

Chapter 177 - A Formidable Enemy for the Lancer

I greeted the morning while training.

I felt sorry towards Kaldo-san, but it has been an intense night with Yui joining in as well.

In the end no one got up except for Helme, even when the morning sun rose.

Everyone is soundly asleep.

In the meanwhile I prepare breakfast together with Helme after having her wash my whole body with her ability.

With her powers as water spirit, she thoroughly cleans the meat and finely cuts it with an ice blade.

Helme is a spirit. She doesn't understand the concept of making flavored food.

That's why I cooked myself.

Though it took time...I prepare everyone's share.

However, it doesn't look like they are about to get up yet.

Hence, while basking in the bright sun, so scorching that it's sadistic...in order to waste some time——

I waited for everyone to wake up while watching the ocean and chatting relaxedly with Helme.

Once noon had passed, everyone finally started to wake up.

As obvious, only Helme and I have special sleeping hours.

Helme seems to feel at ease within my body, though.

Even <Head Servant Leaders> like Viine apparently need a certain amount of sleep.

Well, it's been only recently that they had become bloodkin.

It's possible that their bodies and minds still haven't caught up with the abilities of a Lucival.

I turn my eyes towards the girls who got up at last.

"Did you sleep well? We have prepared breakfast, or rather lunch. Soup, bread and water has been put down on the table." (Shuuya)

"Whoaa, thanks." (Rebecca)

"Nn, Shuuya thoughtful." (Eva)

"Thank you very much, Master." (Viine)

"...Shuuya, you're also skilled at cooking, after all" (Yui)

Seemingly recalling the past, Yui stares at my face.

I did prepare various dishes at Sol's place...

Everyone scoops up their soup with spoons.

"I'm surprised...the soup is great. For me to be able to enjoy a taste similar to high-class cooking here...is it fine for me to call you Shuuya-sama?" (Kaldo)

Kaldo-san asks while eating the soup and bread.

It's a simple flavor that combines a few spices with onion, so it must be flattery.

"I don't mind you calling me as you like." (Shuuya)

"Okay, Shuuya-sama...so, after this, umm..." (Kaldo)

Kaldo repeatedly glances at me while hesitating to go on.

"What is it? Speak your mind." (Shuuya)

"Yes. I'd like to accept the matter with the <Servant Leader>." (Kaldo)

"Dad, you made your resolve?" (Yui)

"Yeah...after much deliberation. I will serve this man together with you, Yui." (Kaldo)

His lips form a smile as he talks.

"Dad...that's wonderful. Your illness will be completely cured as well, and it will be possible for you to become strong." (Yui)

Yui nodded while smiling.

"...Got it. I will employ you, Kaldo." (Shuuya)

"——I'm much obliged for your kind words!" (Kaldo)

It was in the middle of breakfast, but Kaldo went down on one knee in the sand as he answered.

"Sure. I will have you drink my blood after the meal, Kaldo. I will leave the guidance to Hyatos's mansion to Yui and you. I think you will have to spot it from the sky, though." (Shuuya)

"Yes, milord! From the sky, you say..." (Kaldo)

"It's Rollo. You will understand once she transforms later." (Shuuya)

Rollo is just in the process of eating some meat.

"Nyao."

She gulped down the meat and meowed.

"Rollo-sama? I understand." (Kaldo)

"That's right, but that's for later. Let's eat for now." (Shuuya)

"Yes." (Kaldo)

For a while we eat while chatting lightheartedly in a relaxed manner.
Once breakfast was over, we swiftly cleaned up and I stored the Magically-built Home away.
And then, with everyone gathering around me, Kaldo alone steps forward.

"Kaldo, are you ready?" (Shuuya)

"Yes." (Kaldo)

It's my first time with a man, but I activate <Central Pillar of a Greater True Ancestor's Lineage>. Once again my sight is dyed by a darkness that erodes the world.

My mana and blood boiled with my blood starting to throb.

My heart beats fast and my pulse goes up. Blood overflows from the skin all across my body.

I strongly focus on it being a <Servant Leader> this time.

The distribution of my power began.

Kaldo dons an expression full of admiration and devotion. My blood wraps him up.

Different to the sizes of the blood cells so far, he's enveloped by a small blood cell and then floats up into midair.

I guess that's a difference between <Head Servant Leader> and <Servant Leader>.

The small blood cell turned into the Crest Tree of the Lucival which has the same size as before.

There are 25 small, round branches connected from the ten big circles within the crest tree. The ancient letters of Viine, Rebecca, Eva and Yui are carved into four big circles.

The crest tree overlapped with his body.

...A sparkling light is produced at his heart's location, and blood is released into the air, wriggling while blending with the light like crimson shadows.

Once the blood and light form a yin yang mark in the air, Kaldo's entire body is suddenly clad in light, absorbing the blood.

Kaldo groaned in agony.

I'm not really interested in the pained expression of a man.

But, he's my first <Servant Leader>.

I have to fully watch as <Central Pillar of a Greater True Ancestor's Lineage>.

Before long all the blood was absorbed by Kaldo...transforming him from human into a Light Demon's bloodkin in that instant. At that moment, Kaldo's name was inscribed onto a small branch of the crest tree.

He collapses.

And the darkness vanishes as well.

I know through my senses that my mana has been consumed and my spirit decreased again.

It doesn't change the fact that I chose him as bloodkin, but <Servant Leader> seems to not be as much of a decrease as <Head Servant Leader>.

"Dad! (Yui)

Yui runs up to him even before me.

"...Yui? Can you hear my voice? The way how I hear sounds has changed, I think. I...acquired <Servant Leader>. I transformed. My smell is different as well. I feel power welling up...amazing. My sensations are sharper than in the past——" (Kaldo)

Kaldo shakes free from Yui.

Suddenly he started to run with an intense momentum while donning a vampire-like, evil smile.

He draws his longsword and swings it sideways——

He himself does a side turn.

His swordsmanship is pliant.

He increases the force as he brandishes the sword.

Just as he slashed, he suddenly stops his movement.

Motion from stillness.

It's the unique method of a martial artist.
He abruptly thrust the sword forward while slowly advancing.
It's a technique of drawing a trajectory as if splitting the blade and the back of the blade, allowing one to guess his skill.
He ran while unleashing a chain of thrusts in the shape of a folding fan.
He rotates once while performing a light jump at the end. He finished up by striking the sandy beach with the sword.

"...Dad, that was really cool. Your movements are better than in the past." (Yui)

I certainly could feel an elegance, an agility that exceeded the movements of a human made out of blood and flesh.

"Yeah, this is also due to me becoming a <Servant Leader>. It's thanks to Shuuya-sama..." (Kaldo)

"Yep, you have to be grateful to Shuuya." (Yui)

"Of course—— Shuuya-sama" (Kaldo)

Kaldo comes at my feet with swift movements, and lift his face in a respectful posture while propping himself up on one knee in the sand.

"...You bestowed me a wonderful power. Really, thank you very much. This Kaldo Frogman shall swear eternal loyalty to you, Shuuya-sama, here and now. I will offer all my power as <Servant Leader> to milord." (Kaldo)

It's not that Kaldo's face has changed from that of a middle-aged man to that of a youth, but he looks slightly rejuvenated?
I guess it's just my imagination.

"...Alright. I'm counting on you from now on." (Shuuya)

"Yes, milord!" (Kaldo)

Everybody, who silently watched that chain of exchanges, look as if they can agree with the outcome.

"As for <Blood Mana>, just like Yui, I will teach you once we get back to my mansion." (Shuuya)

"Certainly." (Kaldo)

But, lord, eh? It's the first time for me to be called like that.
My first male bloodkin...excellent, refined men might also be quite nice.

"...And Yui, have you grasped how to contact me through blood letters?" (Shuuya)

"Yeah, you're talking about this, right——?" (Yui)

『I love the lewd Shuuya.』

Don't write weird stuff in blood letters...

"That's it." (Shuuya)

"Nn, me too." (Eva)

『Pervert Shuuya loves boobs.』

Ugh, for Eva with her angelic smile to write something like this...

"Me too, then." (Viine)

『Master is a superb male...』

I'm happy about your feelings, but what a long text...

"Alright, the blood letters look fine. Let's head over to the capital then. Rollo, get ready." (Shuuya)

"Nya."

Hearing my words, Rollo immediately grows her limbs, transforming into a huge lion.

"——Oooooohh! She's bigger than last time...is she a sacred, guardian deity as the ones I have heard about in rumors?" (Kaldo)

"No, she's my partner. A divine beast who's a familiar." (Shuuya)

"...Nothing less of the great man who charmed Yui." (Kaldo)

Kaldo's body trembles as he looks up the huge lion.

"Rollo-chan, you're truly big. Getting on the back with everyone——" (Rebecca)

As Rebecca is talking while admiring Rollo, a tentacle of my huge partner wrapped itself around her and she was lifted up on Rollo's big back in no time while screaming "Kyaaaaa!"
Rollodeen carries one of us after the other onto her back.

"Now, everyone got on, right? Rollo, go ahead." (Shuuya)

"Nyaon."

She's a huge divine beast right now, but her voice is a throaty cat voice.
And then she kicks up the sand with her powerful limbs as she runs.
She extends several tentacles ahead, amasses power by twisting them, and then releases that power——
In response, she flew up in one go.
A black lion running across the sky while cutting through the clouds with us on her back.
Huge, jet-black wings grew out at her sides.

Mana particles gush out of those dragon-like wings that exceed those of a big hawk——

"Nn, to be able to fly through the air..." (Eva)

Eva muttered while sitting on her magic wheelchair.
She's enjoying the sky view while looking deeply moved with her violet eyes sparkling.

"Yeah...I did see those jellyfishes up in the sky sometimes, now they are nearby..." (Rebecca)

...Come to think of it, I didn't tell those two about the possibility of flying.

"Shuuya, I'm surprised how fast we are, but since we already passed the Leelia Forest, the capital Halphonia lies ahead of that road over there." (Yui)

Yui points her finger diagonally downwards.
A huge city - seemingly the capital - facing the ocean had already come in sight.
Various buildings line up within.
A completely gray castle with asymmetric towers possessing pointed, triangular roofs was located in the city's center.
It looks like a small mountain, but I suppose it's just a castle.
A romance between prince and princess, no, like Romeo and Juliet seems absolutely possible in that setting.
It must be suffocating.
A great number of galleasses is anchored at the harbor.
Many ships sail back and forth along the coastline.

"...That's the capital, huh...? It sure wasn't far away." (Shuuya)

"Rollo-chan is fast. I don't know since I never rode one myself, but isn't her speed above gryphons and equal to dragons?" (Yui)

"I wonder..."

I happened to ride a dragon once, but back then we reached our destination in an instant.
Great Knight Remrona's dragon was really cool.
Speaking of Remrona, I have to go sell the treasures from the other day to her patron, the Second Prince.
...Ah, now I remember! There's also the matter with the magic stones.
I have to dedicate them to the item box so that it expands. The next reward was...

"...Milord, are you going to personally plunge into the city? If we continue like this, we will enter the enemy's detection range... If we are detected by magicians, sorcerers or superb magic detection tools, it's possible that the army will make a move." (Kaldo)

Kaldo warned me as I was pondering about the item box.

"The army, eh? Rollo, circle around here." (Shuuya)

"Nyaa."

Just as instructed Rollodeen starts to draw circles in the sky.
I felt a pleasant wind——

"——Zamalia's military forces, do they possess a magic dragon rider unit like Osebelia?" (Shuuya)

"Yes. It's the capital after all. The majority are gryphon teams, but a few dragon knight units have been deployed as well." (Kaldo)

"...I don't mind trampling down the armed forces alongside the country, but...we will pick a safer option here. Let's land and enter the capital normally along the road." (Shuuya)

"Yes, milord." (Kaldo)

"Master, you're not going to shoot that huge spell?" (Viine)

Viine is probably talking about the spell that crushed her archenemy, the Sorcery Nobles.

"It's no problem to wrap this up by firing it, but this time I'd like to proceed without using strategic-class magic." (Shuuya)

"I see." (Viine)

"Am I too lenient?" (Shuuya)

Helme responded to the question I asked Viine instead.

"Your Excellency, you are far too lenient. Those are enemies who have tried to attack Your Excellency's subordinates. I believe you should eradicate them alongside the entire country and race." (Helme)

Helme is as extreme as usual.

"Spirit-sama's...plan is a bit too harsh, I think...since I understand what Master is trying to do, I support Master's decision." (Viine)

"Viine...so you finally reached the point where you can talk back, haven't you? You're saying that you understand His Excellency's decision?" (Helme)

"Yes, I do." (Viine)

Helme and Viine start a dispute of gazing at each other.

"You know..." (Shuuya)

"Your Excellency, please stay silent for now. Viine, please tell us what His Excellency is thinking." (Helme)

With her long eyelashes trembling, Helme sharply glares at Viine.

"...Yes. It's a prediction from the fact that he won't fire the huge, strategic-class spell, but I believe that master wishes to consign the big noble called Hyatos to oblivion with his own hands, and in particular his spear, on top of implanting despair by making them frightened. That's my very own, humble opinion." (Viine)

——I'm surprised.

Viine guessed my thoughts with a precision I'd expect from Eva who possesses a mind-reading ability.

Is it an effect of having received my blood?

"...Your Excellency, how about it? Is Viine's conjecture correct?" (Helme)

"Completely. I'm truly amazed, Viine." (Shuuya)

Once I praise Viine, she grins broadly and looks at Helme as if telling her, "I got the gist of it."

"Yes. I have grasped your preferences, Master, so..." (Viine)

"Humph, this time I shall accept my defeat..." (Helme)

Seeing Viine's smile, Helme averted her face while looking uninterested.

"Nn, Shuuya, I will grasp your hand later." (Eva)

Eva says after having watched the exchange silently.

It looks like she wants to read my mind.

"Sure—— Well then, Rollo please drop us off close to the road over there." (Shuuya)

"Nya."

Rollodeen descends slowly.

While killing the impact by stabbing several tentacles into the ground, she touches down on.

However, my partner is certainly huge. You could describe her appearance as black horse, black lion, black gryphon and black dragon...

"Uwaaaah! It's a monster."

"Run awaaaay!"

"Aaaaahhh! A black beeeeast!"

A party of travelers lost their composure on the road.

Without paying any attention to that, we get off Rollodeen's back.

Once all of us have gotten off her, Rollodeen reduces her size to that of a black horse.

Once again commotion occurred among the curious onlookers.

"Nnn——"

The 'black horse' (Rollodeen), which resembles Maeda Toshimasu's Matsukaze——
Using her tentacles, she placed only me on her back.

"——Well then, I guess I'm off to the capital." (Shuuya)

"Okay."

Viine looks at me with a yearning of wanting to sit in front of me, but still replies obediently.
Then, while touching my partner's torso with its black fur, Rebecca says,

"If it's this size, it's certainly impossible even for Rollo-chan to take along everyone." (Rebecca)

Eva smiles together with Rebecca while enjoying Rollo's fur.

"Nn, roger." (Eva)

"Let's run." (Rebecca)

"Nn." (Eva)

"Ah, I will push." (Rebecca)

"Nn, thanks for always taking care of me." (Eva)

Eva turns around to Rebecca who's pushing the wheelchair.
It's a gentle expression. Rebecca's smile is nice, too.
The two have somehow softened down and become gentle.
Eva and Rebecca happily go ahead.
Helme starts to run as well.

"Dad, we're going to run ahead." (Yui)

"Aye, let's go." (Kaldo)

"Shuuya, follow after us, we will guide you." (Yui)

"Roger." (Shuuya)

Yui and Kaldo begin to run along the road.
I chased after them while handling the rein tentacle.
Everybody runs after them at the same speed. Since all of them are bloodkin who have inherited the blood of a Light Demon Lucival, their physical abilities have apparently jumped up.
Their running speed exceeded that of humans.
And then, on the way, Eva cheers on Rebecca to not lose to Yui and her father, and to run ahead, causing Rebecca to spurt. Rebecca dashes while cladding her legs in blue flames.
It's a quickness that's unthinkable for a magician...
Even Eva, who proceeds next to Rebecca while having a friendly chat with her, uses an abnormal speed for her wheelchair.

There's no need to talk about Helme and Viine either——

They are staying right next to Rollodeen.

Once Viine noticed that I'm looking at her, she turned a smile at me with her silver hair swaying in the wind.

As usual, she's a beauty and cutie.

Her appealing that she wants a kiss by puckering her lips stimulates my nether region.

While watching the face of that perverted girl...we arrive at the capital's gate in the blink of an eye.

Yui and Kaldo pass through the gate while slowing down their pace.

We followed their lead.

After entering the city, passing several crossroads and a wide main road, Yui and Kaldo stopped.

"Milord, from here on out it's the noble district. The huge mansion surrounded by the wall in front of us is the place where Hyatos lives. The members of 【Anbu's Right Hand】 are patrolling the vicinity." (Kaldo)

Kaldo reported while genuflecting.

"I see. There's of course an entrance in the back, right? Isn't there possibly an underground escape route or such?" (Shuuya)

"Yes, it's just as you have guessed." (Kaldo)

Kaldo nods respectfully.

"It feels as if you have actually seen the building. Shuuya, you certainly think things through...I had thought that you might choose a frontal brute force approach." (Rebecca)

"As expected of you, Your Excellency. Your discernment is profound." (Helme)

Rebecca and Helme say, but...

"Something like that is only the beginning. The opponent is a Marquis, a high-ranking noble. Moreover, for a big-shot that goes as far as doing secret maneuvers against the neighboring country, it's better to think that he possesses several hidden cards, I think..." (Shuuya)

"Master, I agree as well. The priestesses of Sorcery Nobles own devilish tools to communicate with their goddess. Even a magul will definitely possess trump cards, seeing as he's a Marquis." (Viine)

"Nn, I think so too. Nobles possess a lot of money, thus he should have acquired weapons, not to mention powerful magic items and spirit-binding armor." (Eva)

"Just as Eva says, he has those. Hyatos attended the underground auction held every year in Pelneet and bought various things there." (Yui)

Yui supplemented Eva's opinion.

"He seems to own a treasury like Eribol from some time ago." (Helme)

Helme appears to recall how I personally crushed the leader of 【Owl's Fangs】.

"It's definitely possible."

"Please leave the disposal of the surrounding small fries to me." (Kaldo)

"Sure. Okay, Helme, you watch the backdoor. You may let go those who want to escape, but kill those holding weapons." (Shuuya)

"Yes——" (Helme)

Helme liquefies in an instant and vanishes as if seeping through the mansion's wall.

"Kaldo, you get rid of the small fry in the vicinity." (Shuuya)

"Yes, milord——" (Kaldo)

Having quit being a human, Kaldo grows fangs from his mouth and his eyes become bloodshot. He runs along the street located in front of the mansion while laughing.

"Eva and Rebecca, you will cause a flashy ruckus at the front. I think you will encounter a big number of 【Anbu's Right Hand】 soldiers, though." (Shuuya)

"Leave it to me. I will get rid of them from a distance with my magic and blue flames. If they get close I will wallop them with my blue flame fists!" (Rebecca)

Rebecca holds the magic wand with the dark red gem in one hand, and talked while cladding her whole body in blue flames. Her clothes not catching fire is a mystery. Her blonde hair and blue eyes sparkle, and she looks lovely in her low-cut dress.

"Nn, I will fight while assisting Rebecca." (Eva)

Eva glanced at Rebecca in a calm manner, and extended both black tonfa with their conspicuous, purplish red rune patterns.

"Then I shall leave the front entrance to you." (Shuuya)

"Yeah——" (Rebecca)

"Nn——" (Eva)

Both head towards the front gate.

While watching as they leave, I dismounted Rollodeen (Horse Lion).

She immediately shrinks into her black cat size and returns on my shoulder.

I shift my eyes towards Yui.

"Yui, where's the underground exit?" (Shuuya)

"This way——" (Yui)

"Rollo, Viine, let's go." (Shuuya)

"Yes." (Viine)

"Nyao."

I chase after Yui, who's running ahead, with Rollo on my shoulder.
Yui stopped at a detached house in a back alley located opposite of the mansion.

"The exit should be inside this house." (Yui)

"I see." (Shuuya)

"Three people outside, and there are likely some inside as well...I guess those are 【Anbu's Right Hand】 members." (Viine)

Just as Viine stated, they are people wearing black clothes who seem to be 【Anbu's Right Hand】 members.

"Back in the old days, the guards weren't a big deal, but...I don't know about now. Inside the house are very likely members at leader-class level who are proficient at indoor battle such as the Evasive Matius or Himiko the Shadow Attacker." (Yui)

"Hee...it's very unlikely that I will be able to brandish my Magic Halberd." (Shuuya)

Indoor battle, eh...? Rollo gets down on the ground and transform into a black wildcat.
She's smaller than a black panther but bigger than a black cat. She transformed into an exquisite indoor combat shape.

"Master, Viine and I will eliminate them, so please watch us." (Viine)

"That's fine as well, I will deal with them using <Chain>. Just watching doesn't fit my style after all." (Shuuya)

"Okay." (Viine)

"Well then, let's storm the house. There's only the entrance at front." (Yui)

Yui draws her two special magic katana.
Viine readies her emerald snake bow, and adopts a stance enabling her to shoot a beam arrow at any time.

"Alright, shoot." (Shuuya)

"Yes, Master!" (Viine)

Viine shoots several beam arrows in succession with quick movements that appear to be skill-based.
The beam arrows fly through the air as if cutting it, stabbing the place between the eyes of the guards.

However, one of them is skilled.
He repels all beam arrows with an adamantite-like spear.
He kept rotating the spear.
I'm not sure since he's wearing black clothes, but he seems to have strong body.
A lancer just like me, huh...?

"Yui, Viine, Rollo, no need to interfere. I will finish that guy." (Shuuya)

I looked forward to it since I had a hunch that he's the first formidable enemy in a long while.

"Okay." (Yui)

"Understood." (Viine)

"Nyao."

While tightly gripping my Magic Halberd and maintaining a forward-bent posture, I run up to the lancer standing in front of a hut.

"To challenge me to close combat——"

The black-clothed man unleashes a thrust with his spear.
I don't know whether he intends to restrain me with that, but while dodging that by slightly shifting my head to the side, I slash diagonally upwards to the left with the red spear part of my halberd.
The man reacts while amassing mana in his eyes.
Once he raised the butt end of his spear and repels the upslash of my spear, he unleashed a compact thrust aiming at my chest in return.
I ward off his spear with the central part of my halberd, causing a metallic sound.
——I retreat a bit.
The man removes the black mask at his mouth without pursuing me.

"...A lancer like me, eh? But, who are you? I know of several skilled lancers in the underground world of Zamalia, but...I don't remember having seen your face. Besides, I understand from the quality of your steadfast movements just now. Does that mean the Roluju faction employed an enemy from outside the country at the upper ranks of the Eight Divine Spear Kings? Or are you by chance "Silkworm"?"

He talked about various things.

"...I don't know any silkworm or whatever. If it's Divine King rank, I have heard about it." (Shuuya)

I honestly replied to the man with the remarkable spearmanship.

"If you don't know about Silkworm, you must be a nameless hitman. Hah, that means it's an outrageously big-prized job——"

The man raises his voice in delight, and releases a powerful <Thrust> while staying forward-bent.
I receive the sharp <Thrust> with the violet metallic staff part of my halberd, and release a counter-roundhouse kick with the outer edge of my right foot while averting the adamantite spear to

the side by drawing a circle with my halberd, but the black-clothed man avoids my kick by slanting his body, and mows down his spear from the side.

As I dodge that swing at a paper-thin distance by stepping back, the adamantite blade grazes my overcoat, causing violet sparks.

At the same time I clad my feet with Magic Combat Style.

——This is where I will start my counterattack.

I sharply step in while increasing my speed, and unleash a <Thrust>, which is relying on my arm, aiming at the opponent's torso.

The man tries to pull back his spear, but the trajectory of my halberd's spiraling red spear only deviates a bit, and penetrates the black glove covering the man's arm alongside its content.

Blood dances in the air.

"Ugh, what was that!?"

Even with his arm having been pierced, the man clads his whole body with mana, and continuously thrusts his spear at my chest, handling the weapon in his hand skillfully.

There was some feedback, but...I retreat several steps while repelling his spear with my halberd.

The instant the black-clothed man showed an eerie grin, some kind of black mana gushes out of his arm, healing the wound on it.

"...It's been a while. For me to suffer an injury in battle..."

Hee, so he possessed such a skill or item?

"Was that a skill just now?" (Shuuya)

"Indeed. <Unseal - Demonic Heal>, a skill that you won't encounter often——"

The man lets loose a low kick at the end of his words.

Evading the kick by lightly jumping, I slap down my halberd from above, but the man easily parries the heavy red ax blade attack with his spear grasped in both hands while keeping his body steady.

He's tough, but I have seen everything he has to offer.

Once I release a roundhouse kick with my right foot while feinting as if I'm going to mow down my halberd, the man is unable to cope with it.

It's settled once my kick sinks into his hard solar plexus.

"Guaaahh——"

Having directly received my kick, the man was blown against the wall of the house behind him. He puts one foot against the wall, and says with a twisted expression, obviously bearing the pain,

"Oouch...let me hear your name..."

Something like a huge fire dwells inside his eyes.

"...Shuuya Kagari. Yours?" (Shuuya)

"Leon Ashima. I have studied under the third rank of the Eight Divine Spear Kings, Tereiz Rulurshu."

A former disciple, huh? No wonder that he's so strong.
With that timing I clad my entire body in Magic Combat Style.

"Nuoooooh!" (Shuuya)

I quickly approach Leon, who's leaning against the wall, in a forward-bent posture and a shout full of fighting spirit while getting ready for a <Thrust>.
Leon adopts a posture to dodge the spear stab that should come from right in front of him, but without using <Thrust>, I suddenly alter the trajectory of my halberd, making the red ax blade face diagonally downwards.
He fell for it.

"Wh-!?" (Leon)

Leon shouts in surprise while unguarded, but he's too late.
Cutting through Leon's right thigh as if it's butter, I severed half of the flesh below.

"Guaaaaahh." (Leon)

Leon's posture grandly falls apart as he screams loudly.
Using that timing, I focus on my muscles while maintaining the rotation of my halberd.
While adding a gyration to my half turn on the tips of my toes, I amass power in my spine, and activate <Powerful Slash> as I put that power into the red ax blade in one go.
The red ax, which colors the lower arc of the rotational circle in flames while causing an intense wind similar to that of a tiger's shout, went from the torso through the head of Leon Ashima.
Large amounts of blood spew out of his upper body and face which were divided into left and right halves along his bangs.
Including those blood spurts, I drank up all the blood with <Blood Path - First Gate>.
I didn't suck up his soul, but...it's just right like that.
After all I recently lost a big quantity of blood.

"...I defeated him." (Shuuya)

I address the three who watched behind me.

"...Cool."

Yui has a slightly entranced facial expression.

"As expected of Master. You are an amazing male. But, your opponent wasn't a run-of-the-mill male either..." (Viine)

Seemingly excited, Viine openly showed her unadorned emotions.

"N, nyao."

Rollo meowed something along the lines of 『You defeated him nya』, too.

"True, to be able to exchange this many blows with Shuuya, the opponent must have also been quite skilled." (Yui)

It looks like he really learned from one of the Eight Divine Spear Gods.

"Indeed."

"Next is my turn."

Yui starts running after smiling in complacency.
She kicks Leon's corpse flying, climbs the small stairs of the hut, and passes through the door.

"Nyao."

"Master, let's follow her." (Viine)

"Aye." (Shuuya)

Together with Rollodeen (Wildcat) and Viine, I storm after Yui.
Yui enters a room located on the right from the entrance with uncommonly, light movements.
The blade of her katana, which she handles while jumping, drew a beautiful parabola. It accurately cut through the cervical vertebrae of several black-clothed men, who got ready while on guard.
The blood gushing out of the headless trunks splashes into Yui's face.
She gulped down those blood spurts with her fanged mouth while revealing a smile with her white eyes.
The <Eyes of Baycala>, huh?
They are scary but pretty.

"What it is?"

The voice of a masked man is audible from a corridor in the inner part.

"Don't tell me, Leon was done in?"

The voice of a woman wearing a white mask resounds from next to him.

"Ah, those eyes, those katana! We were betrayed by Death Goddess Yui!?"

"It looks like there are some others as well..."

The masked man and woman lowered their waists, drew special, Khukuri-like daggers from their lower back, and got in position.
While repeatedly running and doing triangular jumps along the wall as if making use of the narrow room, Rollodeen (Wildcat), who closed in on the masked enemies, extended her tentacle bone swords towards the two.

"——What!?"

"Hyaaa!"

Even while being taken aback by the tentacle bone sword attacks, the two repel them with their own daggers and retreat close to the wall.

"I have no grudge with you guys, but I will have you die here——" (Yui)

Yui rushes forward in a bent posture while talking to them in a cool-headed manner.
Even I could see from behind that a white mist was released from Yui's face as she dashed.
The white mist also sticks to her two katana.

The chest of the man, who was cornered at the wall, was very easily stabbed by a sword thrust that left a faint afterimage behind.

It might be new skill, combining her <Eyes of Baycala> and her powers as bloodkin.

"Gufaaah."

"Matius——"

Even while being cornered by the chain attacks of Rollodeen's (Wildcat) tentacle bone swords, the black-clothed woman yelled her comrades name.

"Shut up." (Viine)

Viine extends her arm alongside those freezing words.
She had activated Rasheena's Bracelet. Small, black spirits similar to shadow midgets creep out of the bracelet. Moving about lively, they approach the masked woman.

"Hiii, what are those!? Don't approach my arm, geeeh——"

The spirits restrain both her feet as she screams, binding her whole body while also climbing it.
Before long they reached even her white mask, and ripped it off.

Her face is beautiful.

A female elf with green eyes, blond hair and long ears...the design of a rat was painted on her cheek.

Since Rollodeen's tentacle bone swords continue raining down on her in the meanwhile, the elf is successively stabbed across her whole body alongside her black clothes.

"Guaaaaahh."

I could shoot my <Chain> as usual, but I stuck to just watching the indoor combat.

I don't want to let her die since she's a beauty, but...it can't be helped.

Holding one hand vertically in front of my mouth...Amen...

I pray in advance using a simple Buddhist style.

"It looks like there are no other 【Anbu's Right Hand】 leaders in this place anymore...there should be a passage leading below around here..." (Yui)

Once Yui removes the cloth covering the floor, an entrance covered by planks came in sight.

"I guess this is it." (Shuuya)

"Yeah." (Yui)

She takes the planks away, making descending stone steps appear below.

"It's a short distance because it's directly connected to the mansion's underground passage, but given that corpse puppets, which had exclusively been released by Corpse Caster Azekai, are loitering around in the basement, we will have to move ahead while annihilating those." (Yui)

"Sure." (Shuuya)

"Okay." (Viine)

I'm bothered by those corpse puppets, but whatever.
I descend the stairs with Rollo on my shoulder.