

## **Chapter 178 - Hyatos' Trump Card**

The basement is dark, but...Yui appears to be able to see through the darkness after having become a bloodkin.

Of course Viine, as former dark elf, can see as well.

My sight is good enough as well——

Since I own <Night Vision> and <Darkness Adaptation>, I see that there are traces of the corridor's wall having been dug into.

Suddenly there are magic sources ahead of us.

"They are here——"

I move ahead while summoning my Magic Halberd.

It's a corpse doll...its head is that of old-styled Japanese women with a long, thin talisman stuck to the forehead.

Its eyes are slightly bulging, and its lips blood red.

It wears a vermilion, Asia-styled dress with mysterious patterns.

The blood veins visible on the surface of both hands are pulsating.

Abnormally long nails extend from its fingertips.

I guess those are its weapons.

Its appearance is that of a Chinese "hopping zombie." [efn\_note]Look here:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiangshi> - it should give you an idea[/efn\_note]

That's the point where I want to call for Mr. Vampire. [efn\_note]A Honkong comedy horror film.

You can google it[/efn\_note]

I wonder whether 『Tenten』 [efn\_note]A character appearing in Mr. Vampire[/efn\_note]is still doing fine. I liked her in the past.

It's really hopping around...

"Guuoooh."

I guess its enemy detection range is vast. The corpse doll headed in my direction while releasing its characteristic groaning.

I meet it while advancing slightly forward.

My target is the head with that talisman.

I move my left foot forward while in a forward-bent posture—— after stepping down on the hard basement floor with a force of crushing the surface——

I unleash a <Thrust> with a twist of my right hand while also twisting my waist.

The instant the halberd's spiraling red spearhead hits the corpse doll's face, the talisman is torn off, obviously rolled up by the spearhead and the doll's head is crushed with an explosion.

At the same time the neck is shred to pieces, and the head is blown away.

The lump of meat that appears to be the squashed head clashes against the ceiling and drops to the ground, landing in front of the feet of the corpse dolls hopping over from behind.

The headless corpse doll crumbled to the ground like a broken doll.

"Nothing less of you Shuuya. But even so, those corpse dolls are fearsome guards."

"Well, there are many tough, strong enemies in the labyrinth." (Shuuya)

"Ah, yeah. You're an adventurer who has fought against the monsters of the labyrinth. I guess these are not that much of an enemy for you then. I think I will become an adventurer as well, now that I have become strong." (Yui)

Once I look at the bashfully smiling Yui, my mood brightens up.

"It looks like there's still several dozens of them ahead of us." (Viine)

Viine points out.

"Yeah, I will deal with them." (Shuuya)

I had a fight with a formidable lancer, but during the indoor battles I only watched. Seemingly having heard my words, Rollodeen (Wildcat) crouched. She adopted a hunting pose while swaying her bum, but then stopped.

"Nya?"

While meowing, she turns around and looks at me. Rollo's pupils widened. She's a beast, but no matter how I look at her, I can't see anything but those rotund, excellent eyes.

"Ugh, you look like you want to hut...very well, go for it." (Shuuya)

"Nyaan——"

In contrast to her sweet voice, Rollodeen (Wildcat) ferociously leaps at the corpse dolls. While dashing, Rollodeen creates a crowd of tentacles which are difficult to count from all over her body with its conspicuous, velvet-like, black fur, and not just her nape——  
And, just as usual, white protuberances grew out of the winding tentacles' tips. That crowd of tentacles is released ahead like the bullets of a machine gun. They pierce the torsos, legs, hands and faces of the corpse dolls, riddling their bodies with holes. Moreover, she entwines a tentacle around one plump doll corpse and pulls it in. She contracts the tentacle. Don't tell me... Rollodeen (Wildcat) dragged the doll corpse over to her feet, and then stares down on it like a carp atop a chopping board. Rollodeen opens her muzzle and exposes her fangs. Then she sinks them into the doll with a chomp, and eats its dead flesh.

"...You chose the plump one? If it's you, I don't think that it'll spoil your stomach, though."

"Oooruohh."

"Guooohh."

"Oooohh."

The corpse dolls let out cries.

They apparently got angry after seeing their comrade being eaten.  
But wait, they have feelings of fellowship despite being dolls?  
It might be better to call them corpses rather than dolls.  
The corpses extend the sharp nails from their thin fingers towards Rollodeen (Wildcat).  
Furthermore, once the talismans on their faces lit up, those talismans are lifted up lightly and yellow, uneven teeth become visible growing in their widened mouths.  
The spit something similar to wind blades out of those mouths.  
With several tentacles—— Rollodeen repels the approaching nails.  
The simple manner of her repelling them as if beating them with a broom is funny.  
The wind blades are very easily beat down in succession by the bone swords that had grown out of the tentacles.  
She dealing with them with a drive as if playing badminton, tennis or table tennis.  
The wind blades, which were struck and broken, change their direction and clash against the walls, producing linear scars on the wall.  
Even while dealing with those attacks, Rollodeen devours the corpse doll's meat.

"Rollo, you're becoming too engrossed in eating." (Shuuya)

At that point I stepped in front.  
I release <Chain> from both arms.  
——The <Chains> stabbed the corpse dolls with a furious speed.  
While manipulating <Chain> I immobilized a corpse doll that had been pierced by it, and contracted the <Chain> right afterwards.  
Of course the corpse doll affixed to the chain was also reeled in with force.  
I immediately erased <Chain> and struck down the doll that came flying with quite the speed.  
I have cautioned Rollo before, but I will try to eat it as well.  
I bit the neck of the doll.  
I activate <Soul Sucking> —— and absorb something that seems to be its soul.  
My body is clad in light.  
The corpse doll dries up in an instant and vanishes. Its Asia-styled dress falls to the ground, and the talisman, which clung to hits head, flutters down as well.  
The other corpse dolls approached me, who had immediately become the new target, while extending their nails.  
——However, they are easy to deal with.  
——I activate <Chain Spear of the Ray System>.  
Five <Chain Spear of the Ray System> stab the corpse dolls unhindered.  
As they pierced into the dolls, the spears blew the dolls back down the corridor while at the same time serving as guideposts with their light illuminating the vicinity.  
And at last a thick, blunt sound could be heard from deeper down the corridor.  
The dolls have been crucified to the wall by the <Chain Spear of the Ray System>.  
The back part of the spear stabbing the dolls changes into a net of light in no time while rotating and squirming like a sea anemone. The nets cover the dolls' bodies and then permeates inside through the Asia-styled dresses.  
Once fresh net-shaped cut wounds appear on the dolls' bodies, they lose their shape, turn into pieces of meat just like a puzzle, and fall to the ground.  
Stitch traces similar to modern art are left behind on the wall.

"...It looks like you defeated all of them. But Shuuya, I have never seen that dazzling light spear spell you released without chanting. The wall over there still has traces of the net remaining. I sure

don't want to be on the receiving end of those magic spears." (Yui)

Yui, who has walked ahead, turns around and mutters timidly.  
Her expression had a tinge of fear.  
It's easy to grasp from her eyes that she has <Eyes of Baycala> activated.

"Haha, don't be so afraid." (Shuuya)

"Ah, again on their own device...sorry, I actually know..." (Yui)

"Don't worry. Those eyes of yours are beautiful." (Shuuya)

"...Those are the <Eyes of Baycala> you told us about before, aren't they? What magnificent blessing. You have been chosen by the gods. Yui, it's a well-deserved power to possess as someone serving Master." (Viine)

Viine looked at Yui's <Eyes of Baycala> with eyes full of respect.

"Thanks." (Yui)

"No, that's a matter of course." (Viine)

Yui voices out her thanks with a smile, but Viine turns her eyes at front without changing her expression, implicitly asking "You're not going to pass through over there?"

"Yeah, the entrance is over there. There are stairs on the right." (Yui)

"Will there be any guards once we climb the stairs?"

"Maybe. Depending on the results of Rebecca and Eva at front, spirit-sama in the back and Dad...there will be guards. They will definitely use this pathway if they're going to run away." (Yui)

"I see. Since there hasn't be any news from outside, I take it as proof that they are still rampaging, but...well, we should march in ourselves anytime soon. Let's go?" (Shuuya)

"Yeah." (Yui)

"Let's do it." (Viine)

"Nyao——"

Rollo, who had returned to her usual appearance, runs ahead.

"Ah, Rollo-chan, don't steal my work——" (Yui)

Rollo reacted to Yui's words by making her ears twitch, but seemingly unable to hold back any longer, she ignored Yui and climbed the stairs before disappearing out of sight.

We run along the corridor, chasing after Rollo. The stairs come in sight on the right.

In the end, Rollo had ascended the stairs to the very top.

While standing on her hind legs in front of the closed door, she lifts her upper body and scratches the door with both forepaws. A continuous scratching sounds reverberates as if telling others, "Open. Open here."

She's apparently trying to get the door to open with just that.  
I climb the stairs in a hurry.

"——What? Hey, I've heard a strange noise from the entrance to the underground passage. Is it the regular message?"

Shit, we've been noticed.

"No idea. Outside at the front and back of the mansion it's somewhat noisy...didn't something happen?"

"It might be better to open it. I will go check."

"Okay."

The instant the door was opened,

"It was a cat?"

Rollo soundlessly extends her tentacles and then pierces the foreheads of the two surprised guards with her tentacle bone swords.  
They collapse with crossed eyes.

"Nyaon."

Rollo looks proud.  
Climbing atop the fallen soldiers, she looked at my face.

"You did well. I got worried there for a second, though." (Shuuya)

"Nnn, nya."

Rollo turned her face away as if saying 『I don't care nya』, and rubbed her face against Viine's leg.

"Rollo-sama..." (Viine)

Viine crouches down with a smile, and caresses Rollo's head with her bluish-white hand. Since her silver hair spilled over from her shoulder, Rollo apparently got interested by that, and unleashed cat punches against the hair.

"Kyaa." (Viine)

"Rollo, you're not allowed to play around with her hair." (Shuuya)

"Nya."

Understanding that I got angry at her, Rollo dents in her ears and returns on my shoulder.

"If you watch this scene, it almost makes you forget that we came here to kill Hyatos..." (Yui)

Yui absent-mindedly whispers while observing the actions of Rollo who's now resting on my shoulder.

I certainly get how she feels.

It lacks any feeling of tension, but then again, that's not quite right either, is it?

I looked at the black cat silently resting on my shoulder.

Rollo sent me a message to relax by slowly opening and closing her round, cute eyes. I answered in the same way.

"...Now then, the short period of taking it easy ends here. Yui, where can we find Hyatos?" (Shuuya)

"The leaders and soldiers seem to not be here as they have gone off to the front and back of the mansion due to our diversionary tactics. It's just the right moment. As long as Hyatos doesn't see any necessity to escape, he will be in his office as usual. It's this way." (Yui)

After taking a short peek at Yui's attractive butt while looking at the back of her head, I advance along the corridor.

There were no magic source responses on my Grasping Perception, but——

I sense several responses from a room located deeper inside with a red carpet leading towards it. Going by the extravagant decorations atop the cabinets on both sides, one can easily identify that the corridor leads to the Marquis' room.

"Since there are no presences, it looks like everyone has headed out to the back or front. That inner room is the place where you will usually find Hyatos." (Yui)

"It appears so. There are several presences within the room. Leave the talking to me, if Hyatos is present. Yui, Viine, Rollo, are you ready?" (Shuuya)

"Yes." (Viine)

"Yep." (Yui)

"——Nya."

At the end Rollo jumps off my shoulder, and lands atop the red carpet.

I energetically push the door together with Rollo at my feet.

We charge into the room through the opened door.

Yui and Viine follow with a slight delay.

"Your Excellency! We should use my corpse dolls here and immediately escape through the basement——" (Azekay)

"Indeed! It's a very carefully prepared attack from the front and rear...the enemies might be assassins from the island nations, or members of Leften Kingdom's secret agency, the Twilight Knights——" (Rayku)

"Azekay, Rayku, why have you suddenly stopped talking? Mmh——" (Hyatos)

They see our entry into the room.

Hyatos is the same as before.

His fox eyes widen in surprise.

Seeing Yui's and my faces, his face freezes with his cheeks twitching.

"Yoo, Hyatos. Long time no see." (Shuuya)

"Who are you!?"

I nimbly moved both wrists as if drawing guns with my hands, and fire <Chain>.

The two <Chain>, which depict a trajectory similar to bullets, pierce the heads of the fellows, who might be soldiers or leaders, standing on either side of Hyatos's desk. In the same motion, targeting Hyatos' head with the two <Chain>—— no, they got stopped.

The two tips of the <Chain> are suddenly stuck next to Hyatos' forehead.

The tips are equal to sharp blades. The temporal region of Hyatos seems to have been grazed by the tips, seeing how two lines of blood run down from the temporal regions to his cheeks.

With his sidelocks dyed in blood, Hyatos trembles.

"H-Hiiii...spear...user..." (Hyatos)

Obviously falling on his backside, Hyatos crumbled to the ground while bumping against a chair.

I thought he would have a trump card, but...I guess I worried too much.

In the end he's a human, after all.

His agitated behavior overlaps with Eribol.

It's only natural and a rudeness towards the dark elves who survive by fighting, but the dark elves understood how to fight.

"...W-Why are you and Yui here? What are my subordinates doing...?" (Hyatos)

Hyatos mutters while looking dumbfounded.

I approached him and spoke up while looking down at him.

"...I believe your subordinates are holding out at the front and rear gate. Though I'm sure that they are all "dying" because of my chosen bloodkin." (Shuuya)

At that point Hyatos stands up slowly.

That part seems different to Eribol.

While glaring sharply with his fox eyes,

"...Kuh! How annoying...why are you trying to crush me...have you been hired by some political power...there's no way that the Lolju faction or the Rasny faction will cause a riot within the country... Is it someone connected to the royal family of the Island Nations as Rayku said? Is it that female fox Chardonnay from Oseberia? Or the shitty committee members of Senapua? Or is it a rescue mission for Nereis'Kary by the secret agency, those dogs of the Leften Kingdom who I manipulated with the prime minister's false information?" (Hyatos)

Is he even opposing Chardonay?

Come to think of it, at the meeting where I also met Yui, this guy, Chardonay, and a prime minister, whose name I forgot, talked about the kidnapping of Leften Kingdom's Princess Nereis'Kary and promised to cooperate, didn't they? ...I don't really care, but I guess I will ask anyway.

"...It's not the secret agency of the Leften Kingdom. But, the abducted princess is still alive?" (Shuuya)

Hearing my words, Hyatos looked at me with surprised and questioning eyes.

"...Why are you interested despite being unrelated to Leften?" (Hyatos)

That's a reasonable question.

"It's just because of the word princess." (Shuuya)

Even if I say so myself, the meaning behind those words remain unclear.

"Are you related to the princess? Aren't you someone hired by the secret agency after all...? Then again, if that was the case, it would be quite the roundabout way, wouldn't it?" (Hyatos)

Hyatos twists the corners of his mouth and laughs.  
He is misunderstanding something.

"Roundabout way? So, is she alive?" (Shuuya)

"She should be alive at the moment. As for the roundabout way; it means that it doesn't concern me any longer." (Hyatos)

"Mmh, what kind of trick did you pull?" (Shuuya)

"...Nereis'Kary was certainly in the hands of my subordinates at a time, but we have already delivered her to Prime Minister Zamud as part of a deal." (Hyatos)

Ah, Zamud, eh? I remember him.  
His useless subordinate was also present back then, wasn't he?

"Hee, you have given the princess in Zamud's hands? Leften is at the height of chaos right now, I suppose." (Shuuya)

"It's a situation I created, you know?" (Hyatos)

He raises his chin while puffing up his chest, and looks slightly proud of himself.

"You think that Zamud is fine with his own country being destroyed?" (Shuuya)

"No, I believe that the prime minister simply wants to earn some money in the war. Using the princess, he's toying around with the secret agency and nobles who are against him, but the fact

is...that the country is headed for its destruction. Leften is at fault for making a man, who's a slave to money and power, into its prime minister; a prime minister who forgot what he should protect."  
(Hyatos)

Hyatos reveals a bold expression.  
Well, I don't really care about Leften anyway.  
However, I'm interested in that huge mountain.  
I wonder what you might find at that summit?  
Someday it might be a good idea to go challenge it.  
I guess I will try asking about Chardonnay, too.

"...I see. I got the point. So, have you gotten in touch with Chardonnay?" (Shuuya)

"No, I haven't met her since the meeting back then. We're clashing a lot because of rivalries, though." (Hyatos)

I guess he's something like Chardonnay's rival.  
Well, that's enough, I suppose.

"Now then——" (Shuuya)

Swinging my Magic Halberd horizontally, I destroy the desk in order to move it out of the way.

"Hiii!" (Hyatos)

Hyatos widens his eyes in surprise.

"P-Please wait, just my life...I will give you this key and give you all my treasures....so, only my life..." (Hyatos)

He holds up a key which had been hanging at his chest as he apparently treated it as important keepsake.

The key is unusual.

...It's a crooked, metallic key with several white, compound eyes that seem to be alive.

It's containing a dense mana.

Is it the one where you are cursed if it's touch by other people? [efn\_note]Like a Behelit[/efn\_note]

"If it's a key, I don't want to touch it. Where's the treasure chest or door that's being opened by that key?" (Shuuya)

Hyatos keeps a watchful eye on me.

It looks like he thinks that he attracted my interest.

"There is a mechanism at the shelf...if you're against touching it, I will open it for you." (Hyatos)

He unsteadily walks over to a bookshelf.

"Master, is that alright?" (Viine)

"Yeah." (Shuuya)

I know that it will be a trap in 9 out of 10 cases, but...  
I'm kind of looking forward to the development that might occur from whatever he might do.

"Shuuya, that smiling face of his; he's scheming something." (Yui)

"Oh my, Yui, how distrustful you are..." (Hyatos)

Hyatos turns his face this way, asking for a decision whether it's fine for him to get the mechanism going.

"It's fine, do it." (Shuuya)

"Really...? Then, here we go." (Hyatos)

While broadly grinning, Hyatos moved a book.  
At that moment, the bookshelf opens to the left and right, and a round door shows up behind it.  
The white magic crests that floated up all over the round door vanished.

"It's obviously no ordinary treasury. What have you stored inside?" (Shuuya)

"You will know once you open it. By the way, you might say that most of my earnings...went into the this room's door, and are in here..." (Hyatos)

Hinting at something, he lifts the corners of his mouth once again.  
His face shows a fairly resolute confidence...so this is his trump card?

"I don't care, open it." (Shuuya)

Hyatos takes a deep breath, inserts the key into the keyhole, and speaks up,

"Cazdolo Abrahnam Asrohla Rizui Nuguy Hadd——" (Hyatos)

Hyatos chanted. What is it? A spell? But, it doesn't consume almost no ma...whoa, the magic crest on the doors surface gleams and moves.

"What are those words?" (Shuuya)

"Ah, it's the incantation to unseal the door of the powerful deity Cazdolo." (Hyatos)

Powerful deity, he says? Meanwhile the door opened up.  
Inside was a human-shaped creature possessing a huge magic source.  
It has long, black hair, a light purple skin and its forehead stands out a bit.  
Its eyes are white. Something that seems to be bones connected to its thick, square eyebrows, which are adding a black border around its eyes, is growing on the left and right towards the back of its head like hair that's drawing a curve.  
Overall, its face is flat and doll-like.  
It's wearing a purplish red mantle, which has a fluffy, white fur attached to it, over its shoulder. A

special, black-dyed leather costume covers its entire body.

And it held a claw-shaped, long, two-handed cane, where mana lines connected the tip and the end, in its two hands which were turned towards the back.

"Nuuuuuooooo—— after a long time I can finally breathe a different air...where's the powerful deity Azra who imprisoned me...?"

It roars while widely opening its purplish red mouth and exposing its teeth — causing a sudden gust and making the air vibrate. The bookshelves and chairs in the vicinity are blown away.

While Viine's beautiful silver hair flutters and sway in the wind, she readied her Jade Snake bow and adopted a stance allowing her to shoot a beam arrow at any time.

Rollo's danger perception apparently went up a notch, too. She turns into her Horse Lion size, securing some space for herself by blowing away the surrounding trash with her tentacles.

Yui draws her two katana, prepared to swoop down on the creature at any time.

So he did possess a trump card after all, huh?

"Ooooh, Cazdolo-sama! I have unsealed you. I——" (Hyatos)

"Shut up——"

Once Cazdolo brandishes his long cane, a large quantity of mana stakes are shot out of its tip.

Hyatos entire body is riddled by mana stakes. His body is crushed in an instant, turning into a lump of meat.

Whoa...once I thought that it's nothing less of a Marquis like Hyatos given that he possessed an amazing trump card...he ended up dying...

The person called Cazdolo exits through the round door while trampling across Hyatos' flesh and blood.

"For trash to talk to this me...mmh——" (Cazdolo)

Just when he exited the door, Cazdolo saw me.

The instant he gathered mana in his white eyes, something like a coin floats up in front of his eyes. Three living spider compound eyes manifested on the coin.

"...It was repelled!? What's this about? Are you the gatekeeper on Azra's side, Cazdola, the strongest knight?" (Cazdolo)

As the coin vanishes, he falters.

Revealing his discomposure...he retreats one and the two steps, and bumps into the round door.

"...I don't quite get what you're talking about, but what's Azra's knight? In the first place, you were called Cazdolo, but why had you been locked up in there?" (Shuuya)

"...You really got many questions. He heard this me, didn't you!?" (Cazdolo)

The fellow called Cazdolo with an unclear gender widened his eyes and raised his voice.

"You're so damn loud. As you killed Hyatos just now, are you going to fight against us?" (Shuuya)

I clad my entire body with Magic Combat Style while making sure to not leak any mana to the outside, and hold the Magic Halberd in a seigan stance.  
Or should I surprise him with <Chain>, magic and <Chain Spear of the Ray System>?

"Fufufuhahaha! Humph, there ain't no meaning in fighting against a strong person who repels my appraisal. According to what you said, you don't seem to be one of Azra's people, hence there's no point in fighting you." (Cazdolo)

"Then I have no reason to fight you either. And, I believe I answered your question already, but...can I have your answer mine? Why have you been locked up? And why are you afraid of the fellow called Azra?" (Shuuya)

I ask calmly.

"...You heard about the Second Great Abrahnam War, didn't you? I was defeated in battle against the native deities on Azra's side as one of the many native gods on Hoo's side. And then I was sealed in this room using the big seal of the adamantine tree." (Cazdolo)

...If it's a powerful deity of the Abrahnam family, I heard about them, but I never heard about something like a great war.  
Seeing as he's a powerful deity, I guess he's the same as the white cat Magit.

"I have never heard about that great war." (Shuuya)

"If you don't know about the great war...just how much time has..." (Cazdolo)

I think I will try asking him about the deity Magitora.

"...I have heard about Magitora of the Abrahnam family, though." (Shuuya)

"What, you know Magitora-dono? A white fox possessing many heads. She should have gone missing after playing a very active role in the First Great Abrahnam War, but...well, if she's still alive, she might become our ally and fight against Azra's side—— Mmh? It's anytime soon now, huh?" (Cazdolo)

The instant Cazdolo muttered so, a roar resounds from above our heads.  
In that moment blood letters float up in front of me.  
It's from my <Head Servant Leaders> Eva and Rebecca.  
It wrote 『A huge dragon has appeared in the sky』.

"Dragon, they say?" (Shuuya)

"Correct——" (Cazdolo)

No sooner than Cazdolo said that while looking up, the entire ceiling of Hyatos' mansion vanished. It was apparently blown away by the huge dragon's tail.  
Once again blood letters appear.

『Are you alright?』

『We're fine.』

The blood letters had been sent by Eva.

"Let me introduce myself once more before I leave. I'm the deity Cazdolo Doctrine. And, I'd like to hear your name." (Cazdolo)

"I'm Shuuya Kagari."

"I see. This me is withdrawing from your sphere of influence, Shuuya. Therefore, I ask you, even if Azra's side comes in contact with you, please don't side with them..." (Cazdolo)

Cazdolo, who had an arrogant attitude before, bowed his head.

"Even if you bow your head, I can't promise you anything." (Shuuya)

"Then, Ronbalua...you have understood my will, haven't you?" (Cazdolo)

While revealing a sad expression, Cazdolo looks up to the dragon.

The dragon had a light brown hue. Four wings grew out of its torso, and two large feet with huge claws were visible below its belly.

Its huge head extending from its spine has a thin, triangular, helmet-like bone top connected from the nose to the forehead. The perceptive, white eyeballs located below its forehead bone are glaring at us.

And then a green light sprang forth from within its opened mouth with its countless stake-like fangs.

"Goooooh——" (Ronbalua)

The instant I thought that it might fire a mysterious, green light breath, I put myself on guard, but the light brown dragon cried in distress...

"Cazdolo, what is it doing?" (Shuuya)

For a fraction of a moment he smiles.

"As proof of our friendship to you, Ronbalua will give you a certain something. Now, Ronbalua, do your best." (Cazdolo)

Cazdolo lifts his long cane above his head, and mana is released from the tip of the claw-shaped cane. The green mana is sent to the dragon who's raising its voice in pain.

Once the dragon is enveloped by the green mana, I don't know how to describe it...it raises a remarkably shrill voice and lands just above us.

It turns its butt in our direction, showing its butthole to us as if it's going to poop.

...Don't tell me! They are going to give me dragon poop as proof of friendship!?

No, certainly not, there's no way they are going to do something like...

"Master! The butt of the huge dragon is twitching!" (Viine)

Viine, you really don't need to comment every single detail...

"Shuuya, what are we going to do if it poops!?" (Yui)

It looks like Yui's thinking the same as me.

At that moment a huge egg with an emerald shell slowly and gently - obviously opposing gravity - fell out of a different hole than its asshole while making creaking sounds.

The huge dragon egg gently landed in front of me.

Great. I guess it wasn't poop, but an egg.

"You're giving this to me?" (Shuuya)

Hearing my words, Cazdolo nods calmly.

"...That's right. We are presenting it to you, Ronbalua's child. Different from the high ancient dragons living on this continent, it's a species of high ancient dragons possessing some intelligence and hailing from a distant continent. This species can give birth to children only three times. This is Ronbalua's last child. And, if you provide mana to it, it will probably be born as your child in around three days, Shuuya." (Cazdolo)

For real? They are entrusting the dragon's last child to me?

I suppose becoming an ally of Azra's side has become a no-go at this point, just as Cazdolo had requested.

As a matter of fact, I don't know what's Azra's side, though.

"Understood. I will gratefully accept it." (Shuuya)

"I think our sincerity is obvious with this. I won't tell you to join our Ho-Oh side, however, please don't join Azra's side." (Cazdolo)

"I don't know whether I will become an ally of either side, but at the very least I won't be hostile to you." (Shuuya)

"...It might be better to stay neutral. Strong warrior, Shuuya, it's time for farewell——" (Cazdolo)

Cazdolo nodded solemnly, and then jumped on top of the dragon's head in the instant he had amassed mana in his legs.

The dragon flies away at full power.

In the blink of an eye it vanished out of sight within the clouds.

I shift my attention to the dragon egg in front of me.

I immediately place my hand on the right surface, and once I pour mana into the egg while caressing the egg's surface with my palm, the egg reacts by twitching. Moreover, peculiar patterns are carved on the eggshell's surface. For an instant I can sense something like a needle pricking my thumbnail.

What is it? Once I look at my thumb, a nail art-like pattern similar to a small egg had been carved onto the nail's surface.

"...Is this some kind of contract?" (Shuuya)

I show my thumb to Viine and Yui who have gathered around the egg.

"It sure looks like a special contract mark with a dragon." (Yui)

"Master, you're going to become a special dragon rider, aren't you?" (Viine)

"Nyaon, nyanya, nyan."

Rollo played around by pressing her paw against the dragon egg.

"I'd be really happy if that happened...flying through the sky while taking a dragon along together with Rollo sounds fun." (Shuuya)

At this rate we will break through the planet's stratosphere, and go on a space travel in search of Id  
○ n[efn\_note]An old anime from 1980/81. That's all the hint you get from me[/efn\_note] ...as joke  
it seems interesting.

"Shuuya~, we defeated everyone~" (Rebecca)

"Your Excellency." (Helme)

"Nn, Shuuya!" (Eva)

"Milord!" (Kaldo)

Rebecca, Eva, Helme and Kaldo, who were supposed to rampage around in the back and front, came running.

"That big egg is..."

"It was born by you, Your Excellency!?" (Helme)

Helme blinks her long eyelashes, and asks something weird.

"That's right. Because of that, my bum has been split in two! Guoooh!"

"Wh-! That's a disaster! Your Excellency's butt is in danger!!" (Helme)

Helme became pale, released a sheet of spray from her whole body and drew close.

"...Helme, it's a joke." (Shuuya)

"Hauua!" (Helme)

"Ahahaha, sorry. Besides, my butt has been split in two from the very beginning, hasn't it?"  
(Shuuya)

"...Yes, you're right." (Helme)

Helme drops her shoulders, but everyone who regarded it as impromptu skit laughed.

"Fufu, Spirit-sama and Shuuya, you're funny." (Rebecca)

"Helme is strong against butts, and also weak against butts, after all."

"...As expected of you, Your Excellency. You're making my crystal throb, ufufu." (Helme)

She looks at me with a flirtatious glance, and then focuses on my nether region. I don't quite understand what's making her aroused, but I turned my face in Eva's direction, ignoring Helme.

"Nn, this egg comes from the huge dragon that flew in the sky just now?" (Eva)

"Yeah. It was a dragon employed by the deity Cazdolo, just as you mentioned, Eva. It seems to be a high ancient dragon hailing from a different continent. It presented that egg to me as proof of friendship." (Shuuya)

"...A high ancient dragon. I'm sure it was born from a splendid "butt"...and, nothing less of Your Excellency. I guess you make even powerful deities fear you." (Helme)

The butt-lover Helme emphasized the butt part.

"I don't know about its butt, but something like a high ancient dragon is really awesome! But, honestly said, I have never heard the name of the deity..." (Rebecca)

Rebecca stated while agreeing with Helme.

"Nn, I learned from sensei that there had been different gods in the divine domain and spirit world in the past." (Eva)

Eva explains after nodding.

I guess sensei is the one from her time at the Baron house.

"Cazdolo said that he was imprisoned after being defeated in a war between fellow deities in an old era. And he persuaded me to not join Azra's side. He gave me the dragon egg as sign of his friendship." (Shuuya)

"Hee, so you won't side with that Azra, eh?" (Rebecca)

"I wonder. I haven't made any definite promises." (Shuuya)

"Yes, but him giving you a dragon egg as gift means that he wants to win you over as ally, Shuuya. And, since you accepted it, it has been decided that you will fight against Azra's side, hasn't it?"

It will probably end up like that if Azra's side truly exists, but it's also possible that they have lost their divinity as it's a story from a distant past dating back several tens or hundred million years. Well, if they really exist, and if they meddle with us...

"...What will happen will happen. It might be fine for us to crush them." (Shuuya)

"Your Excellency...you're mesmerizing, admirable and the strongest." (Helme)

Just as she said, Helme's entire bluish-black, leafy skin trembled.

"Nn, I will follow Shuuya." (Eva)

"Forever with Master." (Viine)

"Nyaon."

Viine, who was close to egg, genuflected and bowed her head.

Eva separated from her magic wheelchair a bit while cladding her entire body with violet mana, and landed after bowing her head while floating.

Rollo climbs on the wheelchair where Eva had landed, and tries to cheekily rest on her thighs.

"No matter whether it might be Azra or Cazdolo, I will defeat your enemies with Azelos & Versage, Shuuya." (Yui)

After Yui swiftly swings the two katana in her hands sideways, she returns them into their scabbards with a short clinking sound, goes down on one knee, and bows her head.

"Milord's enemies are my enemies. I shall follow you wherever you go." (Kaldo)

Kaldo adopts a respectful attitude while moving next to Yui.

"——I will do my best, too!" (Rebecca)

Seemingly panicking due to everyone giving statements while genuflecting, Rebecca hastily hoists her dark red wand into the sky.

She's womanly and cute.

"Alright, I guess it's time to go back home then." (Shuuya)

""Yes.""