

Chapter 202 - Interlude Mia

After I bid farewell from Shuuya-san...

I changed to a certain name, got on a stagecoach, and departed Holkerbaum while gazing at the blue sky. After following a straight road, we went along a curvy road, passing many adventurers, travelers, and peddlers heading from the Rado Mountain Pass to the desert area.

With continuously clear weather and without getting attacked by monsters or bandits, we arrived safely in the northern part of Labyrinth City Pelneet.

Entering the city through a big stone gate, the coach's noise stopped.

"We've arrived." The coach driver announced.

The stagecoach had come to a halt. Descending the coach together with the other passengers, I took a look at the city. The northern area was close to the noble's district. There were many people wearing elegant attires like those of royalty and titled nobility.

I wonder, did the fashion change? Because it's a big city, the switch is quite extreme. I ended up somewhat yearning for a refined, womanly dress. Ah, it looks like the quality of the make-up has changed as well...

Everything and anything is different from Holkerbaum. Is it because this is the noble's district? Nothing less of a labyrinth city. Ah! Metal fixtures and accessories in the shape of stars, which I have never seen before! Stylish...a vogue different from Holkerbaum.

Just now I passed a person who seemed to be a sheltered noble lady, possessing a beauty that garnered the looks of those around her.

I long for that, but I have my very own path to tread. I will strive to continue my previous dream, and will become an adventurer in this big city.

For this feeling to be dwelling in my chest is owed to a certain person. However, to be honest, since my enemies are still alive, I'm overflowing with hatred...

But, at the same time I recall the conversation with that person. Many words that expressed his sincerity...rinsed my heart and mind, which were about to be dyed in hatred...go mad, before I could succumb to evil. The person who encouraged me, soothed my heart, and taught me to live positively.

...Thank you.

I want to say these words to that person once more.

But, I'm not strong...

I want to meet my benefactor after becoming strong and succeeding as an adventurer!

—That's why what comes next is important. A retry at life.

I will do my best as an adventurer.



After a short time I managed to reunite with Daisy, my old school friend.

Fortunately Daisy was in the middle of looking for a party. Several days of going back and forth, after the swordswoman Daisy and I put up green and blue decorative flags at a bar with the name "Bar of Newcomers" where parties and clans gathered...

As I was looking at the appearance of the dancers who went along with a strange tune...

"I am Nemus."

"I guess today no party either."

"I, am, Nemus."

"Aight? There's too few Moga around here..."

"I am Nemus..."

"Don't worry. As long as you're with me, we can finish most jobs easily."

Next to me I could hear the voices of a small bird race and a steel wood giant, a race I have never seen before.

That giant sat on an uncomfortable-looking chair...that seemed to be about to break any moment. Is he going to be alright?

I think that giant-san with his size obvious even while sitting is a rare race, but are they adventurers as well...?

Giant-san dons a face that's free from any worldly thoughts, but his two eyes...are mysterious, crystal eyes...

At that moment,

"Young ladies, are you looking for a party?"

An invitation from the owner of a deep voice.

"Yes."

"How about joining us, if you like?"

The smell of dry squid served here at the bar wafted out of his mouth, but I didn't point it out.

"By all means, please take care of us!" Daisy answered first.

Afterwards our party members and the party members of the deep voice's owner casually introduced themselves.

The name of the person who had called out to us at first was Gomez-san. He was the party's leader. The party's name gave off a strong image with **【Fist of the War God】**.

A largely built man as vanguard warrior. I think he's pretty strong since he has a special stake weapon equipped on his arm. The vanguard extended his stake weapon and bragged with "Leave it to me." He was impressive.

A lively personality, huh? His attitude towards his friends was gentle. His face gave the impression of him being strong, but he might be unexpectedly kindhearted. It might be better to describe it as him having a dwarf-like atmosphere.

The other members were Jio, a male, light warrior, and Sheila, a female magician.

Next to us, "It looks like no one's goin' to join a party with us. Well, we've been a duo for a good while now. Right, Nemus? The strongest duo, that is."

"I am, Nemus."

I felt sorry for the steel wood giant and the small bird race kicking up a fuss, but once I realized, the talks with the members of 【Fist of the War God】 had finished smoothly. We officially entered 【Fist of the War God】.

It was decided that we will challenge the labyrinth on the very same day. And then I suddenly got some results.

Fufu, at this rate, someday with Shuuya-san...



Recently I have been challenging the labyrinth together with 【Fist of the War God】 everyday. At first living alone was more difficult than I had imagined as I was always short on money, but...the monster hunt on the third to fifth floor of the labyrinth together with my new party proceeded smoothly, allowing me to finish a big number of magic stone and material requests.

Since I even reached the point of saving up some money, I was happy.

I'm going to have a day off after returning from the labyrinth today. That's also the reason why I saved money...

My friend and I decided to head to the Magic District, where we often passed through as students, in order to investigate the prices of magic scrolls. However, I was suddenly told by Daisy that she had some urgent business...

Even though we had planned to go out together...I was miserably turned down.

I haven't heard anything about her having a boyfriend...

I decided to go by myself, and arrived at the Magic District while grumbling a bit in my mind.

Just as I was troubled which store to enter, 『Ayla, Ayla, I want to see you, Ayla.』

Suddenly such a voice reverberated in my head as I was in the middle of walking across the Magic District's streets.

...『What's this about?』 I was confused.

Since I believed that I had received some kind of mental attack — I hurriedly looked around me, but the elven magician walking along the street wasn't doing anything.

Even the nearby, scaled person, who seemed to be a magic swordsman, passed me while only looking at my face.

There was no indication that one of the trafficking people had released a spell...

Is it my imagination?

...I took one then two steps forward.

And once I passed in front of a certain store, 『Ayla, Ayla, I want to see you, Ayla.』

The voice reverberated stronger in my head than before.

Uuuuh...this store, huh? Have I gone mad?

Being guided by the voice that seemed to call out to my mind, I decided to enter the magic tool store, possessing a special roof which seemed to have been built by gathering white bones...

Once I entered inside after pushing the door open, I could hear the voice again.

This is...no coincidence. It's not that I have become crazy either.

Something is calling out to me.

As I frantically persuaded myself of that, I explored the store's interior with its mysterious items while being guided by the strange voice, and finally the voice stopped when I reached a corner of the store.

There I saw merchandise displayed on a shelf. Is the voice coming from one of the items for sale here?

Ah, there's a shady item among them. Half of a broken wand which was covered by dust. The broken wand was sold together with many magic make-up brushes inside a small, vertical pot. A cursed item that's being sold together with magic brushes?

But, usually there's no way for such an item to be put up for sale, is there...?

I don't know whether I was influenced by the voice reverberating in my head, but I moved the magic brushes to the side, naturally picked up the broken wand and took it to the store's owner. The owner was a weird old man. He talked oddly, saying something like funpi with a hoarse, bird voice...

He was slightly surprised, but I guess that's because it was a broken, magic wand.

"I will sell it cheaply to you~" He said while extending his thin hand to his white beard, which was growing like a waterfall from his chin, and then sold it to me dirt-cheap.

On this occasion I might as well research fire-based magic scrolls. The advanced magic scroll Sweltering Heat Wave was expensive...

I had become able to earn money, but with my current earnings I was far from being able to afford it.

Just as with strength, I have to steadily and untiringly put in effort and save up money.

In the end I only bought the strange, broken wand, and not a single magic scroll.

But, this broken wand...for it to know my new name, no matter how I think about it, it's odd.

It would be better to investigate it...since I had passed the library a few times once I finished my recent party activities, I remembered that there were several books about Ayla. I haven't really been aware of it, but since the academy's library was open for the general public for free, it was convenient.

I walked along the roads, heading for the school. As I passed those streets, I recalled my time as a student...after traveling along an avenue, I came out at Magic Academy Ronberge, which was surrounded by a high, gray wall.

It's not that any magic had been cast on the wall, but each time I saw it, this thick wall possessed impressiveness. It looked like it was a bluff that some students had carved scribbles into it.

Passing through the huge gate, I entered the library. In a place with bookshelves, which were twice as tall as me, lining up, students wearing uniforms mingled with each other and were looking for books within a quiet atmosphere that was yet different from loneliness.

...Ancient God Aulonso whose Hair Stands on End, Legends of the Abrahnam Gods, Rebellion of the Wild Gods, Cursed God De Ga and His Relationship with the Eight-legged Monsters De Ga living in the Wastelands, Adventurer Cathy Lombard's Revision Demonic Eyes, Missing People Case of 【Club Ice】 who Traveled the Legendary 14th Floor, Heretic Galmodeus, Schaffer's Ideology, The Love of Lephot the God of Employment, The Infesting Neighborhood, The Demonic Opening of the Interstice, Old Man Paizel who Sealed the Lord of Wind, The Family of the Divine Domain's Apostle Lu Jienga Boo, The Art of Navigation to Cross Oceans, Huge Monsters of the Desert, Concept of Phraseology, How to Make Use of High-class Combat Slaves, Hohateos - From Arena Slave to Twilight Knight, Research Thesis about Desert City Gozart's Underground Water, Tainted Spots Connected to the Spirit World, Benrack Cockfight Tournament Register, Black Dog Mercenary Band, The Penniless Toad, Demon Dog Mingu who Lives in a Demonic Hole, Her

Limited Information, How to Raise a Tonra Bird Strong at Cockfights, Nameless Samurai Countrified among Patriots, Rain Falls for Good and Evil People, The Affectionate Deela, Demonic Army's Night Travel and Food, Enamel of Lymes, Recipe for Liquid Spirit Medicine, Ambitions of the Demonoid Millennium Empire Hazarn, The Hundred Azure Demons...

There are many books with very interesting titles. There are also books which have faded remarkably, but they are important books to pass on the teachings of our predecessors. I always end up hesitating at this point.

But, today I'm looking for a different book.

Ah, I have found two books which I know very well, "The Gentle Tiger who Boasts of a Fierce God-like Strength" and "The Love between Ayla and the Evil Knight Velzey who Was Caught in the Interstice."

I truly love these two novels. I traced their titles with a finger.

These are not the books I have been looking for, but...they are books of precious memories as I grew up reading them many times over since my childhood. I also like the books' color. Whenever they enter my field of vision, I stop moving and stare at them.

The books who have been burned alongside my past...but, at the same time, they are cherished books who granted me new energy. Oops, I'm thinking about such arrogant things on my own accord, but in order to put a lid on my burned memories, I willfully gave myself the name of the Witch Ayla...

Ayla was a name I liked for some strange reason. It's also the name of a legendary witch, but it suits my tastes.

I searched for my target book while pondering about such things...The Truth of Ayla, Witch Ayla, Ayla Who Entered the Spirit World to Save Velzey, and so on...

Found it. Tale of the Magic Wand Beerahl and the Familiar Guu.

It's a thick book, but I stretch out my hand for it and pick it up.

Heavy. But, today's target is this book.

Putting the heavy book under my arm, I return to the place with tables and chairs. I calmly sit down on a vacant seat, place the thick, bound book atop the table, and open it while excited.

With a feeling as if putting power into the pit of my stomach, I read the tale of the magic wand Beerahl used by Ayla and the familiar Guu...

The familiar Guu was a giant living in the spirit world. At the time when the giant was first used by Ayla, he didn't obey her orders. I didn't know that there had been a contrarian giant. It wasn't mentioned in other books either...

Ayla kept walking while continuing to use such a familiar for a long time as she considered him cute. As she made friends without any care about humans, demons or races, she kept traveling to various places.

I know this part of the story quite well. The meeting with Velzey was around the time when she was chased by soldiers of the Demonoid Empire, right? It was Velzey who rescued her from being pursued. After that it naturally developed into a love relationship with him... However, their happiness didn't last.

Velzey, who had inherited demonic blood, was liked by the gods of the spirit world... He ended up being pulled into the spirit world after being invited by an apostle. There it turned into a battle with a warrior of the divine domain whom he repelled in the end, but due to the effect of an unknown spell constructed by the wizards of the Demonoid Empire, who had been chasing Velzey, he was caught in a dimensional interstice.

In order to rescue Velzey, Ayla used the familiar Guu, whom she summoned from her wand, and intruded the interstice through a tainted spot of the spirit world. However, the power of the wand ran out, and the Magic Wand Beerahl, which was the source of power for the familiar, broke. At that moment the familiar Guu vanished and Ayla succeeded with the rescue of Velzey in the

interstice, but at the same time half of the broken wand was hurled towards the spirit world while the remaining half of Magic Wand Beerahl remained on the surface.

And, this broken magic wand...which I obtained by coincidence the other day...has the shape of a small, round head at its tip. It's not like there exists a detailed portrayal, but it's just like it has been described in the book.

Even now, when I charge the wand with mana, it says Ayla, Ayla.

『Ayla, Ayla, are you researching about me?』 It says directly into my head.

I'm inside the library, but no one can hear that strange voice. It might be a special voice only I can hear.

I haven't talked to the members of **【Fist of the War God】**, the good-natured leader Gomez, and even my friend...about this broken wand...

Suddenly talking about hearing voices in my head and the familiar of a fairy-tale; it would be inevitable for them to consider me having lost my mind. I can't tell anyone about it. If it's a familiar coming out of a new magic item, it's possible.

But, it's a broken wand...

At that moment, "Ell! Miray's group managed to win, Ray's group lost. Our mock battle is in five days. What are we going to do about a strategy?" a girl asked.

"Mia, calm down. It's fine. I have worked out a strategy by learning from the others' mistakes. See?" The girl called Ell soothed her.

"Yeah." Mia replied in relief.

That girl's name is Mia...the same one as my old name.

I had intended to put a lid on it, but...it was easily torn open. A name...that had been buried at the bottom of a deep abyss of memories...floats up vividly in my mind.

Since my interest had been piqued, I fixedly stared at the faces of the two students.

Both of their faces are small. Two beauties with skins similar to high-class porcelain.

It looks like they are going to participate in a martial arts tournament with team battles and individual matches. I didn't graduate, but I have my share of experiences as well. It's a habitual event.

"Oh my, you two have come here as well?"

A woman possessing reddish brown joined the two girls. A stylish bandana was coiled around her head. A slender and beautiful person...

"Ah, Mysty-sensei~"

"Sensei, the other day you mentioned that you're moving houses. Did you finish already?"

"I have completed that long ago." Mysty answered.

What, a teacher. So her name is Mysty.

"Apart from that, is it just you two? What about the other party members?" Mysty asked.

"First the party's brain, Ell, is going to work out a strategy, then we will talk with the others, right?" Mia replied.

"Yeah, for the sake of victory." Ell said confidently.

Mia and Ell nodded at each other.
They might be the core members of the party.

"Yes, strategy is important. If it's you, Ell, you will likely come up with good ideas so that you guys hit bull's mark." Mysty encouraged the two.

"Yeah, even at the time when we formed a party with you, sensei, Ell exhibited her prodigal style, so you can look forward to it~" Mia praised her friend.

"Back then, eh...? Mia, you also possess excellent magic skills, but Ell is even beyond that." Mysty complimented her students.

"Sensei, you sure plainly and frankly say what's on your mind..."

Mia has a refreshing atmosphere. I feel a slight affinity with her since she has the same name as the old me. It looks like magic is her forte.

"Oh my, Mia, you're excellent as well, you know? There's only a few students who achieve results in the labyrinth. Besides, cultivating your character by studying and doing your best is something I know myself very well." Mysty replied.

"Yahoo! I'm happy. Ah right, can you give us good marks, seeing as we are friends who partied together?" Mia asked cheekily.

"...There's no way that I can do something like that, is there? I will just wish that your strategy works out smoothly. I have to go to a place that has documents about sorcery dolls..." Mysty said sadly.

That teacher revealed an expression making it clear that she was reluctant about parting, but she really doesn't seem to be the kind of teacher that adds restrictions. I think she's a young and new teacher. It looks like she's a sorcery doll researcher, so she must be quite smart as well.

"...For the sake of master, Shuuya." Mysty muttered.

Eh?

Due to that whisper as she left, I reflexively stood up, knocking over my chair.

The looks from those reading, including Mia-san and Ell-san, gathered on me, ending with me standing out. Mysty-san walked deeper inside the bookshelves without minding that noise.

Is that beautiful woman...maybe acquainted with Shuuya-san?

I know that my benefactor, Shuuya-san, crushed the dark guild **【Owl's Fangs】**...

While living as an adventurer, I had heard that a lancer and a black cat had caused quite a stir as I was gathering information.

I want to see Shuuya-san. I want to meet him and thank him for having avenged my friends of

【Scales of Gaia】, my family.

I will tell him, "Thank you"...while looking at his face...properly...

However, I still...haven't become strong enough to be able to stand on my own two feet.

I'm bragging about doing my best untiringly, and that my fireball and flame spells are quite helpful to my party, but...by just holding the broken magic wand related to Ayla, I haven't changed even a bit.

That's why I want to go meet him after having become able to clearly state that I've become strong while throwing out my chest.

I arrogantly declared that I will search and hold onto my "small justice," but I still can't catch up with Shuuya-san's justice...

While harboring a faint feeling of loneliness in my chest, I left the library.