

Chapter 183 - Try a Horse by Riding it, Judge a Man by Living with Him

While shaking her pink hair, Riko...

"With this, it's one win for me! See!" (Riko)

...declares.

She extends her slender arm towards me who's laying on the ground.

No matter what method she used, a victory is a victory.

I guess she got some of her pride back.

"——Yeah, it's perfect. You fully used my weak point." (Shuuya)

I grabbed her hand and stood up.

"Hooray. But, someday we will fight seriously and I will best you, Shuuya. After all I hate having more losses than wins." (Riko)

Her pink hair looked beautiful as it was reflecting the evening sun.

"Haha, well, do your best. Well then, it's time for me to go home soon." (Shuuya)

"...Yeah." (Riko)

She cannot hide her loneliness.

Her pink freckles are cute, too.

"What's wrong? You are going to hug me genuinely, right?" (Shuuya)

Hearing my silly joke, Riko blinks her eyes repeatedly.

"Idiot..." (Riko)

After mumbling that short comment, she averted her eyes while looking embarrassed, and smiled. And then,

"Er, well...I will lead you until the entrance door." (Riko)

While saying so, she immediately throws a glance at me.

Her eyes are slightly bloodshot?

She's blushing slightly.

Her pink freckles were inconsistently dyed red.

In that state she was about to say something, but...

Once she shakes her small face, she starts walking, obviously having changed her mind.

It's adorable as a girlish behavior.

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

"Nya."

I call Rollo who was sleeping in a cat loaf posture.

While looking at Riko's appearance from behind, I chased after her in a half jog. After arriving next to her, I walked.

"Shuuya, today was fun." (Riko)

"For me too." (Shuuya)

"...Shuuya, you're popular, aren't you?" (Riko)

Suddenly she asked something like that.

"I have many lovers, family members." (Shuuya)

"Not only do you not deny it, but you even say that you have many lovers? Ugh, how irritating. Humph!" (Riko)

"What, it's pointless to lie about it, right?" (Shuuya)

"Yeah, yeah. Ah, we already reached the entrance door..." (Riko)

For an instant, sadness and loneliness showed on her face, and she wore a pensive look.

"Lonely?" (Shuuya)

"...Jeez, you're really quite experienced with women——" (Riko)

Riko gives me a farewell hug.

I put my arms around her slender waist and returned the embrace.

"We will have another match during when I've got time, okay?" (Shuuya)

After gently muttering so into her long ear, I separate from her.

"...Yep!" (Riko)

"Nyan."

Rollo gives a farewell meow, too.

Immediately after she turned her body big with a billowing, transforming into a shape resembling a horse and lion.

She's a cool, divine beast.

I say to Riko,

"See you then——" (Shuuya)

I straddled on Rollodeen's back while telling her goodbye.

"Good bye, Shuuya." (Riko)

Rollodeen went ahead immediately after hearing Riko's goodbye.
Without advancing through the streets of the Martial Arts District normally, after an explosive speed — she jumps——
In the blink of an eye we arrive on top of the front gate of my mansion.
I get off Rollodeen.
My partner turns her head upwards, and cried,

"Nyaaan, nyaooon."

The bushy black hair at her throat and chest that gradually started to look like that of a gryphon trembles in resonance with Rollodeen's voice.
Following, she twined a tentacle around my waist in an instant and placed me on her back once again.
Just like that she kicks off the roof with her powerful limbs — and lands on the courtyard.
I message my partner's back with my palm while laughing.
Even though I would be able to come down by jumping...
I gave her black fur and the skin below a careful and proper massage.
Seemingly happy about it, my partner purrs throatily.
The whole scene turned into a laid-back atmosphere.
Shortly after my <Head Servant Leaders> rushed out of the house onto the courtyard.

"Shuuya, welcome back~. I bought some sweets." (Rebecca)

"Nn, you're late." (Eva)

"Master, I explored a nearby, small market." (Viine)

"Welcome home. I managed to stab Dad several times during the training." (Yui)

Yui nonchalantly says something scary.
Her father, Kaldo, stands next to Yui while laughing, and says to me,

"Milord, welcome back home." (Kaldo)

I immediately raise a leg on Rollodeen, rotate, and get off onto the stone paving.
I turn around towards the girls.

"——I've kept you waiting. I talked with the chairman of the Martial Arts Federation, and it was decided that I will take part in matches. Once I go to the arena, I will start from the 230th Divine King rank, but it looks like I can have my matches at any time I like." (Shuuya)

"Hee~, this place seems to be a former dojo, but are you going to turn this into a real martial arts dojo?" (Rebecca)

Rebecca surveys the stone paving of the courtyard, which was formerly a training area.

"I don't have any intention towards that. I simply obtained a position allowing me to challenge other fighters. Someday I might make use of that right or not." (Shuuya)

Once I honestly explain all that, I send a glance towards Viine.
I looked at her beautiful silver mask and silver eyes.
No matter how often I take a look at Viine's piercing irises, they are always pretty.
She smiled at me who was staring at her.
She had apparently grasped the meaning behind my gaze.

"Master..." (Viine)

"Nn, why are you staring at each other?" (Eva)

"Hey? Viine, your prohibited to do something strange with Shuuya today."

The great complainer Rebecca joins in with Eva, and says while raising her finger.

"No, I will sleep together with Master!" (Viine)

"Uuh~. Saying something like that~. Evaaa, say something." (Rebecca)

"Nn, yeah. Shuuya, I——" (Eva)

Eva splendidly ignores Rebecca.
She makes her magic wheelchair transfer into its Segway mode, and swiftly draws close to me.
She hugged me with an angelic smile.

"Nn, Shuuya's scent. ——Nn? There's the scent of another woman..." (Eva)

Well, I had been hugged by Riko, after all.
I guess Eva grasped so in an instant with her perception.
The girls' sense of smell should have improved after becoming <Head Servant Leaders>...
Well, even without it, Eva would have noticed, I think.

"...What was that?"

"Master! You matched your spear against the female spear user, didn't you?" (Viine)

Viine asks, seemingly intending to make a pun.

"With that Riko-san..."

"Nothing less of milord. You're a man among men. Even a female martial artist gets captivated in front of a strong, great man." (Kaldo)

"...Dad. But, I suppose that's only natural..." (Yui)

I spoke up while looking at them.

"...I only practiced my spearmanship with Riko. I haven't done anything perverted with her, yet."
(Shuuya)

"I wonder, why was the "yet" necessary there?"

Rebecca knits her eyebrows, and blue flames dwell in her eyes.
She approaches while making me feel a characteristic aura despite her small build.
At that point Yui shortens the distance with Magic Combat Step, and stand in front of me to protect me.

"...Rebecca, how about trusting Shuuya a bit? Even if he were to do perverted stuff with Riko, Shuuya loves us. I know it. Even after being separated, he treated me gently just like back then. His behavior towards women hasn't changed in the slightest in all the time." (Yui)

Yui...
She made an adult statement.

"Ugh, that's true, but...it makes me feel depressed!" (Rebecca)

Rebecca frankly exposes her womanly emotions.
She's really adorable.

"Nn, adding other women is fine. But, tonight I will have you...for myself, Shuuya. Okay?" (Eva)

Eva casually mutters while hugging me tightly.

"Eva, you have the confidence to last through a night with Master by yourself?" (Viine)

Viine points out.
Once she hears Viine's words, Eva looks up into my face and sticks out her small tongue.

"...Nn, maybe impossible." (Eva)

She faces me with a lovely smile.
At that moment Helme appears in my field of vision.

『Helme, are you going to come out?』 (Shuuya)

『Yes, please leave it to me. I will show them the proper way.』 (Helme)

『Okay.』 (Shuuya)

Helme comes out of my left eye in her usual, flashy manner.
——Spiraling in slow motion.
She adopts a human shape and creates several beautiful water loops in the vicinity.
The birth of the beauty Helme.
As he skin seems slippery, it possesses a gloss.
Helme scatters water into the surroundings.

"——Kya! It's cold." (Rebecca)

"Nn, spirit-sama." (Eva)

Helme makes her body float a bit.
A light blended with blue and darkness was emitted out of her back.
It's a light similar to a divine aureole.
That goddess-like Helme says,

"...Chosen bloodkin. Even if you hold the position of <Head Servant Leaders> after having personally received His Excellency's blood, you're getting carried away too much. Just as Yui has stated, His Excellency loves all of you. I understand your feelings of wanting to monopolize him. However, if you plan to trouble His Excellency any further, I will submerge all of you in water. Got it?" (Helme)

Submerge in water means drowning, right?
Well, everyone is an undead, so I believe they don't need to breath as they probably don't require any oxygen, but...
Helme releases many water columns from her back that's still emitting the aureole.
The water columns, where the water spirals, have a force of piercing heaven.
A violent water turbulence can be seen rising up as well.
Having become a tempest of water sprays, it fully covered the twilight.

"..."

Dangerous stuff. A water storm with directionality.
So she has reached the point of being able to do something like that, huh?

"Spirit-sama, we got caught up in the moment."

"Helme-sama, please calm your wrath."

Yui and Rebecca press one knee against the ground and apologize.
Obviously flustered, Kaldo also shouts,

"——Ah, the mansion...spirit-sama, please soothe your anger. I will offer you prayers, so..."
(Kaldo)

and goes down down on both knees on the stone paving.
He starts praying while joining the fingers of both hands.

"Nn, spirit-sama. I won't monopolize him any longer." (Eva)

"Spirit-sama, please soothe your anger. Master looks like he's troubled..." (Viine)

Viine says nonchalantly.
As expected of the excellent Viine.
She has seen through Helme's sore spot.

"Hauuh, Your Excellency, you are troubled?" (Helme)

Seemingly feeling shaken, Helme-chan released a bit of water from her boobs.

"...You're overdoing it a bit. Aren't you flooding the courtyard?" (Shuuya)

"I'm sorry. I will make the water recede right away." (Helme)

Helme controls the released water, and calls it back into her own body.

It's just as if a high speed camera plays the video backwards.

The water which fell to the ground returns into Helme's body.

Instead the air became dry now.

At that moment I suddenly come up with an idea: how about using Helme as dryer?

"...Your Excellency, I'm done." (Helme)

"Aye. However, you have grown as water spirit, haven't you Helme?" (Shuuya)

"Yes! My feelings towards Your Excellency are making me stronger." (Helme)

Helme smiles happily.

"Feelings, eh? Helme, thank you for everything. Well then, everyone...let's pull ourselves together and go inside the main building." (Shuuya)

"Your Excellency..." (Helme)

Apparently delighted, Helme made the leafy skin across her whole body wave.

After making eye contact with Helme while smiling, I signaled them to follow, and headed to the main building.

"Yes, Master." (Viine)

"Oki." (Rebecca)

"Let's go, let's go." (Yui)

My <Head Servant Leaders> follow me in a relaxed mood.

Once I enter the house and take off my bandolier...

The beautiful maids draw near quickly.

The bandolier was taken by Krychiwa and Anna.

They also strip off my overcoat and remove my armor, and hang all of it on the mannequin.

So far it had been a state close to "finely dressed outside, but naked inside," but...it looks like it has been decided that I will spend my time inside the house while wearing decent clothes, too.

This feeling of nobility and royalty apparently has...become an habit.

Well, it's just in this house, thus, let's enjoy it.

"Shuuya, you look happy. Do you want me to help with the undressing, too?"

Seemingly watching my situation, Rebecca asks with a smile while placing her elbows on the table in the living room.

"No, that's their job, so it would be pitiable to take it away from them." (Shuuya)

"Makes sense." (Rebecca)

I hold out my hand towards the two maids——
While telling them my intent of 『I will do it』 with this, I put on the new black leather clothes.

"Rebecca, I will have you help me get these off in my bedroom, okay?" (Shuuya)

"Pervert..." (Rebecca)

"Nn, I will join in as well, Rebecca." (Eva)

"I will take off Master's clothes." (Viine)

And oonce again a quarrel has started.
While ignoring it, I address Isabell.

"Isabell, prepare a meal." (Shuuya)

"Yes, as you wish!" (Isabell)

And then it turned into a happy family eating time.

It's delicious.

We talked about various topic while chatting lightheartedly.

Viine reported about her simple market research.

About there being a garden shrubs festival, the apostles and evil god using bugs, the subjugation of the evil beast inhabiting the labyrinth's fifth floor, the predictions in regards to the Ten Heavenly Evil Statues, the management of the dark guild, predictions what items will be exhibited on the underground auction, the progress of the war between 【Oseberia Kingdom】 and 【Radford Empire】, the progress of the high-class combat slaves who are diving into the labyrinth, and whether we should get the new magic treasure map, which we obtained from the golden treasure chest the other day, appraised.

By the way, Rebecca was excited about the last part.

"We should go to the Map Association to get it appraised!" (Rebecca)

She insists.

Next I explain the details of the meeting with Mysty who's scheduled to come here tomorrow.

Yui nods.

She had fought against Mysty's elder brother, Sol.

She told us the details what kind of abilities he might have possessed.

"Mysty's brother Sol was killed by me. I haven't told her yet. That's why I'm wondering whether I should honestly tell her." (Shuuya)

"Yeah, I think you should be open about this." (Rebecca)

"Milord, it's my humble opinion that you ought to tell the truth." (Kaldo)

I guess Rebecca and Kaldo agree with me telling her.

"Nn, difficult..." (Eva)

Eva puts her opinion on hold.

"It's the opinion of someone involved, but what kind of last moment did Sol and his wife Theta have...yep, as blood relative, you should tell her. But, since I was almost killed by them, I can't condemn you for killing Sol, Shuuya." (Yui)

"I agree with Yui. He fought against Master, got defeated and died. I believe you should tell her the truth." (Viine)

"Your Excellency, if her feelings become disconnected after telling her the truth, precious combat strength will..." (Helme)

They had various opinions.

After scrutinizing those opinions...most are agreements. My decision was in the process of trending towards telling her.

There's also the fact that I want to ease my feelings by telling her the truth.

Above all, Mysty expressly wants to become our comrade.

That's what this beautiful, precious woman requested.

The situation is different in comparison to the time when she bid farewell the other day.

It follows the mindset of 'Try a Horse by Riding it, Judge a Man by Living with Him.'

I will tell her after all.

"...You're right. I will tell her the truth after all. She said that she wants to kill her brother, but in reality she might have simply worried about him. It's very likely that she will feel hatred towards me and leave once she learns the truth. But, what happens, happens." (Shuuya)

And I also talked about my intention to turn her into a <Head Servant Leader> or <Servant Leader> if she wishes for it.

Rebecca indicates her objection to this.

But Eva, Yui, Viine and Helme managed to avoid further troubles by persuading Rebecca gently.

Next, the Valmask family, one of the twelve founding clans, who has built its stronghold in the vicinity of the **【Royal Capital Gromheim】** according to Veronica and Paulsen.

From there I extended the topic towards the powerful spirit White Cat Magit, who was stolen by Veronica of **【Remains of the Moon】**.

Currently Veronica can be called a comrade and my subordinate.

I inform them of the high probability that we might get dragged into her dispute with the Valmask family.

"...Are they really going to pick a fight with you, Your Excellency? I don't know the details about that Valmask family, but are they blood relatives of the founder continuing for several hundreds or thousands years? If they have avoided annihilation by slipping into human society, you could call

them fairly excellent race members." (Helme)

It's as Helme says.

"Certainly."

"Yes, no matter how important the powerful spirit that had been stolen might be, the information that the underground society's sphere of influence in Pelneet is mostly under the control of **【Remains of the Moon】**, a guild led by Your Excellency, should have been spread to many **【Thief Guilds】**. Putting that information aside, they are vampires. I believe that the Valmask family, who stayed hidden by using darkness techniques, might have noticed long ago that Your Excellency is a supreme being through their spies." (Helme)

That possibility is quite likely.

They are likely vampires using the powers of Vampire God Luganad.

"The other vampires are going to become milord's enemies...please leave any strategic drafts for pursuit battles, extermination battles, and guerilla warfare to me then." (Kaldo)

"Dad, you're really eager." (Yui)

"Indeed. What's important for a soldier is winning, no matter whether they are called asshole or brute." (Kaldo)

Nothing less of Kaldo.

His appearance as he talks with a grim voice is like that of some warring states commander.

"Nn, we're going to be attacked as well?" (Eva)

"Yes, Eva. Your blood might end up being sucked."

"No, that belongs to only Shuuya..." (Eva)

Eva turned her violet eyes in my direction with blushing cheeks.

Once I match my eyes with hers, she reveals an angelic smile.

Kuuh, how cute.

I definitely won't allow some bastard vampire to suck the blood of this angelic Eva.

Once I imagined Eva and the other girls being attacked by some good-looking vampires and having their blood sucked by them, my heart beat fast...shit, that's a different fetish, no, that's not it...a boiling rage welled up within me.

I guess we will eradicate the Valmask family...using the tactics mentioned by Kaldo.

Or, should I go out personally and put the vampires under my control?

If it's my blood as Light Demon Lucival, it looks like it might be quite effective, even if they might be true ancestors of Vampire God Luganad.

"...M-Master, y-your eyes are bloodshot. Veins are popping out...around your eyes...is something angering you?" (Viine)

Viine moved her mouth while trembling fearfully.

It seems my demonic, or rather, dark part has naturally appeared on my face.
It's something I wouldn't realize if she hadn't pointed it out.
Well, I'm a monster that likes blood, after all.

"...Sorry, once I imagined Eva having her blood sucked, I couldn't suppress my anger out of jealousy. That's why, I wondered whether I should personally head out, and eradicate the vampires or put them under my control, if the Valmask family picks a fight with Veronica or you." (Shuuya)

"Fufu, Shuuya, thanks."

"Aah, how unfair. I'm going to have my blood sucked by vampires as well~~~" (Rebecca)

Seemingly jealous of Eva, Rebecca suddenly started to talk about something like that and leaves her seat.

She takes the silly action of running up to me while turning her face to the side and exposing her neck.

"Me too~~~. Fangs will biiiite into my baaare feet." (Yui)

Yui stretched her toes towards Rollo who's sleeping on the floor.

"Nya?"

Did Rollo judge it to be linked to some kind of communication?

She licks Yui's toes.

And then she buries her face between the toes...showing a wrinkled face.

It was Rollo-san revealing a Flehmen reaction.

"Yui, it looks like the area between your toes smells~~"

"Eeh!?! Shock." (Yui)

Rebecca heads over to Rollo while laughing.

"Nn, but it seems as if Rollo-chan likes it. She's sniffing and licking that area again." (Eva)

"...Rollo-sama sure likes Yui's feet...do my leafy feet smell?" (Helme)

Helme stands up while waving her leafy skin, and extends a foot towards Rollo.

Rollo sniffed her foot with her nose, but she didn't wrinkle her face.

She licks Helme's foot in alternation with Yui's.

"Yelp, I'm ticklish there~"

"Fufu, Rollo-sama, your tongue feels rough..." (Helme)

Since Yui started to somehow release erotic sounds, I switch the topic.

"The egg of the high ancient dragon doesn't look as though it's going to hatch yet, does it?"

(Shuuya)

"Not yet, I guess. At times Rollo warms it up, though."

"Nn, did you decide on a name?" (Eva)

"No. I think I will decide when it's born." (Shuuya)

After the egg, we talked about sometimes heading over to the arena, the 12th facet of the mirror: a mirror located on an empty island, the 15th facet: a mirror located at a rocky mountain or a cliff that has a huge, cataract-like waterfall, the 17th facet: a mirror set up in a room, where time seems to have stopped. It's overflowing with armors, swords, and black frames filled with organs and eerie hearts.

"A room decorated with intestines is way too eerie." (Yui)

"It might be some kind of storage for magic items." (Kaldo)

Yui and Kaldo say.

Certainly, a storage, huh? That's possible.

"Say, you collected on of the mirrors, didn't you?"

"Yeah, I did."

"Nn, placing a mirror in the labyrinth will be handy?" (Eva)

"Although it's called a labyrinth, there are many item box possessors, you know? The probability of it being picked up is high."

Rebecca adds to Eva's argument.

"That's reasonable."

I'm pretty sure that it's going to be picked up.

"Nn, how about looking for a safe place? If it's the labyrinth's fifth floor, there's a wide field. There might be place where we can set it up." (Eva)

Eva slants her eyes.

She was apparently talking while recalling the fifth floor's layout.

"Since I don't know the labyrinth, I can't judge. However, I think it's very likely that it will be stolen like Rebecca says." (Yui)

"Milord, I agree with my daughter. Because I don't know anything but assassinations and battlefields...I'm sorry." (Kaldo)

Kaldo bows his head in a courteous manner.

"No, we are discussing it, so I don't mind at all. Rather, a military man, who knows about battlefields like you, Kaldo, is important." (Shuuya)

"...Milord, I'm really grateful. This Kaldo shall think with all his power about a possible place." (Kaldo)

"Dad, are you crying?" (Yui)

"That's right. Do you understand these feelings towards milord which exceed loyalty?" (Kaldo)

Kaldo asked while looking at Yui with a dignified expression.

"...I-I understand. You love him." (Yui)

"It's fine as long as you understand." (Kaldo)

Kaldo nods with a refined expression.

"...The talk got off track, I won't set up a mirror in the labyrinth yet. No matter how I look at it, currently I can't see any future besides it being picked up by some excellent adventurer. If there's some hidden door that can't be opened no matter what, the story will be different, though..." (Shuuya)

At that point the things mentioned by the evil god Steertop cross my mind. He said that there's a special crystal making it possible to transfer deeper down by using a Ten Heavenly Evil Statue, and that there's a room you can't enter unless you use said statue. Moreover, if it comes to a place that can't be entered without the key I'm holding, there won't be any need to worry about the mirror being stolen if I set it up in there. Well, in the end this is just an assumption. In reality it's a story after heading to the fifth floor, defeating the evil beast there, and using the Ten Heavenly Evil Statue.

"...True. For now I think it's fine with just the mirror in your bedroom. But tell me, won't you retrieve the mirrors that seem to be buried in ground?"

"I'm planning to do so. The other day I wore a blood chain armor, right? I wondered whether I can't dive into the ground with that while shoving away the soil." (Shuuya)

...There's also the work of transporting the soil from within the ground to the outside.

"Your Excellency, it's still an unknown procedure, isn't it?" (Helme)

"...Indeed. I have no other option but to actually try diving into the ground. But, the degree of priority is low. For now I think we should rather decide to what floor we're going to head in tomorrow's dungeon dive." (Shuuya)

"We talked about it before, but there's also the map appraisal."

Rebecca, who likes treasures, mentions.

"I know. Finally it has come down to this. I wonder, what floor's map will it be..." (Shuuya)

"It's out of golden treasure chest, so I don't think it's wrong to assume that it'll be a deep floor."

Viine calmly predicts with a sidelong glance.

"Well, that's a matter for tomorrow. Now then, today's discussion is over." (Shuuya)

I call an end to the chat at this point.

Everyone leaves the living room and returns to their respective rooms, but...

Everyone except for Kaldo eventually gathered in my bedroom.

I don't know whether Rollodeen (Black Cat) got fed up by it, but after that it turned into such a passionate night that the bed creaked.

Early in the morning.

This time I was full of vigor.

I think the girls were satisfied, too.

My <Head Servant Leaders> are sleeping atop the bed in seductive postures.

Even Helme, whose butt is shining, was lying stretched out.

I quietly get up from the bed so as to not wake up the girls.

I leave towards the corridor...and head towards the second floor by firmly stepping on the wooden planks of the spiral staircase.

Crossing the room with the big fireplace, I went out on the veranda.

While staring at the courtyard, where the two large trees are growing as usual, without any meaning in particular...I relax while feeling a gentle breeze on my face.

There's no Helme sprinkling water in the courtyard.

She's a water spirit of everlasting darkness who shouldn't need any sleep, however...I guess my waist swinging or my finger work was too intense for her...

No, Helme herself was too eager.

It's because she used too much water mana after talking about a "new play" or such.

I will give her some mana once she returns into my eye.

While thinking about such things, I sit down on the chair and enjoy some laid-back time.

Now then—— With that I jump down on the courtyard.

I start the spear arts training on top of the stone paving.

Psyching myself up with "Cross both hands at my chest and push!", I kick and do elbow strikes, then make a half turn on my toes——

I jump while rotating around. In the air I create a foothold with <Magic Hand guided by Thought>.

I kick <Magic Hand guided by Thought> with the back of my right foot, rising into the air——

Even in the air, I carry out my training——

The roof of the front gate entered my visual field——

I kick <Magic Hand guided by Thought> and erase it. Then I create yet another <Magic Hand guided by Thought>, kick it again. Sky stepping — three times!

Adding a pointless sideways spin, I rotate through the empty sky — it should have added +0.5 to my rhythmic sports.

And then I landed on the roof——

"This veranda is somewhat like a veranda, too——" (Shuuya)

While muttering something like that, I begin the training of Sage Art——
I faintly release mana from my whole body.
I activate Grasping Perception, a technique belonging to Guidance Sorcery...
The instant I switched over to the Sage Art's mana manipulation——
A fog was created, spanning over the entire roof.
I lost quite a bit of mana.
I taste a sensation of my stomach being twisted, but...without minding it, I successively create the fog many times over.
As I did so, I became able to manipulate the small fog particles to some extent.
It acquired a directionality, but it's not like I gained a skill...
I guess these are the basics of basics.
But man, Sage Art training is sure hard.
It's as if a hole has opened in my stomach.
The pain of the Virgin Blade might be still better than this.
Phew...I sit down atop the roof and take a break.

"Nyaon."

As I'm resting while sitting cross-legged, Rollo came on the roof.
I invite her over with a finger.
My partner poked my index finger with her nose tip.
Rollo-san sniffs the tip of my finger with her mouth or nose.
Damn it, how cute!
As I'm poking her nostrils, Rollo turns her round eyes at me.
I say to her,

"...Mornin', Rollo. Sorry for the noise yesterday." (Shuuya)

"Nn, nya."

I don't know whether Rollo meowed something like "I don't mind nya," but she placed her feet atop my crossed legs, and sat down.
While purring throatily...
She places the lower part of her neck on my knee, and stretches her back.
Haha, it's a comfortable, cat-like sleeping posture.
She's really too adorable.
Suddenly I remember the time when I met her for the very first time.
In front of Master Achilles and Leifa, you rested on top of my crossed legs like this, didn't you...?

"Nya?"

As I'm stroking my partner's head while recalling the past...
Rollo bends her head to the back to a degree that makes me wonder that this is also possible.
Even with her sight having turned upside-down, she's still looking up to me.
It's the face of my beloved Rollo.
I returned a smile to her.