

Chapter 320 - Surgebald Earldom

The flight on Divine Beast Rollodeen has been very fun as we've entrusted ourselves to the mercy of the sky. Extending a hand towards the clouds lingering on my left, I can sense a chilly moisture grazing against my fingertips. Believing that the cotton-candy-like clouds might be delicious since whales are inhabiting the skies, I lick the fingers that got in contact with the clouds, but it's just ordinary water.

While touching the clouds with my fingers, I meaninglessly shoot <Chain> out of the <Chain Factor> mark, creating a vivid hole in the canvas of clouds.

Spreading my arms next, I feel how a moderate wind tickles my cheeks. It's fairly refreshing.

Leaning my body out from Rollodeen's back, I spot the Heim River and forests dyed in vibrant green spreading out below us. The wind hitting my face and lifting my bangs feels nice, even as it picks up a bit in strength. Is the wind influenced by the mana particles released from my partner?

I spot fires for luring fish appearing and disappearing sporadically on the distant Heim River. They kinda look like fleeting heat hazes.

"For such a sky world to also exist..." Nereis'Kary has been enjoying our relaxed flight.

At the end of her line of sight a whale parent and child are hunting down a flock of jellyfish. The big whale wolfs down the big jellyfish with its huge mouths. The small whale chases small jellyfish while widening its small mouth. Once plenty of small jellyfish have entered, it closes its mouth, causing its chin and abdomen to bulge.

Having watched that spectacle, the big whale releases a sheet of water spray into the air from its head as if praising its young.

All of us who are looking at that heartwarming scene are deeply moved. Though I guess it's a nightmarish crisis for the jellyfish clan. It's a gruesome standpoint, but well, I can't help it.

"...Princess, please don't press that button." Mysty cautions Nereis'Kary.

The princess has apparently touched the new sorcery doll while watching the sky.

The new doll is humanoid. It has a long, narrow, pointed horn on its forehead. It adopts a classy, simple design reminding me of the word for fighter in German. Way too cool.

It makes me recall the conversation I had with Mysty the other day while she was working in her workshop.



During the chat with Mysty in her work clothes, I asked as a joke, "Does this horn mean that the

doll will become three times as fast?"

It caused Mysty to ask, "Huh? How did you know?"

While thinking, 'So it's really going to become three times as fast...', I answered, "It's a common rule in some worlds."

"...You sure look serious there. Do you mean other dimensions with those worlds?"

"No, I'm just joking. Three times as fast means it's got a secret hidden within?"

After repeatedly blinking at my crazy reply, Mysty smiled, "Fufu, indeed. A powerful mana amplifier is built into the horn with enough force to generate the power needed to accelerate the whole frame. The main materials are worm drops, and the object, which combined the metals containing life-forms, I received from you just the other day."

'A door of the futuristic garbage truck, eh? She used that part?'

"...Although it's a crushed garbage truck, its mysterious steel proves to be useful, huh?"

"Yep. I don't get the meaning behind the garbage thing as you call it, but I've used the metal on its surface for the doll's horn. Since there were interesting mechanical, metal parts inside the crushed material, I preserved them. It's a metallic frame that finely connected a compressor and crankshaft through intake mechanisms based on the usage of cylinders and combustion gas. As far as I can tell from my research, that should be the source of its power. As for amplification of the horn in question here, it might be an outcome put in effect by the worm drops, though."

I imagined that it was part of the car's engine back then.

"Well, it does look like you've obtained some nice parts there. It's great that I bought it."

"Eva was also delighted. Thank you for always going out of your way for our sake."

Such words from a bespectacled doctor beauty in a workshop were definitely nice.

"...I keep telling you to not worry about it."

I felt embarrassed by Mysty's gaze.



At this point, my vision returns from reminiscing about our chat in the past to the reality of us riding on Rollodeen. ...The new sorcery doll of Mysty is pretty neat. It's got a head resembling that of a dragon. Its puzzle-like frame seems to combine metal parts in layers while having round holes all over.

Small amounts of steam escape through those holes. Gaps that are shaped like the pointed ends of a

fork with a faintly different form have been added to the place where you'd usually find the eyes. A mana gleam is released from within the six gaps, as if the doll is alive.

Unfortunately, it looks like one eye was no option. It also has no gas-tube-like connectors at its mouth. But, in the end that doesn't really matter anyway. [efn_note]Gundam reference for those not knowing[/efn_note]

The metallic patterns resembling processed Damascus steel are pretty. Its neck is slender, and its whole body looks refined. It makes me realize that Mysty's design sense is a cut above normal people.

Even the collarbone hollows have been elaborately added to the frame. The design quality of the shoulder pads covering its shoulders is extremely high. The pads are curved and slit-shaped. They follow the idea of the defensive layers becoming gradually thicker, and a violet crystalline core had been installed on the top of the somewhat bulging pads. Red and deep blue crystal beads are surrounding the core like electrons their nucleus.

And in contrast to the shoulder pads, the elbow pads that extend all the way to the hands are instead gradually narrowing down, seemingly focusing on elegance, resulting in the doll having two arms that possess strength and delicacy at the same time, just like a female pianist.

The doll's upper body is manly. It's covered by a bulky breastplate which seems to recreate a male pectoral, smoothly continuing downwards from the collarbone. The breastplate itself brightly reflects the sunlight.

Its metallic legs are similar to those of a goat, thick thighs while becoming slender beneath the knees. Though they're a bit distorted since the kneecaps are pointed. Sun-like marks have been added to the center of those kneecaps. Flame waves are drawn around those suns as if depicting a corona and prominence.

Overall it uses a magic steel vividly resembling a fluted armor. It makes me fully realize how much crafting skill has been stuffed into this doll.

Mana light similar to neon is emitted from trenches in the metal. That complicated, metallic device reminds me of God of Justice Shafa's appearance. But of course it's very different from a god. Still, I think there are some parts resembling what's called metallic life-forms.

Mysty says, "It's an experiment whether it can successfully operate even up here in this beautiful sky."

Anticipating for an instant that this new sorcery doll might possess jet muzzles at the soles of its feet, allowing it to fly, I ask Mysty, but get curtly scolded that it's impossible to incorporate such a function.

But it might actually be possible, seeing how Mysty has started to curse under her breath while weighing the possibility of my wild idea in her mind. At present it doesn't seem to be very realistic, though...

Mysty lets her pen fly across a parchment at a terrifying speed while releasing blood and mana from

her hands as she writes mana values reminiscent of functional analysis. Once she finishes a rough estimate of my wild idea, she pulls herself together, and says with a voice lacking confidence, "...Right now it's because I've simply made it appear on top of Rollo-chan."

"Nnn, nyaa, nya, nya~"

"Rollo-chan, you're hitting its surface again. Please don't beat it too hard... Ah, wait, it might be okay since it'll also serve as durability experiment, I suppose." Mysty rattles on while slightly agitated.

Seemingly disliking the touch of the metal that makes her experience a weird weight on her back, Rollodeen extends tentacles from all over her body, using them to tamper with the sorcery doll. In particular, her tentacles are carefully touching the doll's head area. She uses the flat pads to rhythmically tap and caress its surface. Since she hasn't extended her bone swords, it's obvious that she doesn't intend to break the doll, but...

As we continue to fly through the sky in this relaxed mood, I spot huge statues towering over the surroundings as if watching over the Heim River.

"—Those are huge statues depicting War God Vice and Goddess of Love Aria." Viine explains while brushing her hair behind her left ear.

At first she has been muttering that there's no cover with an anxious expression while pressing her boobs against my arm, but...since Rollodeen has been flying gently and slowly through the sky, she's apparently become used to the pace of our flight.

I keep looking at the superb view brought about by the Heim River and the fortress city with everyone. There's no change in the chains extending from the statues. I'm pretty sure that blocking the river by using the big statues would turn into a huge event.

"...Over there is Fortress City Hekatrail." I inform everyone as I wallow in nostalgic memories.

The skyscraper-like height of the walls is just like before. It's still far away, but I can already see the townscape stretching out on the other side of the wall. Moreover, I can also see a griffon formation flying in the skies above Hekatrail.

Hekatrail's lord Chardonnay is in the middle of a dispute with the eastern Zamalia Kingdom. I suppose it's only natural for her to have the vicinity patrolled. Or maybe there's some other reason for it, but it looks like a part of the defense force has remained back in the city.

Come to think of it, back during the kickoff-party for the Evil Dragon King subjugation on the War God Vice Square, a superb-looking soldier had greeted everyone. I'm sure they're going to be alright if they've got people like him in their ranks. Though many soldiers have died during the Evil Dragon King battle...

Chardonnay has also obtained private military forces by participating at the Underground Auction. She did buy that guy called Black War God. He, who reminded me of a Japanese man with his strangely fitting military uniform, had created a square cube. Assuming that it's an ability allowing him to suddenly fire that cube-like object even from a distant place, it should be quite the brutal

ability. If it comes to battle, I assume it'll be a ranged battle.

The demonstration he showed at the auction only revealed him creating it at his hands, but...since it wasn't necessary for him to display all his abilities back then, he must also possess other surprising skills.

In addition, she also bought that woman who had nothing from her ankles down. Those were truly mysterious legs. It looked like her feet had been cut off...or rather, she had none to begin with. Still, she floated while releasing foam-like mana beneath her legs.

Speaking of a person with the ability to release foam, there's that Silkworm member who fought against Demonoid Zarl, but I wonder whether he's related to that woman...

Besides preparing such combat forces, Chardonnay also negotiated with Bloody Long Ears and the central government's nobles, including the first and second prince, during the auction.

As I'm pondering about all that, I observe how the griffon unit descends. The scene of a flying griffon squad sure makes for a great picture. ...It reminds me of the magnificent appearance of Captain Cecily Fadasso of the 3rd Army Corps. The image of her handsome subordinate also crosses my mind, but I force it out of my brain.

It gets replaced by my memories of the pretty Quiche and Sherry, but...

"We'll prioritize Nereis'Kary, and not visit Hekatrail."

"...Thanks, Shuuya." Nereis'Kary casts a gentle smile at me.

It's a look full of reverence as she anticipates her return to the earl's domain. It's my intent to atone for not having rescued the princess in the past...but it's impossible for me to tell her that. But then again, since I don't openly show that emotion, she won't know that I'm trying to make up for my own blunder as long as she doesn't possess a mind reading ability like Eva.

"...I've been telling you to not mind it."

"It suits me just fine since I don't really like Hekatrail." Mysty says with a slightly bad complexion.

That fortress city is her hometown. But it's also a city waking hatred in her due to the chain of events triggered by her older brother, Sol.

"Me too. I don't want to run into that silver-green-haired elf." Hankay agrees with Mysty.

Silver-green-haired means...

"Clydossus?"

"...Yeah, that one." Hankay mutters while not looking in our direction...gazing at Hekatrail.

It's about the time when Paulsen and Angie were still in **【Bell of Twilight】**, huh? It sounds like they had some harsh fights with Clydossus at that time.

In other words, I'll send off the princess, carry Mysty and Hankay to the Whirlpool Forest of Demon Fog, and then come here afterwards. Anyway, for now the princess remains the priority. I'm going to safely deliver the princess to the Surgebald Earldom in the south of Leften while keeping the feelings of not having rescued her back then shut in my heart.

"N, nya."

Seemingly having sensed my feeling through the tentacle connected to me, Rollodeen heads northeast from the Heim River, leaving Hekatrail in the lurch, after meowing lightly.

As soon as we pierce through a big cloud, Mt. Baldok comes into sight in the south. How nostalgic. It's the place where the Evil Dragon King subjugation went down.

As I wallow in nostalgia...

"...I can see the Surgebald Earldom."

We're already in the earldom. A flock of jellyfish is traveling in the sky - a common sight, I guess. On the other hand, the number of buildings along the road has somehow increased compared to the time when I passed this place last. I have the impression that there's a lot more people here, too.

Previously Nereis'Kary had mentioned that public order has improved in this area. I guess that's also the reason why the relay towns have been revitalized through the influx of new people. Though it's also possible that villages have simply transitioned into becoming towns after the distribution of goods has been put in order.

It seems like many merchants are coming and going. The earl has probably adopted many policies to usher in all kinds of businesses. Kind of like the free markets and open guilds policy introduced by Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, I think. Earl Surgebald might be a clever, capable man.

I look at the beautiful face of the princess while imagining the earl whom I haven't met yet.

"...Where can we find the earl's mansion?"

"On the right side of the road right below us...yeah, ahead of the brick buildings. It has a fresh, green tree mark as a landmark."

"Okay."

Rollodeen continues flying at a low altitude, following Nereis'Kary's instructions. And then, a big mansion which seems to be the earl's mansion comes into sight.

"Look, it's over there." The princess yells.

Watchtowers have been constructed in the four corners around the mansion. I can see guards patrolling and manning the towers. I have Rollodeen land in a trench next to the road to avoid her standing out too much. Unlike with the prince's mansion, it'd be a bad idea to directly land on the mansion's grounds of an unknown earl without prior notice.

"Rollo, you did really well to keep the flight gentle."

"Nyaa~"

I gently stroke the back of Rollodeen's head with the intent to thank her for having flown everyone on her back. After meowing happily, she throatily purrs, and then growls lowly. Since she's quite huge right now, her throaty voice naturally turns into a loud noise that seems to vibrate through the air.

While perceiving that trembling with my whole body, I turn in the direction of my friends

"...Now then, we've arrived. You can get off now." I say while turning my arm in the direction of Rollo's long tail.

Mysty salutes by holding her index and middle finger together against her outer eye. "Aye aye, sir. I'll get off first."

After a casual confirmation and her cute gesture, she passes mana into the new sorcery doll. In response, the doll shrinks down in an instant. Turning small like Alray or Hueremy, the doll transforms into a silver brooch.

Mysty looks at that brooch, smiles in satisfaction, hooks the brooch to the rim of her tube top at her chest, and then leans over. Just like that, she places her hand on Rollodeen's back, saying, "——Rollo-chan, thanks for the pleasant flight. It woke the wish in me to make this one day possible for my students as well," while ruffling Rollodeen's back.

Satisfied with the nice feel of touching Rollodeen, she gets up, walks across Rollodeen's bushy back, and gets off while touching Rollodeen's long tail. Her brooch is very fashionable as it fits her armor.

"This is the kingdom called Leften? As expected of a divine beast! Let me stroke her as well!"

"Nyagoa." Rollodeen turns over her tail, and hits Hankay's onion head. But, rather than hitting, it feels like she's telling him 『Come this way nya』.

"...I think Rollodeen is telling you to hurry up with dismounting." I follow up after watching the situation.

"Nunu, I'll forgive you because of the fluffiness of your black fur." Hankay, who's wrapped up in a fluffy tail, reveals an expression full of complex feelings, and then gets off.

Nereis'Kary, who has watched the exchange just now with a smile, is the last one Rollodeen. Accordingly, Viine grabs her hand and while courteously telling her, "Prince, this way," she lifts her up and gets off Rollodeen.

Guh, I wanted to give Nereis'Kary a princess carry. But, without voicing out that complaint, I jump off Rollodeen, and land on the ground after turning my body in the air.

The instant everyone has dismounted, Rollodeen reverts to her usual cat form.

The place where we got off is an earthen road continuing to the left and right. After looking at the people living in wooden houses surrounded by mud walls, I shift my eyes to Nereis'Kary.

"...By the way, Nereis'Kary, I'm going to call address you as princess from now on."

"...Okay. Though it's slightly regrettable."

"It doesn't change the fact of us being friends. But, we're already in Leften. And moreover in the Surgebald Earldom that has been announcing its support for you. I think it'd affect your honor and be regarded as rudeness towards the earl otherwise, princess."

"Sheesh, such a way of treating me...I'm a princess who once fell into slavery, you know?" While hiding her smile with a hand as befits a princess, Nereis'Kary implicitly rebukes me with 『We're friends, so don't give me such a formal treatment』.

However, I deliberately strengthen the gleam in my eyes so as to refuse her clearly.

"Aren't there things you can do because you've gone through such an experience?"

"...Fufu, you're an unsparing gentleman. It reminds me of my father's words."

"With father, you mean the one with the weak constitution?"

"Yes, he's been imprisoned by Zamdo, though."

So he's keeping the king confined without killing him, huh?

"Is it fine for me to hear the words of the king, seeing how lighthearted chatter has come to an end at this point?" I ask while focusing on a smile.

In response, Nereis'Kary laughs bashfully, "...Sure, why not. My father told me to find a man who talks with his eyes. And if I find such a man, I am to employ him as my subordinate, win him over as lover, or welcome him into the family as husband...that was the gist of my father's words."

Nereis'Kary's cheeks turn crimson.

"Haha..."

Just when I thought she'd mention some words oozing with a king's philosophical view, it's that kind of advice he gave her. A lover or husband, eh?

Unintentionally it has turned into a mood as if she's confessed to me. At that moment, Viine, who's been sending a cold look my way, quickly stares to the right.

"——Princess, the approaching horse riders are..."

A group heading this way while accompanied by loud hoof clacking is visible in the distance. They

look like mounted knights. Are they knights of the Surgebald Earldom?

"They're unmistakably Surgebald's knights with that crest."

"They have been watching the sky or someone told them about us."

"Either way, they've got a quick information network." Viine comments while nodding at my remark.

Is someone with an item possessing the ability to instantly pass on messages, or someone with such an ability conveniently part of their knight order? No way. I think it's a coincidence.

While considering that, I step forward to greet them first. Hankay nods, telling me with his eyes that he leaves everything to me. I nod back at him, and keep walking ahead.

"Nn, nya." As usual, Rollo climbs on my shoulder.

"——You people! Stop at once and identify yourself!"

The knights wear stern expressions. I try to greet them, but Nereis'Kary quickly steps forward. She places her hand on her own chest.

"I am Nereis'Kary. You don't remember that name?" She introduces herself with a powerful tone.

"Wh-, p-princess!?"



I try to leave after giving the princess in the custody of the knight order, but after getting persuaded by Nereis'Kary, my friends and I are escorted to the earl's mansion.

After entering the mansion, we head to the governmental office situated at the end of the entrance hall. The lord and knights are having a meeting in the room that has maps and flags hanging on the walls. It's only natural, but the lord and his knights treat the princess respectfully. All of them go down on their knees.

"...Surgebald, please raise your head."

"Princess...it's great that you came back safe and sound..."

"Yes...various things happened, but I've managed to return to Leften."

The earl lifts his head upon the princess' permission.

"Princess, I'm overjoyed."

"Me too. You have done well to hold out in the dispute against the war faction as part of the peace

faction. Please stand up. I'm in the position of being this country's princess, but right now I'm just an ordinary woman. A weak woman...who's come to rely on you, Surgebald."

"What are you talking about, princess? Do you know how important it is for you to be here? It's all going to be alright now that you've escaped Zamdo's evil clutch. Please leave the rest to this humble servant."

The earl is a human with a beard as thick as Hankay. With his white hair standing out, he must be past middle age by now.

"Okay, I'm looking forward to your service."

"——Yes, Your Highness!" Surgebald kisses the back of the princess' hand.

Once he stands up, the knights behind him follow suit as well.

"Surgebald, it looks like your territory is flourishing."

"Yes, thanks to you. The companies feeling grateful to the peace faction, especially the president of the Hyperion Enterprise and the leaders of 【Oath of the One Horn】, have been supporting us across-the-board."

Oath of the One Horn? Isn't that Chianelas' place? Viine has apparently realized as well as she's sending a sharp look my way through her silver mask. I nod at her, lowering my chin slightly, and also make eye contact with her.

That's why it probably matches with Chianelas's company. Hyperion's name also stood out during the Underground Auction. Back then I've seen people probably related to that enterprise, but...since all of them were wearing robes, I couldn't see their faces. The only thing I noticed was one person having a cleft chin. I think it might have been the handsome Chianelas with his chiseled face.

A conversation about their plans has developed between the earl and the princess. After talking for a while, Nereis'Kary introduces me.

"...Is that so? He is...the hero who has saved you, Princess Nereis'Kary." Surgebald grins while looking at me.

He bows like a knight. I answer with the Ra Kelada greeting.

"Hero is too exaggerated. At first I intended to ignore her. But, because of Princess Nereis'Kary's courage, I made a move. That's why we're here now." I explain matter-of-factly.

"...You're an honest man. Shuuya Kagari-sama, are you truly an Eight Light?" The earl asks, apparently knowing well about the dark side called dark guilds.

"Surgebald, I'll repeat it many times over, but it's the truth. He owns a huge mansion in the Martial Arts District of Pelneet. I think he's extremely strong when it comes to the aspect of a martial arts family, rather than the title of Eight Light. The spearmanship training he's done every day on the courtyard...he's also trained many other weapon types. And at times, I was allowed to witness how

he had frighteningly intense mock battles with his friends. I'm not that well-informed about martial arts training, but I think his might be even more rigid than that of the Knights of Twilight."

"...Haha, Knights of Twilight you say... Princess, it will hurt some of the knights standing behind me to hear you say that, you know?"

He's right. The knights standing behind the earl, who have many beastmen among them, are glaring at me. I don't really know much about that Knight of Twilight business, though. I wonder, would it be okay to keep considering them to be similar to Great Knights?

"I'm sorry, but it's the truth."

"Princess, I have understood. And Shuuya-sama, please allow me, Lusan Ido Surgebald, to formally thank you for helping us this time. As a reward, I shall——"

"No, Your Grace. I don't need any thanks."

It's rude, but I instantly turn him down. As for the earl who's obtained information about me from the princes...I'm sure he's aiming to win me over for their side. Nereis'Kary doesn't rebuke my behavior or anything. She wears an expression full of understanding.

"What..."

"Surgebald, please don't pull such a face. Shuuya-sama didn't even plan to come to this mansion at first. Although he said, 'Well then, princess, I've kept my promise, so I'm leaving now,' and was about to simply leave when I explained everything to the gentlemen of the Silver Snake Guards, I frantically stopped him from going. And I brought him here with me while fully aware that it was unreasonable to do so."

"...I see. In that case, I must regard just being able to meet with Shuuya-sama as a blessing. By all means I'd like to invite you to tonight's dinner party."

What should I do? I had planned to go to Sol's place in the Whirlpool Forest of Demon Fog, though. I also want to go to Hekatrail to meet with Quiche and Sherry. Quiche...I'm sure she'll be delighted if we meet again.

"Shuuya, I don't really mind a little delay in our journey."

"I don't mind either. I want to swing my axes at the Mysty's Whirlpool Forest-something, but...well, neither the forest nor the house in there are going to run away, right?" Hankay comments while placing his hands on his Adamantine wood armor.

"Alright, then let's have you treat us to some delicious food."

"Ooh, then please come this way. Hodon! Chizel!" The earl summons his servants while energetically clapping his hands. "You two, lead Shuuya-sama to the inner room. Princess, please go and take a rest as well."

"Okay! I will stay at Shuuya-sama's side, too." Nereis'Kary announces cheerfully, and draws close.

Although it was just a short period, she might be reluctant to part with me after becoming my friend.

"Okay, then we'll take you up on your kind offer for a bit, I suppose?"

"Fufu, correct~ It appears the room is this way. Since we'll also be provided with fruits of Leften, let's enjoy eating those together for a bit."

"Nn, nya." Rollo, who's been behaving well so far, replies by tapping my shoulder.

It looks like she wants to eat fruits.

We're guided by the servants through a long corridor that seems to have a width of ten meters. A light brown carpet has been laid out. After some time we arrive at a fan-shaped door. Magic lamps are installed on the left and right side of that door.

We step into the room after the servants open the door for us. I guess this is a parlor. That's an earl's mansion for you. It hosts an array of beautiful furniture. The walls are decorated with paintings depicting servings of vegetables.

"Nya."

Rollo runs straight for the sofa. Mysty and Hankay, while each picking out a piece of furniture, sit down on armchairs. The servants carry side tables filled with fruits, wine bottles and water pitchers into the room. Viine and I sit down on the sofa where Rollo is playing around by jumping up and down. The princess sits down on a matching sofa, located opposite of mine.

I take a deep breath while stretching my back. Yep, it's a nice mansion. A chandelier is hanging from the ceiling, and the walls have been designed in a way to match with the paintings. The cat-shaped lamp in an alcove is pretty neat.

It looks like Rollo would unleash cat punches at it once she notices...

All of us have a pleasant chant in this parlor. As if relaxing in the lobby of a high-class hotel, we drink herbal tea and eat fruits while listening to Princess Nereis'Kary telling us about how she learned sewing during her imprisonment in the tower. For some reason, Viine gets jealous of that, and proudly describes a dark elf child game using strings which her big sister taught her in her childhood. This triggers Hankay to get curious about stories of the dark elves in the underground world. He also frantically asks Viine about stories of the dwarven underground society and the stray dwarves living down there. It develops into a talk about speculations whether they might not be related to the ancient civilization that appeared in Mysty's dreams.

After a while the break comes to an end. The time passed in a flash as we kept exchanging all these rich stories.

"Nnnnn." Rollo purrs at the talk's end, and jumps.

She gets on the cloth of a low table, and seemingly enjoying its feel, she rolls around on top of it.

Then she begins to rub her back against it.

『Rollo-sama looks so happy! What cute boobies!』

The tiny Helme, who's appeared in my visual field, gets all excited as she stares at my partner's belly. *censored cat porn*

When a servant enters to inform us that the dinner is ready, Rollo gets up. The massage time is over. If Rebecca had been here, she might have had a nose bleed.

"Fufu, you sure look forward to the food, don't you Rollo-chan?"

"Nyaa."

While climbing on my shoulder, Rollo points a tentacle in the direction of the room's exit. She probably thinking, 『Let's hurry up and go eat nya』. Since it's the dinner of a noble, her expectations must skyrocket. But, Rollo-san, do you really believe that you'll get to eat kasojique so easily?

"...It does seem so. Well, let's go."



Just as we're lavishly enjoying the great amount of food, the door is suddenly slammed open.

"Your Grace! It's unclear who it is, but enemies have invaded the grounds of the mansion! Several of our men have been killed, and several have collapsed. Fierce battles are going on at the front and back door——"

Enemies? Soldiers of Prime Minister Zamdo? Hogbar?

"What was that!? Send a messenger to the soldier and knight barracks to call for reinforcements!"

"Yes!"

The earl handles it in a manner showing that he's used to it. It seems like he's experienced all kinds of skirmishes.

『Your Excellency, shall I come out?』

『No, finding the enemy takes priority for now. Lend me your eyes』

『Yes—— ahn』

I turn my eyes to Rollo while using Spirit Sight. Rollo exchanges eye contact with me.

"N, nya."

At once she transforms into a black panther. Viine readies her Jade Snake Bow. Although she's got Gadorices with her as well, she's chosen her bow. Her bow releases a green light as usual, but it doesn't transform into a longbow. Well, makes sense since we're indoors.

The name Viine Dao Azmail floating up in red letters on the surface of the decorative wisteria after she grabs the bow is the same as usual, too.

Mysty retrieves a small metal ball from her waist without using her new sorcery doll, and instantly creates metallic stakes on her palm, readying them between her ten fingers as if handling pens. Somehow she looks like a female ninja. So damn cool.

Did she learn daggers arts from Yui? She might have used her classes at the academy for it.

Hankay seizes one ax, and moves to a window. Certainly, it's quite possible that they'll attack from the backyard, I guess. ...It's a glass window allowing a look at the garden.

So it's Hogbar's **【Noctal's Oath】** after all, huh?

For the time being, I'll focus my priority on protecting the princess. A big <Chain> shield and magic. I assume I'll use <Chain Spear of the Ray System> as a projectile weapon.

Hankay covers the window, Viine stands in front of the princess while holding her bow. Mysty keeps the whole room in sight from behind Rollodeen. I suppose I'll deal with the guys coming from the corridor.

In the next moment, the double door of the salon is smashed. The thick, light brown door that seems to have been made out of evergreen oak shatters apart. The one appearing while trampling across the door's fragments is a catman.

"Kakaka! The outside is under our complete control. A surprise attack unexpectedly rocks as well."

Yep, it's Hogbar Shafeed. Seemingly being the embodiment of composure, Hogbar rotates his four arms, showcasing a feeling of calmness. Behind Hogbar who's clad in the aura of a strong fighter...strong folks have gathered. There's also the spear-wielding catman I've seen before among them.