

## **Chapter 2 - Story 32: Premonition (Beginning)**

Once the Head Priestess drew the machete she had pressed against the neck sideways, a large quantity of blood poured out.

The sacrificial rabbit, which had been put to sleep with the same medicine as Souma, didn't leak a sound as its throat was cut with only its body twitching slightly.

The Head Priestess draws a huge circle with the rabbit's blood around Souma. Moreover, she applies the remaining blood on her fingers and paints complicated patterns on the forehead and cheeks of the deeply sleeping Souma.

And then, once she efficiently lines up a small incense burner and ornaments that had prayer beads consisting of fangs and bones attached to them, the Head Priestess sat down cross-legged next to Souma.

After igniting the incense, the Head Priestess looks up to the sky within the questionable smoke and scent drifting in the air, and raises her voice in a sonorous prayer.

"Oh great Beast God, this me, your faithful leader of the priestesses, presents her wish while humbly bowing here!"

People don't have power to cause anomalous phenomena.

However, they can pray. If that prayer reaches the gods, and if they accept them, the gods will kindly exhibit their divine might.

And, this Maha Genobandela is a place that induces awe among the zoan, equal or even more so than the sacred land Rollo in the Solbiant Plains. A mysterious power dwells on this soil that's honored and feared by the people. Such place makes it easy for the gods to visit while avoiding any unnecessary interference towards the world of man.

If it's this place, the prayers to the gods will likely reach without anyone disturbing and also without being seen by anyone.

"Now then, I will have you show me your everything."

'Very likely even the Beast God should harbor unusual interest in this boy. If that's the case, the Beast God will probably demonstrate a miracle with a reasonably high probability.

"First there's the Creator, the source of the beginning! The one and only Creator, who is almighty, severed his life due to his solitude, giving birth to The Seven! By that——"

Reciting the Myth of Creation, she forms a place for the gods to descend on this ground.

And, no sooner than she had started to pray, a small figure modeled after the Beast God began to shake with a clattering. Its vibrations gradually become bigger and more intense. Alongside that, some huge presence arrived.

'The Beast God has descended!

The Head Priestess is surprised while continuing her prayer.

'I had expected that the Beast God would probably show his interest, but I certainly didn't think that he would respond this quickly. Just that is already proof of the Beast God being interested in this boy.

'Moreover, it's not only him.

The Head Priestess felt the presence of another five huge beings with her sharp senses.

Furthermore, compared to the presence of the Beast God, which the Head Priestess knows very

well, those are equally huge presences.

'There's no doubt. These are the other gods of The Seven.

'Not just the Beast God, but very likely even the other five gods except for the Human God have assembled in this place.

'With this, it's definitely a success!

Even while being shocked by the appearance of the other gods of The Seven, the Head Priestess, who was confident of her assumption, put even more passion into her prayer.

And, the instant her zeal reached its peak, the Head Priestess' field of vision blacked out.



That place was dark.

'No, it's not dark. Something black has covered my eyes.' The moment she realized that, her sight opened up after she drew back.

What was visible there is a huge, jet-black flag. A flag, which was dyed in a black like the dark night, had blocked her visual field.

'Is this place atop some kind of mountain?' The big flag causes loud sounds as it flutters in the strong wind.

What's sewn in the middle of the flag with a silver thread is a design of a combined 8 and  $\infty$ .

'Doubtlessly that's the seal of Aura, the Goddess of Death and Destruction.

'Then, is this the flag of the boy called Soma?

Once the Head Priestess looks closely while harboring that question, the flag was smeared and stained with mud and dust, and had slightly faded, as if it had been in use for many years. Not only that. At some places there are cuts as if it had been torn open by blades. There are even arrows still stuck within.

However, what shocked the Head Priestess is the base of the flag.

An innumerable number of corpses was piled up there, forming a mountain. The corpses that were gathered there also include people such as zaoan and dwarves. They laid down their life while having their whole bodies turned into hedgehogs by countless arrows.

But, that's not all what shocked the Head Priestess.

It were the expressions of the dead that surprised the Head Priestess.

What was visible on their faces is not anguish distorted by pain. Much less to say that it's despair over having lost their lives.

What was visible on their faces are delightful smiles.

Even though their whole bodies had been pierced by arrows, obviously joyful smiles were carved onto their faces.

The visual field of the Head Priestess, who feels dumbfounded due to that abnormal sight, blacks out once again.



The scenery that spread in front of the Head Priestess next was a huge city illuminated by the scorching light of the blazing sun.

'Just how many people are living there?' To the Head Priestess, who only knows of the plains, it's such a gigantic city that she can't even imagine it.

Spreading radially from the city's center are such wide streets that several carriages can line up next to each other on them. On both sides of the streets, brickwork houses have been built in rows. An especially big building among these is probably a temple? At its entrance stood a big statue, which had been built by piling up bricks, as if watching over the city.

And, what's surrounding that city is a large wall, so high that one has to look up. Going by its height and thickness, it even feels as if the city is surrounded by mountains.

From somewhere a sound as if the atmosphere is trembling reached the ears of the Head Priestess, who was overwhelmed by the sight of this solid and huge city. Gradually the sound became louder, and finally even the ground began to shake.

And in the next instant the wall collapsed.

That enormous, massive city wall broke down alongside a sudden, fierce noise.

Moreover, it doesn't end at that. Starting with the wall, furthermore the buildings, which were closest to the wall, begin to crumble as well. While the atmosphere vibrates and the ground rumbles, the palace, the huge statue, the houses and the rampart break down.

That spectacle was as if an invisible giant marched onwards while mowing down the buildings after smashing the wall.

Presences of people surge forth behind the Head Priestess who couldn't do anything but dumbfoundedly watch as the townscape is collapsing.

"W-What's this about!? Mine city! Mine temple! Mine wall! Everything is crumbling!"

She can't see them, but that voice was clearly dyed in the color of fear.

"Is this really the deed of people!? Is this a deed achievable by people!?"

The Head Priestess is shocked by those words.

'He says that this collapse that's still continuing in front of my eyes is not a natural calamity, but accomplished by someone!?'

"You bastard, are you a god!? A demon!? Just who the heck are you!?"

'Just as the shouting states, this is truly the deed of a god or a demon.

'Is he saying that the city's destruction, which should be called a natural calamity, can be induced, if one possesses some kind of power?

The Head Priestess, who thought that she had no strength left to be surprised anymore, is surprised even further by the next shouting.

"Divine Son of Destruuuuction!!!"

The Head Priestess couldn't believe her ears upon the shouting that claimed Souma to be responsible for the destruction of this city.

'For that human, who is a nice person on a first glance, to have caused the destruction of a city which I can only regard as deed of a god or a demon is something absolutely unbelievable.

However, without time to make sure of the truth, the Head Priestess' consciousness is sent flying to the next scene.



The vicinity was filled with a silence that made one's ear feel pain.

The location is some unknown room. Seemingly right after dawn, a morning mist that resembles white silk loosely hangs over the surroundings.

'However, it's far too quiet.

'Even if it might be morning, that place is too silent. Not a single bird can be heard. And not only that. I can't even sense the presence of insects that should exist everywhere.

At that moment a gust of wind blew over with a whizz.

"...! This is...!?"

What peeked out from the morning mist that was cleared away by the wind were countless corpses. Many of them are human soldiers who wore armors and swords the Head Priestess never saw before.

But, that's not all.

Even horses and cattle had died there, exposing their corpses.

Faint sounds reached the ears of the Head Priestess who has her breath taken away by the abnormal scene.

Once she turns her eyes in the direction of those sounds, she saw a single human soldier walking feebly while using his sword as cane.

Seemingly having experienced some very strong dismay, the eyes of that soldier are unfocused, and his breathing is rough. Going by his appearance, he looks as if it has been caused by some kind of disorder of his mind.

And, bright, crimson blood was discharged from his mouth.

"It's a curse!"

The soldier yelled while spouting bloody foam from his mouth.

"All people, horses and cattle died! Anything and everything died! Anything and everything rotted away! Swords, armors, helmets, all of these have corroded! Dreadful! It's the power of a terrible monster! It's a curse! A demon's curse!"

'The great number of corpses scattered here weren't simply killed.

'He says they were killed by some terrifying might.

'Just how were this many humans and animals killed?

As the Head Priestess imagines that power, her body trembles in fear.

"I never wanted to come to such a place! I never wanted to try defeating such dreadful guy!"

And the soldier shouts his name alongside a surge of blood.

"That cursed Divine Son of Destruction!!"

Was that scream the last breath of the soldier? The soldier pitched forward on the spot, and once he collapsed with a flop, he turned into one of the corpses littering the ground.

And then the vicinity is once again visited by a silence that makes one's ears feel pain.



This time the scenery spreading in front of the Head Priestess is a place similar to a room of a mansion made out of some stone.

Piles made out of accumulated things that were placed chaotically inside the dim room - possibly because it's night - seemed to cast shadows.

The one sunken deeply inside a luxurious chair inside the room is a male human.

"You say people feel darkness within me!?"

The Head Priestess isn't overly well-informed about the social positions of humans, but to her this man seemed to hold a fairly high position seeing as his clothes were decorated with various designs sewn with golden and silver threads.

"Then just what is the guy you're serving!? What I feel from such guy is darkness! A bottomless darkness!"

However, his face was ghastly pale.

And, in contrast to that paleness, a crimson-shining liquid flowed out of his mouth, dyeing his chest with a darkish red.

"That guy is abnormal! There's no way for such a guy to exist! It's impossible that it's alright for him to exist!"

The man appeals while the fire of his life that was about to vanish soon is burning brightly for a last time.

"That guy is the very definition of darkness! That guy is the true monster here!"

The man vomited the crimson liquid with force.

"That damned Divine Son of Destruction!!"



The Head Priestess was confused.

The scenes shown to her one after the other were all simply unbelievable.

The Head Priestess understood, "The zoan of the plains must pay a heavy price to obtain a future, just as that boy called Soma said. And that it's easy to imagine that fighting the humans, who believe in the Holy Faith that tries to ostracize the other races, will lead to tragic events.

However, the visions the Head Priestess had so far were all so abnormal that they surpassed her imaginations by far.

And what all of them shared in common was the absurd level of fear towards the boy called "Divine Son of Destruction."

However, all the scenes she had seen until now were from the point of view of those who were hostile towards Souma. Warriors extolled as heroes by certain clans are cursed as sworn enemies by

other clans. That's something that applies to the zoan as well.

'Besides, the one always accompanying that boy is 《Noble Fang》 Fagul Galguss Shyemul who's known in the plains for her nobility. Even though the other party is her "Navel Master," it's not like she will blindly obey him in everything. Even if the other party might be her "Navel Master" — no, exactly because he's her "Navel Master," she won't allow him to act recklessly.

Believing in that, the Head Priestess wished to see the future of the zoan in her visions.

Once she did, as if responding to her plea, once again a new vision appeared in front of her eyes.



Zoan warriors were sitting around a small campfire.

'From the fact that they put on war paintings and talismans, I guess that they are headed towards battle or that they are in the middle of one just now.

'However, I wonder whether they lost the battle. Gloomy shadows cling to their faces.

One among them grumbled,

"His Majesty was the Divine Son of the Goddess of Death and Destruction, as expected..."

The Head Priestess is baffled.

'Just whom does he mean with 'His Majesty'?

'Speaking of the Divine Son of the Goddess of Death and Destruction, I can't think of anyone but that boy called Soma. In that case, does that mean that he's really going to build a country in the future?

'However, despite calling someone 'His Majesty' being a display of respect, why was it fear that I sensed from his tone?

One of his comrades quietly calls out to the previous speaker, telling him "Stop it." However, the other zoan keeps complaining while his voice trembles.

"Even after killing and killing and killing this much, His Majesty is still not satisfied?"

Once again his comrade tells him to stop, but this time with a slightly stronger tone. And yet the zoan doesn't stop.

"Even though Lord Soma would surely stop if that person was still there..."

Due to that the warrior, who had cautioned him quietly so far, yells,

"Even if you speak about someone who has left us, it won't solve anything, right!?"

The place becomes still as death.

The warrior, who had complained, and the warrior, who shouted, sank into silence while frowning. Within that awkward silence only the sound of the fire bursting with a crackling can be heard.

After a short while someone quietly mumbled,

"...Divine Child."

'What the heck does that mean!?'

The Head Priestess' confusion intensifies even further.  
'Having left; just what does that mean?  
'Exactly who is meant with Divine Child?  
'What on earth happened? Just what did that boy do?  
And then the fire blazed up with a roaring in front of the Head Priestess.