

Konjiki Word Master - Ch 01-18

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Translated by PROzess – Unlimited Novel Failures [Chapters 01-18]

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Chapter 01: Dragged into another World

Okamura Hiroyuki calmly analyzed the scene in front of his eyes. There stood people he had never seen before.

Furthermore, the several men were dressed like priests as one would hardly come across in Japan and amongst them was one girl, wearing a pink dress, too.

He checked out the surroundings by looking around. The building was an atrium, so he could see outside well even while sitting.

But since he could see a mountain range in the distance and not just the ground, he concluded that he was up fairly high.

The building was a tower or alike. The ceiling was supported by various pillars and had unfamiliar and strange drawings on it. It were mysterious drawings like the Egyptian mural art.

What he recognized were the four people near him, wearing the same high school uniform.

They were his classmates, but he had never talked to them. So, why was he here together with them?

A magic circle like from a game was drawn on the ground to his feet.

Obviously foreign people, an unfamiliar scenery and a magic circle.

He could more or less guess what had happened from the current situation. And the girl in dress confirmed it with her words.

“I, I welcome you, Heroes!”

Yeah, this was a so called different world.

Up until now he had been at school. Skipping classes by sleeping the whole time on the rooftop, he had went back to the classroom to fetch his bag after school. There he found these four people here.

Like always, he had headed for his desk without so much as looking at them. They had frowned a bit upon see him, but he had ignored them as he didn't care.

But then a bright light had suddenly gushed out from under his feet. All five present, Hiroyuki included, had frozen up on the spot from the all too sudden surprise.

Everything had turned snow-white in front of him and in the next moment, he found himself in the current situation.

The priests cheered merrily. Frolicking with “Yes!” and “It's a success!”, they ignored the five of them, who were confused from the sudden happening.

However, they all looked rather exhausted and they were sweating as if they had just run a marathon.

On the other hand, the girl had long orange hair till her waist, which made her unthinkable as a Japanese. She was overall pretty, had big eyes and adorable facial features.

She was without a doubt an eye-catching beauty.

Same as the men, the girl showed a broad smile. Most likely the five of them were summoned unquestioning.

He should never have imagined it possible that he would experience something like that. Although Hiiro had been rather composed so far, a part of him still refused to believe it even now.

The others seemed to feel the same from being summoned as their faces showed that they couldn't keep up with what was happening to them. Then one of them finally spoke.

"H- Heroes? What do you mean?"

The guy named Aoyama Taishi had bleached hair, but an earnest expression and gentle aura.

To add, he was tall and handsome, so he was overwhelming popular with the girls in class.

The girl lowered her head flustered on Taishi's question.

"Ah, my apologies! His Majesty personally will explain this matter to you! So please follow me!"

She looked apologetic as she said that. On a closer look, she appeared rather pale. It was hard to tell from her smile earlier, but like the men, she was sweating on the face as well, probably exhausted from the summoning.

Taishi seemed to notice her condition as well and likely thought it would be better to listen to her for now instead of staying here longer, since it would probably allow the girl to get some rest then.

Taishi exchanged looks with the everyone except Hiiro and nodded affirming.

"Okay. I've a rough idea of what happened, but we'll listen to what you have to say."

Seemingly the other four also kind of understood their situation.

Like that, the five of them headed to King in the <<Throne Room>> with the girl's guidance. Hiiro didn't neglect to observe the area on the way.

Judging by the colour of the hair and eyes of the servants and the soldiers, stationed here and there, he once more concluded that this wasn't Japan.

The building they had been in was indeed a tower and stood in the middle of a big castle.

"Ohh, I appreciate your coming, Heroes."

The man sitting on the throne said that with a refreshing smile. No need to tell him that they didn't come of their own will.

"I am sure you must be confused from the abrupt circumstances. But rest assured, I will properly explain it now."

After saying that, he first started with a self-introduction.

The kingdom's name was <<Victorias>> and the king unified the 'Humas' of <<Edea>>, of this world here. The continent was partitioned and each race had its own country.

The so called 'Gabranth' were a race that had animal traits like a 'Werewolf' or 'Werecoat' and lived in <<Pasion>>, the country of beasts.

Likewise, the 'Evila', commonly known as demi-humans, were a race of 'Demons' and 'Ghosts' and lived in <<Xaoc>>, the country of demons.

Lastly, the 'Pheom' were a race consisting of 'Faeries' and 'Spirits', but they didn't have a country on their own. They lived in a small settlement as there were extremely few of them. Hardly anyone had seen them, since they don't interact with other races.

And in front of them sat Rudolph van Strauss Arcliam, the unity king of <<Victorias>>.

Next to him sat the queen Māris and the girl, who guided them here, was the first princess Lilith.

'Humas', 'Gabranth' and 'Evila'. Between these three races currently existed a tension like never before.

Particularly the Demon Lord of <<Xaoc>> plotted to destroy the 'Humas' and 'Gabranth'.

He seemed to think that only his race was suited to rule over a united <<Edea>> with their superior strength. So he tried to make a world solely for the 'Evila' by eliminating the 'Humas' and 'Gabranth'.

The 'Evila' indeed had an enormous magic power and possessed an all too brutal battle strength.

Magic existed in this world and needless to say, the stronger the magic power, the stronger the magic. The 'Humas' had magic powers as well, but it was relatively low.

Of course magic wasn't everything in a battle, but the magic used by the 'Evila' was quite powerful and a human had close to no hopes of defeating even a lower demon by himself.

Even a high ranked adventurer from the adventure guild had to form a team to fight against the 'Evila'.

The king feared that they would be destroyed sooner or later at this rate and considered destroying the 'Evila' before that. On that occasion, they used summoning magic, which had been sealed as an old magic.

But it was sealed for a reason. It showed that the summoning magic wasn't omnipotent.

The summoning magic consumed a lot of magic power and if used by someone untalented, it ran the risk of <<rebounding>> and making the used magic power go out of control.

Essentially, the summoning magic could only be used by the royal family, but it didn't mean that anyone could use it as long as they were royalty. Failed attempts always resulted in a mental breakdown from being exposed to such enormous magic power, or sometimes even in death.

It wasn't a simple summoning magic. It was a heretic magic that opened a path to another world and thus carried an adequate risk.

So King Rudolph had an idea. He had a couple of daughters and let them use the summoning magic.

At this rate, 'Humas' would be exterminated. To avoid that, it was necessary to summon Heroes from another world at all costs. An old book told the tales of Heroes being summoned in the past and saving 'Humas' from a terrible calamity.

Heroes possessed an incredible magic power and could utilize physical abilities and magic unthinkable for 'Humas'. Learning of this, Rudolph hardened his heart and asked his daughters. But the fourth and third princesses both failed and lost their lives from the <<rebound>>.

(He sacrificed his own daughters...?)

Listening to the King's explanation, Hiroyuki scowled on his insanity. But speaking up here would make complicate matters, so he kept his mouth shut.

The Queen lamented the death of her daughters one after another, but she herself had married into the royal family and was an outsider, so she didn't have the pure royal blood and couldn't use the summoning magic. The second princess was next in line.

She managed to avoid death, but was bedridden and still unconscious at this point. That left Lilith and Rudolph as the only ones, who could use the summoning magic. As they couldn't afford any more failures, he decided to do it himself.

However, everyone was against that. Precisely the losing of the King, the buttress of the country, was what could lead to the immediate demise of the 'Humas' by the 'Evila'.

Lilith understood that and offered herself for the country. She was scared, very scared, but at this rate everything would vanish. If she was going to get killed anyway, she would rather choose the moment by her own will. She conducted the summoning ceremony with these feelings.

The ceremony was held with the priests' and Lilith' magic power as a medium. Lilith felt her consciousness fading during the ceremony and when she gave up, thinking that she was no-good either, the magic circle released an obscure light.

And then the five people appeared.

"I see. So you brought us here to protect the 'Humas' from 'Evila'."

Aoyama Taishi nodded a few times while listening to the explanation.

"Yes. According to the documents, there are four Heroes in total. Mh? Speaking of, I just noticed, there's... five of you."

Exactly. Five people were summoned this time. The king looked questioning at the nearby scholar. The scholar adjusted his glasses flustered.

"I, I have no clue! But I guess, all of them are Heroes...?"

"Mhm... Then we just have to find out. All of you, show me your abilities."

Rudolph said that, but Hihiro and the others tilted their heads puzzled.

"Mh? What is the matter? Do not tell me you are unable to show me your abilities?"

Taishi answered as their representative with “Indeed”.

“Recite <<Status>> in your mind.”

Everyone did as told. Of course Taishi recited as well. Upon that a status screen like from a game appeared in front of him.

Name	Hiiro Okamura
Level	LVL 1
Health Points	24/24
Magic Power	120/120
Experience	0
NEXT Lvl	10
Attack	13
Defense	8
Agility	27
HIT Chance	11
Intelligence	23
<<Magic Attribute>>	None
<<Magic>>	Word Magic (Single Chain Unlocked)
<<Titles>>	Innocent Bystander – World Traveller Word Master

Chapter 02: Classmates

A few questions arose. He realized that his level was one. If this was a RPG-like world, this was only natural, since he hadn't fought with anyone yet.

But why was his MP (magic power) so high? It must be the benefit of being a world traveller, who had high magic power as he was informed just now.

By the way, HP referred to endurance, MP was magic power, EXP experience and NEXT indicated the necessary experience points for the next level. ATK, DEF, AGL, HIT and INT respectively symbolized attack strength, defence, agility, hit chance and intelligence. These were expressions often used in games.

He was surprised at his unexpectedly high AGL, but what he was most surprised about was this:

<<Innocent Bystander>>

It perfectly showed that he was just dragged along with the four Heroes. In other words, he himself wasn't a Hero, but just an ordinary person. Although he was concerned about his magic too, he rather pondered how to explain this situation.

While he was in thought, Rudolph asked them.

"How is it? When you look at the title, it should display Hero."

Taishi was the first to answer.

"Y- Yes, it does! It says Hero here! Uwah~ Awesome, I'm really a Hero."

He uttered with a somewhat excited voice.

"Hey, what about you, Chika?"

The one answering Taishi's question was Suzumiya Chika. She was a talkative and popular girl in class. Her open and direct attitude in dealing with people gained her their goodwill.

Her short hair was bleached like Taishi's, albeit paler. Her breasts were somewhat lacking, but her slender figure as a sport ace was quite attractive.

"Yeah, I have it too, Taishi."

"Good. And you, Shuri, Shinobu?"

He called out to the other two girls. Minamoto Shuri had pretty, glossy and long black hair.

Unlike Chika, she had a voluptuous body that attracted boys. She belonged to the tea club and the boys sometimes came by to ogle her in her kimono. Her charming points also included the kind of drooping eyes and the mole under her eye.

The other girl, Akamori Shinobu was brimming with curiosity. Active in the newspaper club, she also planned to find employment in that field in the future. She was talkative as well and smart on top, so everyone often asked her for tips on the exams.

Her slightly wavy, black hair hang over her shoulders. From her cattish eyes, you could feel the strong resolution of never letting go of her prey. Moreover, she came from Kansai.

As for what these three girls had in common: They were all eye-catching beauties. And as members of Taishi's harem, they were always around him.

Shuri and Shinobu seemed to have the Hero title too. And as a matter of course, the gazes faced Hihiro next.

"What about you?"

"...Nope."

He answered with a single word. Upon that, the others made a ruckus.

"Then... can you tell us what kind of title you have?"

It annoyed him how was talked down to, but answered honestly nevertheless. But only one of them.

“<<Innocent Bystander>>...”

Now his four classmates changed their attitude on these words. They frowned and left their mouths gaping open in disbelief.

“<<Innocent Bystander>>...? Lilith, do you know what that means?”

“Eh, uhm... Yes. Most likely...”

Lilith looked downward, hesitant to answer. Hiroyuki sighed while looking at her. Then he answered in her stead.

“I’m just an ordinary person. I just happened to be in the classroom back then and got mixed up with these guys. Right?”

“Uh- Uhm...”

“Hey, wait! Okamura! What’s with that tone!”

Chika said by pointing at me. But he completely ignored that and continued.

“Originally four people should’ve been summoned here. And that’s these four here. I’m an irregular so to speak. What’re you going to do about it?”

He merely stated it indifferently without any hostility or animosity. And yet, Lilith turned pale as she was the one who summoned them.

“Well, it’s not just about me. These guys were brought here at your conveniences too. I’m sure our families are worried about us.”

Lilith’s expression became more and more heartbroken.

“You are right. I can only ask for your pardon on this matter.”

The king offered his apology like that. Hiroyuki thought he would make excuses, but the king was unexpectedly aware of the significance of their actions.

“We were left with no other choice.”

“No, to be honest, I don’t care about your circumstances.”

“Huh?”

Time stopped for everyone upon Hiiro’s words.

“I have no connections whatsoever to these four.”

“Hey, Okamura! Aren’t we classmates!”

Taishi yelled enraged.

“Yeah, we’re classmates. But we’re merely studying together in the same room by the school’s decision.”

“Th- That’s going too far...”

“Yes, after we finally got together~”

Shuri and Shinobu stated their opinions too.

“So you say, but I haven’t spoken a single word with you in the four month, since we’re in the same class.”

It was a fact. Hiiro basically liked being alone, so he kept his distance from everyone, not just these four. Sleep, eat and read. That was Hiiro’s custom.

The other four fell silent from his words. Like he had said, they hadn’t talked to each other, even though they were classmates. It was also a fact that they never tried to speak to him on their own accord, even if he was hard to approach.

“Okay, as I said just now, I’ve no connection to these four. You guys want the four Heroes, right? Then I seem useless?”

“Mh- Mhm...”

Rudolph groaned with a difficult expression. He was perplexed about what to do.

“Since they’re Heroes, they can fight the ‘Evila’ in some way, right? But I’m a no-name. You wouldn’t send me out to fight these dangerous guys too, would you?”

“...Then let me ask you: What do you want to do?”

“Go home?”

“Th- The documents speak of the Demon Lord knowing a magic to send you home.”

Rudolph’s word resounded through the throne room and Lilith’s expression turned gloomy at once. Seeing that, Hihiro quietly shut his eyes.

“S- So we just have to defeat the Demon Lord quickly!”

What an idiot, Hihiro thought. Even if the Demon Lord knew such magic, why would you defeat him? Hihiro was disgusted at Taishi’s thoughtless statement.

“In- Indeed. Besides, our country is wonderful, so you will surely come to like it. You are all basically part of my family now.”

Seeing Rudolph desperately trying to persuade him, Hihiro shrugged his shoulders.

“Ah, if I may add, I’m worried about my family.”

The others felt worried as well, not just Chika.

“Th- There is no need to worry about that. Right?”

A nearby scholar was addressed.

“Ah, y- yes! As a matter of fact, you all have been forgotten now!”

“F- Forgotten, you say!?”

It was quite a shocking statement.

“Ah, please rest assured. There are forces at work to keep things coherent in your world. Once you return, it will be changed back... yes.”

(That’s... a lie.)

Hihiro definitely felt that from their attitude.

(Everything they said is surely a lie. Likely just a made-up reason to somehow convince us. A return magic, in other words a method to send us back... doesn't exist. At least not right now. And I'm dubious about the forgotten part too...)

He looked at the other four to see if one of them had realized that. Taishi hadn't noticed at all. Same for Chika. Only Shuri and Shinobu were frowning on this story.

(Well, I don't care about them. As for myself... I can make do anywhere.)

Okamura Hihiro grew up in an orphanage. His parents didn't leave him, they died in an accident when he was still young.

Then he was handed over to an orphanage. He made some friends there, but more than that, he loved books, so he read nothing but books all day. The books were more a friend to him than humans.

Of course he still had other relatives, but he had no real reason to return to his world. So it wasn't really troubling for him when there was no way to return.

Lilith, knowing that there was no way to return, had clouded her expression for a while now. She might feel guilty about the lie.

Taishi and the girls started to talk about what to do from now on after understanding that as of now there existed no way for returning from Rudolph's explanation.

"Like Okamura said, you selfishly called us here. I think that's really rich of you."

Being told so by Taishi as well, Rudolph looked sullen.

"But..."

While saying so, Taishi looked at the three girls. They all snickered and he looked at the king again.

"We'll do it!"

“Really, you will?”

Rudolph raised a voice.

“Yes, we always wanted to travel in such a world.”

“Yeah! We four are playing an online game together too!”

As Chika had said, the four of them had played an online RPG game in their world. They often met up and discussed about where to venture, just like they did after school before this.

Right before they were summoned here, they were just talking about their desire to venture a world like this.

“Th- Then you will accept!”

“Yes, but in exchange...”

Shinobu spoke after the king.

“From what I can see in the <<Status>>, we still seem to be level 1. In other words, beginners.”

“Y- Yes, that is correct.”

“We can’t fight the Demon Lord like this. So... I want you to teach us in fighting.”

“Do not worry about that. For that matter...”

At that time, a person clad in armour showed up.

“I will take over here, Heroes.”

He knelt down and lowered his head while he said that.

“My name is Vale Kimble. I was entrusted with the duty to teach you in fighting.”

“Incidentally, he is the captain of the second division of our army.”

He was a handsome guy with a noble face. Just by looking at his body, you could tell how well trained he was. His hair was green and short, whereas his eyes emitted a great willpower.

Naturally the gazes of the females focused on him. Only Chika looked at him inexpressively, as she had no interest.

“In other words, that hunk is going to train us?”

“Yes. Right now, matters have quieted down at the borders. I want you to grow stronger before it becomes turbulent again.”

“Ah, where’ll we be living?”

“We have prepared rooms for you here in the castle. Lilith will show you around later.”

The discussion proceeded and Takashi and the others seemed to have resolved to fight. At this point, Hiroy raised his hand.

“Sorry, but I’m going to act on my own.”

Time stopped again for everyone on these words.

“You see, I’ve no obligation, nor reason to fight for this country. Neither am I a hero like you guys. So there’s no point in staying here any longer.”

“Mhm... But”

“Sorry, I’m not as sensible as these four. Well, since I’m already here, I just want to do as I want. You won’t mind, will you?”

Rudolph looked worried. Hiroy was indeed no Hero, but just an ordinary person. He didn’t look all that strong either. Black hair, dark pupils and around 1,80m tall, but not really muscular.

His only charming point were his glasses. In terms of looks, he was inferior to Taishi.

With an appearance like that, it was unthinkable that he could fight. But it was a fact that they summoned him. Throwing him out without doing anything for him would be unreasonable.

“Mh- Mhm, I am feeling really sorry about your case. Is there anything I can do...”

“Nothing.”

“N- Nothing, you say?”

“Yeah. And it’s not like I resent you. This world should’ve some novel books, so it seems quite interesting.”

Hihiro was a guy as well. Of course he admired adventures. It didn’t need to be a great adventure like for the protagonists of his books, but he certainly wanted to travel this world.

“I’ve no more business here. See ya.”

Saying that, he was about to leave, but Taishi grabbed his arm.

“Hey! Acting all apathetic, do still call yourself a man?”

“Huuh?”

Hihiro made an annoyed utterance.

“They’re lowering their heads here! Don’t you feel like helping them out even a bit?”

“Nope.”

“Why!”

“Because I’m no Hero. Or what, do you want to use me as a bullet trap?”

“Wha... Bullet trap...?”

Taishi let go of his arm.

“Forget about this guy, Taishi.”

Chika said with a sharp look.

“Don’t you two agree?”

“Ehm... I’m...”

Shuri cast her look down bewildered. Shinobu stared at Hiiro, then snickered.

“Ahaha, sure, why not. I mean, this looks like a game, but it’s still reality. In other words, we’re putting our lives on the line here. We’re Heroes, so we’ll get stronger, but it’s different for Okamuracchi. He’s just a normal guy. So try putting yourself in his shoes.”

Shinobu’s words shut up the other three. Because she made a sound argument. This wasn’t a game. As a matter of fact, people died in the attempt to summon them. They were this serious about it.

“R- Right. Let’s just do it ourselves.”

Taishi consented. Hiiro gave them a glance and tried to leave. At that time,

“Uh- Uhm!”

The voice belonged to Lilith. Hiiro stopped and looked over his shoulder.

“Uhm... I, I am sorry!”

She looked at him worried. Hiiro said as he turned his head back.

“Don’t sweat it.”

Then he left the place for sure.

Chapter 03: Magic and Magic Power

Hiiro left the castle and got out onto the streets, mulling over what to do next.

(Now then, gathering information first is a must in RPG)

Technically he could have asked the king and such, but there was a risk of getting dragged into something unforeseen and becoming unable to leave the country when he stayed there any longer.

Therefore he left the place as fast as possible. Besides, there were four very capable people. He had concluded that he wasn't needed.

(First of all, what's with this <<Word Magic>> in the magic column in my <<Status>>...? I kinda get that it's unattributed.)

Accessing his knowledge from games and books, he also remembered the term Guild when thinking about magic. The king had told him that a Guild existed in this world.

Hiiro decided to ask the townspeople about the location of the Guild. By doing so, he came to know that it was close by.

He headed there to register as an adventure for now. Living and travelling here wasn't free. Somehow or another he had to save up money.

By the way, the money of this world could be stored on a Guild Card. Likewise it was possible to pay with the card. That's what the townspeople taught him.

When he arrived at the Guild, the interior was rather crowded. Sturdy guys, likely adventures, lined up in front of various counters. The nearest counter had a sign above it with register application written on it.

As his black hair and dark eyes were unusual, Hiiro became the center of attention as soon as he entered. Naturally, since he was dressed in an unfamiliar school uniform. He reminded himself to buy some gear later on.

He went to the counter, assuming indifferent to all the gazes on him.

“Hey, I want to register.”

When he bluntly said that, the woman at the counter explained with a business smile.

Various quests were filed to the Guild. An adventure earned a reward by carrying out these requests. The quests were classified into levels of difficulty from F, E, D, C, B, A, S, SS till SSS.

A Guild Card was handed out upon registering, but it served the same purpose as the Citizen Card that all citizens had. An ID so to speak.

The adventurers were ranked into the same categories as the quests as well. Although there were very few adventures with a rank S or above. Particularly the SSS rank had only three adventures from the ‘Humas’.

The woman at the counter gave him a white card and told him to drip his blood onto it. He pricked his finger with the small needle he received. After dripping the blood on it, the card started to disperse and vanished.

“Huh? It’s gone?”

“Please recite <<Guild Card>> in your mind.”

When he did as he was told, the card appeared in his hand. But the card was different than before. It had been completely white, but now it had a blue border.

“The colour represents your rank. From the lowest blue to violet, green, yellow, orange, pink, red, silver, golden and finally black.”

Hiroyuki listened to the explanations with nods. Looking at his new Guild Card, he confirmed the inscription.

Guild Card	
Name	Hiiro Okamura
Sex	Male
Age	17
From	Unkown
Rank	F
Quest	-
Weapon	-
Guard	-
Accessory	-
Rigin	0

He was glad that the FROM column listed his birthplace as unknown. If there had been written that he was from another world, it would have been troublesome to explain. Equipment meant his gear. It was subdivided into Weapon, Guard and Accessory. But he asked about the one thing that bothered him more.

“Hey, what’s this Rigin stuff on the card...?”

“Mh? That is the currency...”

The woman tilted her head baffled. Naturally the people of this world knew that Rigin was the currency. But just as natural, Hiiro didn’t know that as he was only summoned here a while ago.

On further inquiring, he learned that Rigin nearly had the same value as Japan’s yen and that the sixth column Quest displayed his currently active quests.

(Quite a handy card)

With just one single card he could trade and identify himself. Moreover, the card was usually within him and could be taken out at any time.

“Where can I take quests?”

“Please choose from the bulletin board over there. But remember that you are a rank F. You can only accept quests up to one rank above yours, meaning E.”

“I see. How do I raise my rank?”

“When carrying out quests and raising in levels, your rank will go up naturally.”

“In short, after I completed a number of quests, this blue border will turn... uhm, what was it again?”

“Violet.”

“Then it’ll turn violet?”

“Yes.”

Hihiro was awestruck at the serviceableness of the card.

“Better not waste any time.”

Saying that, he headed for the bulletin board.

Help repairing the roof of the Amaruq Church. Experience preferred.

Reward: 10000 Rigin

Lucky Herb Harvest F

Collect Lucky Herbs on the Asbit Plateau.

Reward: 300 Rigin per bundle

Goblin Hunt E

Kill 10 goblins in the Clair Forest.

Reward: 35000 Rigin

There were various other quests, but he chose “Lucky Herb Harvest” without hesitation. To be honest, he was uneasy about hunting quest, since he was still level one. Although even a beginner should be able to hunt goblins.

But he decided to only go for hunting quests after he went up a few levels and got used to fighting.

“I understand. But please be careful about the 10000 Rigin penalty fare in case you cancel a quest midway.”

He accepted the quest by bringing the quest note to the counter. Since there was a penalty fee, he had to avoid cancelling a quest by all means. At least for now, when he didn't got any money.

First he asked where the “Asbit Plateau” was. Luckily for him, it was right outside this land. And he was shown a picture of the “Lucky Herb” in a reference book to know what they looked like.

(I would like to read that reference book)

As he loved books, Hihiro's thirst for knowledge awoke. He seriously considered to hole himself up in a library for a while after he saved up some money.

After seeing the picture of the plan, he got a big bag and left the Guild. The bag surely was meant for his harvest.

On his way out of town, he remembered the <<Status>> again. The <<Word Magic>> from it weighted on his mind.

And even if he had high magic power, it was a waste of talent when he didn't know how to use it. He needed to learn how to use magic as soon as possible.

He regretted a bit that he didn't ask about it at the counter. Magic was nothing unusual in this world. About anyone could use it and had magic power to a greater or lesser extent.

Speaking of, he could just someone around here. Hiroyuki stopped and looked to his right. There sat a person on a chair in front of a crystal ball on a desk.

(...A fortune-teller?)

The person wore a black robe and a hood hid the face, but it certainly seemed like a fortune-teller.

"Oh my? How about it, Sir?"

From the voice he concluded that it was quite an old woman.

"Nah, I don't have any money."

"Oh, is that so. But you look like you want to ask something."

"..."

"Are you not from here? I have never seen you before."

"Your point?"

He looked at her a bit suspicious.

"Fuehehe, don't look so grim. How about I tell you a bit about your fortune in commemoration of coming here?"

"Not interested."

"Fuehehe, don't say that. Take a seat."

Since he wasn't really in a hurry, he sat down on the chair in front of the desk like he was told.

"Fuehehe. Then let me begin."

She put her hands on the crystal ball and concentrated. Hiiro silently watched over her with crossed arms. It didn't escape him that she suddenly narrowed her eyes.

"...Oho, you have a strange star fortune."

"Strange?"

"Fuehehe, everyone has a star in their heart. Each has its own shape, colour, size and radiance. My divination allows me to see them. And while I have seen many up till now, I have never seen such a powerful star like yours before."

"Mhm~"

"It's powerful and to shut out a burning red, a dark blue rules over its surroundings. The shape is an immaculate sphere without a single corner and it shines so bright that it opens the eyes of anyone who looks at it. I see... This country aside, you are not even from this world."

He stood up at once with a clattering of the chair. How did this fortune-teller know this? Hiiro felt doubtful.

(Can fortune-telling do this? No, maybe it's... magic?)

Thinking that, he glared at her with a sharp look. He didn't care that she know, but he got wary on reflex.

"...Sit down. I'm not going to spread it. And while people from other worlds are indeed rare, it's not my first time meeting you."

"...You met one before?"

"Yes, just once when I was still young. The person back then had a strange star as well."

“...I see. So, what’s the deal?”

“Fuehehe, you will get, no, you already have the wings of freedom. These wings will grow wide and warm in all aspects.”

He didn’t get what she was talking about, but it didn’t seem to be anything ill.

“Many will likely gather at the light you are in pursue for these wings.”

“Geh, that’s bad. I prefer to be alone.”

“Fuehehe, well, it’s nothing but one possible future. By hearing this today, this future became more likely for you. That’s all.”

“Mhm~ I don’t get it. I’ll just do what I want.”

“Fuehehe, do that. Incidentally, didn’t you want to ask something?”

“Yeah. Like you said, I come from another world. There’s no magic in my world, so I can’t really grasp the magic here, nor do I know how to use it. I’ve to learn it as fast as possible...”

“Oho, I understand. A world without magic, interesting.”

There Hihiro suddenly realized and looked at the old woman.

“Hey, could you teach me how to use magic?”

“I don’t mind.”

He had thought she would turn him down, but apparently she accepted.

“Do you know where magic power comes from?”

“Nope.”

That’s why I’m asking, was what he stifled to say.

“Maybe the heart or brain?”

“No, no. The magic power comes from the blood.”

“Blood?”

“Yes, every living organism has blood. That is the source for magic.”

“Oh.”

“That’s why you focus on the flow of your blood in your veins, when concentrating magic power.”

“The flow of blood?”

“Yes, look closely.”

Saying so, the old woman showed him his hand. Something like blue smoke gushed forth from her palm. It gradually assumed shape until it was a sphere in her hand.

“That’s magic power.”

“Wow. So it’s something this visible?”

“Well, it takes a lot of training to make it visible like this. I focused on the flow and imagined it gathering in my hand.”

“Imagine, huh.”

“Magic is the power to imagine. And also the power of flow. A flow of magic power is currently circulating inside this sphere like blood.”

“Sounds a bit complicated, but I get the gist of it. Anyway, it wouldn’t be wrong to say blood flow = magic power, right?”

“Indeed.”

“And to utilize the magic power, I imagine the blood flowing through my entire body. Going by that...”

While saying so, he imagined the flow of blood only going to his index finger. Upon that, his fingertip glowed pale and became a little bit warm.

“So you can even do stuff like that. I see, so this is magic.”

The old woman in front of him had her mouth gaping open in surprise.

“Oh, what a surprise! You said it’s your first time using magic, right?”

“Mh? Yeah.”

“Nevertheless, you can control it already. You must have an incredible imagination.”

“Well, I AM a bookworm, so I’m confident in my imagination.”

Books consisted only of words and one had to imagine the written text in one’s head. To visualize the place, person and action in one’s mind from the narrative needed imagination.

Hihiro had buried himself in books since he was small, so his imagination was well trained. Or rather, it was his only strong point he felt confident about. When he stopped imagining, the light and warmth disappeared from his finger tip.

“Thank you. Now I get what magic power is.”

“Glad to hear.”

“One more thing, do I just chant a spell while I focus on the flow of magic power like just now when I want to use magic?”

“Quite so. Look. <<Fire Ball>>”

The old woman held up her index finger and chanted, then a fire ball with the size of a tennis ball appeared.

“Ohhhhhhhh”

Hihiro raised an excited voice in admiration. His interest in magic was piqued by using it for the first time.

“I kept it small now, but it can become bigger depending on your imagination and magic power.”

"I see. But I don't think I can use <<Fire Ball>>."

"Mh? Is your attribute different?"

"Yeah, it's unattributed."

"...Now that's a rare attribute. Those unattributed are unique magic users without fail. Could it be you..."

"Wait a sec. Unique? You mean a special magic just for oneself?"

"Yes."

According to the old woman, there were eight attributes to magic: Fire, Water, Earth, Wind, Lightning, Ice, Light and Darkness. Unattributed meant having none of these attributes. In other words, someone unattributed could not cast magic of other attributes.

In exchange, one had a magic only usable to oneself, also called unique magic.

"By the way, unique magic is precious even in this world. Actually, not many can actually control it."

"What do you mean?"

"Unique magic is always powerful. And I heard it's difficult to control. And most people die from <<rebound>> as their own magic power explodes."

That story sent a shiver down Hiiro's spine. He never thought unique magic would be that dangerous.

"Control is important, but knowledge even more so."

"Knowledge?"

"Yes, because one ends up with a <<rebound>>, since he does not fully understand what his own magic actually is. Knowledge of magic power, of magic and of oneself. When all these are mastered, one will be a first-class magic user."

"I see. Thank you for telling me all this."

"The pleasure is all mine. It's been a while since I enjoyed a light like yours."

He still couldn't see the old woman's face, but she must have been smiling as she raised her voice.

"I am always here, so drop by if you need something. Though I will charge you next time of course."

"So shrewd."

Then he parted with the old woman and headed for the town gate.

Chapter 04: Word Magic

(I think the “Asbit Plateau” is due east of here)

Hihiro started walking towards the plateau while remembering the picture of the “Lucky Herb” he was shown. After walking for a while, he found it rather easy. It looked exactly like on the picture.

It had a small, white bud at its head and was growing all around.

(Even a kid could do this quest)

It was close to the town and could be collected easily as it grew in large quantities. An easy task, even for a beginner.

(No one’s around here)

Looking around, he noticed that no one besides him was here. Then he recited <<Status>> and looked at the column where <<Word Magic>> was written, lightly touching it with his finger. Upon that, the panel changed and showed an explanation about the <<Word Magic>>.

(So the help shows up after all when I click it. This really is like a game)

Hihiro didn’t just wanted to read the help. He wanted to try the magic here.

If possible, he would like to avoid showing off his unique magic, because he feared that he would get dragged back to the king if he stood out, after he finally obtained freedom.

(Well, it depends on the magic anyway)

If all unique magic were indeed powerful, it was quite possible that his fear came true. Besides, it was necessary to understand the magic to grasp his self, like the old woman had told him earlier.

But he didn’t intend to be reckless, since there was the so-called <<rebound>>. Hihiro just wanted to find out what his magic was, not to die here already.

<<Word Magic>>

MP cost: 30

Imagine the magic power gathering in your finger and draw a word. An effect in accordance with the meaning of the word is brought forth. It is a unique magic with the phenomenal power to apprehend and contort the underlying principles.

<<Single Chain unlocked>>

Refers to the possible chain length of words. This magic was once ^%&GR!&*

For some reason the last part was corrupted and unreadable. He was quite bothered about it, but he somehow understood this magic. Still, he wouldn't know if he was right unless he actually tried out the magic.

(So it's called Word Magic. Let's try it for now)

With that in mind, he took a deep breath and concentrated magic power in his fingertip in the same way as in front of the old woman. Before it took him a little while, but on his second try, his finger lighted up with magic power rather smoothly.

(A word, huh... Will anything do? But since it's manifesting the word...)

He drew on the ground with his finger. Upon that, the pattern glowed in a pale light. He had written the kanji for "hard" while imagining the ground hardening. It was easier to imagine with kanji.

And the moment he recited <<Activate>> in his mind, the magic power from the word flowed into the ground while making sizzling sounds like on an electric discharge.

(Did that do it...?)

He knocked onto the ground. It was hard. Incredible hard. Pretty much like concrete. Until a moment ago, it had been loose dirt without a doubt.

He went around, checking the range of effect.

Clonk, Clonk, Clonk...Splat.

The ground was hardened in an area roughly 6.5m² wide.

The glowing word dispersed and vanished too. It was quite convenient that it left no traces behind, because it lowered the likelihood of his magic getting exposed. Then he reverted it with the kanji for “Origin”.

The electrical discharge happened again and the ground returned to how it had been before.

(This is... more overpowered than I thought)

Hihiro realized the incredible potential of his own magic. A magic to apprehend and contort the underlying principles. It meant affecting anything with a single word.

For example, if he gave the “lucky herbs” around here the effect from the word “wither”, then they would wither. If he gave a rock the effect “split”, then it would break into two.

(It can change all kind of phenomena regardless... Moreover)

With that in mind, he concentrated magic power in his finger once more and wrote another word into the ground. Upon that, a fire suddenly broke out and scorched the grasslands. The word he had written was “fire”. But this time, the fire extinguished after one minute.

(Creating from nothing... Looks like I got my hands on some awesome magic)

He exhaled in awe, realizing that the unique magic held a far greater power than he had imagined.

Still, he was happy about the usefulness of his magic. He should be able to live here without a problem with it. An almighty magic sure was handy.

(But I shouldn't forget that I still don't know everything about it. Part of the help text was corrupted and considering the output...)

He called up the <<Status>> again by saying so.

Name	Hiiro Okamura
Level	LVL 1
Health Points	24/24
Magic Power	30/120
Experience	0
NEXT Lvl	10
Attack	13
Defense	8
Agility	27
HIT Chance	11
Intelligence	17
«Magic Attribute»	None
«Magic»	Word Magic (Single Chain Unlocked)
«Titles»	Innocent Bystander – World Traveller Word Master

(I knew it, it costs quite some MP)

His full MP was 120 and now it was down to 30. He had used the magic thrice, so it consumed 30 MP per usage, just like the description said.

He couldn't compare it to other magic, but the consumption was most likely quite high. His MP being higher than the other numbers was a peculiarity from being a world traveller, or so he heard.

A three-digit number was quite unthinkable for a normal level one. It should usually be around the same as the HP. And the consumption for beginner magic should correspond with that.

In all the games he had played so far, there never had been a magic that cost 30MP right from the beginning. It was an established fact that the strength of a magic, and in accordance its MP cost, increased with level ups.

(I can cast it four times with my current max MP. I need to level up quickly)

After all, the more often you could use a magic, the better. Even more so with an almighty magic like <<Word Magic>>.

(Okay, I got the magic down. Time to bring this stuff back)

He returned to the town with the bag filled to the brim with „Lucky Herbs“. It would be common to get attacked by nearby monsters in such a situation, but to his luck, he reached the town without any incidents.

There he headed to the Guild to complete the quest.

„Allow me to verify the details of your quest, Hihiro Okamura-sama. You accepted the rank F quest „Lucky Herb Harvest“. Please show me your loot.“

Told so by the woman at the counter, Hihiro put the „Lucky Herbs“ from his bag on a big weighing scale.

„...Okay, that makes twenty-two bundles. Your rewards amounts to 7700 Rigin in total. Please give me your card.“

When he handed over the card, she took it somewhere. After a while she came back and returned his card. Looking at the currency column of the card, the earlier value of 0 had turned into 7700.

“The quest is completed. Good work.”

She lowered her head politely and showed him a business smile like always. Hihiro gave a small nod and left the Guild.

(Good, I have money now. Guess food comes first. I still haven't eaten anything since I came here)

Asking the villagers, he looked for a restaurant. <<Victorias>> was a big walled town, divided into the trade, craft, pleasure and living districts where a lot of people lived.

With each district being rather big, it was structured as if various towns had been merged into one.

Hihiro went to the trade district for a restaurant. When he entered one that he found on the way, it turned out that it served delicious fish cuisine. He didn't hate fish, so he decided to stay and checked the menu.

But as expected, all the dish names didn't mean anything to him. He ordered today's suggestion, since he had no clue.

„Okay~ One serving of ‚Addicting Seafood Noodles‘! Please wait a moment~“

The waitress cheerfully took his order. While he waited for his food, he checked his <<Status>> again. There he noticed that his MP recovered up to 40 after having sunk down to 30 from using <<Word Magic>> three times.

It probably recovered over time when he rested, just like his stamina. But the recovery rate wasn't really profitable as it only recovered 10 MP since he used the magic over an hour ago.

(Well, rather than resting, I just walked around the town without using MP)

If he rested in the true sense of the word, meaning sleep, then the recovered amount should be different. As he pondered about that, his steamy food was served.

A lot of seafood swam in a ramen bowl. It was full of eggs from a fish like a salmon roe, something like shrimps and kelp or brown seaweed. He took his chopsticks and stirred it.

By doing so, an exquisite fragrance tickled his nasal cavities. Instantly his stomach reported in with a growl as to demand food at once. He munched on something exquisite like a shark fin.

“Oh!”

He couldn't hold in his voice. The fin was well flavoured and its fish flavour spread in his mouth. It tasted and smelled so good that he couldn't help but crave for more.

Then he drank the broth with the spoon. It was good enough to be served as a separate dish. The broth with plenty seafood was so addicting that he would gulp it down in one-go if he didn't pay attention. It was lightly flavoured, yet superb.

Next he tried the noodles. On a closer look, something like small grains were kneaded into it. From one mouthful, a sea flavour assaulted his taste buds. Mashed fish was kneaded into the noodles. Truly Seafood Noodles.

(Yeah, the addicting in the name isn't just for show)

He finished his meal in a matter of few minutes and could go for another two or three bowls, but he resisted the temptation, since he was tight on money. Still, 450 Rigin was cheap for it.

After he stomachached the satisfying aftertaste, he looked for an inn and made plans for the future, involving levelling up and collecting money, for a while.

Chapter 05: As for the Heroes

In the meantime, the four heroes received training in magic right away. Vale Kimble, the captain of the second division from the Victorias army, was in charge of it.

Name	Taishi Aoyama
Level	LVL 1
Health Points	35/35
Magic Power	35/35
Experience	0
NEXT Lvl	10
Attack	28
Defense	23
Agility	13
HIT Chance	19
Intelligence	9
«Magic Attribute»	Fire, Wind, Lightning, Light
«Magic»	-Fireball (Fire, Attack) -Wind Cutter (Wind, Attack) -Thunder Shock (Lightning, Attack) -Lighting (Light, Effect)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller

Name	Chika Suzumiya
Level	LVL 1
Health Points	28/28
Magic Power	30/30
Experience	0
NEXT Lvl	10
Attack	25
Defense	20
Agility	21
HIT Chance	17
Intelligence	12
«Magic Attribute»	Fire, Earth, Ice, Light
«Magic»	-Fireball (Fire, Attack) -Grave (Earth, Attack) -Ice Needle (Ice, Attack) -Lighting (Light, Effect)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller

Name	Shuri Minamoto
Level	LVL 1
Health Points	18/18
Magic Power	60/60
Experience	0
NEXT Lvl	10
Attack	9
Defense	10
Agility	15
HIT Chance	10
Intelligence	20
«Magic Attribute»	Wind, Water, Light
«Magic»	-Wind Cutter (Wind, Attack) -Water Wall (Water, Support) -Heal (Light, Recovery)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller

Name	Shinobu Akamori
Level	LVL 1
Health Points	22/22
Magic Power	52/52
Experience	0
NEXT Lvl	10
Attack	13
Defense	13
Agility	24
HIT Chance	14
Intelligence	24
«Magic Attribute»	Water, Lightning, Light
«Magic»	-Mist (Water, Support) -Paralyse (Lightning, Effect) -Heal (Light, Recovery)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller

Each of the four told Vale their «Status».

“Oh, all of you are so outstanding!”

Listening to them, Vale widened his eyes and leaked an astonished voice.

„What’s so outstanding?“

Taishi asked as their representative with a doubtful look.

„Let me explain: Originally one is supposed to only have one attribute. Of course there are exceptions and talented individuals possess more than one, but I never heard of anyone having three or even four attributes. Moreover, the light attribute is basically only used by ‚Pheoms‘. That all of you have it shows that you are truly Heroes.“

Everyone smiled embarrassed on the exaggerated praise. They were happy, albeit the cheating status.

„And as far as I can tell from your magic, Taishi-sama and Chika-sama are the vanguard type, whereas Shuri-sama and Shinobu-sama are the rearguard type. Your basic statistics seem to confirm this, too.“

Indeed, Taishi’s and Chika’s <<Status>> emphasised on attacking, whereas Shuri’s and Shinobu’s emphasised on defending and supporting. Their magic were in accordance with that too.

„It’s quite the balanced party.“

„Haha, just like in our online game!“

„Yep!“

Taishi and Chika looked at each other and smiled. The four of them had formed a party in an online RPG before. Even there, Taishi and Chika had been attackers, whereas Shuri and Shinobu were supporters, just like now. They were given the exact same roles in this world.

„I’m sure our <<Status>> will grow according with our role when we level up.“

„Oho, just like a RPG. By the way, what about you, Captain Vale?“

„You can call me just Vale, Taishi-sama.“

„Mh, really? Okay, Vale, what’s your level?“

„Mine? I am level 48.“

„Woah~ Nothing less from a captain. I guess you get experience points from defeating demons?“

„Indeed. Completing quests will also gain you experience points.“

„Quests!?“

All four got hooked.

„Jesus! There are quests!? That means there’s a Guild too?“

„Ah, yes. Adventures are registered in a Guild.“

They all were in awe with „Ohh~“. The words quests and guild certainly pique their interest as they had always admired the game world.

„C- Can we register there too?“

„Why, of course. After some basic training, I would like you to register and polish your skills.“

„Hell yeeeeeeah~!“

Vale blinked with surprise on their excitement.

“Y- You are this happy about it? Danger always follows an adventurer. I am quite surprised to see you so excited about it.”

“Man, it’s a Guild! Adventurer, you know! And quests to boost! Naturally this excites you as a gamer! Right, everyone!”

“Yeah, I’m itching to act.”

“Yes. I’m a bit scared, but it’ll be fine with everyone together.”

“Yeah~ You can’t really do without a Guild~”

Each of them voiced their opinion.

“That sounds quite promising.”

However Vale misunderstand their optimistic thoughts, he felt hope in their brave words and showed a smile.

“Ah, but what about him?”

Taishi asked as he suddenly remembered. Chika reacted to it.

“Him?”

“I mean Okamura.”

“Oh, right...”

Chika replied indifferently as she wasn’t interested.

“He got involved in all this because of us, right? You know, I feel a bit sorry for him.”

“Oh come on, he said he wasn’t resenting us, so don’t need to worry about him.”

“Mhm~ But...”

“To begin with, I don’t like his attitude.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, he’s always by himself and gives off the vibe that he can do everything by himself. It’s not pleasant to watch.”

The other three kept silent on Chika’s outburst of anger. Sure, they had been in the same class, but they never talked to each other. And not just them, they never saw him speaking with anyone else.

He was like air and gone before you noticed it. Either he skipped class altogether or paid no attention during class, since he slept or read a book.

“Be a loner elsewhere!”

“Hey, Chika, why’re you so angry?”

"It just pisses me off! He rarely attends class, yet always scores full marks on the tests! Just why!"

"W- Well, don't ask me..."

Yes, Okamura Hiroyuki certainly didn't attend classes regularly. And even if he attended, he was either asleep or didn't listen. Yet for some reason, he got perfect scores on his tests. Chika was angry at that unfairness.

"F- For all you know, he could properly review and prepare at home."

Shuri uttered so merely as a possibility, not in his defence.

"Well~ There's cram school or a private tutor too."

Shinobu added to that.

"I don't care!"

Chika turned away, pouting. Taishi made a weary sigh.

"Okamura-dono was a friend of yours?"

That Vale added dono instead sama to his name showed the difference in their assessment.

"He's no friend!"

"You might say... he's a classmate, someone who studied together with us."

"Mh, I see. But will he really be alright on his own?"

"Eh?"

"Our world is overflowing with danger. The 'Evils' for one, but there are struggles between the same race as well. To survive on his own, it is very likely that he will become an adventurer. But it does not seem like he possesses outstanding fighting talents like you, so..."

He might end up dead. Everyone present thought that. A heavy silence hung in the air. Although he wasn't their friend, it was indeed unpleasant to lose a classmate.

During that, Chika was the first to start a conversation.

"Aw, geez! There's no use to worry about such a selfish guy! Instead, let's think about getting stronger first!"

"You sure are vigorously, Chika."

"What, got a problem? Besides, when we defeat the 'Evila' and bring peace, then he can live in peace too, right?"

Everyone had her mouth gaping open on these words. No one imagined that Chika, angry until a moment ago, would voice such a view.

"Chika-chan... You're so kind."

Saying so happily, Shuri showed a smile, whereupon Chika turned bright red and shouted.

"N- No! I was just... Aw, geez! We're done with this topic! No more! Got it?"

The other three looked glad as if to say "Sure, sure".

"Chika-sama has a point. We have to think about training you now."

Everyone nodded upon Vale's words. Then their magic trained started.

Hiiro found an inn for the time being and brooded over what to he needed to buy from now. He concluded that he wouldn't last a day with his current funds.

(I really need to save up money quickly. And there's a lot of stuff I want to try out)

Saying so, he fell into deep thoughts on the bed in the single room of the inn.

(...My heart's beating faster?)

He repeatedly opened and squeezed his hand. By doing so, he felt that his body was unusually hot, he felt excitement.

(I'm unusually excited? Haha, guess I'm a guy after all)

The RPG-like world gave him a racing heart. A world he could only experience through books or games. Not even in his dreams would he have thought to experience one in real life.

After completing a quest and trying out magic, he felt his excitement growing. Since he was already here, he wanted to try out everything on his mind.

Luckily enough, he had an overpowered magic. If he could make good use of this unfair magic, he surely would have a worthwhile life, even here.

(Anyway, I should get some sleep for tomorrow)

His MP fully recovered after eating the "Addicting Seafood Noodles". He could go out to level up right away, but so many things happened all at once today, so his mind couldn't keep up.

As that was only inevitable, he decided to go to bed for today to recovery his mentality too and genuinely start taking action from tomorrow onwards.

"Are you sure you want to accept this quest?"

"Yes."

The first thing he did after getting up on the next day, was looking at the quests at the Guild and choosing one.

Goblin Hunt E

Kill 10 goblins in the Clair Forest.

Reward: 35000 Rigin

Chapter 06: The Battle against Demons

He had checked out the quest yesterday already. It was reasonable for a beginner and yielded quite the reward.

“The Goblins are the weakest demons, but they attack in groups, so please be careful.”

“Sure.”

He answered curtly, left the Guild and wanted to leave the town right away, but he had things to buy, so he went into the shopping district.

He visited a weapon shop to buy a weapon, since even the weakest demon was hard to fight against with just bare hands, looking for a weapon within the range of his funds.

When he looked around with his funds in mind, he would have to go with a short weapon like a knife. Amongst these, he found a relatively robust one with a thick blade and a good grip.

“This one.”

Saying so, he showed it to the shop owner.

“Gladly. A solid knife, that’ll be 2650 Rigin.”

After paying, he received the weapon and appreciated the scabbard that he got as an unexpected freebie. Then he brooded over what to do about armour. A shield might be useful, but he concluded that he could just use his <<Word Magic>> when necessity arose, and left the shop.

Leaving the town, he headed for the “Clair Forest” in the west. He could reach it by following a straight path called the “Toll Road”.

During his search for an inn yesterday, he had stopped by a general store and bought five “crispy beans” for HP restoration, three “honey toffee” for MP restoration along with a map of this world.

Even if they were necessary expenses, they completely emptied his wallet. He had to complete the quests by all means or he would have to sleep outside tonight. That sounded fun in itself, but he wanted to avoid a sudden hobo lifestyle.

During his trip, he spotted something weird in front of him.

(What's that...?)

It looked like a big volleyball. However, it didn't have a fixed appearance and contorted itself spongy, blocking his path.

(Wait, could it be...?)

The famous monster for levelling up as a beginner in a RPG...

"A slime!"

His voice was somewhat filled with excitement. There the slime suddenly charged into his direction, startled by his voice.

"Wait, a battle out of nowhere!?"

He drew his solid knife from the scabbard. The slime was slow, but Hiroy got the chills when he thought about coming in contact with that disgusting substance.

The moment the slime jumped up, he swung his knife downwards accordingly. There was no resistance and the slime was cut into half, but the two parts still moved meandering. To put it bluntly, it was disgusting.

"Don't tell me it multiplied from being cut in half?"

In that case, a blade would be useless, so he wondered about what to do, whereas the demon writhed agonizing on the ground and stopped moving before long. Hiroy timidly poked it with his knife.

(Wait, there's a faster way!)

He opened his <<Status>>. The NEXT (required experience points until level up) column had been 10, but now it turned into 8. The fact that he had received experience points meant that the demon was defeated.

“Oh~ It was a demon after all. I bet it’s a weak one like the goblin. It only gave 2 EXP anyway.”

Still, he felt somewhat accomplished from his first battle and victory. At first he had feared it would pain him to kill, but it surprisingly turned out alright.

“...Still feels like a game... Or rather, like it’s none of my beeswax.”

When he analysed it calmly, he heard another rustling sound from behind. He turned around and there were more slimes, three even.

“They seem perfect for levelling up. But I wish there were four of them.”

Then he could have levelled up. At the time he clicked his tongue, three more slimes appeared from behind him as to ridicule him. Hiiro was totally surrounded.

“Grr, a pincer attack on a beginner?”

While he grumbled bitter, he focused on defeating the three in front of him first. After he cut down the first and second one, an smacking impact hit his back. A slime seemingly attacked him with a charge.

“Kuh... It unexpectedly hurts quite a bit.”

It felt just as if he was hit by someone. He took his distance and checked his <<Status>>, seeing that his HP decreased by 3.

“Looks like I can’t play around.”

Bracing himself once more, he took a stance with his knife. Since two slimes attack him simultaneously, he dodged them and cut one down immediately. But two more were coming from behind.

“No more pain!”

By swinging his knife around, he managed to cut down two at once. One slime remained. Hiiro killed it by charging in on his own.

Upon that, he heard a weak PLIINK sound over his head and opened his <<Status>>.

Name	Hiiro Okamura
Level	LVL 2
Health Points	21/30
Magic Power	120/145
Experience	12
NEXT Lvl	12
Attack	15
Defense	10
Agility	30
HIT Chance	12
Intelligence	25
<<Magic Attribute>>	None
<<Magic>>	Word Magic (Single Chain Unlocked)
<<Titles>>	Innocent Bystander – World Traveller Word Master

“Figures. That sound was from the level up. Anyway, my MP sure has an amazing gain. It went up by 25 in one level. Well, not that I’m complaining.”

Though he complained a bit about not recovering the health upon levelling up. Some games did that, so he had preferred it here too.

On his way to the “Clair Forest”, he kept defeating the appearing slimes.

He reached the “Clair Forest” alright, but he had no clue where to look for the goblins. As slimes had appeared various times, he was level three now.

With no other ideas, he advanced into the forest pre-cautious and left marks on the trees as not to lose his way. He would use them as landmarks on his way back.

Then he heard the brushwood rustling and took a stance, thinking it was a goblin, but it was just a slime again.

“...’nother one of you.”

Although he was sick of them already, he killed it instantly as he was already familiar with them. The quest was to kill ten goblins. As proof, he had to bring the “goblin fang” back with him.

Incidentally, slimes dropped “slime substance” as part of a hunt quest, but he ignored it as it was too disgusting to touch.

Going through the forest, he encountered another slime. The moment he felt annoyed about it, something appeared from the bush to his side. And it attacked him with some kind of weapon.

WHOOSH!

He dodged it by bending his body at once, but he broke out in a cold sweat.

(C- Close call... I see, that’s a goblin.)

Its appearance was identically to the picture in the reference book he was shown. A stature small like a child, but an ugly face and a club in its hand.

“Must hurt to get hit by that...”

When he glared at the goblin, he received another attack on the back and groaned. He had totally forgotten about the slime. Moreover, the goblin used this chance to attack too.

(Damn. Goblins come in groups, I can't waste time here!)

He parried the club with his solid knife. The goblin let out a creaky voice like grinding one's teeth, with drool spilling out of its mouth. Hiiro definitely didn't want to get bitten and sent the goblin flying with a kick.

(Fuh, a humanoid demon... Will I be able to kill it...?)

Speaking to himself, he narrowed his eyes as he stared at the goblin. Needless to say, he never killed anyone when he was in Japan. He had killed bugs, but never animals, so he was insecure about whether he was able to kill a living creature with a human appearance, even if it was a demon.

"...Hah. Well, I gotta survive here."

He muttered as to convince himself.

"Sorry... but you'll be a stepping for me."

Saying so, he rushed at the goblin with all his might. Hiiro had a lot of agility, although he didn't know why. The goblin didn't move as it intended to take him on upfront.

SLAAAASH!

He cut down the goblin. That made him somewhat sick in the stomach, but he swallowed it down and glared at the goblin.

"You're next!"

Afterwards he defeated the slime, whereupon another level up sound resounded. His level turned to four now. It was going well.

The his joy only lasted for a moment as one goblin after another appeared in front of him. The earlier battle seemed to have attracted them.

However, Hiiro had waited for them. He concentrated his magic power into his finger tip and quickly draw a word onto the ground. The group of goblins came at him all at once.

(Good... Come here!)

Just when the goblins were right before him,

“Activate!”

He shouted and the electrical discharge occurred in the word. In the next moment, various sharp objects appeared from the ground and pierced the goblins.

“Haha, it worked.”

The goblins desperately tried to move while grimacing in pain, but they couldn't. After a while they stopped moving as they died.

The word Hiiro had written was “needle”.

The area of effect was roughly 6.5m² wide, just like with the word “hard”. He had waited for the goblins to enter that area. The ground had turned into a cactus and killed all the goblins on it.

(Kuh... It's more tiring than I thought.)

Lot of blood was flowing out from the pierced spots of the goblins. Seeing that, Hiiro painfully became aware that this was a real battle, that he did this and that he could have turned into this himself if he was careless. It was taught to him in a forcible manner.

(Fuh, anyway, first things first)

He took action again right away. There were still goblins around, but confused by his weird attack, they were reluctant to attack him.

“Then let's try the next one”

While saying so, he picked up a stone and wrote onto it the word “stop”.

If all went well, it might stop the goblin's movement. He threw the stone at a goblin. The moment the goblin was hit at the shoulder, he activated it. However, only the stone was stopped. It stopped right in midair.

(Mhm, so it can't emit magic)

As he had written it onto the stone, probably only the stone itself was influenced.

Hihiro had hoped that the effect from the stone would affect the goblin too, but sadly that wasn't the case. Only the stone itself was affected, leaving the goblin unaffected.

(Okay, next one!)

Next up he wrote "extend" on the blade of his knife. Then he readied the knife and turned his body like a spinning top.

"Activate!"

WHOOOOOSH!

In a flash, the blade extended manifold and the goblins in the distant were cut. Three of them went down at once. As far as he could tell, that left three more.

"I only need two more for my quest, but I won't let anyone escape."

He slaughtered the goblins by swinging his extended knife around and was so immersed in it that he didn't notice the level up sound during it.

After he defeated all of them, he collected the "goblin fangs". It was the only sharp tooth on the upper jaw. But before that, he transformed his knife back by writing "origin" on it.

As soon as he finished collecting them, exhaustion befell his whole body. His MP was empty too, so he ate "honey toffee" to restore it.

(Oh right, I gotta fix the ground too)

With his MP replenished, he fixed the ground by writing "original". Anyway, it had been a while since he moved around so much and he somehow endured that battle, which was akin to a massacre, albeit of only demons.

"Puh, never thought I was this emotional"

He sighed while saying that as he didn't expect himself to get worn out mentally to such an extent. It really made him realize that this was not a game.

The smell of lots of blood, the sensation of cutting through flesh, the dying screams and corpses. All of that gave Hiiro, a citizen of a peaceful country, a dreadful shock.

Feeling more exhausted than expected, he sat down on the spot to rest. But a rustling sound announced the arrival of something. It was a goblin.

"Fuh~ Guess I can only keep going until I'm used to it..."

He made a resigning sigh and glared at the goblin.

"Then bring it on! Come at me! Until I get used to it!"

Somewhat out of frustration, he swung around his weapon.

"Aw~ I'm pooped~"

Hiiro had returned to the town, but took a rest on a bench on the street. The slimes and goblins had attacked him without rest. He had defeated them while their blood splashed onto him, so he was completely out of fuel now.

(Though I quite raised my level thanks to that)

Name	Hiiro Okamura
Level	LVL 7
Health Points	31/65
Magic Power	34/250
Experience	222
NEXT Lvl	87
Attack	25 (35)
Defense	21
Agility	46
HIT Chance	20
Intelligence	37
«Magic Attribute»	None
«Magic»	Word Magic (Single Chain Unlocked)
«Titles»	Innocent Bystander – World Traveller Word Master

Chapter 07: Bon Voyage!

He planned to go to the Guild for his quest reward after he rested a little bit more. His blood-spattered appearance drew the attention of by-passers, but he was so exhausted that he paid it no mind.

(Hah... Maybe, I can clean... my clothes with magic)

With that in mind, he moved somewhere without people and wrote “clean” on his clothes. And when he activated it, the bloody clothes became all clean again in an instant.

(When I write it on my body, I won’t be needing a bath...?)

He kept it in mind to try it out later. And if it worked, he would be delighted about such a convenient power.

At the guild, the woman at the counter widened her eyes in surprise. Because he completed the quests, which demanded to hunt ten goblins, with a far higher number: 22.

She looked at the 22 “goblin fangs”, which he presented as proof for the quest.

“I am impressed you managed to hunt so many. Especially considering that you only registered yesterday, Okamura-sama.”

“Whatever, evaluate it already.”

He wanted to get over with it before he was dragged into something troublesome. The woman apologized on his words and properly did her job.

“The advertised reward is 35000 Rigin, but I can give you an extra 10000 Rigin for all these ‘goblin fangs’ you are turning in. What do you say?”

“Yeah, do that.”

He had no use for the “goblin fangs” anyway.

“Then please wait a moment.”

Saying that, she took his card and went somewhere. After a while she came back and returned his card. The money had been added to it. He brought the card closer to his chest and recited disappear, whereupon the card dispersed and vanished.

Now he had enough funds for the inn for a while and could even buy a fair number of MP restoration pills. With this quest he realized that MP pills were an absolute necessity for him.

When he wanted to use the <<Word Magic>>, which by itself already had a high MP consumption, numerous times, he should have a large number of restoration pills at hand.

(I got to test out a lot of stuff and realized how important the MP pills are. I better buy as much as I can carry.)

Hence he went straight to a general shop and bought the necessary items for battles, including a new weapon. It was the cheapest kind of a sword, but still cost 30000 Rigin. The reason he bought a new one was because the blade of his knife was chipped. Well, naturally that happened when he fought so many demons. Lastly, he bought a red robe as a protection gear.

He chose it, since it had a high magic resistance and an unexpected high protection value. The red was kind of flashy, but he made do with it, thinking that he will get used to it.

(Wait, couldn't I have fixed the chip in the blade with magic... Like if I wrote 'new' or 'original' while remembering how I bought it... Moreover...)

Various things came into his mind, but he had already bought the sword.

(Well, it was just a knife anyway. I'll use magic from now on)

The knife was only bought due to a shortage of funds at the beginning and he had intended to buy a sword when he saved up some money anyway, so he would now first try magic to repair the blade before buying a new one.

And when the blade actually chipped and he tried <<Word Magic>> to repair it, the blade really turned as good as new with the word “new”. His own magic apparently knew no bounds.

For one week then, Hiiro completed quests from morning till evening. At first he just wanted to save up money and level up, but it was surprisingly fun when he tried it.

He saw flowers he never saw before and encountered various demons. It was also quite enjoyable to think of ways to defeat these demons.

He didn’t consider himself to be a battle maniac, but he might have to reflect about himself as he unintentionally got elated about how to kill a strong opponent, the real thrill of an RPG.

And by this and that, his Guild rank raised as well, turning from the blue F rank into the violet E rank. Not to mention his pile of money and levels.

The woman at the counter called him a new rising star as there certainly were hardly any beginners that completed twenty to thirty quests in one week.

(It’s likely that things will get troublesome when I work here any more and the king hears about it)

He feared that he would get told to fight with the heroes if he was that strong, which would be horrible. His freedom was the only thing he wouldn’t surrender. He didn’t want his fun life in the other world get spoiled from obligations.

(I guess it’s about time)

He made his resolve while checking the contents of his big bag.

(Tomorrow I’ll leave this country)

Yes, he resolved to go on a trip.

Enough money on his hands, a good level and above all, his mentality toughened up.

With that, he could even survive during a trip.

Name	Hiiro Okamura
Level	LVL 18
Health Points	210/210
Magic Power	640/640
Experience	4672
NEXT Lvl	480
Attack	89 (100)
Defense	65 (80)
Agility	137
HIT Chance	77 (85)
Intelligence	102 (106)
<<Magic Attribute>>	None
<<Magic>>	Word Magic (Single Chain Unlocked)
<<Titles>>	Innocent Bystander – World Traveller Word Master

Guild Card	
Name	Hiiro Okamura
Sex	Male
Age	17
From	Unkown
Rank	E
Quest	-
Weapon	Short Sword
Guard	Red Robe
Accessory	-
Rigin	567.000

On the next day, Hiiro groaned while spreading his map on the “Toll Road” outside the town. It was necessary to decide where to go.

He technically had an idea. Going south, there was a big town called “Frentor”, albeit not as big as “Victorias”. It was a famous trade town.

But Hiiro rather tended to go to “Surge” instead, a town in the west. “Surge” was close to the country border, right next to the continent, where the “Gabranth” lived.

Since he came to another world, he naturally wanted to meet a “werewolf” or “werecat” by all means.

But right now, there was a tension between both countries. He didn’t think he would be able to pass the border easily. However, being an adventurer, he heard some news.

That the countries certainly had placed restrictions on each other, but lot of “Gabranth” were adventurers and often went on jobs together with “Humas” adventurers.

The individual and nation’s opinion were different things. In other words, the nation’s opinion didn’t represent the whole race. Some people worked together with each other.

Still, a lot of people in this world detested other races right now. They were especially out of sorts with the fighting “Evila”.

Nevertheless, Hiroyuki believed that he had to confirm it with his own eyes. To begin with, he wasn’t interested in the opinion of others, priding himself with the conviction to come up with his own answer by experiencing it himself.

Therefore, he decided to head to “Surge”. Crossing the border would be possible one way or another as well if necessary.

But it was quite a distance to “Surge”. A long trip called for resolution and good feet.

On his way, he came by the “Clair Forest”, where he had been before. There was no more need to be wary about this forest, but he needed to get through there. He entered the forest and defeated the demons that attacked him flawlessly.

With his current AGI, the movement of his opponents looked like they were standing still. Their difference in strength was that obvious.

(Well, I’m not a beginner anymore)

Hiroyuki was experienced fighting even stronger demons, so the slimes and goblins appearing in the forest weren’t worth mentioning.

He easily passed through the forest and got onto the “Tempus Highway”. Following it straight lead to a small town called “Ames”. His plan was to stay the night there and go on tomorrow.

“Oh, a jewel slime in such a place?”

He spotted a sparkling slime shining like a jewel in front of him. As he had read the Guild's reference book once, he got a hold of the different kind of demons.

"I can sell its 'jewel slime core' for quite a sum. No escape, dude."

Hihiro drew his sword with the eyes of a hunter. Money was important after all. After he killed it without letting it escape, he nodded satisfied.

"That's a good sign. Mh? Now it's a yellow rabbit."

The next demon that appeared was a literal yellow rabbit. Its attack power wasn't all too strong, but it was quite fast. Still, not so fast as to bewilder him, because right now, he could move even faster than the yellow rabbit.

"Haah!"

He cut it into two with his sword. Three of them had shown up, but one seemingly got away. He kept the hunt quest drop "yellow rabbit tail" just in case. Defeating the appearing demons, he headed towards "Ames".

Chapter 08: An average guy that won't work for free

In "Ames" he looked for an inn first of all. Luckily for him, not many adventurers dropped by here, so there were enough empty rooms, only one double room was booked.

"A single room please."

"Eh, ah, yes. Ex- Excuse me... Are you... an adventurer?"

"...Yes?"

"I... see."

"...?"

Hiiro inclined his head as he somehow didn't feel welcomed. It was his first visit to this village, nor did he ever did something to them.

Yet, the inn keeper treated him anxiously. It bothered him, but for now, he reserved his room and went to look around the village.

But there he noticed something strange. For some reason, he felt gazes on him. And from all directions at that. It was an atmosphere like he was an uninvited guest.

Just like the inn keeper, they frowned at him. Maybe this village didn't welcome outsiders. Well, Hiiro was only going to stay for one night, so he didn't let it bother him.

"Hey, Mister."

At that moment, someone called out to him. When he turned around, there stood a kid. It was a boy around the age of seven. He glared at him with eyes like looking at someone suspicious. Hiiro ignored him, since he didn't like that attitude.

"Hey, don't ignore me!"

The boy got angry. Why would he have to deal with a brat? Hiiro dropped his shoulders.

"What's up, shorty?"

“Don’t call me shorty! Not when you’re wearing some weird red robe yourself! It’s intimidating!”

“...Are you a bull or what?”

Not like he wore the red robe to be intimidating. It simply wore it for protection purposes. Although he grew attached to it after wearing it all the time.

With his black school uniform underneath, it was a surreal combination, but Hiiro didn’t care at all.

“Mister, you’re an adventurer, right? Why did you come to such an isolated place?”

“Isolated place?”

“Don’t call it an isolated place!”

“You called it that.”

Why was he so aggressive...? Hiiro couldn’t come up with an answer to that, so he ignored him and walked away as it was too troublesome after all.

“H- Hey, wait!”

Ignore, ignore.

“I told you to wait!”

Turn a blind eye.

“Hey, man! Listen to me!”

Just the wind.

“Hey... Please... don’t ignore me.”

His voice gradually started to tremble. He must have gotten sad from being ignored. Hiiro made a light sigh and stopped.

“What do you want?”

He stopped ignoring him as it would be difficult to stay in the village if he made him cry here. Upon that, the boy smiled energetically, but went back to glare at him right away.

“Sh- Sheesh, you’re such a meanie! All adventurer are like that!”

“I’m me. Don’t lump me together with others, it’s discomforting.”

When he glared at him in a bad mood, the boy cowered with a shiver.

“...Hah. So, what’s up? I’m busy looking around, you know.”

“Eh? Why’re you looking around?”

“What does it matter? It got nothing to do with you, brat.”

“Uh... Uhh...”

The boy got close to tears again, so Hihiro pressed on his temples with a sigh.

“Hah. Just killing time. I got here just now and plan to stay here one night during my travel.”

He looked at the boy, hoping that this satisfied him.

“Oh? You’re not going to sham the village?”

“Sham? Say what?”

According to the boy, certain adventurers lately dropped by the village, barged into the general or weapon store and forcefully haggled products, doing whatever they wanted.

“It was a group of two and they falsely charged the inn to get to stay for free.”

While he grinded his teeth frustrated, the boy clenched his fist.

“Why didn’t you refuse? You could’ve chased them out with all the villagers.”

“We cannot do that.”

It wasn’t the boy, who replied to Hihiro.

“Ah, Uncle Panis!”

The man called Panis looked like in his late 30s. In reality he might be younger, but his gloomy expression made him look older.

“And you are?”

“You seem to be an adventurer. My name is Panis. I run a humble shop.”

That meant he was a victim of the two adventurer.

“Is it true what the brat said?”

“Yes, it is. They currently picking at the general store.”

“...You said you can’t chase them out. What do you mean?”

Panis looked troubled and made a big sigh.

“For some reason, they got title deed of the village.”

“Huh? Why would they have that? Doesn’t the village chief usually keep it?”

“Yes, but the title deed was suddenly gone from the village chief’s house...”

In other words, the two stole it.

“How careless. You reap what you sow.”

“Haha, you got us there.”

Yet another new person answered Hiiro.

“You are the adventurer that arrived earlier? I am the village chief of ‘Ames’, Brey.”

“What are you doing here, Chief?”

Panis asked.

“Same reason as yours. I was told there is an outsider, so I came to check.”

Appearing Hiiro's arrival was immediately reported to the village chief and he came to see the suddenly visiting adventurer with his own eyes. He seemingly was relieved to see that Hiiro was just an average adventurer.

CRAAACK!

Suddenly the sound of wood breaking resounded. Everyone present faced the origin of the sound taken aback. The door of a house was burst opened and someone was thrown out.

"Mick!"

The village chief widened his eyes and shouted. The man called Mick was thrown onto the ground and crouched. Then two people appeared from the house, where he was thrown out from.

One man was fat with a bald head, the other one slender with a spiky hairstyle like a broom. Mr. Spiky Head spit out while looking down on Mick.

"Keh! Try saying that again!"

The slender man, also qualified to be called spiky beanpole, scowled fiendish. Next to him, the other guy took a bite out of a fruit that was probably from the store. Hiiro named him bald chubby.

Mick desperately pleaded. They most likely told him to hand over the products for free and he refused to. However, spiky beanpole showed an irritated vein on his forehead and kicked Mick's face.

Quite a lot of blood splashed around. Seeing that, the villagers rushed over to him. Spiky beanpole glared sharply at the village chief.

"Huuh? Look who we have here, the chief. Got something to say? Mh?"

Hiiro calmly observed, taking him for a third-rate gangster, no, delinquent.

"M- More food."

Bald chubby tried to go back into the house while drooling, probably in search for more food.

“Hey, Junior, give it a rest, we’re leaving.”

“B- But I’m hungry.”

“Tch. Make it quick.”

“Okay.”

“Stop it already!”

Unable to watch any longer, the village chief shouted, but winced when spiky beanpole glared at him. The others close by didn’t approach either, scared by spiky beanpole’s look of menace.

(Looks like they’re being compelled to accept it because these guys are beyond their power, not just the title deed)

The village didn’t have any capable people, so they didn’t resist as they would only get killed if they challenged them.

(They could ask the army for help, but I guess the guys would just run away with the title deed then. And there’s a fear for their revenge. The best solution would be for someone to subdue them)

While Hiiro pondered like that, the boy next to him looked up to him. Pretty much ask if he was asking him to do something about it.

“No idea what you want, but this doesn’t concern me.”

“Wha! And you still call yourself human!?”

“What? Do I look like a demon or what?”

“You do! Why aren’t you helping! As a fellow adventurer, you have to stop them!”

“...Listen, brat, I may be an adventurer, but I ain’t some advocate of justice. Ask the Heroes if you want justice for free.”

Hihiro said composed while crossing his arms. The boy gave him a look filled with anger, it was no concern of his.

“Forget it! In the end, all adventurer are like this!”

Saying so, the boy went straight for the two guys.

“Ah, wait, Nies! Don’t go there!”

Panis tried to stop him, but the boy called Nies ran with all his might. Then Panis glared at Hihiro while grinding his teeth. Still, he relaxed soon enough and sighed.

“No, I get it. This has nothing to do with you. A Hero that works for people without charge like from fairytales does not exist.”

“Mh, no idea if such a person exists, but at the very least, I’m not like that. I pass on working for free.”

Hihiro kept it to himself that sadly enough, he considered unprofitable things as bothersome.

“...For free.”

“Huh? What?”

Panis suddenly leaked a voice, so Hihiro inadvertently asked back.

“So it just... has to be paid?”

“....”

Hihiro got a bad feeling.

“In that case, I will give you my finest weapon when you help us.”

“....”

“Will you help us?”

“....”

Panis looked at him earnestly. It was a pain and to be honest, it didn't concern him at all. However, the finest weapon was appealing. Just taking care of this scum for it was rather cheap.

While thinking so, he made eye contact with Panis. Looking into his eyes without averting his gaze, they stared at each other for a while. After a while, Hihiro sighed like being outlasted.

“Fine. I'll lend a hand. But keep your promise.”

Panis' face instantly brightened up, but turned gloomy again.

“I, I know I asked you, but... are you strong?”

He asked while looking anxiously at Hihiro from head to toe.

“Dunno. But at least good enough to do something about them.”

Hihiro said so by looking at the chubby & beanpole combo. Panis had his mouth gaping open from that confidence, but Hihiro ignored that and swiftly went into action.

Nies picked up a pebble from the ground and threw it at spiky beanpole. It pleased him how it hit him right into the face, but needless to say, the other villagers all went pale.

Spiky beanpole's expression as he slowly looked at Nies spoke volumes: This brat is as good as dead.

Feeling his killing intent, Nies froze on the spot.

“St- Stop it!”

The village chief stopped covering in front of Nies, but was sent flying with hard punch. Then spiky beanpole drew the sword on his waist and pointed it at Nies. Paralyzed by fear, Nies didn't move an inch.

"Brat, any last words?"

"D- Don't..."

Nies shook his head while shedding tears, but that didn't stop spiky beanpole. He smiled happily and raised his sword into the air, then swinging it down from there.

WHOOOSH!

Everyone gulped and closed their eyes. They all thought Nies' life was over now.

However!

"OWWWW!"

The one screaming in pain and bleeding was spiky beanpole. Something was pierced into his sword arm.

Everyone looked dumbfounded at this scene. A blade, yes, it was a blade. His arm was undoubtedly pierced by a blade.

But the length of it was clearly too long. And they looked at the end of the blade, at the person, who performed the attack. It was Okamura Hihiro.

Chapter 09: Sword Encounter

He had extended the blade by writing “extend” on it, fully aware that its length was now roughly seven metres. However, no one present understood what had happened in this bizarre scene.

Hihiro reverted his sword by writing “original”. The blade slipped out of spiky beanpole’s arm with a whoosh and he groaned.

He dropped his sword from the intense pain and his arm trembled. A great deal of sweat was accumulating on his face.

“Stand back, brat.”

“M- Mister... Wh- Why?”

“I get paid, so I’ll lend a hand.”

When Hihiro said so bluntly, Nies made a slightly happy sigh of relief.

“Wh- Who are you, dude!?”

Putting up with the pain, spiky beanpole frantically shouted while opening his bloodshot eyes wide.

“I don’t have to answer you. See ya.”

“Wha!?”

Hihiro leaped in with an incredible speed and spiky beanpole couldn’t react at all. Then Hihiro slashed at him with his sword.

“Take this.”

SLAAAASH!

In one swing, the blade cut from the left shoulder into his right flank, splashing blood everywhere. Like this, spiky beanpole got on his knee and collapsed onto the ground.

“Im... possible...”

Everyone thought he was dead, but he was convulsing with twitches as he was still alive. But it seemed like he completely lost consciousness. Hereupon, bald chubby finally seemed to notice that something was wrong and came out of the store.

“Ah... What’s this? Why’s Brother on the ground?”

“Keep the questions to yourself.”

Saying so, Hiiro once again leaped in towards him in a flash and swung his sword like before, but

CREAAAK!

he was stopped by a metallic sound.

(Damn! He’s wearing a chain mail!)

Although he had slashed him, there was no feeling of having cut flesh. Instead the sensation of a metallic resistance remained in his hand.

“M- My clothes. How dare you!”

When bald chubby said so, the already torn clothes ripped some more. Hiiro wanted to retort why he got angry over the clothes, but as he had figured, there was a chain mail underneath the clothes.

Bald chubby drew the broadsword from his back and swung it with a buzz.

“Mhm~ I’ll die if I take a hit from that upfront, considering my gear”

With that in mind, Hiiro took some distance for now.

“I, I’ll turn you into minced meeeaaat!”

“Shut up, pig. Bring it on already.”

“Grrrr!”

Bald chubby swung his word with all his might. Since Hiiron knew that he aimed at his head, he dodged it by squatting down and slashed at his legs without a moment's delay. But there was a metallic sound again.

"Oh man, this pig wears a full body armour? Impressive that he can move around."

Normally it would be too heavy to even walk around. But while his movements were dull, he still managed to move around, so he must have quite the strength.

"But there's no meaning if he doesn't hit. Besides, I can fight like this too."

While saying so, Hiiron put away his sword and toyed with his opponent by moving around swiftly.

"U- Uh, where? Where's he?"

With his characteristic speed, Hiiron had gone around to his back. The opponent was still looking around restlessly in search for him.

Concentrating magic power in his fingertip, he then wrote a word onto bald chubby's back.

After quickly taking his distance, he recited activate in his mind, whereupon bald chubby suddenly turned bright red in the face and started to roll around on the ground.

"H- Ho- Hoooot!? Wh- What's this! Why's it so hot!?"

He currently felt like being grilled by a fire. Moreover, his whole body was hot, not just his back.

It was a sensation like being enveloped by flames. Not something a human could endure. The word written on the back was "heat". It wasn't on the level of hot water as it even melted the chain mail. The flesh burned with a sizzle and a scorching smell hung in the air.

The villagers were dumbfounded at the sudden collapse of bald chubby.

"Okay, all done."

Looking down on bald chubby, Hiiro showed a faint smile.

“Guh... H... Hot... What did... you do...?”

“Who knows? You’ll never find out, chubby.”

He hit him into the face with all his might while saying that.

“Gueh!”

Bald chubby lost his consciousness while his body smoked. In that moment, Hiiro heard a familiar sound in his head.

(Oh, even these guys give EXP?)

Then he went over to spiky beanpole and searched his pockets.

“Ah, found it. Here.”

Saying so, he passed it to the village chief.

“Don’t come crying to me for it again.”

It was the village’s title deed.

“And call the army to take these guys away. They won’t wake up for a while, but properly tie them up.”

“Uh- Uhm...”

The village chief had no clue what was going on, gradually caught onto the current situation and looked at the defeated two once more, smiling then.

“O- Ohh...”

And then...

“YAAAAAY!”

The overwhelming cheer of the villagers reached his ears. Hiiro mumbled “So noisy” with one eye closed, but no one heard him.

The village chief took his hand and thanked him in tears.

“Thank you! Thank you so much!”

“S- Sure.”

A bit bewildered, he answered. There Panis came over as well.

“Y- You are quite an remarkable adventurer.”

“No clue. Aren’t these two just weak?”

“No, no, there are known as the ‘Harios Brothers’ and are quite skilled adventurers. Although notorious.”

He nodded short. To be honest, he wasn’t interested in their life story. Then he suddenly felt a light hit on his bottom. On a look, there stood Nies.

“Man! If you’re that strong, you could helped us from the beginning!”

“Hey, Nies!”

The village chief rebuked him, but in the next moment, everyone was surprised at Hiiro’s action. Because he lightly nudged Nies’ head with a thump.

“Oww! What’cha doing!”

“I told you, I’m no Hero. I don’t help people for free. The old man requested it this time with a reward, so I helped.”

“Wha...”

“Anyway, it was one-time thing.”

“Wha!?”

Ignoring the pouting Nies, Hiiro turned the topic to Panis. Needless to say, it was about the reward.

“Now then, can I look around your store?”

“Y- Yeah, sure.”

Panis showed an empty smile by looking at Nies, who glared at Hihiro with teary eyes and his cheeks puffed out. The village chief even offered to remit his lodging fees and he gladly accepted it.

After that, he headed towards Panis’ shop, but every time he run into a villager, he was thanked. Earlier he wasn’t welcomed, but now he was like a VIP.

(So self-interested)

Of course he could relate, but he didn’t have a favourable impression of them due to their sudden turn-around in attitude.

“This is my store.”

“Oh, you have armour too, not just weapons.”

Looking around the shop, he roughly checked the products.

“So, you said you would give me your finest weapon, but which is it?”

“Fufufufufu. I’m glad you asked.”

His laugh was a bit annoying. Not the least bit coquetted. Then he went to the back of the store and brought back a single sword.

“This is it!”

“Oho.”

“It’s called ‘Piercer’.”

It looked like a Japanese sword and had the same blade length as one. The only difference was that the blade was clear like ice. It certainly was breathtakingly beautiful.

“It’s a Katana specializing on piercing. It’s a kind of sword that was originally created by some people of the ‘Gabranth’. Unlike the swords made by ‘Humas’ which focus on

slashes with all one's might, it has a sharp blade to cut apart the prey with speed instead of power."

Being a Japanese, Hiiro knew all that, but he kept silent.

"Of course I guarantee the sharpness of 'Piercer', but its speciality are thrusts. Like the name implies, it's a Katana that can pierce anything. It may look like this, but it's sturdy without a doubt."

"Where did you get such a sword?"

"Through some connections. I kept it dearly so far, since I wanted to make it a heirloom."

"I'm surprised these two didn't take it."

"Duh, I hid it in the basement."

He said proudly while throwing out his chest. It must be that important to him.

"Can I really take it? I mean, it's a heirloom, right? In other words, not for sale. I thought you would give me something from your assortment?"

As it wasn't displayed in the store, Hiiro thought it wasn't an article for sale.

"Well, it's a bit regrettable, but I feel like I can entrust it to you."

"...Aren't you giving me too much credit? It's not like I took these guys out because I wanted to. As I told the brat already, I ain't a Hero."

"That doesn't matter."

"Mh?"

"You saved this village. We are incredible grateful about that, no matter how it came to be."

Hiiro looked at the sword once more and for some reason got the urge to hold it.

"...May I?"

“Sure, take it.”

“Okay, thanks.”

Saying so, he accepted “Piercer”. Even though he touched it for the first time, it stuck to his hand like he had used it in forever. When he put it on his waist, it was yet again a perfect fit. His face inadvertently brightened up.

As a Japanese male, it was quite satisfying to have a Japanese sword hanging on one’s waist.

(What a lucky found)

He gained a level and found a good sword, so he had nothing to complain. After Panis thanked him again, he left the shop and returned to the inn as there was nothing more to do today.

But on the way someone was blocking his path.

“Mister, got a minute?”

It was Nies. He got angry when Hihiro made a big sigh.

“Why’re you looking so annoyed!”

“.....Hah.”

“Again!”

Hihiro wanted to tell him not to point at other people, but there would be no end to it once he started to pay heed to him, so he wanted to get this over with quickly.

“What do you want, brat?”

“Don’t call me a brat! I’m already seven!”

“Yeah, a legit brat.”

“Gr~!”

“...Hah. So, what’s up?”

“Tell me your name.”

“...Huh?”

“Your name! My father told me to ask you!”

“Your father? Who’s that?”

“The village chief.”

“...You’re his son?”

“Fufu, awesome, right~”

Nies said proudly, but Hiiro wasn’t the least bit envious.

“Ah, sure, sure. Really amazing~ I’m sooo surprised~ Amazing alright~”

“.....You don’t think that at all.”

“Duh.”

“You just admitted it!?”

He had his mouth open wide in shock, but at this rate this would really take a lot of time, so Hiiro reluctantly decided to tell him his name.

“I’m Hiiro. Hiiro Okamura.”

“Hero... So cool!”

“Huh?”

Hiiro was puzzled as he didn’t know why Nies suddenly sparkled his eyes.

“I see~ Hero~”

“...I don’t get you, but you have to report to the village chief, right? Shouldn’t you be going?”

“Ah, right! Dad’s busy tying up these guys! See you, Mister!”

“Sure, sure.”

Nies left while waving his hand energetically, so Hiiro thought how nice it must be to be young again. Although he himself wasn’t all that sophisticated, and shook his head. After all, he was only seventeen yet.

Then he returned to the inn and was treated by the inn keeper like a totally different person.

He was served a luxury dinner without ordering it, and while he was grateful for it, he wondered if his personality became twisted as he was somewhat disgusted, so he shook his head again.

After a while Nies appeared together with the village chief now. The village chief apparently came over to properly thank him again as he was busy dealing with the aftermath before.

As each villager would shower him with gratitude when he walked around the village, Hiiro secluded himself in his room in the inn, since it was annoying for him. His physical strength wasn’t exhausted at all, but he was worn out mentally.

He once again checked his <<Status>>.

Name	Hiiro Okamura
Level	LVL 20
Health Points	320/320
Magic Power	900/900
Experience	5672
NEXT Lvl	520
Attack	139 (200)
Defense	100 (115)
Agility	210 (212)
HIT Chance	112 (120)
Intelligence	189 (193)
«Magic Attribute»	None
«Magic»	Word Magic (Single Chain Unlocked, Air Writing Unlocked)
«Titles»	Innocent Bystander – World Traveller Word Master, Awakened One, Ripper

Chapter 10: Evila

A few inconsistencies popped up. First was the abnormal gain in the <<Status>>. Of course he was happy about gaining two level at once as he had been level eighteen before.

But considering that his HP had been scarily past 200 until just now, this was certainly strange, even if he went up two levels. Same for his MP or other stats, which mostly had been still in the double digits.

(Well, I'm happy about it, but...)

Thinking so, he shifted his gaze at the <<Title>>. The <<Awakened One>> caught his attention. He figured that he got the <<Ripper>> one from defeating the Chubby & Beanpole combo. But he had no explanation for the former one. For the time being, he clicked it to see the help.

<<Awakened One>>

Enhancement for a World Traveller. Great addition to the status upon reaching level twenty. Level ups will give a small bonus from now on.

He inadvertently let his surprise show on this cheat. Being a World Traveller had its benefits. Hiiro was quite pleased about this blessing despite not being a Hero. The next thing that caught his eye was <<Air Writing Unlocked>>.

<<Air Writing>>

MP cost: 100

Able to write words into the air with magic power. Activates by coming in contact with the target. It is also possible to shoot the written word and let it activate then, though it only flies straight like an arrow.

As he didn't really understand it, he tried it out. He concentrated magic power in his finger tip and wrote in midair while he imagined how he usually wrote on the ground. Upon that, a pale word appeared. It showed "float".

When he moved his finger, the word followed it and he imagined shooting it at the vase in the room like pulling a trigger, whereupon the word headed straight for the vase.

The moment it hit, the word stuck to the vase. After reciting activate then, the vase surprisingly floated.

"Wow, that's handy."

Like this it was possible to attack the opponent by firing at it without having to set up a trap on the ground.

Hiiro was astonished about his own power becoming more and more unfair, but felt somewhat happy as well. Incidentally, the floating vase suddenly fell down after around one minute.

The next day, the village chief was waiting in front of the inn to say his thanks to Hiiro again, when the inn keeper came rushing outside.

"Wh- What's the matter?"

"Y- You see..."

Hiiro was gone. His room was completely empty with no sign of him.

“Say what!?”

In fact, he had left the village early in the morning before the sun was even up. Needless to say, he did so, because he predicted the village chief’s visit. And because it would get troublesome when the army arrived.

“Oh god, we still haven’t thanked him enough...”

“That’s so like him...”

Nies said with a smile and Panis nodded agreeing too.

“I wonder if I will ever see Hero again.”

The village chief petted Nies’ head and answered.

“You will. He’s our saviour after all.”

Everyone nodded in agreement with the village chief’s words.

“Acchoo!”

While making a big sneeze, Hiiro was making his way to “Surge”, a city near the country border. His <<Status>> had increased drastically, so he mowed down the appearing demons like weed.

He tried out his new “Piercer” too and it was easy to handle, killing demons with one strike due to its high attack power.

“Okay, I gotta pass the ‘Torchu Mountain Range’, then the ‘Maritone Highway’ leading to ‘Surge’.”

On the spread map, he confirmed his route.

“It’s still a long way.”

Grimacing from the scorching sun above him, he gazed upon the 'Torchu Mountain Range' in the distance.

On his way, he reviewed the possibilities of his <<Word Magic>>. He had tried out various things and got to know that the <<Word Magic>> had words with temporary and permanent effects.

For example, the word "float" only lasted for one minute, then lost its effect, whereas "extend" extended his blade and remained like that until he did something.

Likewise "hard" and "soft" were permanent effects while "flame" or "heat" stopped after one minute.

(Guess it goes like this? Changing the target's nature or shape is permanent and everything else last for one minute?)

This thesis needed practical tests. It would be fatal to get a <<Rebound>> when he used it unreasonable. His power was outstanding. He could easily see himself receiving quite the damage from a <<Rebound>> if he was unable to control it.

So he decided to refrain from using words that directly affected life and death of living creatures as much as possible. A <<Rebound>> from that would surely be lethal.

Magic meant imagination. Without a clear image, it wouldn't activate and even if it activated, it would cause a <<Rebound>> if the control was insufficient.

Hihiro fully understood why the old woman in the capital told him that knowledge was important.

Along the way he tried out various <<Word Magic>>. He carried plenty of MP restoration pills, so he could noodle around to his heart's content, discovering a few merits and demerits.

(I wonder what the Heroes are doing right now)

He had started to forget their face [how cruel], but he faintly recalled Takashi and the others.

“OK! Now we’re all E rank in the Guild.”

While holding the Guild Card with the violet border, Aoyama Takashi stroke a triumphant pose. The other three Heroes held a similar card.

“As expected of the Heroes. I am amazed how fast you raised your rank.”

Their instructor Vale Kimble brightened up his handsome face happily.

“Yeah! We also reached level fifteen! It’s going well!”

Suzumiya Chika happily gave a thumbs-up.

“But it’s still not enough to fight the ‘Evila’, right?”

“Indeed. The ‘Evila’ exceed ‘Humas’ in in physical strength and magic power by birth.”

“Haah~ The race traits aren’t to be trifled with.”

“Yeah, even in games, humans are all-purpose, but don’t have a specialized trait.”

“So we can only rely on tactics and weapons?”

“No, that only applies to the average ‘Humas’.”

Vale denied Takashi’s utterance.

“What do you mean?”

“You come from a different world. Heroes have various traits. Increased physical strength and magic power, not to forget the light magic, the weakness of ‘Evila’. That will be a great advantage.”

“Ah, right. I think we heard that before.”

“Yes. But there is also an attribute only the ‘Evila’ can use.”

“Darkness... I guess?”

The one, who answered, was Minamoto Shuri. Vale made a slightly long face.

“Yes. Darkness magic is quite strong. Many ‘Humas’ already fell victim to it.”

“And our light magic copes with it, right~”

Akamori Shinobu talked with a carefree smile.

“Right. While light magic is indeed powerful, it consumes a lot of magic power. If you use it wrongly...”

“That’s why we’re working on our team play.”

“Yes. Two attackers and two supporters. That gives a clear distinction for using light magic.”

“Well~ Unlike in games, we don’t have a turn system here. You don’t get much time to think during a fight~”

Shinobu made a valid point. One was always risking one’s life in a battle. Planning each attack in detail during battle would make one fall behind and at worst, cost one’s life.

For that reason, they formed a team and supported each other. By doing so, they could at least buy time for someone to analyze the situation carefully.

That way they could determine when to use light magic as well. But a perfect teamwork was needed for that.

“Listen, there are all sorts of ‘Evila’. You can defeat a weak opponent on your own, but I want you to refrain from doing so against the so-called ‘High-class Evila’.”

“Are they that dangerous?”

Shuri asked anxious.

“Quite so. Especially the guardian squad ‘Cruel’ under the direct control of the Demon Lord. Please never fight one of them with just two or less people. They are ‘Top-class Evila’, even above the ‘High-class Evila’.”

“Isn’t the ‘Cruel’ a force that protects the Demon Lord? I think they only consist of six members?”

“Yes and from them, the ‘Evila’ called Aquinas is once again in a different league.”

Vale turned pale as he recalled something.

“I- Is he that strong?”

Takashi asked with a gulp.

“In- Indeed. Back in the days when I guarded the border, I ran into him once. Aquinas is so terrifying that you could call him the devil incarnate.”

Back then, Aquinas just had passed near the border by chance. But his overwhelming aura prompted Vale’s fellow soldiers to open fire against their better judgement.

Needless to say, their attacks couldn’t harm him, whether they hit or not. Still, it caught his attention.

He had been flying through the air, stopped in midair and looked down on them with his sharp, red eyes. At that moment, every single guard there expected certain death without exception.

Some even thought about how they could die without pain. Just by being stared at, they realized what an abnormal existence he was and that they would all die.

For some reason all their weapons turned into ash and no one knew if he used magic for that or not. But in the next moment, his red hair fluttered and he left.

Except for a small number, everyone had fainted.

“You sure it wasn’t the Demon Lord?”

Takashi speculated from the dreadful story, but Vale shook his head in denial.

“But I’m surprised you’re still fighting after such an experience.”

“Yeah, it makes no difference anyway.”

“No difference?”

“Yes. Even if I do not fight, ‘Humas’ will be annihilated sooner or later. As a soldier, I would rather die fighting.”

“Ohh~ So imposing~”

“Not really. Because I have given up hope either way.”

Judging by his way of talking, he didn’t think they had a chance for victory.

“But then the matter about summoning, about Heroes was brought up. Saviours, who protected us ‘Humas’ with their enormous strength in the past. We found our last hope.”

Vale looked the four into the eyes with a smile. They all reacted kind of bashful.

“I see. But if they are that strong, an attack is possible at any time, right?”

“Yes, the king was doubtful about why they do not attack when they are this strong, too.”

“Mhm~ But that works in our favour~”

“Yes. However, we cannot be lenient. We need to be ready at any time for their all-out attack.”

“Yeah, we just have to get stronger!”

“Leave it to us!”

“We’ll give our best!”

“Well, we’ll do everything in our might~”

Vale responded with a handsome smile to the reassuring words of these four.

Chapter 11: Conference in the Demon Country

The country of Demons <<Xaos>> was located far north of <<Victorias>>.

One room in the castle of the Demon King, located within the country, had 'Evila' warriors sitting at a long table, looking at each other.

Three chairs were arranged on each side of the long table in the fashion of confronting each other. Five of them were occupied while another one person sat at a position overlooking them with an attendant standing next to it.

That made a sum of seven people in the room. The only standing person, a woman by the name of Kiria, spoke.

"I would like to open the demon conference now. First allow me to take attendance, beginning with the lowest ranking one like always."

Then Kiria shifted her gaze to the person sitting the farthest away from her.

"<<Rank 6>>, Grayald-sama."

"Yep."

A young man in his 20s with darkish skin answered.

"<<Rank 5>>, Shublars-sama."

"Here~ Fufu."

A sociable and voluptuous woman answered with a smile.

"<<Rank 4>>, Ornoth-sama."

A man with the face of a wolf nodded.

"<<Rank 3>>, Teckil-sama is absent today due to other commitments."

A small click of the tongue could be heard. It came from

"<<Rank 2>>, Marione-sama."

a man with a grim face, obviously a hardliner. He was frowning in a bad mood. Kiria continued without paying him any heed.

“<<Rank 1>>, Aquinas-sama.”

“Yeah.”

A man with red hair muttered quietly.

“Now onto today’s agenda. If you please, Your Highness Eveam.”

Kiria turned the topic to the blonde girl sitting next to her, Eveam.

“Okay.”

She opened her closed eyes and was about to speak, when <<Rank 2>> Marione promptly raised his hand.

“...What’s wrong, Marione?”

“It is wrong on so many levels, Your Highness. Why are we missing one person for the conference?”

“Because I gave him a job to do.”

“A job? Is it more important than this conference?”

“Yes. Besides, I was going to touch upon this in the conference anyway. Hear me out first.”

“....Is that so.”

He still didn’t look satisfied, but backed out for now.

“Okay, I will be frank with you: The ‘Humas’ succeeded in summoning Heroes.”

“Is that verified, Your Highness?”

Shublars asked, so she nodded.

“Yeah, Teckil reported it. There is no doubt.”

"I see. You sent him into the <<Human Territory>>."

Marione nodded understanding.

"Yeah, although I am having him look into the <<Beast Territory>> now."

"Right, we need to be more wary about the 'Gabranth' than the 'Humas' anyway."

"Indeed. The other day I got a report of my subordinators getting attacked. Of course they retaliated at once."

Grayald stated as a matter of fact, but with a definite anger.

"Yeah, the Heroes certainly are a threat, but we can ignore them for now. The 'Gabranth' with their stronger physical abilities and their 'disguise technique' are extremely troublesome. Moreover, they're belligerent."

"They can't use magic, but have this weird power instead. I think it's still developing, so now's the time to strike."

Marione said that, but Eveam shook her head.

"No, as I told you before, we will not go to war."

Marione suddenly slammed onto the table, attracting everyone's attention.

"Are you out of your mind? Our brethren are getting killed! We have to smash them before they become an even greater threat!"

"No, then we will just follow the same path as the previous king! We are pursuing a world, where all races can live in peace!"

"So we just need to eliminate all hindrances!"

"No! Doing that will only bring about hatred! Conflict calls for more conflict, instigates the flames of war and ultimately destroys our <<Edea>>!"

"Then what! Are you telling us to sit back and accept their actions!?"

“Exactly!”

“Wha...!?”

He didn’t expect her to affirm it, so he froze up.

“The previous king... My brother took power by killing our father and tried to create a world for only us ‘Evila’. As a result we have the current situation. Is this what we want? Do you call a world, where each race glares, fight and hurts each other, a righteous one?”

Everyone shut up and listened to her words.

“My brother was too radical and was assassinated because of it. The ‘Gabranth’ were probably responsible for it, but that does not matter now. Anyway, excessive domination will result in strains without fail. These strains will increase, eventually turning into conflict. Isn’t that sad? All living beings in this world have a right to live. Why do we have to fight over that...”

She expressed her words by casting her eyes down saddened. Kiria noticed that her shoulders were lightly trembling and softly placed her hand on her shoulders.

“I’m fine, Kiria. Thanks.”

Then she raised her face and looked at everyone.

“All races joining hands would be the best outcome, but even without that, there should be a way for us not hurt each other!”

“Such idealism.”

Marione discarded it with that.

“Yes, it is. But at this rate, the flow of blood will never end.”

“We are the ‘Evila’. Why do we have to watch out for other races?”

“Life in itself is a wonderful thing!”

“...”

Eveam was seventeen, but looked like eight years old. In Marione's eyes, she was nothing but a brat. But the power in the gaze of this brat took away his breath for a moment.

"That is why we don't fight at full power! Waging war is just absurd!"

"Mh~ But Your Highness, all the other races ignored your letters for a peace treaty."

Shublars was right. Eveam was repeatedly sending out letters to reconcile, but there was no reply. They didn't respond at all.

"That's just as unreasonable. During the previous king's reign, the killing was endless and he used to stab them in the back through means of letters too. It's not strange to say that we are bound together with them through hatred. So it's no wonder that they consider a treaty for peace from our side as some prank."

With sighs, Grayald uttered like speaking to himself.

"Presumable neither the 'Gabranth', nor the 'Humas' can ever forgive my brother's atrocities. I understand that. However, unless someone severs the chain of hatred, the sorrow will only increase."

"Are you suggesting we are to be the edge to sever that chain?"

Marione said with a mocking smile.

"Indeed."

"Impossible. We lost people too. You can't expect them to suddenly accept that. Are you saying we should stay low until peace is achieved? When will that be? Maybe at our ruin?"

"No! I'll protect the 'Evila'!"

"Don't make me laugh. Everything you said so far only endangers us!"

Even Eveam showed an expression troubled for words towards Marione's vigour.

“Nevertheless... I’ll...”

“The ‘Humas’ will train their Heroes and attack us before long. The ‘Gabranth’ are just waiting for their chance, too. Either way, we’re out of time. We can only kill each other until one side perishes. Please withdraw the ceasefire!”

Yes, the reason the ‘Evila’ didn’t attack other races was that Eveam used her authority as the Demon Lord to enforce a ceasefire. The Demon Lord’s orders were absolute. Since ancient times, capital punishment awaited the one that went against them.

“Let us remove all hindrances with all our might before it’s too late! Your Highness!”

Hearing these words, Eveam fell silent for a while. Lifting her head, she looked at Marione. But her expression showed no signs of yielding to him and seeing that, Marione frowned.

“I will not withdraw the ceasefire!”

“Your Highness!”

“Why don’t you calm down a bit, Marione-dono?”

“Shut up, you beastman defect!”

Marione scowled at Ornoth, who had interjected, ready to kill him.

“To begin with, why is a <<Taboo>> like you here! You’re just—”

“Shut up!”

“!?”

A sudden bellow. The atmosphere became stiff from Eveam’s shouted words. She glared fiercely at Marione.

“Are you defying the Demon Lord’s order?”

“Grr.... Hmpf!”

He left the room with a snort.

“Shouldn’t you be stopping him, Your Highness?”

She showed a faint smile to Shublars’ question.

“N- No... My conviction will not falter.”

Then Aquinas, silent until now, spoke.

“He has a short temper, but that’s just his own way to worry about the future of the ,Evila’.”

Of course he meant Marione.

“I know.”

“His wife and child were killed by the ‘Gabranth’.”

Orneth quietly closed his eyes. Eveam clenched her fist frustrated by looking at him. She understood had Marione held an extraordinary grudge because of that incident. Still, she believed it to be wrong to dominate out of hatred.

“You are dismissed for today.”

Looking the complete opposite from before, she left the place spiritless and heartbroken together with Kiria. The others left one by one too, only leaving Aquinas and Ornoth behind.

“Don’t take it to heart. As I said just now, Marione just has a short temper.”

Ornoth inadvertently smiled on the sudden words from Aquinas.

“No, I’m more worried about Her Highness.”

“...?”

“What do you think about her ideals?”

“...I think it’s naive. Too naive.”

“....”

“However,”

“Mh?”

“If a world without grief really exists, I would like to see it.”

“...Yeah.”

“But as long as we’re the only ones striving for it, it will be futile.”

“You’re right.”

“...Someone.”

“Mh?”

“If there was someone unbiased against races who could act as a mediator...”

“It’s not feasible for Her Highness?”

“It’s impossible for the princess... no, Her Highness on her own. Besides, she’s the representative of us ‘Evila’.”

“Right. We need someone that is neither affiliated with the ‘Humas’, ‘Gabranth’, ‘Pheom’ and ‘Evila’. He could act as a mediator.”

“Now that’s idealistic.”

“Still, you’ll continue to support Her Highness, right?”

“Yeah.”

“And I swore to support you back then.”

“.....How duteous.”

Giving each other a faint smile, they stood up from their seats. Aquinas thought:

(A mediator... That’s really idealistic.)

Chapter 12: Desire for Meat

The “Torchu Mountain Range” was a hangout for demons. Our protagonist Hiroyuki Okamura had to pass through there to get to his destination “Surge” and thus was...

“UWAAAAH!”

running away with all his might. As for the reason, an annoying amount of demons was chasing after him.

“D- Damn! Who would’ve thought that this was the ‘Torchu Disaster Plant’!”

He slipped into a gap in the cliff, letting the demons go past him.

How did it come to this? He had finally arrived at the mountain range, but noticed that his food was running out.

While he roamed around, he found a plant growing on the roadside. That plant bore fruits, which emitted a sweet fragrance like strawberries. Moreover, the fruits were rather large and he plucked the plant, thinking it could serve as food.

However, underneath the plant didn’t have roots, but was shaped in a creepy humanoid form out of wood. It suddenly started screaming, so his heart nearly stopped beating.

And then he remembered that the woman at the counter in the Guild taught him about the demon called “Torchu Disaster Plant” before coming here.

It wasn’t a plant, but a full-fledged demon. Once pulled out, it screamed shrill and attracted all nearby demons.

Not knowing that it was the “Torchu Disaster Plan”, he froze up on the spot without understanding what was going on, whereupon a swarm of demons advanced upon him.

(Oh man, this world’s really interesting)

Even while thinking so, he held his breath and checked the surroundings. It looked like the demons were gone.

“Fuh. I think I could’ve beaten them, but so many showed up so suddenly...”

There were easily over ten of them. For now it was the right decision to hide.

He walked on, reminding himself to be careful about the “Torchu Disaster Plant” from now on.

“Still, I’m hungry.”

Even more so after running. He restlessly looked around for something eatable and sniffed out an aromatic smell from somewhere.

“Guess I’ll check it out.”

He headed towards the smell. After a while, he found a small stream and some fishes being grilling nearby on skewers at a fire. The great smell stirred up his hunger.

Gulping down, he surveyed the area, looking for the one responsible for this. But as far as he could tell, no one was around.

“Mhm~”

No one around. Delicious grilled fish right in front of him. An empty stomach. And again, no one around.

“.....Time to dig in.”

He couldn’t hold himself back. Just at the moment he tried to take the fish,

“Get awaaaaay!”

A terrible killing intent came from behind him, so he jumped widely to the side. At the place where he had been at before, now stood a man thrusting a wooden pole into the ground.

“Get away! I won’t give you any! That’s my food!”

While saying so, he pointed the pole at him like pointing a finger. The man had short ruffled hair in blue colour. He looked like in his 30s. Even covered by armour, it was noticeable that he had quite a muscular build.

He carried a broadsword on his back, which lead Hihiro to think that things would get troublesome if he drew it.

(Still...)

Glancing at the fish, his stomach growled again.

“Boy! Name yourself! Trying to snatch food from me, the great Arnold, is inexcusable! State your name!”

With half-opened eyes, Hihiro thought: What a bothersome fellow.

“I’ve nothing to give to you! State your name and begone!”

It seemed he had to state his name no matter what, but he considered what to do.

“.....Mh, first, hear me out.”

“What’re you acting all composed for, you thief! I won’t be tricked! This is my food! After all, I caught it!”

The man asserted by impressively throwing out his chest.

“These fishes are yours?”

“Yeah! What about it?”

“Okay, hand it over.”

“Don’t take me for a fool!”

“I’m starving here, so hand it over.”

“G- Grrr! So demanding. How did your parent raise you, you damn brat!”

“Who cares about that. First of all, hand it over, grumpy old man.”

“Say what! Who are you calling grumpy!”

He flew into a passion, making you think he would explode if angered any more. Just when Hiiro thought the man might actually transform, someone came out of the bushes with a rustling.

“U- Uncle...”

It was a girl around the age of ten. She had silver hair that reached till her waist, but she wore a headgear like a woollen hat that concealed her hair.

Her big eyes had clear sky-blue pupils. But right now, these eyes were filled with anxiety and her small body trembled lightly.

“O- Oh, Muir~! Give me a moment! I’ll educate this ruffian with my fist of love now!”

For some reason the man was running his mouth about him, but Hiiro glanced at the little girl, whereupon she hid herself startled.

“.....Hah. I understand.”

“Mh? You understand what, brat?”

“I won’t ask for all the fishes, just share a few with me.”

“Were you never taught how to ask for a favour, brat!”

“Huh? I won’t compromise any further.”

“You’re in no position to say that!”

Tightly grasping his pole, the man became inflated with hostility. Then he leaped at Hiiro with quite a speed. Hiiro stepped back right away, dodging the pole attack from his opponent.

(So fast... And he isn’t even serious yet.)

While dodging, Hiiro measured his opponent’s strength by observing him. But his opponent did the same.

(Mhm, this brat has some good moves)

Arnold was just testing him, but having his attack so easily evaded from seeing it the first time, he concluded that Hihiro was quite capable. Then the two of them glared at each other from a distance.

Hihiro grabbed the hilt of his "Piercer". The man also seized the broadsword on his back. Tension was in the air and silence spread, whereupon a scream resounded. It came from the girl called Muir.

Three Barbarous Kong, oversized gorilla demons, had appeared behind the girl. They were probably lured in by the smell of the grilled fish and ready to attack the girl at any moment.

"MUIIIIIIIIR!"

The man drew his broadsword and went straight for the Barbarous Kong. His speed was in a whole different league than before. The demons were startled as if there were dazzled.

Arnold succeeded in cutting off the arm that tried to seize Muir by applying the momentum of his charge in his sword swing.

"GUAAAAH!?"

While spraying blood around, it swung its other arm, but the man parried it with his sword and desperately protected Muir behind him.

"U- Uncle..."

"It's okay! Leave this to me and take cover."

He tried to tell her to take shelter, but another Barbarous Kong appeared behind him.

"Damn!"

At this rate, Muir was in danger. But he had his hands full with the three demons in front of him right now.

(Kuh! What now! Do I use it... No, it would endanger Muir too...!)

At that time, he heard a voice from the distant.

“Hey~ Can I eat now?”

In a completely inappropriate mood, Hiroyuki gazed upon the grilled fishes in front of him.

“Hey, hold it! Eating now!? Colour me surprised! Read the atmosphere, damn it!”

“Say what you will. By the way, having trouble?”

“I- If you see it, help me!”

“Nope. Why would I’ve to work for free? Ridiculous.”

“Say what!”

The man ward off the demon’s attack while his eyes became bloodshot. With the momentum of repelling it at once, he stood in front of Muir. But four Barbarous Kong were surrounding them. With one moment of carelessness, Muir would be in danger.

...What to do?

Seeing Arnold cornered, Hiroyuki remained composed. His hunger won over him, his stomach growling endlessly.

(So, what to do... The growling is annoying. Do I secretly snatch some food? Nah, he’ll notice...)

Just as he was staring at the sweet-smelling fish, a knife was thrown at his feet. Taken aback by the knife pierced into the ground, he looked at the culprit.

“Hey, what’s your problem, old man.”

Yes, Arnold had thrown that knife.

“Okay~ Listen well, fool! Y- You can have these fishes! So help me out! Th- This is a deal!
If you want to eat, obey me!”

“Nope.”

“Wha!?”

He never expected him to turn him down at this point.

“Right now, I can just snatch the fishes and run away!”

“You devil!”

“Can’t take a joke, huh.”

“Don’t ask for the impossible in this situation!”

Hihiro truly handled things at his own pace.

(Oh well, let’s work a bit for the fish...)

The moment he thought that, Arnold cut off a demon’s arm and that very arm brilliantly
fell down on the fire.

“...Aw.”

“N- No waaaaaay!?”

The fishes were cruelly squashed by the arm and got coated with sand and pebbles,
making them non-edible. Seeing that, Hihiro gradually lost his spirit and then...

“...Well, time to move along.”

“Hey, hey, hold it!”

Hihiro was about to leave when he was hastily stopped.

“What? Since my pay turned into this, I lost all my motivation.”

“Grr...”

He could've forced Hiiro to take responsibility if it had been due to his ineptitude, but Hiiro hadn't agreed yet and the negotiations in form of the fishes had failed due to Arnold's fault, albeit accidentally.

But if he couldn't get Hiiro's cooperation, he would have to fight the ferocious demons while protecting Muir. He would've no trouble against them on his own, but since he had to protect Muir, it was difficult.

"F- Fine! Listen, brat!"

"Mh?"

Hiiro, about to leave, turned around on Arnold's shout.

"Sheesh! It's my last resort! I- I'll give you some of the 'Aqua Hound Meat', so help meee!"

"...What's that?"

"You don't know!? It's a first-grade meat! Eating it grilled, will make your tongue melt and get you addicted!"

".....Oho."

Hiiro's eyes sparkled.

"Addicted, huh..."

Hearing that reminded him of the "Addicted Seafood Noodles" that he had eaten in <<Victorias>>. It had been delicious. Incredible delicious. He wanted to eat it again by all means.

Therefore he reacted to the word "addicting" from Arnold. As Hiiro loved eating, it was the perfect opportunity to eat something good.

"Hey, you better not be lying."

"Huh? Of course not! But don't get me wrong! Not everything, you hear! Whoops!"

Arnold narrowly dodged the claw of a Barbarous Kong.

“Damn it! Listen, brat! I guarantee the taste! But I’m only giving you one portion!”

At that time, a Barbarous Kong seized Muir and lifted her towards its mouth. Apparently it attempted to eat her.

“Kyaa!”

“Shit!”

Just when he thought that Muir had fallen into the enemy’s hands, its arm was chopped off.

“GUAAAH!?”

The girl fell from its hand towards the ground. Muir tightly shut her eyes, rolled herself up and braced herself for the impact. Arnold saw that and shouted. Then...

“Easy there.”

“...Eh?”

However Muir only received a soft sensation. Not a shred of pain. When she slowly opened her eyes, there stood Hiiro with “Piercer” in his hand.

“...Can you stand?”

“Eh, ah... Yes.”

“Then stand up. And you’re in the way, stand back.”

Muir looked at Hiiro absent-minded. Arnold made a sigh of relief once he confirmed Muir’s well-being. However, Hiiro frowned displeased, bothered by their attitudes.

“Hey, get away already, shorty.”

“Ah, yes...”

While saying so, she distanced herself from him.

“Old man, don’t stare into empty space and fight!”

“Sh- Shut up! Right back at you, don’t blame me when you die!”

“Ridiculous. As if these guys could kill me.”

Arnold took a stance with his sword for attacking and felt a shiver running down his back as he sensed Hiiro’s thirst for blood.

Hiiro totally intended to slaughter the enemy. To kill them without mercy. That was how he handled demons attacking him.

His hostility void of any other emotions turned into bloodlust and overruled the area. Even the Barbarous Kong reacted to that and all four focussed onto Hiiro.

“Too troublesome to deal with them one after another. Old man, line them up.”

“Huh!? Say what?”

“Just do it. Talking later.”

“You little... Fine!”

Sighing resigning, Arnold sharply glared at the scattered Barbarous Kong.

“I’ll do it, but fall back if you don’t want to get dragged into it.”

“So bossy.”

Even while complaining, Hiiro took a step backwards, curious about what he would do. Then Arnold held his broadsword with a backhand grip and pushed the sword from the ground upwards while spinning.

“<<Explosive Wind Claw>>!”

Suddenly an enormous blast raged upwards from the ground, no, with Arnold as the centre. Even Hiiro, standing apart, got a bit wobbly.

The demons in the maelstrom were lifted up into the air with no way to resist.

“Oho, not bad.”

Seeing that, Hiiro muttered in admiration. Arnold could’ve sent them flying like that anytime, but didn’t do so as Muir had been close by.

(I don’t feel any magic power from it. It isn’t magic?)

The Barbarous Kong were whirled up in midair while vacuum blades cut up their bodies. Before long, they fell down, all lined up like Hiiro had requested.

“Hmm, good enough in the air?”

“Yeah, perfect.”

Hiiro answered, then aimed at the Barbarous Kong falling before his sword.

“H- Hey, what are you...?”

“Shut up and watch.”

He bluntly discarded Arnold’s question. Arnold became sullen, but watched attentively like he was told.

Hiiro concentrated magic power in his fingertip and wrote “extend” on his blade. Yes, he used <<Word Magic>>.

“Perforate, ‘Piercer’.”

Then the rapidly extending blade pierced through the falling Barbarous Kong. It smoothly went through the flesh, uncertain if it was due to the gravity or the sword’s sharpness.

Arnold had his mouth gaping wide open on this scene. Knowing little of that, Hihiro slowly let his sword drop to in front of him after he was sure that it had pierced all four of them.

The ground shook greatly upon the impact from the fall of four Barbarous Kong. The four were tied together through the extended "Piercer".

Hihiro felt through the blade how they passed away one after another while groaning.

"One skewer of Barbarous Kong ready."

These words marked the end of the battle.

Chapter 13: Tasting the Aqua Hound Meat

The battle ended and Hiiro reverted the length of his sword by writing “original” on it. At any rate, the sharpness of the piercing could only be called first-rate. It easily went through the opponent like a hot knife through butter.

(Nothing less from a sword specializing in piercing)

“Y- You... what did you do?”

“Shouldn’t you be worrying about the shorty instead?”

He had no intention to explain it, so he quickly changed the topic. Then Arnold quickly shouted Muir’s name. She slowly appeared from behind a rock, where she had been hiding.

“A- Are you hurt?”

“N- No.”

“G- Good~”

As he was relieved from the bottom of his heart, he sunk down on the ground. After a glance at him, Hiiro sheathed his sword. At that moment, his stomach growled and he headed towards Arnold.

“Hey, old man. Keep your promise.”

“.....What are you talking about?”

“Oho...”

Hiiro drew his sword from the sheath a bit with a clink.

“J- Just kidding! Put that away!”

The man shouted in a panic. Hiiro sighed in a bad mood.

“Just give me that addicting meat. My stomach is totally empty.”

“.....Hah. Sorry, Muir. I never imagined we would eat it here...”

He dropped his shoulders with a boo-hoo-hoo, but Muir shook her head shortly.

“N- No. He helped us after all. B- Besides, food tastes better with more people.”

“Uohhh! What a good child you are, Muir!”

He embraced Muir while shouting emotionally. Normally this would be a heart-warming scene, but Hiroyuki said while pressing onto his stomach.

“Just get on with it. I’m starving here.”

A vein stood out on Arnold’s forehead due to his attitude, but he realized that it was no use saying anything to Hiroyuki, so he lead the two with a sigh.

“Come here. I’ll prepare it.”

The two of them followed after Arnold to the earlier fireplace.

“Ehm~ I think it was... Ah, here it is.”

He rummaged about behind some rock and got out some large bag. Opening that bag, he took out yet another bag. Something thick and heavy seemed to be inside that bag.

“Is that it?”

“Yeah, inside is.... this!”

What he pulled out was meat tied up with a string so that it wouldn’t fall apart.

“This is <<Aqua Hound Meat>>. Moreover, it’s the shanks, the most delicious part!”

He thrust it before him as if to ask for his opinion.

“Whatever, let me eat already.”

“You sure are a self-important brat. Eat some fruits until it’s done. But leave some for me.”

“...I’ll try my best.”

“No, no. Leave some for me!”

Hihiro ate two out of the six red fruits with the size of a fist, which Arnold took out of the bag. It was a <<Gorin Fruit>> that he had often eaten before.

“More.”

“Already! I gotta prepare the meat too, so show some patience.”

Saying so, the man took out a big stone from the fire place. By the looks of it, the bright red stone was insanely hot.

The meat was placed on top of it. Then it sizzled appetizing and gradually changed colour brilliantly, releasing meat juice and an aromatic smell.

All three couldn’t help but gulp down their saliva. The young Muir was unable to take her eyes off the meat too.

“Hey, isn’t it good already?”

At the end of his patience, Hihiro asked, but Arnold shook his head.

“No, not yet. A certain procedure is needed to bring out the best taste of this meat.”

“Certain procedure?”

The juice temporarily stopped oozing out of the meat, so the string holding it together was cut. By doing so, the meat gradually swelled up.

“O- Oh, what’s this!?”

“That’s meat swelling, unique to <<Aqua Hound Meat>>! Letting out the excess fat from the meat, it swells up. It approximately becomes thrice as big.”

Amazing. Its original size was already around the size of a volleyball. Three times of that was rather big.

When the swelling hit its peak, it was similar to jelly, not like meat at all. He questioned if it was really meat, but the smell answered it for him. Before he knew it, his drool overflowed.

“Okay, Muir, get the containers!”

Arnold was pretty excited too. Muir took out three containers from the bag while nodding happily.

Arnold quickly cut the meat in a straight horizontal line with the knife hanging from his waist. Surprisingly enough, the knife cut through it without any resistance as if it was pudding. After splitting it into three portions, he put it into the three containers.

“H- Here you go! Ah, don’t eat yet, brat!”

Hiroy tried to dig in without delay, but Arnold stopped him.

“What? Do you want to torture me?”

His stomach was giving the alarm for a while now. If left alone any longer, something might happen.

“Don’t be stupid. It’ll only be perfect with this!”

Saying so, he pulled out a long container with a sauce from the bag.

“And that is?”

“A special sauce made from the <<Orczy Fruit>>!”

“Whatever. It’ll taste even better with that?”

“Yeah, forget about getting addicted, it’ll send you straight to heaven.”

“Heh, interesting. Count me in!”

The sauce had a colour like ketchup, but was more fluid than solid. It had a faint sweet and fruity smell.

“Okay! Now it’s perfect!”

“Yep!”

“Mhm.”

Each of them responded.

“””Time to eat!”””

Hihiro used the received fork in place of a knife and cut into the meat very easily. It was incredible tender. He cut an appropriate mouthful and ate it.

“Ohh.....!?”

A tingling ran through his head.

(It- It’s gone!?)

Yes, the piece in his mouth had melted and disappeared. Still, he was by no means unsatisfied. The meat had disappeared, but its strong flavour intensely stimulated his taste buds.

(Th- This is...!)

He took another mouthful. And yet another.

(I can’t stop!)

It was like his body was moving on its own. His whole body was craving for more meat. Each mouthful of the tender and juicy meat felt like his mouth was stuffed, but he didn’t become stuffed at all. He could still go for more. And it was emphasised by...

(This sauce!)

This sweet, yet somewhat sour sauce gave the meat a refreshing flavour, stimulating your appetite even more. He could really eat this with no end. The other two were devouring it in a frenzy too.

Then the quite large piece of meat was gone in no time. All three had an entranced expression. Hiroy never expected such an effect from it.

“....Fuh, so what do you say about this meat, brat?”

Hiroy closed his eyes and immersed himself in the aftertaste. Then he opened his eyes a bit and leaked a tepid sigh.

“Well done, my servant.”

“I know, right. After all, this meat, wait, who are you calling your servant!”

“Just a joke. Don’t make a fuss, you’ll just ruin the mood.”

“It’s your damn fault!”

“Awawah!”

Seeing their exchange, Muir was bewildered.

“Hmpf, whatever. So, brat, what’s your name?”

“Name yourself first.”

“You’re really so damn self-important! Geez, I’m Arnold Ocean. An adventurer and cook!”

“A cook? I see, that explains your cooking method.”

“Yeah, I travelled all around the world for cooking receipts. Consider yourself lucky.”

“And this shorty is?”

“Hey, listen to me!”

Arnold retorted, then continued with a sigh.

“She’s Muir Castreia. I picked her up during my travel.”

“Oh, so in this world children are lying around.”

“As if! They aren’t treasure chests!”

“Not?”

“Of course not! Some stuff happened in her village.”

It indicated that he didn’t want to tell more about it. Muir also cast down her eyes somewhat sorrowful.

(Got their reasons, huh. Well, I ain’t interested anyway)

A rather pragmatic protagonist.

Chapter 14: First Comrades?

“So, what’s your name?”

“Why do I have to give you my name?”

“Huh? Come again?”

Arnold was troubled how to react to every single of Hihiro’s unforeseen replies.

“Just kidding.”

“It was a joke!? That’s so annoying!”

“I’m Hihiro Okamura. An adventurer and... bookworm.”

“What the! The last one’s just a hobby!”

“Fufufu”

There Muir suddenly let out a small voice.

“Oh, Muir’s cute when laughing after all.”

Being told so, Muir blushed bashful. Arnold made a disgustingly delighted expression as well.

“.....Are you pervert into little girls?”

“Hey, hold it! I can’t let that pass!”

“Uhh.... I’m not... a little girl.”

The two of them got angry.

“Right! She might not look like it, but she’s twelve already! She can even give birth!”

Arnold said proudly with a thumbs-up, but the little girl next to him glared at him intensely.

“D- Don’t say such embarrassing things!”

Seeing her talk angrily with her cheeks puffed up, Hiiro realized something.

“So different from before.”

He had imagined her to be a quiet child that never got angry, far away from being cheeky.

“Mh? You mean Muir? Well, duh, anyone would shrink back when a crude villainous guy with an evil look appears, not just my cute Muir.”

“Okay, sounds like you would like to taste my sword!”

Hiiro emitted a bloodlust with his glasses glittering.

“Pft! Just try! If it’s to protect Muir, I’ll even eat poop!”

“.....You fail as a human being.”

Muir was stumped with mixed feelings too.

“Pah! She’s just that important! By the way, I got a question for you, Hiiro.”

“I’m not gonna tell you a thing about my ability.”

“Grr...”

It was about that after all.

“But I never saw a magic that stretches a sword before.”

“It’s not just a sword, but a katana.”

“A katana? Now that you mention it. So that’s a katana? Looks pretty well-made.”

“No clue, but it’s easy to handle.”

“Mhm~ So regarding the—”

“I ain’t telling you anything about my magic.”

“Why! What’s the harm! I shared my meat with you!”

“That was compensation for my help. The matter is closed.”

“Ugg...”

There was nothing to be done about it.

“Anyway, I’m surprised you can chit-chat with a total stranger.”

“Mh? Well, somehow we ended up eating together after all. Besides, you don’t look like a bad guy.”

“What makes you think that? I’m human after all. I might attack that ‘Gabranth’ shorty.”

“!?”

In an instant, Muir turned pale and Arnold seized his broadsword. His expression was full of hostility. But Hiiro calmly looked at them.

“Wh- Whatsoever could you be talking about?”

“Your reaction tells me more than enough.”

Arnold’s reaction proved that Hiiro had been right.

“Kuh.... How did you know?”

“...Mm.”

He pointed his finger at a certain place. It was Muir’s bottom.

“B- Bastard! You were lusting after Muir!?”

As he seemed to have a huge misunderstanding, Hiiro reluctantly spelled it out for him.

“Take a closer look. It’s moving around the whole time... her tail, that is.”

“Eh?”

This time, Muir exclaimed surprised. She quickly checked behind her and had her breath taken away.

“H- Hey, Muir...”

Arnold had frozen up too.

“S- Sorry!”

Apparently her tail, hidden inside her clothes, had unintentionally popped out due to the delicious meal.

“The tail is a trait of the ‘Gabranth’, right? And that hat is hiding the other trait, the animal ears, right?”

The two fell silent on Hiiro’s utterance. Arnold then spoke with a troubled expression.

“.....Indeed, she’s a ‘Gabranth’. But Muir... we have done nothing wrong! So don’t tell anyone!”

He looked at him earnestly. At the same time, Arnold got ready to draw his sword anytime... but that was needless.

“Tell anyone? Why would I? I don’t care at all if you’re human or a beastman.”

“...Huh?”

The two had their mouths gaping wide-open.

“That she’s from a different race doesn’t change the fact that she’s a living being, right?”

“Y- You...”

“To be honest, I don’t give a fuck. What’s so fun about spreading rumours?”

Hiiro too asked earnestly with a frown. Seeing that, Arnold burst out in a laughter.

“Kakakakaka! You’re a funny guy, Hiiro!”

“Don’t laugh at me. I’ll stab ya.”

“No, I see now. Of course there are guys like you...”

Saying so, Arnold turned his bottom to him.

“...What’s the big idea?”

Hiiro grimaced from suddenly having an ass shoved into his face. He seriously considered stabbing him once.

“Just look.”

There a tail appeared from above the trousers. Hiiro widened his eyes a bit.

“....You are one too.”

“Yeah. I- we are ‘Gabranth’.”

Then he heard from them that they were on their way to cross the border into the ‘Gabranth’ continent. But since this was the ‘Humas’ continent, it would without a doubt call forth a disaster when their true identities were found out, given the current state of affairs in the world.

People were more understanding towards them than with the “Evila’ and didn’t kill them on the spot, but they undeniable attracted attention. Not to forget the radicals. Arnold had seen more than enough of these.

For that very reason, they had hid their true identities and pretended to be humans.

Hiiro glanced at Arnold’s head in search for a certain something when faced with a beastman. Noticing his gaze, Arnold laughed shorty and asked.

“Wondering why I have no animal ears?”

Yes, Arnold wore no headgear. Yet no animal ears could be seen.

“Wanna know?”

“Not really.”

“I see, if you want to know that bad, I’ll tell you.”

“Didn’t you hear me?”

“Don’t be like that. Besides... it’s not completely unrelated to you.”

After these words, Arnold started talking before Hiiro could reply.

“You see... I lost them.”

“Lost them?”

Hiiro asked back by reflex.

“Yeah, because I’m a former slave.”

The slave system. It was a system mainly established for humans to persecute beastman. Kidnapped at a young age, they got a crest called <<Magic Lock Crest>> engraved onto their bodies. The mark prevented them from running away or rebelling by letting the magic power in their bodies react to such attempts, giving them intense pain.

Long ago, when the beastman had no own country, no status or authority, many of them were turned into slaves by humans as domestic animals.

Nowadays the slave system was abolished, but was still used behind the scenes in form of slave markets.

Arnold was a victim to that and the human, who bought him as a slave, had his animals ears ripped out. His ears, the pride of a beastman, had been taken away eternally just because the human had happened to be in a bad mood.

“I see now.”

It was related to Hiiro, since he was a human too. One of the ‘Humas’, who persecuted the beastmen, not just Arnold.

“One way or another, I got rid of the <<Magic Lock Crest>> and fled.”

“Can it be removed that easily?”

“Nah, no one but the master can erase it. Though it automatically disappears when the master dies.”

“Then you...”

"Yeah, I couldn't do it myself, but I had a guy that knew about how I, how we slaves were treated, do it."

With the death of his master, Arnold officially became free. Hearing this story, Muir too became despondent and looked saddened.

"Well, after I got my freedom, I became a travelling cook! Sparkling, ain't I?"

"The sparkling aside, you sure had a tough life. Normally it wouldn't be strange to have a trauma about humans."

The fact that he was talking with Hiiro like this now was a mystery in itself.

"Let bygones be bygones. Not to forget, the one, who helped me, was a 'Humas' as well."

"I would totally go for revenge. Doing this and that..."

"Y- You're scaring me... Pooh! Anyway, I'm happy right now and that's all that matters."

He said while petting Muir's head. She narrowed her eyes pleased.

"Reminds me, what're you doing in this area, Hiiro? A quest?"

"I have no obligation to—"

"answer me. Yeah, yeah, enough of that. What's the harm in telling me at least that?"

Sure, there was no harm, but he had no reason to either. It was merely Arnold's curiosity. And not just his, Muir also stared at him attentively.

".....Haah. I intend to..."

The two hung on Hiiro's every word. He spoke slowly...

"cross the border."

"...Eh? Y- You mean...?"

"Yeah, just like you two."

"Why! Why's a human like you going to the beastman continent!"

“Huh? Obviously because I wanna see it.”

“...Come again?”

“I don’t give a damn about politics. I do what I want and stop at nothing, not even killing, if someone stands in my way.”

“.....Pft.”

Arnold burst out in laughter again.

“What’s so funny, pervert?”

“Hey, is that title a given now!?”

“Anyway, I’m just doing the same as you guys.”

Arnold suddenly said with a serious look.

“It’s not a field trip, man. The ‘Gabranth’ are currently trigger-happy in more than one way. If they spot a human, it won’t end well.”

“Fine by me. I’ll turn the tables on them!”

“...Are you serious?”

“Naturally. I’ve no reason to run away.”

“The beastman are strong.”

“But I’m stronger.”

Since he had the <<Word Magic>>, he believed that it would work out.

“You don’t say now. I’m getting more and more interested in you.”

“Stop it, you’re giving me shivers. I don’t swing that way.”

“Neither do I, damn it!”

Arnold then shouted “Can’t you take this serious?” angrily, whereas Hiiro responded “Probably not” indifferently. Watching over their exchange, Muir once again spilled a small smile.

“Anyway, our meeting must be some kind of fate. And we’re heading in the same direction too. Wanna go together?”

“Stop messing around. What nonsense is that? I’m just fine by...”

Saying so, he suddenly made a somewhat musing face and fell silent, so Arnold asked him.

“Wh- What’s wrong?”

“You meant to say: Please come with us. Right?”

“Grr... I swear... this brat is...”

He glared at him while grinding his teeth, but sighed right afterwards.

“Haah~ I can’t win against you with words. Fine, we’ll come with you.”

“Do want you want.”

Originally Hiiro had planned to act alone, but this was a good opportunity to learn about the beastman. It was definitely better to have some background knowledge about his destination, the beastman continent. Therefore he permitted them to accompany him.

“Ah, before I forget it.”

Suddenly Arnold glared at him with narrowed eyes.

“What?”

“Just a warning.”

“Tell me.”

“.....Don’t lay hands on Muir.”

"I'm normal, you pervert."

"Don't screw with me! I'm super normal, you fool!"

"Mh? That's a first. I certainly don't have an interest in little girls, but I was sure you had?"

"Okay, let's take this outside, you worthless brat!"

"We're already outside, Mr. Paedophile."

"Don't call me that!"

Muir wearily shrugged her shoulders on their never-changing exchange and whispered with a voice so quiet that it couldn't be heard by anyone.

"Muh, I'm not a little girl."

Her utterance was gone with the wind.

Chapter 15: The Heroes hear Rumours about him

“Aw, my shoulders are so stiff~”

The one rolling his shoulders exhausted was one of the Heroes summoned to <<Victorias>>, Aoyama Takashi. Next to him stood the other three Heroes, looking just as exhausted.

The captain of the second division of the army, Vale Kimble, stood in front of them while watching these four.

“Good job. The current quest was quite rewarding again.”

The quest had been to hunt Stinger Bats in the <<Droke Cave>>. It was put up because their population was too big and they lately started to attack the town.

Moreover, since poisonous demons were living in the <<Droke Cave>> too and footing was bad in the dark, it was given a rather high rank, namely C.

However, the four of them had a high level and a superb teamwork, so they managed to hunt over a hundred Stinger Bats. That should take care of the quest, so they returned to the castle.

“The EXP from all the demons sure was worth it.”

When Takashi said that, everyone nodded in response.

“Yes and we discovered some flaws in our teamwork, so we can work on that now.”

Suzumiya Chika wiped her sweat with a towel.

“Then let us take a look at your <<Status>> now.”

They confirmed it like Vale told them.

Name	Taishi Aoyama
Level	LVL 23
Health Points	120/406
Magic Power	89/370
Experience	7200
NEXT Lvl	987
Attack	212 (263)
Defense	195 (210)
Agility	120 (137)
HIT Chance	152 (158)
Intelligence	119 (122)
«Magic Attribute»	Fire, Wind, Lightning, Light
«Magic»	Fireball (Fire, Attack) Flame Lance (Fire, Attack) Wind Cutter (Wind, Attack) Cyclone (Wind, Attack) Thunder Shock (Lightning, Attack) Thunder Break (Lightning, Attack) Lighting (Light, Effect)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller, Harem Creator, Awakened One

Name	Chika Suzumiya
Level	LVL 23
Health Points	134/373
Magic Power	65/340
Experience	7200
NEXT Lvl	987
Attack	200 (250)
Defense	200 (210)
Agility	140 (155)
HIT Chance	145 (148)
Intelligence	120 (182)
«Magic Attribute»	Fire, Earth, Ice, Light
«Magic»	Fireball (Fire, Attack) Flame Lance (Fire, Attack) Grave (Earth, Attack) Earthquake (Earth, Attack) Ice Needle (Ice, Attack) Ice Tornado (Ice, Attack) Lighting (Light, Effect) Light Arrow (Light, Attack)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller, Sport Queen, Awakened One

Name	Shuri Minamoto
Level	LVL 23
Health Points	200/310
Magic Power	29/530
Experience	7200
NEXT Lvl	987
Attack	107 (119)
Defense	110 (121)
Agility	130 (135)
HIT Chance	118 (120)
Intelligence	200 (215)
«Magic Attribute»	Wind, Water, Light
«Magic»	Wind Cutter (Wind, Attack) Green Bind (Wind, Support) Water Wall (Water, Support) Bubble Shot (Water, Attack) Heal (Light, Recovery) Antidote (Light, Recovery) Charge (Light, Support)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller, Yamato Nadeshiko, Awakened One

Name	Shinobu Akamori
Level	LVL 23
Health Points	90/342
Magic Power	34/500
Experience	7200
NEXT Lvl	987
Attack	115 (127)
Defense	113 (124)
Agility	165 (170)
HIT Chance	120 (122)
Intelligence	207 (222)
«Magic Attribute»	Water, Lightning, Light
«Magic»	Mist (Water, Support) Aqua Spiral (Water, Attack) Paralyze (Lightning, Effect) Acceleration (Lightning, Support) Heal (Light, Recovery) Cleaning (Light, Recovery/Support) Ray (Light, Attack)
«Titles»	Hero, World Traveller, Curious One, Awakened One

(Looks all good, but I could do without the Harem Creator title)

Taishi wasn't satisfied with his own title, because he didn't have a single memory of ever creating a harem.

"What're you spacing out for, Taishi?"

"Eh? Ah, n- nothing! Ahaha!"

He was surprised when Chika suddenly called out to him, because there was no way he could tell her about his title.

"Weirdo. Anyway, we got rather strong."

"Yeah, our hard work paid off."

"Yep, Shuricchi is right. We have to continue like this~"

"Yes, you are all right."

Vale also brightened up his expression happily.

"Still, I'm really pooped today~"

"Geez, Taishi, you're so sloppy."

Chika cautioned Taishi, who lay down on the ground.

"Let me for today~ Ah, reminds me, Vale, did anything strange happen lately?"

"Anything strange? Let me think..."

Vale put his hand against his chin and looked musing.

"Now that you mention it, some wanted men were caught in 'Ames' the other day."

"I think 'Ames' is a village west of here?"

Vale affirmed Shinobu's question with a nod.

"Yes."

"And the caught men were rather famous, weren't they?"

“Yes, the ‘Harios Brothers’. They are notorious adventurer that murdered and thieved. Though they were stripped off their adventurer title when their crimes became known. So it is more correct to call them former adventurer.”

“Mhm, these guys were caught?”

“Indeed and the testimony of the villagers is rather garbled.”

“What do you mean?”

Everyone, not just Shinobu, curiously paid attention to Vale.

“Every villager is saying that a Hero clad in a red robe came to their rescue when the ‘Harios Brothers’ preyed the village.”

“A red robe? A hero? What the?”

“All I know is that he had black hair, used a magic that extended his sword and had a power to make his opponent faint just from a touch.”

“Black hair... couldn’t be?”

“Th- The report also mentioned he had a self-important attitude.”

“Black hair and self-important?”

Shinobu looked at everyone’s faces and apparently everyone was reminded of the same person. But they all believed it to be some kind of mistake.

“Nah... not him. He said himself that he’s just an average person after all.”

“He would never help anyone with that twisted personality of his.”

“Haha, that’s going too far, Chika.”

“Mh~ But, I wonder what’s true. Actually, where’s he now anyway?”

No one knew the answer to that. Vale shook his head too.

“Well, thinking won’t get us anywhere. We’ll just do what we can!”

Chika declared encouraging to everyone. Everyone responded with a nod.

Hiiro's party arrived at "Surge", the town near the border, but an unforeseen situation took place there.

"Hey, what's the meaning of this?"

"N- No idea..."

Hiiro frowned sullen, whereas Arnold next to him twitched his cheek muscles.

A large number of people had set up stalls and attracted a crowd in front of them. Hiiro, not a fan of crowds, got irritated by this confluence and thereby resulting enthralled atmosphere.

"M- Maybe a festival?"

Muir inclined her head lovely and her eyes were sparkling. The endless line of stores might have fascinated her.

"Wait, isn't today the first day of 'Urui'?"

"Indeed, Uncle."

By the way, 'Urui' referred to the month name.

January	Nalwine
February	Nunui
March	Guweron
April	Guviris
May	Losron

June	Norui
July	Kelves
August	Urui
September	Ivanness
October	Nalbress
November	Hisui
December	Grisron

These were the months of this world with twenty-eight days each. Incidentally, the year was called “Anol“, currently it was “214 Anno Anol”.

“What’s so special about today?”

“You don’t know, Hiirō? The <<Raer Festival>> is held annually today.”

“<<Raer Festival>>?”

This world knew of seasons as well.

Spring	Esuil
Summer	Raer
Autumn	Jarvas
Winter	Riu

“It’s ‘Raer’ right now. To blow off this heat, they’re holding stuff like this here and there.”

(I see. Just a simple summer festival)

His discomfort only grew from realizing that. It was already hot to begin with, there was this obnoxious guy next to him and this crowd on top of that only added oil to the fire. It was really irritating.

“Hey, were you thinking something rude just now?”

“Me? Nah. I only thought you were annoying, old man.”

“Listen here! Can’t you deny it, even if you have to lie? What are you answering honestly for, damn it!”

“That’s what’s so annoying about you.”

“S- Seriously, one of these days...”

He clenched his trembling fist. At that time, Arnold’s vision fell onto Muir. Her face was flushed and she watched at the bustling people.

“...Okay, I’ve decided! Say what you want, but I’m determined!”

“What’s that out of the blue? You finally lost it?”

“Shut up!”

Muir blinked her eyes in puzzlement too.

“We’re staying the night here, right? Then let’s enjoy the festival too!”

On these words, Muir’s expression lit up with energy. She seemed rather delighted.

Actually, she wanted to go around the festival, but was fretting as she couldn’t say it out loud.

“I see. Then have a good time, you two. I’m at the inn.”

“Wait.”

Hihiro tried to leave, but was stopped at the shoulder.

“Let go.”

“No, no, how can you be like this now? Let’s enjoy the festival.”

“Not interested.”

“Mhm, you sure you want to act like that?”

“.....What do you mean?”

Arnold put up one finger and smirked. Hiiro felt like knocking him down for that, but resisted.

“Listen, the <<Raer Festival>> here in ‘Surge’ is quite big.”

“.....”

“There are tons of shops~ Moreover, there’s a super popular stall here.”

Hiiro’s shoulders twitched as the words super popular piqued his interest.

“To add to that, they’re holding a competition to see which is the most popular stall in ‘Surge’. A food stall wins every year... but see what I’m getting at?”

“.....Certainly. It serves really good food?”

“I think you would be quite pleased.”

“Mhm.”

Arnold was well versed. Seemingly it wasn’t his first time at the festival in “Surge”. It didn’t seem like he was lying either, nor had he any reason to. Then came the bait in form of good food.

As a result, Hiiro went ahead of the two.

“H- Hey.”

Arnold was disappointed, thinking his persuasion had failed, but Hiiro said without turning around.

“Lead the way already. What if the good stuff sells out, pervert?”

“Don’t call me pervert!”

He shouted angry, but his mouth formed a small smile. Muir was thrilled from anticipation too. The three of them settled on enjoying the festival for a while.

Chapter 16: Raer Festival

“...<<Burning Peach Candy>>?”

Hihiro muttered while looking at the sign of a store.

“Oh, they’re selling quite the rare fruit!”

“Hello, please come closer!”

The stall owner, an energetic old man was radiating with courtesy. Muir looked at the <<Burning Peach Candy>> displayed at the stall with sparkling eyes.

“Old man, give us three!”

“Sure thing! Ohh, the little missy’s cute, so I’ll give you an extra big one!”

“Th- Thanks... Ehehe.”

Muir spilled a happy smile.

“Is it good?”

“Yeah, you bet~ The fruit is shaped like a burning fire and while it’s candy, it’s soft enough to masticate it. Well, you’ll understand how burning it is once you try it.”

Being told so. Hihiro ate a mouthful. He certainly could bite it off easily and its taste spread in his mouth while he chewed it. Then suddenly something popped inside his mouth.

“Mh?”

“Hehe, surprised? The prickling on the tongue is the secret of the <<Burning Peach>>!”

This flavour was addicting for sure. It was damn sweet, yet a treat to your taste buds.

This was surely popular with the kids. Muir too was holding her cheek with an entranced expression.

“Okay! Onto the next one!”

Arnold took the lead and the other two followed him.

(So this is a festival. If it got good food, it isn't all that bad)

Hihiro never went to a festival back in Japan, so he was quite drawn to this new experience. Though it was typically for him to wish that this crowd wasn't here.

A lot of stalls were similar to the ones in Japan, like a shooting range or drawn lots. Muir was enjoying it to the fullest, but after walking around for a while, Hihiro's mentality finally started to reach its limit.

(Aw, this sucks. People bump into me and step on my feet... Can't they all disappear?)

His thoughts started to wander into dangerous waters. Then he spotted a rather large stall. The sign of the stall read as following:

<<Happiness Shark Sandwich>>

Arnold, looking at the same sign, showed a surprised expression.

"N- No way... THAT Happiness Shark?"

"You know it?"

"Yeah, of course! It's an ingredient each cook would like to prepare at least once!"

Hihiro presumed that it must be something really good from his excited attitude.

"Listen, the Happiness Shark only lives in the <<Great Bull Sea>>. Moreover, only at its deepest part, so it rarely comes up to the surface. It's like super rare, but it appears for a short while for laying eggs. Its body has a beautiful pink colour and a jade-green horn on its head. It's said that every single part of its body, be it the horn or fangs, can be eaten!"

Arnold spoke with passion, but Hihiro basically had no interest in animals, so it went in one ear and out the other.

"So, is it good?"

"Of course! Listen, its taste is said... to top even the 'Aqua Hound Meat'!"

“Buy it. Now.”

In an instant, Hiiro’s look changed to something close of a killing intent.

“S- Sure.. b- but.”

“What?”

“Look there.”

“Mh?”

Arnold pointed at a cylinder lottery like you often saw at shopping districts.

“They have a limited stock... so you have to win that to eat it.”

“Say... what!?”

A shiver run all over his body. Coming all the way here and not getting to eat this delicious food? Hiiro bit his lips on this torture.

“Each person has one try and it looks like several won already... Oh, the plate says they only have six portions left... The line’s pretty long too, so I guess it’s no good.”

Hiiro clenched his fist frustrated as he saw Arnold throwing in the towel.

(Wait, wait. That ‘Aqua Hound Meat’ was awesome. But I can’t eat the food in front of my eyes that’s even better? How’s that possible... No, the word giving up isn’t in my dictionary)

Hiiro raised his face with a jerk and glared at the stall.

“Let me give you my thanks, old man.”

“Huh?”

“My thanks for showing me this.”

“Gladly, but you can’t eat it...”

“No, there’s no reason to give up.”

He looked at the people spinning the cylinder lottery. Apparently you won when a golden ball dropped out.

(In that case...)

He concentrated magic power in his finger tip.

“Show me your hands, you two.”

“” ...Eh?””

The other two looked blankly.

The line in front of the lottery slowly became shorter. With some winning, there were only three portions left at last.

But fortunately, no one else won since then. And then finally...

“My turn.”

Hihiro had its chance. He gulped and slowly spun the cylinder. It clattered and then...

....PLOP

Everyone swallowed their saliva. The ball that dropped out was...

“FUAHAHAHA! Nothing is impossible for me!”

Hiiro burst out in laughter in an exaggerated manner. Yes, he perfectly got a golden ball. And a pale glowing word was written in his fist that was raised high into the air. It said... “good luck”.

He had been worried over what to write. The word “luck” could’ve worked as well, but he wasn’t sure if his luck would increase or decrease through it. What about “come out” then? A ball would have dropped out for sure, but not necessarily a golden one.

Therefore he had written “good luck”, since he could easily imagine becoming lucky through it. Magic meant imagination. Any unnecessary thoughts would reduce its power. So he chose the easy to imagine word “good luck”. His magic was really like a cheat.

Moreover, it was a triple pack. He had written the same word for the other two, because that increased the chance of one of them winning even more.

Still, it meant exposing his magic to them.

(Well, I regret nothing. It’s for the food anyway)

His appetite won over the troubles of having it exposed. As a result, all three of them won in a row. Of course the other two had their mouths gaping wide-open on this scene, but Hiiro considered explaining it to them as he was in a really good mood.

“H- Hey, Hiiro...?”

“I know what you want to ask, but for now... eat!”

In his hands was a dish like a hamburger. The filling was the Happiness Shark of course. It had a light pink colour and was wrapped in some vegetables like lettuce with a salty-sweet sauce.

“MUNCH.... Ohh!?”

Where am I? For a moment, he felt like he was inside the sea with the pressure of the deep sea squeezing his body. Such a rich flavour. The compatibility with the bread was extraordinary and just a single bite let him feel the soul of the ocean.

His body melted away from the stimulation on his tongue, no, inside his whole mouth. Furthermore, he tasted something crunchy. It was the horn that Arnold mentioned before.

Delicious. The fried gristle with excellent seasoning was indescribable delicious, too. His body readily ingested everything, even the bones and fangs.

(Holy cow. Who knew something so delicious existed!)

It was more delicious than any fish he had eaten before. The inside of this stomach was frolicking as if the food was still alive. It was earth-shattering good. Moreover, his body felt like it was brimming with power.

Wow... Just wow...

(Definitely... a win...)

His cheeks naturally slackened. He might fall asleep on the spot from the rapture if he were to relax. It was a really pleasant sensation, like he was leisurely swimming in the sea under the warm sun.

When he looked at the other two, Muir was relishing the food too. She seemed to like eating as well, so she was in a good mood from getting to eat something so good. As for Arnold... He was crying for some reason.

To be honest, it was not a pleasant sight to see an old man crying over food. Well, the food was certainly worth crying over, but it somewhat spoiled the mood, so Hiroyuki decided to smack him afterwards.

“Oh~ I’m stuffed! Stuffed to no end~”

Arnold smiled happily.

“Yeah, it was delicious. Ehm... well...”

Muir looked at Hihiro.

“Uhm... Th- Thank you.”

Seemingly she had wanted to express her gratitude. Hihiro replied with a simple “No prob”, but this triggered Arnold to ask about the <<Word Magic>>.

“So, will you tell me about what you wrote on my palm earlier?”

“.....Fine.”

“Eh? You’ll really tell me?”

Arnold had thought he would refuse again, so he asked back on reflex.

“What? I can just keep it to myself then.”

“Ah, no, no. Let me hear it! That word... is that your magic?”

“Yes, it’s called <<Word Magic>>. An unique magic.”

“An unique magic!?”

“You’re too loud! I won’t tell you more!”

“S- Sorry. B- But is it really an unique magic?”

“Yeah. See the word on your palm?”

“Y- Yes.”

“That’s a word from where I lived and I can draw out the effect from the word.”

This world didn’t know of Kanji, so the other two couldn’t read it, so he frankly explained the magic. Both of them listened with a dumbfounded expression.

“Actually, isn’t your magic unfair?”

“*NOD*”

Muir nodded asserting to Arnold's words.

"Who cares. It's like an inborn talent."

"Well, sure, but... Still, I've heard of unique magic, but none as powerful as this."

"Oho, like what for example?"

Hiiro was interested in unique magic besides his own.

"Let's see, magic that controls space, magic that brainwashes people and... magic that manipulates other magic."

"They indeed sound powerful."

Especially the brainwashing one sounded dangerous. He didn't know how it worked, but a magic that bewitches other people's hearts was too powerful.

"But with your <<Word Magic>>, you can use any of these magic I just mentioned too, right?"

To be honest, he could. Maybe he couldn't control it as perfect as the original, but it was possible to use a word with a similar effect.

"Indeed, I can."

"I knew it, so unfair~ You're a damn cheater~"

"*NOD*"

"It might be omnipotent, but it's not invincible."

"What do you mean?"

"Who knows? I've no reason to tell you."

"Grr... Well, you aren't a fool that would tell others your weakness."

"Indeed."

"But leaving that aside, your magic's still too fascinating! Truly paradisiacal!"

“Whatever. I’m tired, so I’m going to the inn. Also, don’t tell anyone about this.”

“Listen to me!”

Hihiro acted at his own pace as always, whereas the other two sighed and followed him.

“Mh? Enough of the festival already?”

“Eh? Ah, yeah, I’m satisfied...”

“I had fun too!”

“There you have it.”

“Then go book a room, servant.”

“I’m repeating myself, but I ain’t your servant! Also, pay some respect to your elders!”

“Don’t be so arrogant just because you were born earlier.”

“It let me experience more of life! Apologize! Apologize to me right away!”

Hihiro looked at the suddenly shouting Arnold and said.

“.....Don’t become like him, shorty.”

“What do you mean, you damn brat!”

Hihiro shifted his gaze to Muir, but she was troubled how to react.

Ignoring Arnold’s annoying outburst, Hihiro headed to the inn. But a problem occurred there.

“....Eh? No free rooms?”

Arnold had his mouth gaping wide-open at the front desk. Behind him, Hihiro was emitted a displeased aura to the max.

“My deepest apologizes. Due to the festival, we have no vacant rooms at the moment.”

What to do now? Arnold sweated bullets, wondering how to reason with the devil behind him that glared at him with a killing intent.

Arnold slowly and quietly turned his head around and looked at the black-haired boy in question.

“What’s the deal, old man?”

“N- Nothing I can do here, can I? When they’re booked out, they’re booked out.”

“...Hah, sleeping outside even though we’re at a town...”

Hihiro muttering so with empty eyes was a rare sight. To be honest, he had hoped to sleep in a proper bed after camping outside for so long, but sadly enough, it was an unaccomplished dream.

“Damn... Stupid festival... Just explode.”

He said something dreadful, but he had enjoyed the festival himself, so he didn’t snap for real. They should’ve booked a room beforehand. No, even then, the rooms might have booked out already, but he regretted not checking it.

“Excuse me...”

The inn keeper at the front desk called out to them, so the three of them looked at him dispirited.

“If I may suggest, why don’t you try out the Guild?”

“The Guild?”

Arnold tilted his head.

“Ah, yes. The Guild has resting rooms for their staff, but if you talk to them, they might give you a room?”

Upon that, Arnold’s expression brightened up and he nodded.

“I see. On a day like this, they really might give us a room.”

“Are we going there?”

Muir looked at him with an upturned gaze and Arnold placed his hand on her head.

“Yeah, it’s our last hope.”

“I hope it won’t be in vain.”

“Brat! Why’re you saying that! Don’t be so damn negative!”

“Let’s hurry.”

“Again, listen to me!”

Hihiro swiftly left the inn, whereas the other two followed in a rush.

Chapter 17: Guild Master

The Guild housed quite a few people, but some way or another, they had a room for the three to sleep in. The party was relieved that their trip wasn't in vain.

They were taken to a rest room and laid down on the beds. It definitely was better than sleeping outside.

"By the way, what are you going to do from now on?"

Arnold asked, whereupon Hiirō answered while closing his eyes.

"...It would be bad to just slip by the checkpoint, right?"

"Yeah, unless you have an official <<Visa>>."

"Do you?"

"Yeah, for Muir and me."

"How did you get it?"

"Wait, you don't even know that? How did you want to cross the border?"

"Talk my way through and if that doesn't work... through force."

"Scary! Normally I would laugh at your stupidity, but now that I know of your magic, it only sounds scary!"

Arnold feared that he would cross the border by beating the clerks with his <<Word Magic>>, because his power was more than able to.

"Listen, the <<Visa>> is issued at the Guild. Look."

Saying so, he showed him a piece of paper slightly bigger than a train ticket. Written on it were the issued and expiration date.

"Then I can just get one here..."

“No, even if you apply for one here, it takes quite some time until it’s approved, you know?”

“...Seriously?”

“Seriously. Usually you get it from the Guild in the capital of the country. And even then, it takes around one week. In your case, you apply for it here, then the Guild in the capital verifies it and you only get your <<Visa>> once they approve.”

First you applied for it, then your personal history and origins were investigated. Needless to say, you wouldn’t get an approval when you had a criminal record. But if there were no problems and a valid reason for crossing the border, the Guild Master gave his approval on the permit. That was the <<Visa>>.

“Oho, so the Guild Master in the capital is quite the big shot?”

“Come again? You were in the capital, right? How come you don’t know?”

“I had no interest.”

“.....Hah. Listen and remember this well, Hiirō. Do you know how many SSS rank adventurer are amongst the humans?”

“Three, I think?”

“Yeah and one of them is the Guild Master in the capital.”

“Mm.”

“Don’t give me a ‘mm’!”

That was Hiirō’s only reaction, since he had no interest in other people.

“He’s amazing, you know? Only people with superior strength and popularity are chosen for the position. They even say his physical ability is equal to a beastman. Truly a monster.”

“I understand that this monster is lost in his status and prestige.”

“H- Hey... It’s certainly said that the Guild Master has an equal power to the King in emergencies, but... aren’t you going too far?”

“Dun care.”

“...Haah. Anyway, his name is...”

“Mh? Oh, it’s been a while, Vale!”

“It has indeed been a while, Judom-sama.”

The man that greeted Vale, the caption of the second division of the <<Victorias>> army, with a generous smile was Judom Lankars.

He wore a splendid white beard, but was only in his late 40s. His shortly trimmed white hair had other reasons than from old age.

His gentle expression gave off an aura that put even children at ease. But his abnormal figure became obvious when standing.

The height of his body was over two metre and his trained arms looked as hard and robust as steel.

His whole body was so muscular that you would think his clothes would rip on the slightest movement.

“Fuhaha. Stop with the sama. You’re a prominent captain yourself now!”

He clapped Vale on his back while laughing openhearted. But even though it should’ve been a light pat, it felt like a strike that gradually cut down his HP to Vale.

“*COUGH* I- I see that you have not changed, Judom-sama.”

Vale showed a happy smile while rubbing his back.

“So, what’s up? It’s rare for you to come here.”

“I came here to ask a favour of you, the Guild Master.”

Currently they were inside the Guild, in the room of the Guild Master.

“Oho, something troublesome again? Forget it, I’m retired. Leave the frontlines to the youngsters.”

“What are you talking about! Even now, no one is able to hold a candle to you as an adventurer!”

“Fuhaha! You’re giving me too much credit! Besides, I heard that the Heroes were summoned. ...It’s their era now, right?”

Judom asked with a slightly sharp gaze, but Vale didn’t notice it.

“No, no, a strong person is always in demand. Especially someone as strong as you.”

Hearing Vale’s answer, Judom clouded his expression a bit, but brightened it up again right away.

“And I tell you, my era is over. As I am right now, I am only a close match for a SS rank. I can’t move around like in my SSS rank days anymore.”

Judom said kind of self-deprecating with an insightful expression.

“You are being too modest. ...Just now you said to leave the front lines to the youngsters.”

“Yeah, I did.”

“I would like to ask you to train these youngsters for battle.”

“.....The Heroes?”

“Yes.”

For a while, the two gazed at each other. Judom looked at Vale, who confronted him with an earnest look, and laughed faintly.

“The same look as back then, when you asked to become my disciple.”

“Although you turned me down in the end. Back then you said to me: You’re not good enough to be my disciple. I only take in someone that can fight on the same level as me.”

“Did I really say that?”

Judom smiling, reminiscing about his juvenility.

“And now people, who can fight on your level, have appeared.”

“.....Is that so.”

Wiping off his smile, he answered Vale.

“Please teach them! It is for the sake of the future of us ‘Humas’!”

“For the future of ‘Humas’, huh...”

Vale looked at him with determined eyes, with straightforward eyes. Judom took out his pipe and lighted it. Then he slowly blew out some smoke.

“Hey, Vale.”

“Yes?”

“Do you know why I became the Guild Master?”

“That’s... No, I do not.”

“Because the Guild Master can give commands with the same authority as the King in emergencies.”

“Judom-sama...?”

“When I was an adventurer, I always wondered why this country, no, this continent keeps waging war.”

“ ... ”

“Every day I prayed that someone would bring peace to the world. Salvation by faith, so to speak. But the dispute between races escalated and spread to this country too. Of course I took up arms, because there were things I wanted to protect. But what do you think the then Guild Master did at that time?”

“ ”

As he knew the answer, Vale looked shameful.

“The Guild Master went far away. He abandoned the country. Abusing his authority as a Guild Master, he escaped for his own good. Due to that, the command chain of the adventurer broke down and many lives that could’ve been saved were lost.”

“Judom-sama...”

“The King had appointed that Guild Master.”

Vale kept silent on his words. The King had been responsible for appointing that Guild Master. Judom was angry at himself too for not being able to see his true character.

“So I desperately grew stronger and aimed to be the Guild Master. Then I asked the King for authorities to command during emergencies. And thus the Guild Master became another King for the county.”

“ ... ”

“I aimed for the one and only position that could correct the King’s mistakes. That was the best I could do as an adventurer. But...”

Judom clenched his fist frustrated. Vale widened his eyes from seeing this. Even now, the King’s orders were absolute. But the Guild Master had the right to decide about all emergencies regarding adventurers.

Judom gave Vale a quiet and cold look.

“The King then committed another mistake.”

“Wha! How can you say that!”

Vale was shocked about the sudden criticism of the King. Going any further would be defamation.

“The Kind sacrificed three people for what? Wait, one’s still barely alive, I guess.”

Then he threw a glance at Vale, telling him to answer.

“Th- That’s...”

“The Hero Summoning... Sure, our country is in danger. But I advised the King that there other things to do before summoning Heroes.”

“You did such a thing...?”

Vale didn’t know that, so he frowned at him.

“Why did we reject the peace treaty?”

“Peace... treaty? What are you talking about?”

“Mhm, I guess you weren’t informed. Well, naturally.”

Judom shook his head wearily.

“Ex- Explain yourself, Judom-sama!”

“A few years ago, there should have been a peace treaty from the ‘Evila’.”

“Impossible! I never heard of such a thing!”

“The top brass must have swept it under the carpet.”

While blowing out some smoke, Judom said so.

“B- But still! Even if such a letter came from the ‘Evila’, we cannot trust it!”

“Why didn’t we seek a dialogue?”

“ ... ”

“You don’t know the outcome unless you try it.”

“That’s...”

Vale understood very well that it was a sound argument, so he couldn’t object.

“I know how you feel. I also know how they betrayed us on previous meetings initiated through letters. But there should be other methods before sacrificing your own daughters, no?”

“H- His Majesty was grieving about that as well.”

“One does not simply grieve over your daughters’ deaths!”

His earlier gentle expression changed completely, turning into dreadful intensive one.

Vale broke sweat on his whole body. That was the spirit of an retired adventurer...

Judom sighed while shaking his head.

“Either way, if he had just consulted me, I would have come along to wherever the meeting would have been. Youn like many others, may not know, but there are good guys amongst the ‘Gabranth’ and ‘Evila’ too.”

“Th- That certainly is true, but it’s likewise a fact that the ‘Evila’ king tries to destroy us ‘Humas’.”

“A fact?”

“Yes!”

“Then do you know about this? The ‘Evila’ King has changed.”

“...Eh?”

“When a King changes, so does the policy. The letter was sent by the new King as well. Nevertheless, the King ignored my advise and called strangers from another world.”

“Calling them strangers... For our sake, the Heroes are—”

“risking their lives...?”

“ ... ”

“I don’t know what world they came from, but I don’t think they care enough about our world to risk their lives for it. If I were in their shoes and suddenly brought here against my will, I would leave everything behind and go on a trip.”

That was exactly what Hiiro did, but Vale was shocked from Judom’s words and froze up.

“B- But the Heroes seriously are...”

“They just haven’t faced a life-or-death situation. Not many recover after tasting despair.”

“ ”

“They’ve a home too, right? As the one who called them here, the King has to make sure they are returned alive... hasn’t he?”

Vale looked downward and closed his eyes.

“From what I heard, another guy was summoned, but he left as he had no reason to comply?”

“Ah, yes.”

“I can trust that guy more than the Heroes.”

“Wh- What do you mean!?”

“That you don’t understand it shows how inexperienced you still are, Vale.”

“Judom-sama...”

Then Judom showed a gentle expression again, placing his pipe on the desk.

“We’re done here, Vale.”

“B- But!”

“Think it over once more about what you have to do. It’s your turn to advise the King now.”

“I could never...”

“How can someone save the world, when the advice from friends or retainers goes unheeded?”

After that Judom didn't say another word and Vale left the room astonished.

Chapter 18: A Method to pass the Check Point

“Judom Lankars?”

“Yeah, Judom Lankars. A former adventurer that was well known as the <<Impact King>>.”

Apparently it was a nickname, but Hihiro frowned upon hearing it.

“That name sounds like a delusional middle schooler came up with it...”

“Middle schooler?”

“Forget it.”

“Okay? Anyway, remember his name. It’s such a waste that he’s a ‘Humas’.”

“Oho, wouldn’t expect that from someone who’s lost in status and prestige.”

“I keep telling you, he isn’t like that! He took care of me once too, albeit a long time ago.”

Arnold narrowed his eyes reminiscing.

“Well, I couldn’t care less about that guy, but at this rate, I won’t be able to pass the check point, right?”

“Yeah, it takes quite some time to pass through there.”

Hihiro pondered about what to do with a pensive face. It seemed it would work out with time, but it already took one week in the capital, so it would take even longer here. He definitely wasn’t patient enough for that.

“Hey.”

“Mh?”

“The check point is in front of a large bridge, right?”

“Yeah, that bridge is the only connection between the human and beastman continent. Well, it isn’t impossible to cross over the sea, but...”

“But it’s no good? I thought about taking that route if anything else fails.”

“And how? The sea between the continent got a really rough stream and sometimes even whirlpools. Not to mention the ferocious demons. I heard it’s all due the particular terrain, so I guess crossing by boat is impossible.”

(I can’t pass it normally, since I don’t have a <<Visa>>. That said, passing over the sea is out of the question, too. Wait, if I use my <<Word Magic>>... No, it’s quite likely someone will see me. Ah, right, I can just copy the <<Visa>> with the word “copy” ...But that’s so ordinary and no fun. Reminds me, I haven’t tried that experiment yet. Good timing. If the left is no good, try from the right, or so they say. Kukuku....)

Hihiro smirked as he thought of something. But the other two were astonished seeing him like that, thinking that he was up to no good again.

On the next day, they went up to a hill near the check point.

“Hey, are you really going to do it?”

Arnold looked doubtful, which pissed Hihiro off.

“Just do what I told you.”

Muir looked at them restlessly.

“Okay, let’s get started.”

Hihiro said so, then wrote “lightweight” onto his chest with magic power. He had trouble writing like this, but he didn’t use <<Air Writing>> as the costs were too high. After that he activated it and counted until forty in his head.

“All set.”

“Okay. Ohh, you’re really light!”

Going by Hiiro's stature, he would be around sixty kilo without a doubt, but right now he weighted no more than a few kilo. Arnold lifted him up like a spear.

"Y- You really sure about this?"

"Hurry up already. I told you it only lasts for one minute, so I only got twenty seconds left now!"

"Fine!"

Arnold mustered all his strength and then...

"WRAAAAAR!"

he threw Hiiro into the sky with all his might.

WHOOOOOOOSH!

"Uh!"

Hiiro squinted from the incredible air pressure and took off the ground with a lot of speed, feeling like a cannon ball.

(Oh~ Nice view from here)

He admired the wonderful scenery in his heart. Then the effect from "lightweight" vanished and he slowly lost momentum. As he was about to stop in midair, he wrote a word into the air.

This time it was "fly". He aimed at his back and activated it, because he imagined flying freely like an animal with wings like that.

Of course he had previously checked that he was able to fly by writing it on his palm. Directing it at his back was mostly whimsical.

(Mhm, wings... Maybe I should try if I can grow some next time)

He got a bit excited from having found a new challenge. This part of him showed how much of a kid he still was. Then the effect from "fly" manifested.

(Ohh~ I'm flying~ But kinda slow. I'm as fast as walking, I think?)

He imagined himself flying faster, but his speed didn't change. Well, it didn't interfere with his plan, so it was alright.

Slowly raising up even higher into the sky, he flew slantwise over the check point. At this height, he only looked like a small bird to those on the ground.

But then the one minute passed and the effect ended. He wanted to write "fly" again, but couldn't.

(Seems I can't write it twice in a row after all)

Writing the same word in succession was impossible. He had checked upon that previously too, so he didn't panic.

(Then I'll go with this next!)

He wrote the word "float". Upon that, he stopped descending and came to a halt in midair. Floating in the middle of the air was a rather strange feeling.

"Mhm, how many have seen the world from so high up?"

From above, <<Edea>> looked beautiful. He could see green lands, blue seas and high mountains. A sight that truly made you aware of Mother Nature.

(Now I'll just repeat writing "fly" and "float")

With that in mind, he enjoyed the view while he waited for the effect from "float" to vanish.

Meanwhile, Arnold and Muir were at the check point.

"H- Hey, Uncle, will Hiiro-san be alright?"

“No idea. But I’ve never seen someone as reckless as him.”

Hihiro had explained them the plan yesterday in the following way: First he reduces his own weight by writing the word “lightweight”. Then he lets about thirty seconds pass.

As for the reason for this pause, apparently he could only activate the next word when one minute passed after a word with a temporarily effect. At worst, he could end up crashing into the ground during the one minute he was being thrown.

Therefore he had Arnold throw him after forty seconds. The remaining twenty seconds would pass while he was still in an upwards movement. Still, it was only feasible since Arnold possessed quite the strength as a ‘Gabranth’.

As the next step, he would fly through the air by using the word “fly”. Of course they asked why he didn’t use that from the beginning, but he couldn’t use the same word in succession and there was a high chance he would be spotted by someone as his momentum would be slow then.

Of course there was also a chance of him getting spotted as Arnold threw him, but one would surely think his eyes are playing him a prank as Hihiro took off with quite the speed.

The last step of the plan involved using “fly” and “float” alternatively and looking for an isolated place to land.

They had asked him if there wasn’t a simpler method by using words and Hihiro had checked upon that as well. He found a way to copy the <<Visa>> by using the word “copy”.

However, Hihiro had always wanted to try out flying like this and since this was a good opportunity, he went through with it.

“Seriously, I don’t know if he’s a genius or just stupid.”

“Ahaha...”

“Either way, he’s a brat.”

Arnold could only give a feigned laughter at this point. Still, it puzzled him how he was convinced that Hiroyuki would pull it off without problems.

The check point was a huge dome out of metal. Before going in there, an officer confirmed the <<Visa>> one by one.

“Okay, you may go on.”

Being told so, Muir entered first, followed by Arnold right afterwards.

The dome was filled with shops. Some were makeshift from peddlers, others were permanently located there. When they proceeded further in, there was a door, big enough to let one adult through, guarded by two male officers on the left and right.

(Strict as always. All that effort to check those who want to pass)

While thinking so, he headed towards the officers together with Muir.

A magic circle was drawn right in front of the officers. The circle lighted up blue when a ‘Humas’ stood on it, green for a ‘Gabranth’, red for ‘Evila’ and yellow for everyone else.

Discrimination against the ‘Pheom’? That thought crossed his mind, but no one of that race ever passed through a check point up till now. To begin with, they rarely showed themselves. It’s said that no ‘Humas’ ever even saw one.

Therefore the ‘Pheom’ were grouped together with everyone else.

“Going home, I see. You’re clear to pass!”

Upon the officer’s words, Arnold and Muir took the door outside, setting foot onto their own continent.

“Uwa~ Such a long bridge~”

Just like Muir had said, a bridge long enough to be called magnificent spanned in front of their eyes. It was approximately ten kilometre long, so her surprise was understandable.

“Let’s go, Muir.”

“Yeah.”

“But I wonder where he ended up in.”

“Yeah, me too~”

Of course they meant Hihiro. He wasn't in sight, so they speculated that he was at the end of the bridge and started walking ahead.

Chapter 19: Encounter a Unique Monster

At that time, just as the other two had suspected, Hiiro was on top of a nearby hill. From it, he could view the bridge without being discovered.

In truth, he had been forced to land on top of the bridge. Going at his slow pace, it cost way too much mana to get all the way to the other side.

There were a number of people on the bridge when he landed. Hiiro was forced to cover his entire body in his red robe to conceal his identity, and run for cover. However the Beast People on the bridge just thought that he was a flying demon swooping down hunting for food, so they paid him no mind.

(This bridge is way too long. Just how far does it run...)

Unlike in games, if you get too tired your HP will drop. So while running long distances, it will drop quite a bit. However it also recovers slowly if you rest.

The Beastman continent was covered in green.

The main difference between this one and the Human one was the amount of untamed wildlife. Of course, the human continent was also home to quite a bit of vegetation and mountainous environments as well.

However, here in the soil and the forests; in the lakes and rivers, the surrounding wildlife had much more energy.

(So each continent has its own merits)

The main selling point of the human continent was its human-made ecosystem.

Manufacturing and trading; import and export. It was a land of business.

(I wonder what the Evila continent has... I guess I'll have to see it with my own eyes sooner or later.)

As I think this, a carriage stops in front of me. From it comes a man who seems to be a peddler. Of course, he's a beastman.

(This is bad... I can't be found out here.)

Arnold said that unlike the human continent, this was a land where you could be randomly assaulted out of the blue. A war-ridden country. There's a possibility of being attacked just because of one being from the Human race.

If that happens I don't plan on losing, but I can't cause a commotion here. I don't want to get separated from Arnold when I can still get more information out of him.

(... I just thought of something.)

I write a character on my body, while thinking of something a certain person had.

"What are you doing here? Do you need a ride?"

In response to the man's frank questions, Hihiro takes off his hood.

"Oh, you have some splendid ears there!"

The man smiles happily.

"I apologize. My companions should be here soon. Thanks for the concern, but don't mind me."

"Oh? I see. I wish you safe travels."

And the man returns to his carriage.

(I somehow got through it. But that beastman was quite amiable)

I touch the ears that had sprung up on my head. They're quite soft to the touch. But the ears weren't the only thing that changed. Hihiro's hair had changed to a silver color. It was the same color as Muir's.

Using his 《Word Magic》 and holding an image of Muir's race in mind, Hihiro had written 『Copy』 on his body. However if he had been thinking of Muir herself then his

facial structure would have been greatly altered and it would be hard to balance, so he tried to imagine something else. However he had only ever met 2 Beastmen in his life.

Hihiro's psych would not be able to handle turning into an Old man like Arnold, so he stuck with thinking of Muir's race.

And here marked the birth of a silver haired, bespeckled boy. The words only changed the basic qualities of its target, so the effects remained over time. Hihiro would have to write 『Return』 to turn back.

(It's weird to have a tail. My body feels strangely light, and my canines have gotten strangely strong.)

After waiting for a while, the other two finally got here. They were able to locate me by my red robe. But then...

"What's with that haaaaaaiiir!"

I had expected this to happen. Even Muir lets out a sound.

"Now then, let's depart."

"Oy, wait, wait, wait! Why the hell are you acting like nothing's wrong!? There's many thing's I'd like to retort at right now! "

"As always, you're being quite fussy. Just be quiet for a bit, like that shorty over there."

"Muir is in too much shock to speak! Just explain yourself! Why is your hair the same color as my beloved Muir's!?"

And so I began explaining against my will. Muir stares at me in excitement. She touches her own hair and stares at my ears.

"For you to be able to do something like that.... How broken are you?"

"Koku Koku"

I'm already bored of dealing with these two. I let out a yawn. I had set out early today so there would be few people to witness me, so I want to sleep.

“Well, it’s not like I’m the real thing. Only my form has changed.”

“Hm? So your physical abilities are still human?”

“Pretty much.”

“I see, but still, your magic is quite amazing.”

The two seem to have seen 《Word Magic》’s true usefulness. They let out sighs.

“Anyways, where will we be heading from here?”

As Hiirō asks, Arnold points his finger.

“If we head due west from here, we should find the village of 【Doggam】”

“What sort of place is that?”

“It’s a town of the 『Bearnt』 clan.”

(TL: Written as Bear People, read as Bearnt)

(『Bearnt』 . I read about them in an encyclopedia. Apparently they’re quite a peaceful race, unlike bears.)

In the human capital, I tried to gather knowledge by reading the books stored at the guild.

“Well, the 『Bearnt』 are gentle folk, I don’t think you’ll be attacked even if you’re found out.”

So the information I attained was correct.

“Also the honey they produce is said to be quite a delicacy.”

“Ho? I’ll look forward to it.”

“Yeah.”

“What? The shorty’s never been there?”

Muir’s reaction is similar to my own, so it can be concluded she has never been to that village.

“Y-yes. T-the truth is, well...”

It seems to be difficult to say, but I can sense that she believes that it is something she has to mention. But Hiiro waves his hands.

“Ah, if you don’t want to say it, you don’t have to.”

“Eh?”

Muir stares blankly at Hiiro. Arnold follows in suit.

“I have no interest in you people’s past, so there’s no reason to force yourselves to tell me anything.”

“... T-that’s not it, but...”

Arnold looks towards the sad Muir, and tries to say something to lighten the atmosphere.

“As long as Hiiro’s fine with it, I guess we can leave it at that, Muir!”

“Uncle...”

“Let’s just go already.”

Hiiro begins walking off. Arnold begins patting Muir’s head, and then whispers into her ear.

“I know that you’re anxious, but Hiiro being Hiiro, if you tell him, he’ll probably just respond with something like, ‘and so what?’”

“Y-yeah... that’s true.”

Upon hearing Arnold’s words, it seems that a burden has been lifted from Muir’s chest.

“I hope that you will be able to tell him one day.”

“Yeah!”

“Now then, let’s get going so we don’t lose him!”

“Yeah!”

As he watched Muir running after Hiiro, he thought something like, ‘how cute’. If Hiiro had seen Arnold’s expression, he would have dragged him off to court already.

After walking for a bit, they come across the first monsters they have seen in a while.

“I think this was... a BukBuk?”

BukBuks are monsters that exist in the shape of books. It's size is quite large. Moreover, this monster's power comes from...

Snap Snap!

“Uoh! Quite a powerful bolt of lightning there.”

Arnold shouts out as he avoids it.

Right, BukBuks are monsters with the ability to use magic. What's more, different species of the monster could learn different varieties of magic. However it is difficult to tell apart BukBuk subspecies.

“It's been a while since I've met a monster worth fighting. Old Man, I'll leave that one to you.”

“Perfect! Watch Arnold-sama's brilliant swordplay! Muir, back off!”

“F-fine!”

We each take them on one at a time.

(The old man's one uses thunder. Mine is...)

Bang!

Suddenly a large hand emerges out of the ground, trying to grab Hiroyuki.

“I see, so your specialty is earth!”

Hiroyuki takes out Piercer and tears apart the earthen hand. But the BukBuk's magic causes several small fissures to open up. The fissures advance towards him, halting his movement.

“Don't be so conceited...”

Hiroyuki concentrates magic into his finger and writes 『Quiet』 in the air. He throws it at the ground and it activates.

The ground calms down, and the fissures stop in their tracks. The BukBuk seems to be quite confused, and it hesitates in casting its next spell.

“Perish!”

In that space of time, Hihiro quickly closes the gap between them. Quickly erects a wall of dirt in front of itself.

“That isn’t nearly enough to stop my advance!”

Without stopping, Hihiro thrusts his sword into the wall. And the blade passes through it quite easily. The BukBuk behind the wall is also impaled. And after letting out a sound like the sound of stacks of paper falling to the ground, the monster stops moving.

“And now, the Old Man is...”

He seems to have already finished up. After dodging the thunder and closing the distance, it only took a single swing of his massive sword to end the BukBuk’s existence.

“Did you see that!? That’s my power! Nahahahahah!”

He seems to be in ecstasy. It may have been a troublesome monster, but it was definitely at a level we could have handled. Is it really that great to have beaten one of those? I let out a sigh.

After that battle, we met more monsters as we headed down the path. After overcoming numerous battlefields, we end up in a forest.

“If we get through this forest, we’ll arrive at 【Doggam】 !”

“Don’t you find it odd?”

“What?”

“There were so many monsters before, but once we entered this forest, we haven’t seen a single one.”

“Aren’t they just afraid of us?”

“You sure are an easy going old man.”

“S-sorry, whenever Uncle gets conceited, he becomes like this.”

"I've already given up on him, so don't worry."

"Y-yes... *sigh*"

Muir looks a little embarrassed as she stares at Arnold. It's as if she's a kid observing her father on Parent's day.

(TL: event where parents observe how their children do at school)

Arnold, who is strutting triumphantly suddenly halts his march. Hiiro becomes worried, and calls out to him. He is giving off a nervous expression.

"Oy, what's wrong?"

Hiiro asks that as he looks ahead, and in front, he sees a single boar. Hiiro thought it was just another monster, but strangely, it was a monster that wasn't in any of Hiiro's books. The boar had yet to notice the party's approach, and it peacefully eats grass.

He had read about a similar monster, so he asks.

"Is that a Big Boar?"

"N-no, it's..."

Arnold is acting strange. He seems to be afraid. The Big Boar Hiiro knew of had short brown hair, however the monster in front of them was red.

"Hiiro... We're running away."

"Wha? What are you saying?"

"Don't worry, just try to move without making a sound."

Hiiro frowns upon seeing Arnold attempt to evade the quietly boar.

"What exactly are you doing, you pervert?"

"I keep telling you I'm not a pervert! ...ah."

Arnold lets out a large voice, and turns pale. Hiiro looks back at the boar and finds it staring angrily at them.

“D-damn... This is your fault, Hihiro!”

“And so what? Is that monster something special?”

“T-that’s a Unique monster!”

“Unique?”

I believe that the books said that Unique monsters were exceedingly rare. And that they were exceedingly ferocious. Arnold’s frantic expression seems to confirm this.

“T-that’s a Red Boar, a rank S monster!”

“Hmm.”

-

The Unique fights the Unique.