

## **Chapter 286 - Crossbreed of the Demon King Seed**

I clasp the seed that I took out of my item box in my left hand, charging mana into it.

Back when I had the shopkeeper of Suloza's Old Sorcery Shop appraise the seed, he said,

『...The name of the plant seeds is Crossbreed of the Demon King Seeds. It's not possible to appraise its classification. It originates from the 15th floor!?! It seems to be something of a different quality born between fellow Demon King seed monsters. If you pour mana into the seed and plant it into the ground, a unique monster or something else will be born while absorbing that mana and a certain extent of the soil around it. Any further details are unknown.』

In other words, it should be possible to have this absorb the white mist. In exchange, something, an unknown being, will be born from the seed, according to his appraisal.

After pouring a huge amount of mana into the crossbreed, I toss it into the crack, reminding me of a dimensional hole with fog wafting out of it. In the next instant, the seed expands, blocking the hole and unifying with the soil. At the spot where the crack has been comes a huge rock, which looks like it'd have tree rings dating back several hundred years if this was a big tree, into existence, with the illusion of a beautiful elf possessing butterfly wings appearing in the background as the rock grows.

『Your Excellency, streams of mana are raging within the rock』

Just as Helme has pointed out, mana is violently stirring within the rock. The different strands of mana combine and blend with each other as if to exhibit a fierce clash of light and darkness. The rock itself continues to rapidly extend towards the sky like a winding snake.

From a seed to a rock...I had imagined that it'd become a huge tree, but this here is rather unexpected. It might be an outcome of the white mist, the land, and the tree joining together into one...

...The sky on the 20th reaches so far up that I don't even know where to find the ceiling, but don't tell me... Lured by the growing rock, I keep staring up. Is this rock possibly...trying to return to the 15th floor?

As the rock continues to grow, the white mist in the vicinity is being sucked into it. Without me noticing, the vicinity has cleared up.

"Nn, nyaa." Rollo approaches me after having turned into a black panther.

She bumps her head against my waist.

『The mist seems to have vanished. There's none left around us』

『I suppose you can call this a success』

As I'm gently chucking Rollo under her chin...the rock stops moving. I can't see the ceiling, but it

might have broken into the 19th floor.

This huge rock has been created with a Crossbreed of the Demon King Seed as origin, and the white mist all around has completely disappeared. I'd say all's settled with this. Time to go back to inform Towa and Dawk. Now Towa should be able to return to her home village.

But then, just as I'm about to leave...the rock squirms.

"Nyaaa." Rollo's hair stands on end with her being surprised.

As we continue observing the rock, it expands, taking on the shape of an egg. Then, in the next moment, a crack develops on its surface, with golden light bursting out from within. Moment's later, the rock's surface is stripped off, almost looking like an egg that has its skin automatically peeled off. What appears from within in the end is a cocoon wrapped up by dozens of golden, white, and black threads.

No way! A bug? Or a butterfly?

Shortly thereafter, the threads come apart at the central part of the cocoon as if a door is being opened. Though, it's not an insect that becomes visible within.

It's a rock...a rock very closely resembling the shape of a human woman. The two eyes on her small, pretty face are crystals. The depressions at the décolleté beneath her slender neck have been reproduced as well. Same can be said of the two proper, bulging breasts. A hexagram is carved onto her belly, but overall, she's beautiful...

However, limited to just the eyes, she resembles the steel-wood giant I saw in the labyrinth. Her face looks as if she's asleep, and I don't feel any mana from her.

"...Is she dead?"

A rock doll?

『It appears so』

"Nnn, nya."

Rollodeen unleashes a cat punch against the rock woman, but there's no reaction.

『I wonder how Mysty would react if we showed this to her』

『...She would likely start analyzing her on the spot』

『Right? That's a very likely scenario. Anyway, I'm going to put this doll into my item box』

『Okay』

While catching how the tiny Helme nods in my visual field, I manipulate the item box on my right wrist, touching the Storage descriptor. Just like always, a black wonder pops up, telling me to please

store the item at the bottom of the screen.

I lift up the rock woman with one hand - the touching sensation is hard, so she must be made out of rock after all - and store her inside the window.

"...Well then, let's head over to the others, who are waiting, okay?"

I check the vicinity after Rollo has climbed on my shoulder. A river is visible in the distance. Its color is no different from before. The purification of that river seems to be beyond hope...

The ground still has white patches remaining, too. However, the origin of it all, the white mist, has disappeared.

Rollodeen keeps dashing towards the hillside where Towa and Dawk-san are waiting while treading across the ruined ground. As soon as the two spot me, they wave.

"Shuuya-sama!"

"No way, the white mist..."

"Yes, it's gone. Instead a huge rock is towering over there right now..."

"I'm going to have a look——" Towa exclaims excitedly, and runs off towards Ishytes' Hill. A short while later, she comes running down again, "Haa, haa, haa."

Her shoulders are heavily heaving up and down as she pants, and her hair has become disheveled.

"Towa, did the white mist disappear?"

"...Yes! It's completely gone!"

The instant he hears her reply, Dawk-san falls on his knees, muttering, "Oohh...it's true. With this, I..." as his body is repeatedly shaking...with him sobbing like a child, contradicting his previous mature demeanor.

After having caught her breath, Towa-san keeps nodding many times with tears streaming down her cheeks.

"..."

I'm happy for them

At that point, a blood message appears in front of me, 『Master, several hours have passed since you left on the Oohbital. Do you have any orders for us? On our side we've gathered 15 magic stones at a slow pace』

『Slow, and yet you collected 15? Your growth is obviously quick』

『Being able to hunt together with Master has made everyone very happy. All of us are trying new

things, increasing our hunting patterns, while actually experiencing the growth in person』

『At this rate, it looks like the Blood Beast Corps will be able to achieve great things on the surface as well』

『Please leave it to us!』

『Sure』

『So, about when are you going to join up with us again?』

『I'll come back soon』

『Understood』

After wrapping up my blood messaging with Mamani, I turn my eyes to Towa and Dawk-san.

"Well then, Towa-san, Dawk-san, it's time for me to leave."

"Eh!? We haven't had a chance to thank you yet."

"Indeed, please come with us to our Arsayban Village!"

"Just those feelings of yours are already more than enough for me. After all, I just did what I wanted to do. Leaving that aside, wouldn't it be better for you to inform your village of the mist's disappearance?"

Dawk-san's expression softens, seemingly having guessed my feelings from my face, "Very well. You must have your own circumstances as well. Towa, let's go back home."

"But Dawk..."

After bowing at Towa-san and Dawk-san, I ascend Ishytes's Hill. When I arrive at the hilltop, I can see how Dawk-san waves from below, bows, and leaves after turning around. With a little delay, Towa-san also bows towards me, and then chases after Dawk-san.

Now then, I guess I'll inform Ishytes-san about the mist's disappearance.

I place my hand on the white stone between the two sculptures. Just as before, my mana is drawn out, and the sculptures shift to the sides, opening up the hole leading downwards.

"I have to report the details of the incident to that white gem."

"Nya."

『Okay. Is Ishytes going to always remain in this place?』

『No idea. But, considering it from that angle, it does sound pitiful...』

I arrive at the underground space while chatting with Helme telepathically. Next I walk up to the white gem floating in the room's center.

As soon as I place a foot in front of the podium, Ishytes takes the initiative in addressing me, "Again thee, visitor?"

"Hello, Ishytes-sama. I've sealed the white mist."

"..." Ishytes stays silent.

I don't know whether it bears any meaning, but the rim of the white gem is swelling in waves.

"This should do away with the need for any sacrifices, but Ishytes-sama, do you plan to stay here for eternity?"

"..."

No response, huh? Okay, I guess I'll go back then. I'll just show him the rock doll before leaving...

"By the way...when I sealed the white mist away, a certain object fell into my hands. Want to see it?"

"Show it to me."

Oh, he's reacted.

Just as he wishes, I operate my item box, and put the female rock doll down on the stone floor beneath the podium.

"T-That! I-Isn't that my body!?"

"Huh?"

"Look at the belly. It's the same as my part of the Apocrypha here!"

The white gem expands its lower part, showing a round magic crest to me. It's similar to the one he's shown me before.

『He seems to be saying the truth』

Well yeah, it's identical with the magic crest carved onto the doll's belly. So it's Ishytes' body, eh?

『I guess it's become impossible to show it to Mysty. I'm going to return it to Ishytes』

『Fufu, okay』

"...You're right. Well, then I'll give it back to you."

"...Thee have my gratitude. Goddess of Chaos Libas Arua-sama will be delighted as well, I'm

certain. Hmm, in the first place, why have thee taken hold of my body..."

I suppose I need to provide a little explanation here.

"I have used a Crossbreed of the Demon King Seed after pouring mana into it, and as result of blocking the hole producing the mist, I saw the illusion of a beautiful elf with butterfly wings——"

"Wait. With butterfly wings, thee mentioned...isn't that the appearance of Goddess of Chaos Libas Arua-sama...?"

It was no more than an illusion, but it's probably related to the goddess' power. I continue with my explanation, "Afterwards, a rock shot out high into the sky, and this body appeared from within that rock."

"I see..."

The white gem's surface undulates, as Ishytes-sama has apparently come to terms with the explanation.

"If this doll is your body, Ishytes-sama, wouldn't it be better for me to place it on top of the magic crest over there?"

"Please. But before that, let me hear thy name."

"I'm called Shuuya. The one obediently resting on my shoulder is Rollodeen."

"Nya."

"Shuuya and Rollodeen...you have my gratitude." His sausage-shaped mouth trembles, but he still thanks us properly.

After nodding at it, I place Ishytes's body atop the magic crest. Then I immediately go down the small stairs, distancing myself, and turn around, watching Ishytes' state. As I do, I can see how the gem keeps melting, turning into a white liquid, which then moves to the body beneath, clinging itself to it.

As the liquid permeates into Ishytes's body, a magic crest, accompanied by dazzling light, appears. Before long, all of the gem, with whom I've talked just moments ago, completely melts and vanishes. It looks like its unification with Ishytes's body has finished...

『...Unlike before, mana is pulsating inside the body』

『I guess it's regained its body』

While I speak with Helme, Ishytes, who's been laying on the floor, starts to incessantly blink her crystalline eyes.

"...I'm Ishytes." She mutters as she slowly gets up.

She moves her slender arms around to get a feel of her body, and then looks at her palms.

"I can...move..."

Although it's been a doll until seconds ago...her expression as she stares at her own palms looks very human. I can sense a strong will dwelling within her eyes.

After staring at her palms for a short while as if performing a palm reading, she clenches them into fists, and then opens them back up. Ishytes extends one arm, as if adopting a pose, and examines the situation beneath the stairs, looking at me.

Immediately following, she moves her slender legs, leaving the magic crest. She descends the small stairs, arriving in front of me...and then extends a hand.

"...Shuuya. I recall being taught by Arua-sama that this is the way visitors greet each other. Or am I wrong?"

"No you're correct——" I shake Ishytes' hand.

She powerfully squeezes back while smiling. I return a smile as well.

"...Is it alright for me to touch you?"

"Of course, now that I've recovered my body."

"Your hand is made out of stone, but it feels somewhat warm."

"I also feel the warmth of your hand, Shuuya. My chest is warm as well... Is this the sensation described as friend by Arua-sama?" Ishytes's face dyes scarlet as she's apparently embarrassed.

Then she lets go of my hand, and heads towards the exit.

...Friend, eh?

"...Ishytes, what are you going to do from now on?" I call out to her from behind.

"...I'd like to meet with those who have sacrificed their lives to me." She answers while looking back with a sad expression.

I see...

Afterwards we silently returned to the hilltop together.

"I'm going to look for the village of the three-eyes..."

"Sure."

"See you again, friend——"

Ishytes transforms her feet into something resembling goat hooves. Then she jumps off the hilltop, leaping high up in the air as if flying, leaving me in the lurch.

If I remember correctly, the three-eyed evil races have come from the right side, but she's heading northwards. ...It might have been a good idea to tell her in advance...

『Ishytes...she sure is a mysterious golem』

『No kidding』

I gaze at the beautiful landscape of the evil domain on the 20th floor while talking with Helme. The white mist, which existed on the left side, is now gone, with a rock now towering high into the sky. I ended up altering the terrain, but...well, whatever.

"Rollo, I'm in your hands."

"Nyaa."

I get on Rollodeen in her divine beast form, and she swiftly starts returning to our starting point in Mulbique's Forest while galloping through the sky. I send a blood message while tracking the smell of my bloodkin's blood.

『This time's large magic stone collection is finished. It's about time for me to get contacted by Kazane, and head over to the underground auction. We will directly return to the surface through the 24-faceted orb』

『Understood』

『Affirmative』

『Okay』

『I wanna drink ten-ten once we get back!』

Before joining up with them, "Helme, please remove the dirt from Rollo and me."

『As you wish』

Helme pours out of my left eye as a liquid, engulfing my and Rollodeen's body in a membrane within no time. It's been the same for a long time now, but the sensation of being wrapped up by her water membrane is indescribable. It completely fills my heart and body with a heavenly soothing sensation.

"Nn, nyaa, nyan."

Rollo seems to also enjoy it. It's a liquid of happiness engulfing our bodies.

The cleaning ends in an instant, and the liquid separates from us by dispersing into the vicinity as countless droplets. The mass formed after the droplets congregated transforms into Helme's

beautiful human shape.

"——Your Excellency, I'm done. I will now return to your left eye!"

"Come!" After ushering in Helme by widening my left eye, I have Rollodeen proceed onwards.