

Gazef felt that Ainz Ooal Gown was not a heartless man, given the way he had saved Carne Village. Yet, at the same time, he sensed that he was no ordinary good Samaritan. The image he had of Ainz was that of a man who showed no mercy to those that opposed him.

As such, Gazef was infinitely glad the Re-estize Kingdom had not opposed him.

Like this, as the days passed, the Kingdom’s army finally arrived at the battlefield.

A crimson expanse spread before the eyes. It was a barren wasteland, devoid of almost all greenery; the Katze Plains.

It was a place where the undead and other monsters wandered, feared as a dangerous place by all living. The most fearsome thing was the thin mist that shrouded its monsters no matter the time of the day.

However, that mist was absent now. Visibility was excellent and one could see a long distance without issues. It was as though the land was welcoming the combatants of the upcoming war onto itself as future undead.

The undead had dispersed with the fog, and none of them could be seen. A silent, lifeless stretch of land spread before them.

Collapsed towers, built hundreds of years ago, jutted out from the earth like scattered tombstones. The towers were originally six floors high, but everything above the third floor had collapsed, and the debris was everywhere. Less than half of the thick walls were left.

As if to look down on this unhallowed land, a vast structure loomed high from the other side of the boundary— the side ruled by the Empire’s troops.

It was built with huge logs that were nowhere to be found on the surrounding plains, with sturdy walls that seemed to deny passage to everything in its vicinity. It was ringed by a shallow ditch that was carefully excavated and filled with sharpened stakes. This was to ward against unintelligent undead.

On the other side of the ditch flew countless flags, bearing the insignia of the Baharuth Empire.

That was only to be expected. After all, this building was the Imperial Army’s garrison base.

The Empire had mobilized 80,000 knights for this operation. The garrison could house all of them, which itself spoke volumes about the base’s size. And this formidable fortress was built on a piece of easily defended terrain, on top of a hill. This hill wasn’t native to the Katze Plains, but built up entirely through magical landscaping.

Even the Baharuth Empire, which had adopted a national strategy of increasing the number of their magic casters, could not complete a work like this in a short time. This structure had been built over a period of several years.

Originally, this place was intended to be the starting point of invasions targeting E-Rantel. That was to say, this massive fortress had been built with the intention of withstanding an extended siege by the Kingdom’s hundreds of thousands of troops.
The Kingdom had no answer to the creation of this fortress, simply because they had no spare manpower or resources to attack the garrison.

Although they would unite when the Empire invaded their own country, when it came to launching an invasion, they had to discuss things with fellow members of their Noble faction. In addition, deciding who would foot the bill for declaring war despite none of their land being at stake was also an issue.

In the end, none of the nobles would bother unless they were in the line of fire.

This way, as it was usual, the two armies formed their battle lines along the gentle slopes of the crimson plains, staring each other down.

The awe-inspiring army of the Kingdom was 245,000 men strong, divided into a left wing of 70,000 men, a right wing of 70,000 men, and a central column of 105,000 men, skillfully encamped throughout three hills. However, this encampment was not ringed by wooden fences, but formed of a gigantic mass of troops.

The foremost five ranks of infantry carried two-handed pikes, each one easily over six meters long, and they were formed up into a spear line.

Their job was to substitute for an anti-cavalry fence in order to counter the heavy cavalry that comprised the core of the Empire’s fighting strength. They didn’t use actual anti-cavalry palisades for a simple reason; protecting that many people would require a ridiculous amount of wood. For a large army, it was better to make good use of a spear line.

Although this formation was quite solid and presented many problems for any attackers, it had its weaknesses as well.

Since the formation was dense and the weapons carried were heavy, it was all they could do just to stay in place and prevent enemy charges. As such, they lacked the ability to react quickly to enemy maneuvers, and if the Empire used bowmen or magic, their losses would be heavy.

Then again, not much more was expected from mere peasants. All that was required was that they deflect the first charge of the enemy.

On the other side, the Empire had 80,000 men.

Their numbers were vastly inferior to those of the Kingdom. However, the Imperial knights were relaxed, without so much as a hint of fear. They didn’t feel they would lose at all, and this confidence came from knowing their own personal strength.

Even so, it was a simple fact that there was a vast disparity in the military power of both sides. Although it wouldn’t be a problem if they could fight forever without fatigue, they were only human. Once they got tired, even the difference in their individual abilities would eventually be caught up to, and the Kingdom would have an upper hand.

The Kingdom also had one more advantage, a large one.

That was the value of each individual.

Most of the Kingdom’s troops were composed of peasant levies. In contrast, the Empire fielded professional soldiers called Knights. A peasant was simply expected to hold a weapon, while each Imperial knight was carefully trained. Every loss by the Empire was more keenly felt than a similar loss by the Kingdom. The Empire simply couldn’t afford to squander their knights in foolish
Therefore, a pitched battle on open terrain like this was to the Kingdom’s advantage.

Because of all this, the battles fought between the Empire and the Kingdom were typically minor skirmishes. The Empire’s objective would be accomplished simply by pulling the Kingdom’s army onto the battlefield. There was no need to waste valuable human resources, and the Kingdom knew this as well.

This scripted pageantry was what passed for “war” between the Empire and the Kingdom.

Even if that magic caster called Ainz Ooal Gown took part, it would still end in a minor skirmish. That was what most of the Kingdom’s nobles thought. After all, the Empire’s knights were not just a military force, but a police force as well. They were the people who protected the safety of the Empire.

What could a single Magic Caster do against that?

Some of the Nobles even doubted that Ainz Ooal Gown would arrive on time.

By tradition, the Imperial forces would parade before the Kingdom’s troops, and then fall back. The Kingdom would then sound a victory cry.

This was how it had always been, so for them, it didn’t even matter if the skirmish was settled even before that magic caster arrived to the battlefield.

This time around however— much to their surprise— The Imperial army didn’t move.

They had remained still ever since they had deployed from the fortress-like castrum and arrayed themselves before the Kingdom’s forces. It was as though they were waiting for the Kingdom to make the first move, or for something else.

“They’re not moving. What’s going on?” one of Raeven’s bodyguards, the paladin of the Fire God, Boris Axelson, spoke up.

This was at the headquarters where Raeven was, as the one leading the 105,000 men in the middle of battlefield.

Marquis Raeven stood beside Gazef, speaking quietly as he surveyed the motionless Imperial knights from the safest place he could find, an observation point atop a hill that was slightly higher than the others.

If the Empire didn’t move, then neither could the Kingdom.

An attack by the Kingdom now would be extremely foolish, given that they had already formed their spear line. Also, since the enemy was willing to retreat, there was no need for risky forays.

“All right then, looks like they’re waiting for us…” Gazef muttered, but it was still loud enough to be heard by the others.

“The final declarations have been made, so they should be joining battle soon… Captain-Warrior, do you have an idea on what the Empire might be waiting for?” the same bodyguard asked him.

Thirty minutes ago, representatives from both armies had begun negotiations in the central area between them. Granted, that was simply a statement of unacceptable conditions from both sides that
was more of a stage play than actual arbitration. Its true purpose was to show that each side was compassionate and willing to avert war until the last moment.

Of course, negotiations would break down, and that would be the signal for the fighting to begin.

If they were following the example of previous years, the Imperial Army should have begun moving out immediately. However, this time around, they remained stationary.

“Isn’t it obvious? They must be aware of our alliance with Ainz Ooal Gown. Knowing the intellect of The Blood Emperor, I have no doubt he is waiting to see that man’s power as well,” Marquis Raeven replied, throwing a quick glance at his bodyguard before turning his attention once more to the battlefield. “One strong enough to make the Kingdom give up part of the territory.”

Although the bodyguards were all well into their middle age, and their strength wasn’t what it used to be, they had been orichalcum-ranked adventurers in their prime, and there was something about the way they carried themselves that made Gazef feel that he couldn’t take them lightly.

This was only proven right when the man nodded, not questioning further after Raeven’s short explanation.

“I really do hope this ends up without much intervention from our side however. Considering the other Noble’s discussion… I can’t assure they will keep coordinated.” Raeven muttered under his breath, frowning at the current situation.

The Empire organized its legions by appointing a general over each one, under whom served division commanders, brigade commanders, and other officers, all in strict regimentation.

In contrast, the Kingdom’s armies were composed of the house troops and levies each of the Kingdom’s nobles could muster. The King was the overall commander — this time replaced by Raeven as per Rampossa’s request — but each host would act as their own faction saw fit.

Simply put, it was a rag-tag bunch of misfits.

Although Gazef had the title of Captain-Warrior, in the end, he was only the commander of the warrior band which was directly loyal to the King, and he had no authority to give orders to the nobles. While it was possible for the King to order the nobles to listen to Gazef, the nobles had always disdained Gazef the commoner, and doing so would sow the seeds of future grudges. The King was aware of this, and so he ordered that Gazef wouldn’t do such thing. That task would fall instead over Raeven, which was well respected by both factions.

“…It’s the same thing as always, but I dislike the tension in the air.”

Gazef tapped the sword at his waist for reassurance, and —out of habit— started to recount the items he had equipped.

The Gauntlets of Vitality, which negated fatigue. The Amulet of Immortality, which let him regenerate his wounds. The Guardian Armor, crafted of the hardest metal known to man, adamantine, and enchanted with magic that deflected lethal blows. And finally, Razor Edge, a magic sword crafted in pursuit of absolute sharpness, which could carve through enchanted armor like the proverbial hot knife through butter.

Mentally nodding to himself, Gazef looked out at the serried ranks of the Imperial knights with renewed energy.

He didn’t think there were any strong opponents in the Empire besides Fluder Paradyne. Now that
he was equipped like this, he even dared harbor the faint hope that he might even be able to defeat Fluder.

On the other hand, he didn’t feel like he had any chance of defeating Ainz Ooal Gown. He could not even imagine the possibility. Gazef was glad they would be acting as allies, since even a hypothetical scenario regarding a fight against that magic caster was enough to imagine himself losing.

No matter how hard he tried to think positive and consider how things might go in his favor, the only thought that came to mind was of himself being instantly slain by the mysterious magic caster.

“What’s wrong?” Raeven interrupted his musings.

“Ah, nothing…”

He knew he was the greatest warrior in the Kingdom. Allowing himself to appear weak would only lower the army’s morale.

Raeven smiled thinly.

“Is it? Speaking of which, Gazef-dono. Do you know the conditions required to completely dominate E-Rantel?”

Gazef shook his head, silently wondering why Raeven had chosen to speak about that now.

“Odd as it sounds, I’m also quite anxious to see that man on action. After all, if he really wants to take over E-Rantel, Ainz Ooal Gown needs to show his power here. In addition, he has to achieve a victory so complete and absolute that none of the surrounding nations—in particular the Kingdom, that can instantly deploy its troops to take the city back—would dare think of making a move.”

Gazef shivered, mentally thanking once more that they were not enemies but allies.

“What’s wrong—?” at that moment, the Marquis’ eyes turned back to the path from where the Kingdom’s Army had first arrived, eyes opening wide before softly whispering “…Gazef-dono. It seems that man has arrived.”

Indeed, a magnificent carriage advanced towards them, following behind mounted outriders. What made onlookers gasp was the fact that the carriage had no driver, and that the horse which pulled it was bigger than an ordinary horse. It was not a Sleipnir, but a magical beast which looked like a scaled horse.

Raeven snapped out of it, and following the agreement he had previously arrived to with the King Rampossa, addressed the soldiers he had under his direct command.

“Present arms to our guest!”

Protocol dictated that one should present arms to the heads of state of allied powers.

However, that protocol wasn’t supposed to exist in military installations. That was because foreign dignitaries wouldn’t normally come to a military base. Even if they did, presenting arms to an outsider was something which should be done in a safe, open place, and not in a military installation.

In addition, there was one more thing.

One would almost never present arms on the battlefield. This is because soldiers might think that the person to whom their commanding officer was presenting their arms to was superior even to him.
That was one of the unspoken rules of the battlefield.

“Gentlemen, please present your arms.” The order was passed down by the appointed leaders of each smaller group of men.

If it was an order, then all they had to do was follow. There was no need to think too much about it, so the soldiers raised their arms obediently.

The carriage stopped before them.

Gazef, even if not short by any means, still needed to look up to see the carriage properly.

It was breathtakingly beautiful. Its base color was a black that seemed to have been cut from the night sky itself, and the entire chassis was covered in elaborate ornamentation. Said decorations had the subdued radiance of brass, while the leather was a copper color, giving the whole an air of elegance and classiness. Although the embellishments might have been a little overdone, it didn’t reach the point of tackiness. Instead, it resembled a giant treasure box.

Gazef had ridden the King’s personal carriage on occasion, and he was of the firm opinion that the one in front of him was superior to it.

The other reason why he gasped was because of the beast pulling the carriage. It was most definitely not a horse. The creature gurgled softly, and its sharp teeth could be seen in the slight opening of its mouth. Its entire body was covered in scales that seemed to belong to a reptile, and underneath those scales were prominent, rippling bands of muscle.

Everyone around it was filled with an acute sense of alarm. Gazef himself could feel as sweat broke out on his back and palms, and he could hear Raeven’s bodyguards hyperventilating from somewhere behind him. The beast was that terrifying.

Amidst the storm of panicked breaths, the carriage’s door opened, and a couple of dark elves alighted.

The girl holding her twisted black staff was adorable, and the boy seemed very energetic. However, the things on the little girl’s hands were utterly incongruous with the image she projected.

The left gauntlet was an evil-looking thing that resembled the hand of some demonic lifeform. It seemed to be made out of some sort of ominous black metal which was covered in twisted thorns. Its fingertips were sharpened into points, and the dirty radiance surrounding it seemed vaguely metallic, but resembled some sort of strange secretion. Just a single look filled all who saw it with a distasteful feeling, like their very souls were rejecting it.

In contrast, the right gauntlet looked like the pure, immaculate hand of a maiden. It was white in color and its slender proportions were covered in elaborate gold embroidery, which further emphasized its exquisite beauty. It drew the eye like bees to honey, and just like seeing a world-class beauty, the onlookers felt like they might lose their souls to it.

“A-Ah, Ainz-sama. I think we’ve arrived.” the girl muttered, while the boy smiled and nodded enthusiastically in confirmation.

“Is that so? Thank you, Mare. Aura, any news?”

“All crystal clear!”

Although Gazef didn’t know what they were talking about, he didn’t have time to dwell on it.
After the twins elves descended, another figure revealed itself, the presence so heavy Gazef could instantly feel as his body tensed to withstand the sudden, additional weight.

Ainz Ooal Gown was dressed in the trappings that one would associate with an arcane magic caster. To begin with, he wore a jet-black robe, and on top of that, another black cloak, which was doubly curious. In addition, he bore a staff which was lavishly decorated, but not to the point of being overly ostentatious. Around his neck was a silver necklace set with a gemstone.

“We bid you and your entourage welcome, your Majesty, King Ainz Ooal Gown.”

Raven greeted before lowering his head. Gazef mimicked the action, but didn’t hear anyone else following suit.

Despite knowing it was very rude, he had to turn behind to look. The groups that conformed their army were frozen in place. They had been overwhelmed by the Sorcerer-King’s presence and could not move.

He could understand that. However, if this went on, it wouldn’t turn out well.

In the end, it was one of Raeven’s Commanders who broke through their stupor.

“Legion!” the man roared in a crisp, bracing command that fitted perfectly his rank. “A salute! To his Majesty, the King Ainz Ooal Gown!”

Slowly, the soldiers presented their arms once more to Ainz, at least those closest to their current position.

Raeven had positioned this small group here precisely so they could welcome him in this manner.

Ainz simply nodded and thanked them, before giving them permission to rise. The act came completely natural, as if he were used to given this kind of command, which only served to cement his image as a ruler.

Ainz casted off the black cape on his shoulders, the jet-black fabric flapping like a raven’s wings as it spread open. In that moment, the cold, oppressive air that surrounded him vanished like it had never been.

All that was left was an ordinary human being, with the presence of an ordinary human being.

It was frightening.

Judging by the sound of someone gulping behind him, Gazef wasn’t the only one that thought so.

He had witnessed Ainz’ shocking nature before, but even so, the man standing in front of him seemed too ordinary, which only deepened his trepidation. He felt like a large predator was slowly drawing close to him.

A wolf in sheep’s clothing.

The soldiers, who knew nothing, were probably beginning to sense the oddity of the situation. The air filled with a growing disquiet.

“I see the encounter is about to begin. Considering the agreement was for me to open this battle with a spell, I trust you’ll allow me to go at the front of your soldiers.”

As per Renner’s suggestion, the Kingdom had written among the mutual agreement that Ainz would
begin the battle with his most powerful spell. This was done with the intent of measuring up his real power, determining weaknesses, and seeing which would be the best way to defeat him to recover the lost land.

That being said, why would a magic caster go to the front of the battlefield?

Everyone knew that spell casters were not proficient at close combat, so they were usually placed on the rear. This way, the others could serve as shields and not allow the enemy to come near them.

“We could ask for nothing more.” Raeven promptly acquiesced, a perfect poker face in place before he wrinkled his brow in puzzlement. “…However, I must ask, from whence shall your forces arrive, your Majesty? We cannot wait too long…”

“There will be no need to wait, my force is already nearby.”

The answer made Gazef’s heart skip a beat. Anxiously, he looked at the sky, but there didn’t seem to be any airborne troops approaching.

Naturally, there was an extensive security net surrounding the rear of the Kingdom’s army. The approach of anyone apart from those troops would be immediately reported to general-ranked personnel. Could it be that a report had been lost?

Raeven looked around, but it didn’t seem like anyone present knew anything about it.

“My apologies, I didn’t mean to alarm you. It’s only natural you cannot detect it, but I assure my force can arrive immediately.” Ainz answered the unspoken question with an amused smile upon seeing their reaction.

“I see…” Raeven trailed off, seemingly doubtful “How many troops will be coming?”

“The necessary.” Ainz replied simply with a secretive smile “There’s no need to assign me an honor guard either, my subordinates are here after all.”

Although Raeven hid his reaction masterfully, the people behind could not conceal their worry. As allies, such relevant information should be conveyed to them—

At that moment, Ainz made a light motion, and the people closest to him relaxed his shoulders, Gazef included.

“Well, it should be fine.

Gazef suddenly felt as if he could lay back and relax, trusting Ainz completely to achieve victory.

But wasn’t there something…?

…No, I need to be alert. The Kingdom’s safety…

The thought was pushed to the back of his mind, deemed irrelevant as Ainz walked. The crowd of soldiers parted to let him through, as natural as breathing, until Gazef couldn’t see his back any longer.

He could only see him again once the Magic Caster arrived to the front of the line, right at the middle of the 105,000 men that composed the middle wing of troops. This made him wake up from his stupor, sharing a worried glance with Raeven before requesting permission to go with Ainz at the front.
Had the King come to the battlefield, Gazef would have been unable to leave his position, but since that wasn’t the case he could move as deemed necessary.

After a hurried, curt nod, Gazef barked the order to his men and followed through the parted crowd to reach Ainz’ position in the front.

In the meantime, inside the Empire’s Palace, Fluder, along with those whose position allowed them to be close to the Blood Emperor, watched the battle develop through magical means.

The spell [Sixth sense] allowed them to see everything Fluder’s familiar—an Adarna—did, the image being projected in a special item. The Adarna had regenerative skills that made it ideal for exploration tasks, since it would survive even if the enemy attacked, so long it wasn’t a fatal blow.

The only downside about this method was the fact that the spell consumed magic for as long as it was active, so the surveying would end the moment Fluder ran out of mana. Although there were several disciples standing nearby to share their mana, it could still be insufficient if the battle was a long one.

This was the best option however, since this method couldn’t be prevented by most known Anti-divination magic.

As such, they saw as an unfamiliar flag rose into the air, parting the Kingdom’s army in two, to make a path. It was a flag Fluder had never seen before, adorned with a bizarre crest that seemed to belong to another civilization entirely, since he didn’t even recognize the form as familiar.

All eyes were on that magic caster as he finally reached the front of the army, an action questioned by everyone present.

“Gramps, is there a tactical reason to move to the front?”

Fluder turned towards the only person that called him ‘gramps’, the Blood Emperor, Jircniv.

“Your Imperial Majesty, magic also has to obey the laws of this world. As such, I cannot think of any, considering he is facing a whole army. If it were a one on one battle, it would be different, but —”

Fluder’s phrase was cut short as a voice resounded, seemingly coming from the walls of the room.

“Greetings, soldiers of the Baharuth Empire.”

…Which was completely impossible; they could only hear what Fluder’s familiar could, which would mean that Ainz Ooal Gown’s voice was resounding through the whole battlefield—

“I am fully aware that you are here to fight, to die in the name of your Emperor, Jircniv Rune Farlord El Nix. Unlike him however, who has carelessly sent you to fight me, I am not fond of meaningless death. I am a merciful King, and as such, I will give you a handicap, should you chose to use it.”

The view changed as Fluder’s familiar—a simple-looking small brown bird whose only distinctive feature was its four thin long tails—flew closer to Ainz’ position. They could see the man speak with a finger over his throat, which was probably due to the spell that carried his voice to the whole battlefield.

The magic caster raised the unoccupied arm and made a harsh, horizontal movement. As if he were
lash at something with his bare hand.

At the same time, a glowing line was drawn just behind the Empire’s fortress. As if something were burning, white but clear smog rose up until it formed some sort of wall, so everyone in the battlefield could probably see the new addition clearly, no matter the distance or position they were in.

“If you chose to retreat, all you have to do is cross that line, and my forces will not persecute you. Cross that line, and you will be safe.” the silky voice was inviting, a small understanding smile seemingly gracing his features.

Fluder wasn’t paying attention to any of that though.

In such a short span of time, that magic caster had used two spells he didn’t know existed.

The glowing line traced at their side of the battlefield irradiated an overwhelming power. This stormy pressure that overflowed didn’t exist physically, so only Fluder and others with similar abilities would feel the torrent of power— of sheer magic — emanating from it. His body shook violently, as if exposed to the frigid north winds.

“Im-Impossible ...”

How could it be possible?

How is it possible that someone stronger than him can exist? But even if he tried to deny it, what he saw before his eyes was pure reality, his ability to perceive a magic confirmed it.

"7th level... No, with the enormous amount of energy it has, could it be... The proof that 8th level exists...?"

If this was true, then it was limited to the field of legends, which made him unable to speak. The 5th level was already in the realm of heroes, and the 6th level that Fluder had reached was a kingdom that no one had ever touched before.

However, someone who had easily reached the upper levels had suddenly appeared before him.

And he seemed to be a healthy young man. Did his age really correspond to his appearance?

He should have gone to the battlefield, if he could see that man personally, he would be able to measure up his magical power. Maybe if Fluder hurried, he could still use [Teleportation] to go to the fortress—

“Now then, let us begin.” the silky voice turned dangerous in an instant, but the image that followed completely threw Fluder off balance.

“What is that?!?” he exclaimed, raising from his seat upon seeing unknown magic.

Ainz had waved his arm. In response, a magic circle sprang into existence, roughly ten meters in radius and shaped like a dome. It was centered on him, and although the people on his left and right, a couple of young dark elves and Gazef Stronoff, were engulfed by it, they seemed fine. It would seem the magic circle didn’t harm allies.

This fantastic sight drew everyone’s attention, even if they knew this was an emergency situation.

The magic circle glowed bluish-white, and translucent symbols appeared across its length and breadth. The sigils changed with kaleidoscopic speed, shifting between runes and letters that nobody
had ever seen before.

Trembling, he witnessed as the world was dyed with a bright light, and Fluder felt his consciousness vanish.

What happened in front of his eyes was inexplicable.

Even Fluder, who had lived for more than two hundred years, someone who had reached the highest peak of magic attainable for human beings, could not understand what was happening.

"I ... what ... how is this possible?" Fluder could feel something warm flowing down his cheeks, but he didn’t bother to clean it, or rather, he no longer had the strength to do it. The shock had caused his emotions to sink into chaos, who could have seen it coming?

Ainz Ooal Gown had reached a level that Fluder could never reach.

"If that was the 8th level, then this is... the 10th level? No! What— hoooo, God!"

The immense energy surrounding the Magic Caster Ainz left him speechless. Finally, the tenth level, maybe something that surpassed even that. While it existed in legends, there had never been anyone who could provide absolute proof of its existence.

But now someone who was in position to do so had deigned to appear before him.

Fluder, who had managed to remain standing up until now, knelt with tears flowing from his eyes. He now could have a teacher, someone that could teach him the abyss of magic—!

"Gramps, Gramps, what's up, Gramps?!" Fluder, using the tiny piece of thinking that was still somewhat coherent, managed to regain a semblance of consciousness after realizing that someone was calling him.

"Fu, fuhahahaha!" but still, he couldn’t help but release a laugh of pure joy.

Had he been coherent enough to actually see the others, he would have noticed that the royal guards, the acolytes and the priests, the faces of everyone except Jircniv’s were frozen by the commotion.

Jircniv couldn’t help but frown upon seeing the way Fluder was acting.

Fluder Paradyne, the man kneeling and wailing like a child was considered the Magic Caster of the highest order, and a hero who possessed an unparalleled education and knowledge. Innumerable passages in the history books of the Empire told about how he alone confronted the monsters that threatened the peace of the nation, and emerged triumphant. His holy behavior also meant that he was honored and respected by many people.

In truth, many of the people present here felt that for him.

And now, Fluder was laughing in a way that shattered the mental image everyone had of him.

There was no doubt that Fluder exuded terrifying pressure, and it was not the warm feeling that Jircniv sometimes felt about the man who was as close to him as a father.

He possessed immense magical power, enough to face the Four Imperial Knights at the same time, and his voice had taken a demented tone as he seemed to be going crazy.

It was natural for the nearby Imperial Guards to feel goosebumps of fear.
"...be able to control, such magic! Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful! Fuhahahaha! " Fluder was kneeling, crying like a newborn even if his face was smiling madly.

No, that wasn’t right.

This was the true nature of a man who had abandoned his position as magician of the Imperial court to lean out and take a look at the deep mysteries of the abyss called "magic."

Until now, it had been hidden under the mask of a hero, but in front of a powerful magic caster, he couldn’t help but show himself.

“Cast a calming spell over him!” Jircniv ordered to one of the disciples present in the room, who had been looking fearfully at his mentor.

“Y-yes! [Waves of the Sea]!”

"Hahaha… ah. Thank you my dear Jir. My pupils, open your eyes wide and appreciate the fact that you can pose them on the largest, the most eminent of all the magic casters on the continent. Now that you have seen the end of your trip, you must work hard to achieve it!" Fluder seemed unable to control the wide smile on his face as he spoke.

“A spell of a higher level... how incredible..." Fluder continued to murmur before finally focusing on Jircniv “Haha, please forgive my rudeness, Your Imperial Majesty, my mind was elsewhere."

I didn’t notice. Jircniv thought sarcastically with a frown, but couldn’t comment on it.

Not after seeing what happened once that colorful spell finally activated.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Well, at first I had placed the whole War in a single chapter, but then I noticed that it wasn’t reader-friendly in the slightest. This is a fanfic, not a book, so it should be short enough so you can read it in a go without your eyes burning for staring at the screen for too long.

Well, thanks for reading and hope you liked it! See ya’ on next chapter. This part has 7.8K words = 19 pages in Word.
Chapter 21 War (part 2)

“A spell of a higher level... how incredible...” Fluder continued to murmur before finally focusing on Jircniv “Haha, please forgive my rudeness, Your Imperial Majesty, my mind was elsewhere.”

I didn’t notice. Jircniv thought sarcastically with a frown, but couldn’t comment on it.

Not after seeing what happened once that colorful spell finally activated.

The skills to perceive danger existed.

It was a skill that allowed one to feel the danger as if reading a book. And it was extremely important.

This skill had two categories. One was based on instinct and the other on deduction or studies of experiences. If the first one noticed the beat of his own heart when a monster approached, the latter would be seeing through any small change in the environment, small changes in the smell or sound, to locate the enemy.

In the case of the latter, if one went to battlefields or missions, the ability would sharpen without need of actual training. Needless to say, it was born from the experiences of walking the line between life and death, so many were not lucky enough to survive and learn from the experience.

What the army of the Empire was feeling right now belonged to the second category.

It was as if the air had been suddenly electrified, as they watched the people of the Kingdom move back and to the sides, so the new arrival could walk to the frontlines without issues.

A magic caster, someone that should have been kept back to avoid any close-combat that could endanger him, was walking towards them nonchalantly.

And then he had spoken, the words traveling through the wind as loud and clear as if that man was just at their side, close to them. The Knights that conformed the Empire’s army just shared a glance at the odd offer of safety, which by all rights shouldn’t exist on a battlefield.

They didn’t have much time to dwell on it however. Once the Magic Caster had stated what he wanted, a magical circle had grown around him, symbols dancing merrily at all sides.

The Empire’s troops gasped out in surprise. There was no fear or tension in their voices, it was as if they were watching a beautiful show. However, the ones with keener instincts started looking around themselves in obvious discomfort.

“Retreat.” one of them whispered, looking with wide eyes at the magic displayed from the other side of the battlefield “Advise the General to order a retre—”
The Knight who had spoken couldn’t finish his sentence.

That was because the magic caster had ended the spell, the glowing circle dispersing beautifully, as if composed by fireflies.

So there’s nobody here.

Harry thought, feeling slight disappointment. After everything he had done to lure them out, it seemed there really were no players present in the Baharuth Empire.

Yggdrasil’s Super-tier magic was incredibly powerful. Because of that, during a large-scale battle, bringing down a person who could cast super-tier spells first was a basic tactic.

Considering this, Harry had acted as bait, coming seemingly alone except for Mare and Aura, waiting a long time for the Super-tier magic to activate and being on the front so anyone watching him could have a clear, direct shot. There were countless methods to accomplish this aim, considering Harry hadn’t placed any defenses—or at least none that could be detected—in the area.

He had also cemented his image as a Summoner, what with the Basilisk and the Dragon, so any players out there should be confident enough to confront him. After all, a summoner was one that used beasts and creatures to fight, which often meant that the player himself wasn’t very powerful.

Since the creatures did all the work, it was common that the tamer would be weaker than other players that specialized on personal combat.

However, no attacks came toward Harry. If anything, this proved that there were no YGGDRASIL players present.

“So that’s how it is. No need to serve as bait then.” he muttered, so softly that the people on both sides could not hear him, before smiling.

“Oh well, it can’t be helped.” Harry said loud enough this time, as the super-tier spell activated instantly.

“[Sword of Damocles]!” Harry exclaimed, out of habit more than because he needed to. After all, a magic caster didn’t need to say the spells out loud, but it was a courtesy so the allies would know what to be expect and work with that as a team.

A giant, stylish magical sword materialized on the sky. The size of a 30-floor building, the glowing sword fell much faster than anything of that size had the right to, impaling the objective accurately.

Aside from the 80,000 knights that formed the Empire’s army, there were also another 10,000 waiting as back up in the fortress behind them.

And every single one of them was slain in an instant.

Gazef watched horror struck as the impenetrable fortress, built to withstand the entirety of the Kingdom’s army, fell down as if it had been made of sand.

The massive sword impaled the building with a strength so mighty, it was like watching a knife go through butter. The instant the tip touched the ground however—
The deafening sound of an explosion filled the air, the pressure turning into slashing shockwaves which tore through the ground. It made no difference whether one was in the sky or on the earth, there was no hiding from it.

The Empire’s Knights that were on the back of the formation died instantly. If Gazef had to guess, he would say that at least 15,000 men had fallen.

Shouts of panic rose into the air, becoming a great wave that engulfed the entire Imperial Army, as they tried to place distance between them and the oncoming apocalypse as pieces of the collapsed structure fell down heavily.

“Say” Ainz spoke casually all of the sudden “Have you ever noticed how creatures commonly considered as ‘prey’ have their eyes at the sides of the head?”

It took Gazef a moment to recover from the shock, at least enough to actually process the question, before furrowing his brows in confusion.

He was not a specialist on creatures, so he had never even thought of that. He had never heard anyone mention it before either, but now that it had been said, he could see it was actually true on most cases.

There were even some creatures whose heads were covered with many pair of eyes, or that had some eyes in other parts of their bodies, like the back of the head as to better cover blind spots and survive against the predators.

“I had not noticed, but I suppose it’s true.” he answered unsurely, confused as for the reason they were having this conversation in the middle of the battlefield.

“I see. In that case, I suppose you never wondered why a dragon would be considered as prey, did you?”

*Good Lord, no.*

*Oh no, no no no—*

“Well, there’s actually a very good reason for that.” Ainz stated merrily to the speechless Gazef.

*Please no, not another pet.*

“The dragons have a few natural predators actually, but I really liked this one.”

Gazef wasn’t a very religious man, but he found himself mentally praying in that moment.

“His name is Hades” Ainz stated proudly, before he tapped the ground with the end of his staff.

Certainly, they had known Ainz Ooal Gown was going to cast a spell after he had deployed his magic circle.

However — how could they have possibly anticipated this?

Who could have guessed that he would cast such a spell?

Who could have imagined that he had a spell capable of destroying their fortress, which had been created to withstand the worst aspects of war, in an instant?
That the shockwaves would end up killing so many of their magic casters, that had been positioned on the back of the formation?

The Imperial knights doubted their eyes, even as they prayed to whatever gods they believed in.

“There’s no more time to waste. Ainz Ooal Gown’s power is immeasurable. Doing battle with him was a mistake from the start. What we need to do now is minimize the number of casualties. Retreat without delay!” the Empire’s supreme commander of these legions, General Kabein, ordered.

Had he not been accompanied by a magic caster that could use [Fly] he would be dead now, Adamantite armor or not. But as it was, although he had sustained heavy injuries, he had managed to escape from the collapsed fortress on time.

“Also, don’t think about an orderly retreat—”

“Of course. We’ll retreat as fast as we can… no, we’ll flee like rabbits.” The Division Leader agreed with a voice tainted with fear.

The two men who stood at the pinnacle of the Kingdom’s military might and strategic thought hurriedly flew into action. However—

—It was all too late.

Kabein’s heart ran cold with terror. The Division Leader, who was standing beside him and saw the same thing he did, swallowed loudly. Knowing that he was not alone in his feelings, bitterness began rising at the back of his mouth, and his heart pounded madly.

For a short moment, a strong earthquake had been felt on the Empire’s side of the battlefield. That wasn’t the problem. The view that had stopped them in shock was the creature that had sprouted from the ground, like a tree that covered the earth, easily tripling the size of an adult dragon.

No, that was nothing as pleasant as a tree.

“What is… that?” the Division Leader muttered in a shivering voice. Kabein knew fully well the species of that beast, even if it was usually just contained in legends, easily recognizable by its huge size.

A Leviathan.

Like Dragons, these creatures had different sub-species. He had never heard about one as menacing as this one however.

Carried by sturdy, centipede legs that seemed to secrete a corrosive substance, the liquid seemed to soften the soil, and was probably what allowed it to burrow in the blink of an eye. That thing could obviously move while burrowed, and although its speed was unknown, it seemed that it could only be detected as an earthquake once the creature was about to come out to the surface, and not a second sooner.

The head was serpentine in nature however, so it looked like an odd cross between an insect and reptile, like a snake with the body of a centipede, the whole body covered with an exoskeleton.

If that thing attacked the Empire’s capital, the place that was meant to have the highest defense, it would be destroyed instantly. There was no way to fight against such a monster.
That was a reality which was far, far too horrible to accept.

“For how long was that thing beneath our feet…?” The man hailed as one of the strongest in the Empire, Kabein, could only grind his teeth in naked terror and stare dumbly at the suddenly appearance of the monster.

“Retreat!” That shrill, high-pitched scream came from somewhere at the other side of the battlefield, and he could see as the knights followed that order quite gladly.

But of course, the Leviathan was much faster than human beings.

A screech resounded in the air, as the huge snake-like head of the creature opened its jaws to reveal three lines of sharp teeth. Instead of it opening like normal however, the creature imitated a blooming flower, the jaws opening in four sections like a carnivorous plant.

There were pincer-like horns at the sides of the head, as if the creature were wearing a crown, and although no eyes could be seen, it was obvious the leviathan could sense them just fine.

The monster —which should have been at quite some distance away— closed the gap with frightening speed. The giant centipede-like Leviathan moved incredibly fast for something of its size.

As it grew larger, the earth began shaking under its thunderous insectoid legs, which made the knights’ hearts pound madly. Then, as their hearts felt like they would burst in their chests, the enormous silhouette was upon them.

The multiple legs acted like blades, going through flesh, bone, armor— it didn’t seem to matter.

Be they generals, officers, or knights, now they were all the same chunks of bloody flesh. Once they were ground into the mud, none of that mattered any more.

The screams rose up every time those gigantic insect-like legs came down, since the huge creature trampled over them carelessly. The sounds of humans being crushed to death and turned into chunks of meat went on and on.

Several people desperately thrust their weapons forward. The Leviathan, whose armored body was too massive to evade the attacks, was simply hit solidly by the points. However, their weapons couldn’t even pierce through the exoskeleton to cause harm.

The Leviathan didn’t mock their futile resistance, but simply charged forward.

Before the knights realized that their fatal resolve was meaningless, the creature had already reached the centermost portion of the army.

“Run away! Run away!”

“Retreat! Retreat!”

The way the Brigade Commanders shouted these orders was closer to a wail. The titles bestowed upon them—the title belonging to the mightiest warriors of the Baharuth Empire— now seemed so shockingly superficial.

Why had they been so proud of such an insignificant little thing? That was how great of a shock they had received.

They couldn’t fight such a monster. No one could.
They shouldn’t throw their lives away for no reason.

In response, all the knights began to flee. It was exactly like a swarm of spiders scattering in all directions.

The sound of heavy legs impaling the ground was very near. Kabein was so afraid that he didn’t dare turn around to see how close it was, and his fear led him to stick his spurs into his horse’s flanks with all his might.

However, the horse didn’t move. Even when he kicked it with more force, it still didn’t move. It flattened its ears against its head and stayed still.

At that moment, amidst the chaos, a group of horses kicked their way through a horde of fleeing people. The men on their backs clung tightly to their horses’ bodies, seemingly ignoring the reins that dangled loosely.

Ironically enough, the trained warhorses were frozen in panic, while the untrained horses were running wild in terror.

In the first place, horses were timid animals. It was only after training that they could be considered fearless warhorses. However, it was precisely because of this training that they couldn’t move. Their minds were already overloaded, but they hadn’t forgotten their training.

“To think training would have the reverse effect! [Lion’s Heart]!” Kabein enchanted a spell of fear resistance at his own horse, as well as towards the one that the Division Leader he had been talking with was using.

With nothing but a silent nod going through them, Kabein and the Division Leader spurred their horses into wild motion at the same time.

Riding a horse through a violent mob that had lost their discipline in the chaos was very difficult. However, it was possible because they were skilled enough to do it, as their high rank prepared them for situations like these.

They both skillfully threaded between the flow of humanity.

“That magic caster’s a monster! How can someone like him be allowed to exist in the world?!”

The Division Leader cursed Ainz as his horse jerked up and down in its top-speed gallop.

“Dammit! We have to do something! I need to think of some way to protect our world — our future!”

Fear was probably the reason why Kabein was subconsciously mumbling to himself. If he didn’t say anything, if he didn’t distract his mind, that intelligent brain of his would probably sketch horrific nightmares of the danger approaching him.

Seeing the ever-approaching, ever-expanding silhouette of the monster, Kabein and the Division Leader ignored everything else and just kept running side to side.

“This isn’t a battlefield any more, it’s a killing floor! Just run! Run until you reach it!”

There was no need to explain that they were talking about the salvation line, drawn at the beginning of the battlefield, the white smoke now looked almost inviting.
Kabein worried that it was nothing more than a cruel joke, that the smoke would end up being a poison of sorts, but what else could they do, but take their only hope with iron’s grip?

By this point, the surrounding knights had thrown down their arms and fled in a panic. Of course, since there were just too many people, it was impossible for them to move freely, so the centipede had little to no issues catching up with them.

It was a carnage.

If it could only use its massive physical strength maybe they would have time to escape. However, Kabein’s hopes were destroyed as the Leviathan used a wide-area attack.

The huge jaws opened to release a thick, green substance, the smoke covering the sky, instantly killing the Hippogriffs— which were part of the Air Guard — as if it they were nothing but flies. The riders had been trying to distract the huge beast, buying time for the army on the ground to escape, but they had been dealt with in nothing but sheer seconds.

Had he had a clearer mind, he would have cursed at the loss of the air guard, the only ones that would have been able to escape from the terror covering the ground. Horrified as he was however, all Kabein could do was think of that monster.

Ainz Ooal Gown —this magic caster, all by himself— was a monster who could take the nations forged by men and obliterate them like a child could kick down a sandcastle. No number of walls or soldiers would ever be able to stop him.

Their spies on the Kingdom had informed them the man had tamed a dragon and a basilisk, so the Empire had prepared for these eventualities, but the reality was beyond the ability of any words to describe.

Kabein’s armor was made of the rare metal adamantite, and further enchanted with powerful magic. It was the best defense the Empire could offer to their highest ranked men, and it had been sufficient to let him survive up until know.

But that ended as the Leviathan burrowed the lower half of its body underground, spikes suddenly extruding from the ground and impaling at all the living beings in its path, killing everything in a matter of seconds.

He realized that Ainz’ power surpassed mortal imagination. His creature was slaying thousands, perhaps tens of thousands if they were unfortunate enough to be densely packed when the spikes sprouted from the ground.

In the end, Kabein didn’t have time to feel pain as his adamantite full-plate armor was pierced as if made of paper, killing him instantly.

This was very bad.

It was a vague statement, but Raeven simply didn’t have the words to describe the situation more clearly than this. He repeatedly shook his head, as if trying to wake up from this nightmare.

Level 10 magic, little more than a legend, only available in the land of imagination.

Marquis Raeven watched the battlefield completely frozen, surrounded by the ex-orichalcum adventurers he had hired as bodyguards.
Even when he logically knew they were on the same side, that the monster wouldn’t suddenly turn and attack the Kingdom’s forces, Raeven’s basic survival instinct still screamed at him to leave, in fear of death.

“The horses are shying. Even these trained, hardened warhorses are so frightened they can’t move.” One of his bodyguards muttered.

“Is that… Is that the magic caster you feared?! Is… is that the power of Ainz Ooal Gown? Then, then… that…” Raeven exclaimed incoherently, thinking at the way Gazef had insisted, doing all he could to remark the power of Ainz Ooal Gown.

What would have happened if the Kingdom hadn’t listened to him? If they were actually fighting against that?!

"No matter how you think about this, it can’t be true. It should not."

Ainz Ooal Gown could control such a creature, such a monster.

They had initially assumed that Ainz was on the same level of that terrible magic caster, Fluder Paradyne of the Baharuth Empire, but the truth was much worse than that.

A magic caster could only control monsters that were weaker than themselves, that much was common knowledge. Maybe if several casters reunited and made a magical ritual, concentrating numerous spells from numerous people, or if they had powerful magical tools available, the result may differ, but that situation was unlikely.

Expressed simply, this magic caster, Ainz Ooal Gown, was stronger than a leviathan.

“Even that mighty magic caster, Fluder Paradyne, shouldn’t be able to do it. That means—”

“Retreat.” Raeven cut through the bodyguard’s sentence. “It’s… it’s obvious that man doesn’t need the support of the Kingdom’s troops. Give the order to retreat without breaking formation. If they panic at the order of departure… we’ll lose many troops if they run mindlessly."

They already knew that Ainz had prepared an awe-inspiring force. With that in mind, what else could they do but leave?

Even more so considering the state of the Royal Army, the soldiers witnessing this massacre.

Raeven could only hear the section close to him, but the sound of armor clattering against itself managed to reach his ears.

The soldiers were trembling, but who could laugh at them?

After witnessing such a scene, nobody could help but break out in goosebumps, wishing that the wrath of Ainz Ooal Gown would never fall upon them. Raeven could even see some kneeling down, giving a prayer to the gods.

By this point, maybe they were praying to Ainz Ooal Gown directly.

In addition, Raeven realized that this couldn’t be dismissed as a matter of “us vs them.”

Certainly, from the point of view of the Kingdom against the Empire, this disaster was happening to “them.” But when you looked at it from the perspective of men against monsters, this brutal slaughter was happening to “us.” It was no wonder the Kingdom’s forces, made by barely trained commoners,
trembled in fear.

And fear was contagious.

If even one of them started to run away the others would follow suit, and many would die once the formation was broken, pushing and stepping over their fallen comrades in their attempt to escape just a second sooner.

No, they needed to leave, to guide them in an orderly retreat before the situation got out of control.

Raeven closed his eyes, briefly shielding them from the carnage occurring at the other side of the battle, thoughts spinning at top speed.

The fact that the plan had been to let him have the land he had requested, and then fight to recover it was downright laughable. He firmly believed that not even the other Nobles were idiotic enough to insist on that now.

But if it came down to that…

He couldn’t die yet. It didn’t matter what happened to the country. If it was to fall, then let it fall.

If taking up arms against Ainz Ooal Gown meant death, then he was willing to abandon this country and flee. He wouldn’t think of the Kingdom’s future anymore.

After all, he couldn’t die while his son was still so young. And... he couldn’t leave his beloved wife alone by dying.

Raeven imagined the form of his son before him.

*My lovely boy.*

A tiny little life had been born. It slowly grew up, and sometimes got sick. Back then, he had made a huge fuss because of that. The image of himself running around half-mad, bellowing orders, while his wife sat there in silence was deeply embarrassing.

His hands were soft and his cheeks were rosy. When he grew into a youth, he would be the talk of the Kingdom. He believed his son’s abilities would surpass his own; he could already see traces of that from time to time.

His wife kept saying that any parent would think the best of their child, but he didn’t think that was the case.

Lost in this track of thoughts, Raeven smiled and opened his eyes.

Yes, compared to his own family, the Re-estize Kingdom simply didn’t matter. He would try to keep things from reaching the point where he would have to escape, but if it came down to that, he would do so with a clear conscience.


(Is this a dream?)

A soldier from the Royal Army muttered to himself, far from the monster that was decimating the other side of the battlefield. Of course, he received no answer. Everyone’s eyes were fixed on the scene unfolding before them, and they had lost the power of speech. It was as if their souls had been snatched away.
“Hey, this is a dream, right? I must be dreaming, right?”

“Ahh. This is a fucking nightmare.”

The second time the question was asked, someone managed to answer. But their voices sounded like they wanted to run away from reality.

Impossible.

_I don’t want to believe this._

If it had been a simple monster, perhaps they wouldn’t have trouble accepting it. But a simple monster was something the adventurers would be able to defeat, at the very least.

That thing was on a category of its own. It was like watching an advancing hurricane, and nobody could muster up the courage to brave the storm.

They prayed that the monster would not come for them. Whether they were thinking about the leviathan or the magic caster that called it forth, it wasn’t clear.

Considering this was happening at Gazef’s back, he should have been able to listen to their conversation.

But he was too shocked to pay attention to such things. Gazef watched from his position at Ainz’ left side, as the panic enveloped the Imperial Army, and even though he knew the Kingdom wouldn’t have to suffer such fate, he still shuddered.

This was the terror born of realizing that the Empire, which had enjoyed of safety and military power that surpassed the Kingdom’s by far, now stood on the edge of extinction.

This was an understanding that if they dared to raise their hands against Ainz Ooal Gown, that same awful magic might end up being turned on them, on the Kingdom, on his home.

Under these circumstances, Gazef suddenly thought of something. What kind of expression did a magic caster like this—who could work a sorcery that could slaughter the living in quantities that beggared mortal comprehension— what kind of expression did he have?

Without moving his face, he spied on the man standing beside him, Ainz Ooal Gown.

The man’s expression made Gazef involuntary relax minutely. That was the same face that had graced Gazef’s own Monarch, Rampossa III, every time the Kingdom battled against the Empire. Every time the news of slavery and death reached the royal family.

It was an expression that denoted guilt, and to a lesser extent, regret.

“This is the way that causes fewer casualties actually.” as if having read his mind, Ainz said that out loud softly, almost compassionately.

“There is no war without blood, and as long as the enemy thinks they stand a chance, they will come back again. It needed to be an overwhelming defeat… at the same time; it needed to be something everyone would know they don’t have any chance fighting against. This way everyone, from militia to the Generals and the Emperor… all would know that there was no other option other than to turn around and flee. To surrender.”

That… made sense actually. Even more so since this strategy was combined by the “salvation line”
that was just behind the fortress of the enemy.

Without it, it wouldn’t matter whether they stayed to fight or not, since all of them would have no other fate other than death. The enemy would know that, so they would have stayed to battle in a mindless, useless feat.

But what could they do other than run, when Ainz had made the promise that whoever crossed that line would be free of persecution?

Now with this perspective, Gazef turned to study the battlefield once more.

Given the speed at which that creature moved, escape should have been impossible. Even if they ran with all their strength, they would still be squashed flat from behind.

However, the Leviathan was moving through the middle of the battlefield instead of persecuting them, as if to make sure to frighten the knights present on all sides. The enemy’s army had abandoned its formation long ago, now running like scattered ants as they did their best to try to reach the salvation line that had been offered.

Compared to the beginning of the battle, the Leviathan was actually sparing most knights now. Maybe if the situation didn’t change, at least one third of the Empire’s army would be able to survive. If they were lucky, maybe half would make it.

+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++

“Ainz Ooal Gown, what kind of creature, what kind of magic caster are you?!” Jircniv muttered, trembling in rage as he looked at the battlefield.

He had underestimated him. No, he hadn’t done so on purpose.

After taking all the information available from the Kingdom into consideration, he had viewed him as an enemy of the highest caliber imaginable. However, all he could say now was that he had still underestimated the man’s abilities.

His imagination simply had not been enough.

Who on earth could have predicted that Ainz Ooal Gown was so powerful? Who could have known that such power existed in this world?

The familiar dived lower, so it was flying just over the heads of the retreating army.

“Aieeeeee!”

The soul-wrenching scream echoed throughout the ranks, resounding over the Empire’s Palace with astounding clarity.

The Imperial army had fallen into panic, their regimentation in tatters.

It was a disgraceful rout.

The knights had obviously been taught how to fall back in good order. However, they no longer had the luxury of adhering to such discipline. If it would let them leave that place one second faster, if they could move one step more in flight toward a safe place, they would push down their comrades in front of them with all their might and flee.

When shoved from behind, it was unavoidable that people would lose their balance and fall. And
once they fell down, the panic-driven throng behind them would not give them the chance to rise.

The ones who fell would be trampled by the ones behind them.

Even if they wore metal armor, everyone else wore metal armor as well. They would be stamped into a single fused mass of metal and meat.

Scenes like this were happening everywhere.

The Imperial army’s casualties were not caused by the enemy anymore, but by themselves, Jircniv noted. He watched as the Leviathan that had trampled over his forces now limited itself to move from one side to the other, ‘persecuting’ without actually reaching them.

“Gramps, what is…?” Jircniv started to speak before trailing off, frowning at the state Fluder was in.

The old eyes weren’t open wide in fear. Rather, it was because he was mesmerized by the sight of overwhelming power, and had forgotten himself in his excitement.

For instance, normal people would flee when they saw a huge tornado sweeping in toward them. However, there were certain beings who admired the beauty of the tornado and stood still—even though they realized it would claim their lives.

Fluder belonged to the second category. Jircniv knew that very well, having known him for his whole life.

“Imperial Court Wizard, Fluder Paradyne!” Jircniv snapped at his parental figure, which seemed to work at least partially to wake up the older man “Do you recognize this creature? What do you know of this?”

"Indeed, there’s no doubt, that creature is a leviathan. To be able to control it so perfectly, hahaha! An impressive feat of magic!"

Fluder seemed to find all this terribly entertaining, which ignited the sparks of uneasiness in Jircniv’s heart.

Although his mentor was an excellent teacher worthy of respect, he became practically useless once the matter had to do with magic. It was extremely irritating when he acted that way.

“What kind of Leviathan is it?”

Fluder didn’t seem to be listening anymore, watching with wide eyes at the projected scene. Jircniv realized that talking to him was a waste of time and instead turned towards one of the acolytes, Fluder’s disciples.

“Do you—” Jircniv started to say, but was interrupted by a loud cry. It was a strange sound that one might expect from a strangled hen.

When they realized who had produced it, the hearts of everyone present, not just Jircniv’s, were filled with terror. In fact, he felt as if they were daydreaming.

The one who had made that unusual sound was Fluder. The man who was said to be able to rival the Thirteen Heroes. A man like that was now with his eyes open wide in terror, his gaze fixed on the image that showed the battlefield.

“T-those are! I knew it! As an underground creature— hahahaha! That man is sparing us! Is sparing
the Empire!"

“What do you mean?!?” Jircnv exclaimed completely exasperated, he needed Fluder to speak clearly, was that much to ask?

"In-Incredible! It is impossible! It’s so dangerous! My dear Jir, can’t you see the glowing sacs the creature has on its abdomen? If it so whished, smaller creatures would be born from them and completely murder all in their path! Like a swarm!"

Jircnv froze at the description given. Of course he had noticed the multiple, glowing dots that adorned the creature’s abdomen, but he had thought that it was magic symbols of sorts.

To think that the massive creature had such a skill, it was enough to destroy an entire continent by itself.

The acolytes cried in terror, which made Fluder glare back at his disciples.

"Silence! It’s not using them! Can’t you see? He wishes for the Empire to survive at least!” Fluder muttered with a smile.

Jircnv fervently wished Fluder was right.

“I believe the original plan was that I would cast a spell upon the enemy, and begin the battle with the initial attack. Then, the Kingdom’s army would follow up with a charge, but it would seem you have no intention to act.” Ainz said calmly, looking at the retreating forces of the Re-estize Kingdom, who were slowly but surely abandoning the battlefield in order.

Gazef had nothing to say.

Ainz was right. The Kingdom had broken the terms of the agreement which they themselves had made with the King of their allied country.

However, one could not blame them for losing their nerve. Gazef would defend them even in front of his monarch, Rampossa III, because he knew the overwhelming terror which had gripped them.

“Ah, I have no intention of rebuking you. I understand you were concerned that if you launched an assault, there was a chance you may be trampled along with the enemy.”

Ainz smiled in a matter that denoted he knew this wasn’t the case, but chose to give it as a valid excuse either way before continuing with “Truthfully speaking, it’s not like their participation is needed for this battle, so I don’t mind their retreat. But since this goes against the signed agreement, I will expect more terrain than the one previously accorded.”

Gazef wasn’t in position to neither deny nor agree with that statement, so he remained wisely silent. Ainz didn’t seem to have expected a response however, since he turned to address the elf girl.

“Some of them are crossing the line, so this battle should be over soon. Even so Mare, do not lower your guard.”

“Yes, yes! Please leave it to me, Ainz-sama!”

“Aura, it seems your pets won’t be needed this time around. It would be a pity not to use them however, so make them search for survivors on that collapsed structure. If they manage to find
anyone, they are to be spared and brought to me; I’d like to ask them something.”

“Understood!” the boy, Aura, exclaimed happily before whistling.

Even if Gazef couldn’t see anything, he still perceived a change in his surroundings. Something was moving, but it was more like a gut feeling than anything, a warrior’s instinct, so he couldn’t even begin to attempt to pinpoint their location.

As of now, the only ones that weren’t retreating, at least from the Kingdom’s side, were Gazef and his men, as well as—

“Stronoff-sama!”

Even before he looked back, he knew who it was by the hoarseness of the voice. The familiar pair came running toward him, the warrior in pure white armor as well as the ex-mercenary, Climb and Brain.

Climb showed him a small smile for a short moment, before facing Ainz and bowing low.

“Your majesty, Ainz Ooal Gown-hekka! We were sent by Marquis Raeven, to inform that the Kingdom’s troops had fallen back to a pre-secured location. Since this goes against our previous agreement, even though is still insufficient, please allow us to assist in any way we can.”

Climb held the Kingdom’s flag in his hand, looking quite determined, even if a little shaky. At a glance, Climb’s body was shuddering, and his stiff, frozen expression betrayed the fact that he was not quaking in excitement or anticipation.

Gazef didn’t fault him for feeling fear, and judging by Ainz’ own expression, the monarch didn’t either.

“I welcome you then, Kingdom’s envoys. Although I don’t require of your support, I will allow you to witness the end of the battle the Re-estiz Kingdom has abandoned.” Ainz said calmly. It was obvious by his phrasing that their country would have to compensate heavily for their retreat, but that was only to be expected.

As such, they watched in silence as the battle developed. Distant screams echoed over, and only this place was silent. It was as though this area was no longer part of the world.

But at last, after only a few more minutes, the last part of the Empire’s forces finally crossed the magical line. As if on cue, the Leviathan halted, screeched triumphally to the air as if rejoicing and then—

Gazef’s tensed and reached for his sword, before forcing himself to halt. Looking from the corner of his eyes at the people behind him, he hadn’t been the only one to tense and prepare for battle.

The creature was now coming towards them, running at such speed that it ended up reaching them in nothing but a short moment.

That, more than anything previously said, cemented Ainz’ words about how he was allowing the Empire to survive. Had it attacked with the speed it just displayed, not a single one of the Knights would have managed to survive.

Ainz stepped forward, and the Leviathan lowered its head until it touched the ground, as if it were a puppy awaiting praise.
“Good work Hades.” the monarch said simply, patting the lowest part of the jaws— which was the only part of the man could reach— a couple of times.

“Thank you, Hadrian-sama.” the Leviathan actually spoke, massive jaws opening in four different directions, which almost gave him a heart attack.

*It's intelligent enough to speak?*

“You may return now. I’m quite confident they won’t be trying anything upon our retreat.” Ainz said lightly, to which the huge creature nodded.

“Understood.”

After that, the leviathan used its centipede legs to cave the ground under its feet, burrowing in just a matter of seconds. Even for something of its size, it didn’t take but a blink for it to completely disappear underground.

It was only once it disappeared that Ainz turned his emerald gaze towards the defeated, now definitely much smaller, Imperial army.

“Sonorus.” Ainz muttered, placing a finger over his throat as he had done at the beginning of the battle “Since the remaining force has made use of my offer, I will assume they have surrendered. The battle has now officially ended. However, I have one last message to give.”

Ainz looked up at the sky, and it was only due to this action that Gazef noticed there was a bird flying just over their heads.

“The Re-estize Kingdom is my nation’s ally, and as such, they count with my support for national conflicts. Take this in consideration when thinking about issuing next year’s war declaration.”

The Magic Caster actually smirked at the end of that phrase, before firing a spell at the sky. Gazef found strange the action until the small bird that had been flying fell to the ground with a soft, unassuming thud.

“That should be enough. Well then, please deliver a message for me.” Ainz said turning to face Gazef “I shall request an audience with the King Rampossa III to modify our previous agreement. I will send an emissary for this action in the next 15 days, and they will need to stay on your nation for as long as required, so I’ll trouble you with their accommodations.”

Gazef steeled his posture and bowed in understanding. After the shameful retreat of the Kingdom’s forces, this was all he could do.

“As for... Marquis Raeven’s emissaries,” Ainz turned towards Climb and Brain, with only a small pause on his addressing “do let him know that I don’t fault him for the Kingdom’s retreat, and that it will be properly addressed with the King directly.”

Gazef smiled bitterly. It was like saying that the mistake was so big it couldn’t be solved by speaking with the perpetrator, so it would escalate directly to their superior. The way it was phrased made it sound more kind than what it actually was.

Climb tensed and bowed in understanding, simply muttering “It shall be done.” steely. Brain mimicked that bow, but chose to remain silent.

There was nothing else they could do but accept Ainz’ requests. After all, no one in their right minds would go against him.
…Whatever he was, since regardless of his disguise, he clearly wasn’t human.

Chapter End Notes

AUTHOR NOTE:

Jesus Crist, these chapters regarding War have 14.7K words = 37 GODDAMN PAGES in word. That’s right, that’s how many pages you just read in a go, you crazy bastards! Hope your time was well-wasted xD

Aaaand just like that, Volume 10 has ended. Next chapter will start to cover the new country under Harry’s rule, the meeting with Fluder, James’ back story and the start of a new original arc. But man don’t expect it to come out anytime soon, this one was so bloody long, I really am not sure how many hours took me to come up with this, but no way in hell I’m going through that again so soon.

On another note, I’ve just started a new story named “Raid Boss” here in this site, same X-over section. I hereby invite you to take a look~

Well, thanks for reading and hope you liked it!

I’ll be trying to publish a new chapter on my three stories at the same time, so if you’re reading this one I invite you to take a look to the other 2 as well. Happy reading!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!