

Chapter 247 - The Truth behind Mmhwee and the Trembling Silver Eyes

Just what is this crescent moon-shaped apparition...?

"Yes, I ate him, but what are you? Are you different from Hal'Konk?" I say to the unknown life-form.

"You might say that I'm different. In the remote past, in a faraway spirit world, I was called Evil Emperor Ciphot. Ciphot Opal Iz Pazus. Though, right now I'm just a broken fragment of what was devoured by Violent Devourer Hal'Konk."

Evil Emperor Ciphot. Ciphot Opal Iz Pazus... What a long name. However, his voice makes me sense a dignity different from Hal'Konk's voice. He looks like this, but...I guess I will answer him like a gentleman.

"...Ciphot-san, I'm Shuuya. Tell me, what is this ink-like world...?"

"You ask something odd. You ate him, didn't you? Hal'Konk, that is."

"Yes, indeed. I certainly did..."

When he lowered his voice, whispering as if playing dumb...

A single spider with many legs crawled out of his puffed-up eyeballs. Among the eight Tarantula-shaped legs, it pointed the two front legs upwards as if doing a banzai pose.

The spider cheers with a hurrah?

And then it skilfully rotated those forelegs with a winding motion. Is it going to pull off some cute spider kung-fu? If it's Yie Ar Kung-Fu, I'm not going to lose, you know?

No sooner than I thought this, a sublime light was cast from its compound eyes located at the center of its head. That sublime light shone upon me.

I didn't feel any pain, neither any soothing. It doesn't seem to be an attack.

As I was basked in the spider's light, the ink stream flowing at my feet scattered into oblivion, allowing a look at a jet-black ground.

"...A strong warrior who repels the Spider King Judgment Eyes despite looking so aloof from the world," said the crescent moon-shaped apparition.

I have already heard words resembling that name. Speaking of spiders...

"Appraisal Eyes, huh?"

I recalled the coin-shaped spiders used by the goddess and the wild god. But, this guy used a living spider. Is it because he's old?

"Correct. You're a strong warrior who has repelled it while also being someone aware of appraisal eyes. Your strength is no lie."

Having finished its duty, the spider sunk its leg into the eyeballs, and vanished. However, saying that my strength is no lie means that I was praised by the apparition?

"...Thanks."

Given that it looked to be the case, I bowed my head, just in case.

"However, since you're here after having eaten Hal'Konk, that might be called only natural."

"Why did you appraise me then?"

"...It's probably because the world is about to end...I also...seem to have been slightly confused. Let me apologize for having appraised you without permission. I'm sorry."

Ciphot is quite the unusual guy, just like his appearance. I feel an arrogance similar to that of gods from his words, but for him to go out of his way to expressly apologize for the appraisal...

"Don't worry about it. By the way, you say that this world is ending?"

"Hal'Konk's mental world dimension is about to end."

Hee, so it was that kind of world after all, eh? But it's really been a while...since the last mental world. Is it since the time when I made the contract with Rozes in the past?

"It coming to an end...is it possibly because I have eaten Hal'Konk?"

"Correct. The silver grains are swirling through the air, right?"

"Yes."

"...Those silver grains are the proof that this world is in the process of unifying with your mind, Shuuya."

In the process of unifying? At the present time I don't really feel anything like me absorbing mana or having my mana absorbed, though...

"Unification...it doesn't actually feel like it..."

"Unlike the real world or the realm of the dead, it's a discrepancy between a world with observers and without."

I didn't quite get that. Is it a talk about a Double-slit experiment[efn_note]Look here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iuv6hY6zsd0> [efn_note] or something like that? Even if I take Earth's quantum theory into consideration, it's no no help here, is it...?

This is a mental world. Outside is Sela, the real world where my real body is. A world with countless black rings. It's excessively vast and has no end either, but it's a different world where multiple dimensions overlap, including their universes. Based on that...

"...Is it a different dimension, or is it about the interstice being thin or thick...?"

"It's close to the first one. But, the veil is unrelated."

"I see..."

I give up then.

At that moment, the eyeballs of Ciphot squirmed. They opened widely while blood veins formed within the ping pong ball-like, white eyeballs.

"...Irregular Shuuya, the one who devoured Violent Devourer Hal'Konk, I have a request to you."

"Request?"

"Indeed. I will vanish soon. Everything will vanish. I will completely disappear, even my mental body that held out to the bitter end...that's why I want to entrust this to you..."

The instant Ciphot repeatedly blinked with his eyeballs while speaking with a sad voice——
Wait, you serious? A crack in the center of his crescent moon shape...don't tell me, he's recreating his chin anew?

Just when I thought so, the moon split right in half with a crack.

It has divided? Each of the eyes was attached to one of the moon parts.

Moreover, a crescent moon-shaped ornate stone appeared from the place where he split apart. Since it's connected to a golden chain loop, it's a necklace?

The necklace with the ornate stone floated in the air. As if having its own consciousness, the ornate stone automatically moved close to my chest with the golden chain loop hanging below it.

For the time being, I guess I will grab it...

The moment I did, the golden chain necklace vanished. Just the crescent moon-shaped ornate stone remained behind.

"...That's the proof of my life. The magic gem of Evil Emperor Ciphot. Please offer it at the 【Ciphot Shrine】 located in the spirit world..."

"Offering it to a shrine in the spirit world...to be honest, I don't know whether I will be able to go to the spirit world, you know? Is that still okay with you?"

"...My karma of having continued to survive and persist up until this point...there's no way that it will come to nothing. I believe that it will guide you...to..."

The crescent moon, which had split in two, turned into dust in the middle of its speech as if falling apart without leaving even a lingering memory behind, and vanished.

I guess his last words were his hope.

Once the talking moon vanished, even the illusion of the ink world kept dissipating like a dream. My room started to manifest.

That's great. I'm able to get back to reality. The happenings just now feel like a vision, but...I can properly feel the touch of the ornate stone remaining in my right palm. Once I opened my palm...it was there, just as expected. It wasn't a dream.

It's not like mana is overflowing from the magic gem accessory, but it looks like it has some kind of special effect, seeing how it contains a great amount of mana. Should I get Suloza's shopkeeper to appraise it for me?

...Time to check my body. Maybe...

I took off my leather clothes, and checked my body after becoming stark naked. Tsuan was

watching, but I ignored him. I looked at my chest, then my shoulders.

Eh!? It was integrated!? That's a surprise.

The dragon head metal plating was clinging to the surface of the skin of my right shoulder. I lifted my right hand and looked at my right flank, checking the smell meaninglessly.

This part is normal——

I also checked my left shoulder, but...it only affects the right one, huh? The dragon head has one blue eye, meaning it has properly adopted the Blue Eye of the Evil Dragon King. Is this the result of Hal'Konk having entrusted his everything to me?

And then, the instant I focused on my right shoulder, I became able to sense a strange connection with the dragon head.

I wanted to test it, but didn't use the small magic gem entrusted to me by Ciphot, and instead picked up a large copper coin that had been laying on the side table. I tried to push that coin into the mouth part of the dragon head. But, there was no reaction...he didn't eat it.

No Mmhwee response. Unexpectedly...even though I had just started to like his Mmhwee a bit.

I put the coin back on the table.

However...his Mmhwee voice, I wonder whether he'll let me hear his voice someday again. ...The Mmhwee sound...shit, it might've become an earworm. Ah! Don't tell me, the part about it being a second danger degree curse is because of this!?

"...Like hell it is. Hmm, will I be able to hear his voice again in the future?"

Alongside those words, I rhythmically tap on the surface of the dragon head's armor plating with the fingers of my left hand.

"...Strange dragon head Hal'Konk."

No response even after I addressed him directly.

"..."

For an instant...I had expected a Mmhwee, but the dragon head remained silent. It looks like he really unified after devouring various items like the Blue Eye and approving of me as his lord.

At that point, I muttered while focusing on the connection I can sense from the whole coat and imagining Baldok's armor, "Evil Dragon King's armor."

In that moment, a dazzling light was emitted from the dragon head. It consumed a bit of my mana, but violet scales were spit out of the shining dragon head with a terrifying force. Those violet scales covered the surface of my body in like no time.

——I fully transformed into a state of wearing a new Evil Dragon King armor. It looks like the dragon head properly understood my will.

The area around my item box on the right wrist had metal fittings bordered by a material similar to a simple gauntlet. I could tamper with the wrist and elbow areas by making the scale armoring thinner and thicker. There were smooth holes at the <Chain Factor> marks on both wrists.

Moreover, the big scar from being vertically cut by the attack of Evil God Steertop had vanished. Looking closely at this new Evil Dragon armor...a dark green color has been mixed into its original hue. And, since the shape is delicately different at some parts, it gives me an impression of it being a combination of Evil Dragon King armor and Hal'Konk coat.

The dragon head's armor plating having assimilated into my right shoulder didn't change overly

much.

"Boss, just what, is that...?" Tsuan, who had been repeatedly talking in his mind with Catiza, was also surprised after seeing my new outfit.

"You could call it a repair, in a certain way? Though, I think it fused, forming a new armor coat? Apparently I can create an armor according to my imagination. Anyway, it's also a part of my body." I answered while laughing.

Oh, wait a sec...

I sent my mana precisely into the blue eye of Hal'Konk. Thereupon, the dragon head automatically turned to the right side, as if matching my line of sight, and then, as soon as the blue eye shone, an ice blade flew out of it.

"Hieeh—!" Tsuan jumped up in shock.

The ice blade was stuck at his feet.

"Boss, without warning is a no-no. For the dragon head to be a projectile weapon..."

Putting that aside, Tsuan, your instantaneous response just now wasn't half bad. As might be expected of a former templar? No, it might be because he's a <Apostle of Light Evil> combining a body with the souls of three people. It makes me want to learn about Purin's past and her ability to use needles.

Well, that can still wait, I suppose.

"...Sorry, this is the power of my new armor."

I think the Evil Dragon King's Blue Eye is something like a new accessory that had been added to the armor coat. So far I had kept it in one of my bandolier's pockets, but it looks like I'll be able to effectively use it from now on.

And then, while focusing on the whole armor coat connected with Hal'Konk's dragon head, I tried to silently pray for it to become a short-sleeved summer version.

At that moment, the violet scales that formed the armor coat deployed across my whole body were sucked back into the dragon's mouth. Once they were retracted in an instant, a dark green fabric was spread out across my whole body in waves from the dragon's mouth.

In the time span of milliseconds, it transformed into a short-sleeved version in a dark green color that wasn't a coat.

"...Ooohhh."

Is this the standard for the metallic dragon head on my shoulder? I'm going to test whether I can turn it back into a normal right shoulder.

Once I imagined it, the armor plating attached to the surface of my right shoulder squirmed audibly and changed into a normal shoulder. It seems that my imagination influences it to some extent.

This is great!

"...Boss, you've got quite the unique armor there, don'cha?"

"Its original source is amazing, after all. It's something I obtained from a silver treasure chest that had spawned after following a magic treasure map on the 20th floor of the labyrinth."

"Ah, come to think of it, this place is a labyrinth city, ain't it——" Tsuan let his eyes wander as if observing the sky while scratching his head.

But, in the middle of that, "Eh!? I feel like I've just heard something major in passing, but is that just my imagination!?"

"It must be your imagination. With that said, Tsuan, change to Catiza and turn back into a finger."

"...So the 20th floor registers as something trivial to you, Boss...? Roger——"

Tsuan didn't agree with me, but his face crumbled apart, and his body collapsed as if melting away, continuing to deflate. Once it withered away and curled up, it transformed into a golden caterpillar.

"Chyuchyu♪"

Catiza cried cutely, and kept meandering forward. She slowly moved her torso forward like an earthworm, clung to the back of my right hand, and went around to my palm from there like a twisting spring, transforming into a new finger.

While checking the finger's sensation, I also inspected the new Hal'Konk. It was an attire using a dark green cloth fabric. There was no change to there being silver branch patterns here and there. ...Now then, I guess I'll go to the prince's place. But before that, I have to store away this crescent moon-shaped magic gem. If I should be able to get to the spirit world, I think I'll head over to that **【Ciphot Shrine】**. Though the relative level of priority is low since it's not like I promised to do it... I fiddled with the item box, booted up the black window, and stored the gem. Then I erased the item box' window, and left my room in the short-sleeved Hal'Konk^[efn_note]I'll call all outfit versions Hal'Konk from now on, while qualifying them with short-sleeved, violet scaled, etc. The dragon head-shaped armor plating on his right shoulder will be called "shoulder dragon" from now on. ^[/efn_note] while rotating my arm meaninglessly. I headed towards the living room through the hallway.

"Master, are you going to head out? Oh, your clothes!" Viine said while sitting on a chair in the posture of a noble daughter.

She was taking a rest while drinking black tea. Next to the teacup on the table were parchments and a pen. She was apparently writing characters on those parchments. Still, unlike the Tsuan dude, just looking at a cool, silver-haired beauty soothes my mind.

"...Yeah, my clothes got an upgrade. I'll tell you about it later." I was naturally drawn close to the chair with Viine on top. "So, what have you been writing?"

"Ah, this is..."

When I peeked at the table, Viine acted bashful, but she didn't try to hide it. As I kept looking at the parchments...they listed the names of merchandise or such in a pretty handwriting. Beneath the list...



The Luksol Company most recently launched a ship company.

The Atenay Company is in the middle of conquering the capital with big mushrooms they procured in great quantities at the labyrinth city.

The Malerian Enterprise succeeded in the development of a new fertilizer using tree demons as an ingredient. They tried starting trade with **【Maritime City Leed Bacua】** which is ruled by Seven Pholia Kingdom's governor-general. However, it's said that they abandoned that project after the pirates of the Sea Light City caused troubles. There are reports about them exploring trade routes between the six cities of Seven Pholia and the Radford Empire in exchange.

Accompanying that, the maintenance of the roads between the cities is proceeding, revitalizing the flow of goods. It's expected that this will influence the economy in various ways for the small to medium towns along the caravans' routes. However, since there's also concern about an expansion of the war in the south, this is no more than a hypothesis.

There are various dangers such as huge monsters, storms, and bandits, but the trade through the desert cities might be the most reliable, after all. I hear that ancient ruins and the distribution of goods in the western Eyhan Country play a part in this as well, but in regards to this, I only have the information I investigated at the mountain pass...

Those would be my predictions if I were in the Malerian Enterprise's shoes.



Viine really gives me the impression of a female company president about to incite some innovations. Besides the documents about those companies...she had been writing something similar to a diary.

"Viine, is it okay for me to take a look?"

"Sure, it's fine. Umm, if I can get you...to look at it, I'll be happy. My feelings are written down here." She said, starting to openly show her emotions in the middle of her speech.

"Roger." While replying with a smile, I gently placed my hand on her shoulder.

She smiled back at me through her silver mask. I nodded and shifted my eyes towards her diary.



Master said that he'd leave on a journey in the future. I want to accompany him...on that journey.

The pledge of a happy life partnership is eternal. Always staying next to the gentle, strong, and great male...

However, each time I listened to the thoughts of the other <Head Servant Leaders> on our trip in the evil domain...I felt like being taught by them. They are strong.

The Lucival blood might stimulate their growth in all kinds of aspects. Even while harboring love

and feeling close to a religious belief towards Master, they possess their own convictions and personalities. From the start, they have been continuing to use their utmost efforts in order to keep growing.

And, because there's love, it's a relationship of offering and receiving time with Master without any compensation. That's why they might also receive his influence, feeling a craving for freedom in themselves and having a notion towards Master's earnest martial arts. It's the same for me as well. The seeds of Master's words and actions have started to bud in my mind before I noticed. This is the growth often mentioned by Master. At least, that's what I think.

I also...want to become stronger myself, investigate things, and learn unknown languages. I've once again become strongly aware that I like those things.

I want to dive into the labyrinth, defeat monsters, and develop my abilities in swordsmanship, archery, and all kinds of magic. I must expand on <Blood Mana> as well...I'm really curious what kind of skill I will receive with the opening of the second gate.

...I can't even begin to imagine it.

Unlike Master who has achieved it as Suzerain-sama, I can anticipate that it'll take time for me. If I continue growing by collecting magic sources and sucking blood, the answer will naturally show itself, I believe.

Besides, I want to try learning taijitsu catered towards actual combat like the one Master uses... No, I think those are movements strongly based on an inherent hand-to-hand fighting sense to begin with. Movements unique to a spearmaster who naturally unified thoughts and body reflexes from being unconscious to being consciously performed.

Whenever I see those moves, I feel my chest throbbing...wanting to hug him.

I derailed a bit. I also want to learn unknown languages. That doesn't mean writing like Mysty, but learning new words is truly fun... I'm also interested in the dwarven language. It was amusing to learn that it's different from the ancient dwarven language, and close to the expressions in the underground elven language used by the old nobles of the Ancient Great Belfaritz Empire.

The common language I have learned now is a convenient language, widely spread in the countries beneath the Southern Mahaheim Mountain Range, including the various northern provinces of the Lololiza Kingdom.

At the time when the slave trader wandered across Lololiza, I learned that the north has unexplored lands. The northern provinces of the Southern Mahaheim Mountain Range also include the Religious State and the Holy Kingdom, though.

I have heard rumors about a dark elf empire on the surface in those unexplored lands. That was a shock for me who only knows the dark elves who have been living underground.

Still, although I'm curious about the north, the same can also be said about the east. The other day I saw the ocean close to Zamalia for the first time after using the mirror together with Master's bloodkin...

It was as magnificent as the legends tell...

And, just what is the culture on the other side, east of Rodelia's Ocean, the place called Eastern Shijima City mentioned by Yui and Kaldo...

I feel like I want to always be together with Master, and it's also a truth that the wish to develop myself and learn about unknown cultures is growing in me.



Viine's feelings, huh? She has been really brooding over many things. Well, she wandered the surface herself and together with the slave trader. You might call it only natural.

"Viine, it looks like you're troubled."

"Yes..."

She furrowed her eyebrows into a worried look. Her eyes were trembling.
I happened to hear that people suffer pain when their minds are wavering greatly. I want to give her some peace of mind, even if only a bit.

"...Are we going to have short lives of a few decades?"

"No, it's going to be an eternity."

"Then the answer is obvious, isn't it?"

"Eh?"

I want to be with her as well, but...

"I believe that I'll feel sad for a while, but Viine, you should do what you want to do. Won't it be fine for us to occasionally meet and stay in contact through blood messages while you grow in the way you want to grow? Afterwards, we can travel and go on adventures together again, right? On the other hand, if you say that accompanying me on my journey is what you want to do, I won't stop you. Since I'd be happy, you just have to come along then."

She hesitated, opening and closing her eyes. Her long ears twitched a bit. It makes me want to touch their tips, but...for now I'm going to endure.

Her lips, a mix of violet and pink colors, moved, "...Understood. Right now my feeling of wanting to be together with you is stronger, Master. Therefore, I want to come with you."

Since her silver eyes were trembling, that might still change.

"...Got it. I've got to have a beautiful secretary at my side after all, don't I?" I said while deliberately forming a smile on my face.

"Fufu, you're totally right."

Yep, laughing beauties are a sight for sore eyes.

"However, it's still a long way into the future, but as I also plan to carefreely stroll through the Religious State, I won't be able to take you along...in the case of that country."

It's because she's an elf, and moreover a dark elf. If I think about the many people there, similar to Mad Knight, going "Blue skin!?! She's a demon, obliterate her, hyahyahya!"...

"...When I passed through the sphere of that country's influence, I wasn't able to go out most of the time. It's a bad place for elves."

"During your travel with the slave trader, huh?"

"Yes."

"...Well, let's talk about it again once it becomes acute. Now I'm going to go out."

"Okay. Since I also harbor feelings of wanting to quicken my own growth, I think that I might use that time to dive into the labyrinth or to go on a short trip."

"Sure."

Viine revealed an expression that looked somewhat refreshed, nodded, and stood up from her chair.

"Your Excellency, shall I enter your eye?" Helme asked from the corner of the living room where she had been meditating.

"No need. Go on with your meditation."

"Okay."

Then I grasped Viine's hand.

"Master?"

"——Sshh." I pulled her slender arm, drawing her into an embrace.

After putting one arm around her tight waist, I focused on hugging her. Then I brought my face close to hers, and stole a kiss from her. I continued kissing her while feeling Viine's breathing and the touch of her nose, and then separated my face from hers.

"...Mmhfu, it was a bit sudden, but I'm happy." Viine said with her excitement being visible.

"Your Excellencyyy, I want a kiss as well."

"Helme, you can keep meditating."

"Spirit-sama, right now Master apparently wants to kiss me alone."

"Kuuu, how cheeky."

Since we were about to hinder Helme's meditation, I headed to the courtyard while holding Viine's hand like lovers would do.

"Rollo, we're heading out." I called out to Rollo who was playing around with Balmint while riding the back of Popobumu's head.

Hearing my words, Rollo reacted by making her ears twitch. She got off Popobumu and ran over to me.

It's kind of odd that Popobumu isn't nervous at all, despite his play partner being a dragon, even if a young one. Balmint apparently abode to my words...treating Popobumu like a new sibling. Using his big rough tongue, he licked Popobumu's skin.

A high ancient dragon and a magic beast. I arbitrarily interpret it as them communicating their feelings in a mysterious way.

Helme apparently continued her meditation, seeing that she didn't chase after us. The big tigers Alray and Hueremy stood at the front gate's sides like guardian lion-dogs at Shinto shrines, faithfully obeying my instruction by properly doing their job as gatekeepers. Since they were in their live forms and not porcelain, they tried to run up next to me.

However, I told them, "Alray, Hueremy, I leave the gatekeeping to you for now."

"...Nyaa."

"...Nyao."

Alray and Hueremy gave their acknowledgment, returned to their sides of the gate, and turned into porcelain.

"...Rollo, we're going to head to the prince's mansion."

"Nyao."

Rollodeen, who had transformed into a Horse Lion, swiftly coiled her tentacles around mine and Viine's waists, and placed us on her back. Immediately after, she started to run. She jumped with her muscular limbs with such a force that she caused a dent in the stone paving, landing on the roof of the front gate in an instant.

From there she jumped as high as the blue sky covering Labyrinth City Pelneet.

"Kyaa."

Just like always, Viine seemed to be scared. She raised a small scream while clinging to me. Her long ears drooping looked adorable.

Given that Rollodeen didn't know about her feelings, she flew across the city while using the roofs of the buildings, heading towards the prince's mansion with a speed similar to that of a roller coaster.

On the way, she dropped the speed to a relaxed pace.

Viine had been hugging me tightly, but once she grasped that the speed had decreased, she looked up at my face.

"Master?"

"I thought about giving you an explanation about my new attire."

"This dark green one..."

"Yep."

I told Viine about Hal'Konk while she kept hugging me from the front.