

Chapter 335 - Reason

The wasp mark on Quiche's cheeks looks as if a small fish is swimming within a mountain torrent. Once I face her smile that has a feel of translucence...a crimson leaf fell down towards us with the big tree, its origin, rustling in the wind.

The red leaf completely contradicts her jade green hair, and yet it lands on that very hair as it sways.

Fallen leaves, similar to crease crape, litter the ground underneath the tree next to her.

Her hair, bound by a string, gently sways again thanks to the wind. Thereupon, she holds the hair down with a hand while standing still gracefully.

The children run up to us from behind her.

"——Aahh, the newly hired adventurer mention by Sherry-onee-chan~?"

"——There's also a kitty with him!"

"Hmm~, onii-chan, I've seen you before. It's the black kitty from back then!"

"Did she come to save us, that cool kitty?"

Many of the children possess scaled skins. There's even a child with a lizard head among them.

"Long time no see."

"N, nya~"

Rollo, standing like a doll at my feet with her hind paws lined up, greets the children. After drumming against the ground with her long tail, she points a forepaw to the side while donning a triumphant look for some reason.

"The cute kitty greeted us~"

"Let's play together~"

"Nya~"

The contrarian Rollo moves behind my calf as if to hide, implicitly telling the children, 『I'm not going to play right now~』. Then she peeks out her small head, glancing at the children with her red eyes.

From my point of view, it looks upside down, but I think she's looking puzzled.

"Uhhh, cute~ Do you believe that you're hidden by doing that?"

"Her eyes are adorable."

The children surround me, trying to catch Rollo.

"I can understand your feelings, but let's keep the greetings at that. I'm sure you kids understand as well, but I must talk with Shuuya about something important, also including the matter of Arry and Taack."

"Nn, nya~." Rollo meows as if saying, 『She's right ~nya』.

Quiche dons an expression containing some motherly component and also elements befitting a knight. It looks like she's already learned how to act like a mother. It's plain obvious from the children's expressions that they dearly love Quiche.

"Yep, Arry and Taack..."

"I'm sure onii-chan and kitty-chan will be able to find them for us." A girl throws her expectations at me.

All of the children look uneasy. Arry and Taack, who've become adventurers and helped out around here, have gone missing, so they must be very scared deep down.

Trying to relieve that anxiety at least a bit, I tell them, "Leave it to us. We'll put all our effort into finding them."

"Nn, nya." Rollo meows in agreement.

She extends a small, bean-sprout-like tentacle towards the karamnian girl from the base of her neck. She uses the tentacle to touch her blue hair, feel her slightly narrow forehead, and caress her cheek that has taken on the tinge of an apple. Then Rollo attaches the pad on the underside of the tentacle to the girl's cheek.

"...Hehe, it tickles! But, yeah!"

The girl acts bashful, looking embarrassed. It appears Rollo has transmitted her feelings to the girl. I've got no clue what Rollo told her, though.

Once Rollo finishes passing on her feelings, she detaches the tentacle from the girl's cheek and instantly reels it back in, reverting to her usual cat appearance as if the tentacle didn't exist in the first place.

The girl blinks repeatedly in surprise, touches her cheek, and then looks at Rollo. I guess a child can't really perceive the speed of Rollo reeling in her tentacle.

Quiche has been watching all that while smiling gently.

"...Fufu. Okay, that's enough, right? Now go and wait inside the house."

Following Quiche's instruction, the human and karamnian children head back into the hut. Quite obedient, those kids. They also want to save Arry and Taack.

But, considering how much time has passed...no, let's try whatever is possible before becoming all pessimistic.

Putting strength into my eyes, I stare at the tattoo on Quiche's cheek.

"...Quiche, please tell me the details."

She looks at my face, reverting to a stern expression. While piercing me with her jade green eyes, her lips move, "At first, our cattle disappeared, and we discovered huge footsteps, believed to be those of trolls. Arry and Taack followed those footsteps on their own accord, and went missing as a result...Sherry and I looked for them, but..."

"I see..."

Her shoulders are so slumped that I can clearly sense the grief from her. Reflexively I place a hand on her upper arm. Her white skin is warm and soft.

"..."

"...Fufu."

Seeing me smile at her, Quiche returns a tender smile, but...big tears have accumulated in her eyes.

And then, with her small lips trembling, she continues, "...Even the children you talked with a moment ago can defeat soldier ants like Arry and Taack. But, obviously I can't go and leave the children behind in a place that's under constant attack by orcs. And, I don't have any money either, so I'm unable to hire any highly-skilled adventurers...Sherry has somehow managed to put up a request with her money, but..."

"Money, eh? I met Sherry in Hekatrail while she was working on that end. She's now hired as a receptionist in a certain office."

"I...see. So you met her earlier, hmm?" Quiche's face is slightly cramped.

Her behavior is definitely weird. It looks like she's bothered about me having met Sherry first. Still, it seems like it'd be better for me to not dig too deep into this.

"...But, at Sherry's workplace, yep."

Sherry has no combat abilities. She might have actually learned some swordsmanship for a short time, but maybe Quiche is worried about her.

"It's the office of **【Remains of the Moon】**, right? I've heard from Sherry. At first I was anxious after hearing that she'd be working for a dark guild, but after she told me with a smile, 『...The public face is a ship company making huge profits through trading with oil shells, crook fruits, and similar. Besides, right now it might be the safest place there is』, I felt like it's going to be okay. After all it came out of Sherry's mouth who has a decent information network at hand."

I suppose Quiche doesn't know about me being the guildmaster of that place either. Well, titles and stuff like that don't count much anyway.

"...So, where are the troll footsteps which Arry and Taack followed?"

"Already gone. After being washed away by rain and getting blurred by orc raids, it's become impossible to follow that trail."

"I see. There's no mana residue either?"

"None."

"In that case...I guess I have no choice but to simply look for the troll den and orc nest."

The red-haired dwarf also mentioned attacks by orcs and trolls.

"The orcs have countless nests, so it'll be troublesome to find the right one. An orc nation might exist nearby, too."

"That possibility sounds very likely. Previously, when I worked on a request in the Pel-Heka-Line, many orcs wandered the underground corridors. Maybe they've been patrolling the area rather than loitering around. And before coming here, a red-haired dwarf, a woodcutter of the Hino Village, told me that they were attacked by orcs and trolls with a grim look."

"Red-haired dwarf...in other words, old man Mubed. I think he belongs to the Rease Company, who mainly focus on lumberjacking and general-purpose stores. I've procured various necessities from them in the past, such as hay, oil, feathers, and polishing agents."

I suppose that tattered, covered wagon carried those things.

"So he was called Mubed, that ichigon-like dwarf. Somehow an unexpected name."

"Hahaha, he definitely resembles an ichigon. Though, it'd be better to not say that in front of him." Quiche replies with a laugh.

"Don't worry, I won't...anyway, about the trolls, did they attack the village here?"

"No, they only roared and left those big footsteps around the village. Mysteriously they didn't launch an attack on us."

Mubed also talked about trolls, but...

"Did the orcs steal the cattle then?"

"I don't know. At first I thought that it was their doing, but...even after repelling those orcs several times, the trolls' roars echoed in the surroundings past midnight, the cases of cattle disappearing continued afterwards. I think there's no doubt that either the trolls or orcs are responsible for the theft of the cattle, but..." Quiche explains with a face full of disgust. "It's possible that the ants took them, or maybe other monsters that appear at night."

"..."

I got a little inspiration from Quiche's grim expression. Maybe it's connected to Nora's story, seeing how it happens at night? It could be that it's part of the battle between vampires and ancient wolfmen, or something like that... A secret maneuvering of vampires, or other highly-intelligent, nocturnal monsters?

I'm not Kazane, but Fate God Ashural is also influencing the situation. No, in the first place...this is a huge world. It's only natural for unknown forces, including the vampires, to vie for supremacy.

But, regarding it under the setting of a huge world, my options are limited. I'll only do what's possible for me to accomplish.

Anyway, it's about the children, Arry and Taack.

"...In that case, about Arry and Taack..."

"Yep, I have no clues. For better or worse, I've entrusted them with a "Rabbit Tail" which will avoid death, so I want to believe that they're still alright."

That's Azolra's...for an instant I end up wondering whether you can really describe that as alright. While looking at Quiche's depressed expression, I continue thinking about a certain matter.

There exists a method to search for the children. It depends on Divine Beast Rollodeen's keen nose, and blood. But before that, I think I need to first tell her that I'm a Lucival and not a normal human.

I'm way late with informing my friend Quiche. I speak up while reflecting on my blunder a bit.

"...I might be able to chase the children, if I meet certain conditions."

"Seriously!?"

"...Before that, there's something I've got to tell you about myself first."

"Something you need to tell me? Shuuya, you are you, right? My friend, who achieved great deeds during the Evil Dragon King battle. A genuine hero."

"You're making me blush if you tell me all this while looking at me like that...well, it might startle you, but please listen to me."

Quiche knits her eyebrows, obviously wondering what I'm talking about.

"Of course I'll listen. You're my friend after all."

Hearing Quiche repeatedly put a level of intimacy going beyond mere friendship into the word 'friend' makes me honestly happy.

I summon my courage, and after nodding once, "...I'm not human, but belong to a species called

Lucival."

She blinks her eyes in succession without showing any surprise worth mentioning on her face.

"You want to say that you possess some special ability because of your race?"

She easily predicts what I was going to say next. I think it's different from what she anticipates as it's about my <Blood Chain Search> skill.

"Correct. I can track people through blood. Though it's only possible as long as I have the blood of the missing children..."

"Blood, you say..." Quiche furrows her eyebrows, brooding.

She presses her index finger against the tip of her slender chin.

...Blood might be used for religious purposes, as fertilizer, or for spells. But usually you don't store it.

Suddenly Quiche cries out, "Ah!", apparently having remembered something as obvious from her hitting the palm of one hand with the bottom of the other hand's fist.

Does she have their blood?

Quiche points her face upwards. And while her face brightens up as if to show off the tattoo on her cheek, she says, "I should still have Arry's kneed protector from the time when she suffered an injury from a soldier ant. Since the bleeding back then was terrible, there might still be some blood left on it——," and turns on her heels.

Making her hair fly, she heads to a hut located in the back.

"——Ah, here it is! There's a blood stain left on this one here!"

Apparently she found the knee protectors inside the hut. Immediately thereafter, she returns to me while carrying a protector at her chest.

It has two holes on the round part of the kneecap above the shin part. Slightly dirty blood, as if it had been rubbed off with a dust cloth, is still remaining on its surface. That means, Arry is an adventurer who took an arrow to the knee.

I think the wound rather stems from claws or fangs, but this is in the way the same as they adventurer who was recuperating in Fortona after taking an arrow to the knee. I think she was a lot younger when she got injured at the knee, but...the knee injury might have healed up quickly because she's still young.

That Arry has been working as an adventurer, and now went missing after following the trolls.

"Nnn, nya~" Rollo reacts after listening to our conversation at my feet.

She skilfully stands on her hind paws like a human. It's what you'd usually describe as rearing up when it comes to horses. Seemingly feeling like a boxer, she cutely unleashes hooks and punches into the air.

"...This should allow tracking. Please put it down over there for starters."

"Okay!"

Quiche places the bloodstained knee guard on the ground. I immediately release blood from my hand and forearm, activating <Blood Chain Search>. You can see the usual, weird tip appearing at the bloody chain. The chain swings around like a pendulum clock, and then pierces into the worn knee guard.

The chain encroaches on the protector with movements similar to that of wool drifting in water, causing the knee guard to break.

However, having obtained Arry's blood, the chain's end rises up, swaying like a cobra. After moving to the left and right, as if sniffing the air, the chain points in the direction of the blood.

"It looks like Arry can be found that way."

"Really!?"

"Going by my experiences with this so far, there's no doubt about it."

"...Amazing."

Alright, let's start the search, using <Blood Chain Search>.

"I'm going to look for her. Rollo, you come with me, too. What are you going to do, Quiche?"

"Nya."

When I ask her, she's staring at Rollo. Her eyes are sparkling as if she's fascinated. I guess it's because Rollo has transformed into her horse lion mode.

She keeps gazing at Rollodeen's imposing divine beast appearance.

"...Rollo, you're bigger than usual...not a panther, but more like a horsey lion?"

Her reaction is understandable since she's witnessing this for the first time. Back during our time in Hekatrail, Rollo hadn't regained her powers as a divine beast. Earth God Gaia and Plant Goddess Sadeyula gave us their blessing as reward for regenerating the Big Tree of Holker...

I'll likely never forget those divine flower sacks, and how Rollo drank the treasured sake, the mysterious sake of light.

"...As a result of our adventures, she regained her powers as a divine beast. There seems to be another treasure, but she recovered her true appearance. For this reason Rollo can turn herself

bigger, into her former appearance."

"Garururu."

Divine Beast Rollodeen has turned into a combination of black horse, lion, and griffon. She proudly appeals her might with a wild, beastly growl. Not her usual cat voice. How unusual.

Without any hesitation, Quiche approaches Rollodeen, and strokes her horse-like head. Staring at Quiche with her moist, glittering red and black eyes, Rollodeen responds. The tips of the small tentacles sprouting out of the base of her neck entwine themselves around Quiche's slender arm and hand.

"...Divine Beast Rollo. Your hands feel slightly ticklish, but your adorable, red eyes are no different from before. The contour from your head to the torso resembles that of a slender horse, but the black fur at your chest, and the tentacles give me the impression of a lion...and all of it is dyed in a pure, wonderful black."

"Nn, nyaa." Rollodeen meows cheerfully.

She touches Quiche from her hair to her long ears with her tentacles.

"Haha, Rollo! Your expression looks sombre, but the part about you trying to do mischief with your tentacles hasn't changed, has it?"

"Nya."

"But, for you to employ such a magnificent divine beast; wouldn't it be more appropriate to actually address you as a Divine Beast Tamer, Shuuya?"

"Divine Beast Tamer, eh? That's not wrong, but...I'm me, you know? Just call me Shuuya as usual. Basically I'm mainly using the spearmanship I inherited from my Master."

"Fugu, you've got a point there."

"Nyano." Rollodeen meows and extends a single tentacle towards Quiche's cheek.

Then she attaches the flat tip to it. It appears she's passing on her feelings to Quiche.

"...The tattoo on my cheek is something like a symbol of my hometown. Fufu, this? My earring is no food. It's small, but it has a Green Dark Gem ornament."

Rollodeen has apparently asked her about her tattoo and earrings. I'm sure she must have perceived the earrings as candy or monster eyeballs.

Quiche keeps affectionately stroking Rollo from her head to the base of neck. And then, after having enjoyed the massage time for a bit, she looks back at me with a smile.

"...I want to join the search as well. But, it's impossible. I need to protect the children and the village."

"Makes sense. The children also need to be fed. And I suppose you'll be needed for the battle against the orcs..."

Should I take out the Burning Knights, Catiza, Purin, Tsuan? Or the two cat dolls in my pocket? Or maybe Helme from my left eye?

"...I sent a request to the adventurer's guild, but I guess it's been in vain..."

"They've got a mountain of other requests. I think it's going to be hard to get any help from them."

"Well, I haven't really been expecting it anyway."

Alright, I guess I'll bring out everyone to protect her village.

"I think it's going to surprise you a bit, but I'll bring out my subordinates. They should be more useful than normal adventurers."

"You're bringing out your subordinates?"

While listening to Quiche doubting words...I touch Dark Hell Boneknight.

As I say in my mind, 『It's time for your turn!』, I also focus on my sixth finger, telling Catiza, 『You come out as well』. Then I take the cat dolls out of Hal'Konk's pocket, pour my mana into them, and throw them towards the ground. At the same time I order Helme to leave my left eyes.

Helme confirms, and spirals out of my eye.

Billowing smoke rises from the ground where the magic threads of the Burning Knights attached themselves after extending from the ring. Alray and Hueremy appear to think of the smoke as fun. They unleash hooks and punches at it from the left and right side. Rollodeen gently watches them playing around.

Then she extends a bunch of tentacles towards the two cats. Coiling them around their small bodies, she pulls them back to herself. Rollodeen proceeds by licking their kitten bodies with her big tongue.

Cleaning, huh? She washes them in a way as a mother cat would nurse her kittens.

"...Your Excellency, you want us to check the situation in the vicinity?"

"There's that as well. For the time being, you're going to basically listen to what Quiche, the one in charge of the village, tells you."

"Understood."

Helme casts a sidelong glance at Quiche after hearing my instruction.

Meanwhile Quiche's mouth is trembling with her being dumbfounded.

"Nice to meet you, Quiche-san. Please order us later as you need."

"...Okay, your name is..."

"I'm His Excellency's water. I am called Water Spirit of Everlasting Darkness Helme. Call me as you see fit from now on..."

"S-Spirit-sama..."

"Quiche, it's alright. You don't need to humble yourself like that. And Helme, don't do any of your butt stuff."

"O-Okay!? I-I won't examine a-anything!" Helme's body jumps with a start.

A denial has come out of your mouth, but Helme-san, you've been fixedly staring at Quiche's butt.

And then, after her upper body trembles violently once more, she makes a pose. Spreading both her palms to the sides, she releases water sprays, spiraling them from her waist along her legs. Those spirals of water take on the shapes of birds as if an indomitable life dwells within them. The water birds fly around Helme, looking like seagulls bustling around a ship.

Lastly, Helme herself elegantly whirls around, adopting yet another pose. Her big boobs wobble splendidly. Magnificent. Her new pose is wonderful. Her way of putting her arms together has become an encounter with the unknown. A New Helme Pose - Gown Version.

"..."

"..."

"...Well then, I'm going to check the surroundings——"

I don't think that she can't stomach our silence, but Helme flies up into the sky in one breath while releasing water sprays from her feet.

At that moment,

"——Your Excellency, Zemetas reports in."

"Admos has arrived! Leave the annihilation of the enemies to me!"

"Catiza has arrived~ I shall exterminate the enemies♪"

The usual, high-tension team.

"...W-What weird knights! A spirit, cants, and even a silver-haired woman..." Quiche widens her eyes in surprise.

Probably reacting as heavy knight and as leader protecting the village, she places a hand on the

longsword hanging at her waist.

"My name is Adomos, a Burning Knight. I am no weird knight."

"My name is Zemetas. I'm an existence called Burning Knight."

"I am an <Apostle of Light Evil>. I'm the beloved Ca-chan who can transform into a third arm His Excellency envies."

Envy? Beloved? Well, she's right about the third arm, so I won't retort on it. But, Catiza's hair has taken on an odd shape...is she expecting me to retort or something? Her hair has a shape with a sense of humor and her expression has a tinge of playing the fool.

The idea of a grand retort of vertically slashing her silver hair with the burning red ax blade of Baldok reflexively crosses my mind, but instead I turn my eyes in Quiche's direction.

"Quiche, the Burning Knights are advance guards using shields and swords, as you can see. And the girl with the brown skin and silver hair is Catiza, also Ca-chan. Her movements are slow, but she can act as an advance or rear guard."

"I shall contribute to battle with my shield and sword——"

"Leave the vanguard to us Burning Knights."

"I shall mow down the enemies with my hair♪"

While declaring that, the Burning Knights and Catiza genuflect vigorously.

"...<Summoning>, huh? Is this also one of your racial powers like the blood chain that's been pointing in the direction of Arry for a while now?"

Quiche points at <Blood Chain Search>, the Burning Knights, and Catiza.

"My personal abilities certainly play a role in this, but for the most part, the Burning Knights originate from this ring's ability. Catiza was accidentally created when I used a certain skill."

I show Quiche the Dark Hell Bone Knight.

"I remember that ring. Though it's my first time seeing it used. I guess you've also obtained magic-based combat occupations besides the spearmanship ones, huh?" Quiche mutters while full of admiration.

"Nn, nya." "Nyaaan." "Nyaoon."

Alray and Hueremy have transformed into big tigers under Rollodeen's encouraging meowing.

"Oohh...two big tigers..."

"I'll leave Alray and Hueremy in the village, too. You guys can differentiate between allies and

enemies, right?"

"——Nyaa." "Nyaon."

The two tigers reply to me, perform a retainer's bow, and approach the Burning Knights, pushing them down.

Come to think of it, they've been jumping at them for like forever now. It looks like Alray and Hueremy like those armors. But, is it going to be alright? If they were to leap at Quiche's children...

"——W-What!?"

"Alray-sama, Hueremy-sama, we are no fodder..."

The two tigers wholeheartedly continue licking the surface from the Burning Knights' characteristic eye sockets to their breastplates. And each time the lick, the amount of smoke released from the armor fluctuates.

How funny. The eerie flames burning in the eye sockets also fluctuate repeatedly. As expected, their appearance is surreal exactly because they're made out of bones.

Moreover, I don't think that the tigers are misunderstanding the armor of billowing smoke as new fodder, but...they hold the Burning Knights' torsos in their muzzles. And just like that, they forcibly lift up the knights.

I'm sorry, but from the movements on this occasion, I've ended up regarding the Burning Knights as dolls.

Suddenly Alray and Hueremy squat down in front of the knights. In short, they're telling them to get on.

"Oooh, is it fine for me to mount your back, Alray-sama?"

"Nyaa."

"I shall get on, Hueremy-sama."

"Nyao."

Zeme and Ado mount Alray and Hueremy.

"Fuhahaha, it means I can capitalize on my sonrissa experience once again!"

"Zemetas, we're in Sela right now. Remember the Spirit World Azorin trap."

"Ugh, I know."

The Burning Knights talk about events in the Spirit World while on top of the tigers. It sounds like they've practiced fighting as cavalry in the Spirit World.

"How nice. But, my fishies are waiting for me♪" Catiza says enviously while watching the Burning Knights.

But, since I believe that the Demonic Bonefish manipulated by Catiza are endowed with considerable mobility as well, I don't point anything to her.

"You guys, follow Quiche's instructions and protect this village as cavalry."

"——You can count on me."

"At your command."

"Okaaay, Zeme-chan, Ado-chan, let's do our best~"

"...These people are going to follow my instructions..."

A shadow of fear is reflected on Quiche's face.

"It's fine. No need to hold back on them."

"...Okay, I got it, Shuuya..."

After surveying my subordinates, Quiche walks up to me. I put my arms around her back, and pull her into my embrace.

She might still feel uneasy.

"Are you still worried?"

"...Allow me to hug you as friend and woman for now." Quiche declares and smiles as if pretending to be tough with a grim expression.

My subordinates are all abnormal. I can fully understand how Quiche feels shaken.

She buries her face in my chest, obviously enjoying the nostalgic touch. Her hair smells nicely.

In order to make this adorable Quiche feel even safer...I gently stimulate the depressions around her shoulder blades with my fingertips through her leather clothes. At the same time, I enjoy the soft feel of her back with my palms.

...Her spine's fleshiness is lovely as well. The liaison at the bar has triggered my lust. I can feel my dick throbbing, but the fun has to wait for later. Albeit reluctantly, I pull myself away from Quiche's body.

"...Honestly, I want to do a lot more with you. But, for now I'm going to chase after Arry and Taack."

"...You're right. I leave them in your hands."

"Sure. Make sure to now point your butt at the spirit up there, okay?" I say while messing a bit with her.

"What do you mean?"

"I'm kidding."

"Hah...so it'll be fine as long as I protect my butt, right?" Quiche hides her butt with both hands while laughing.

I feel like Helme has sent a flirtatious glance our way, but I ignore it.

"That'll be plenty. Anyway, I'm off."

I turn around, and leave Quiche behind by running. Rollodeen runs after me.

"It's a celebration for His Excellency's departure~"

"Ei ei."

"Ooohhh~"

Catiza and the Burning Knights' cheering reaches me from behind, but I disregard it.

The <Blood Chain Search> restlessly points back and forth between left and right side. I leap across the small fence on the village's left side.

While looking at the hill with its collapsed top on the left...I push my way through the trees while blowing away countless branches. It's a terrain with intense undulation, no, a place with many downward slopes?

Following the guidance of <Blood Chain Search>, we shift from heading west of the woodland to south. Mountains, which vividly remind me of the Whirlpool Forest of Demonic Fog, keep appearing and disappearing ahead of our direction. The overlapping shapes of the mountains' ridgelines look like dragon fangs to me.

And then, the sight of bountiful nature got overlaid in my mind by the scene of the two gigantic monsters fighting on the labyrinth's 20th floor...that can't be, right? But, it's a place that seems as if such huge beings would live there.



—Around the time when the spearmaster and his black cat started to chase after the missing children while using <Blood Chain Search>, two beings were fighting an ancient wolfman in a certain woodland.

One was a woman wearing a black-lacquered headgear. That female person jumped up from atop a leaf growing on a big branch.

"Sagecross——" She fully swung a big scythe while shouting.

The scythe's blade headed for the neck of the wolfman, making it look as if a branch had suddenly extended from the woman's elastic, round shoulder tip.

The wolfman yelled, "A blade like this——", with a sharp glint in his eyes while growing several silver claws from his fists. He blocked the approaching blade by crossing the silver claws in front of his neck.

However, from behind him, "——End", a sharp, big scythe blade dug into the wolfman's neck from right behind him, accompanied by that yell.

The wolfman's head was sent flying. Blood gushed out furiously from his neck, which was cut so cleanly and magnificently that it seemed like a distinct cross-section-view. The blood fountain scattered into the air in a helical shape.

The woman, who had swung the scythe, was densely covered by white moths on her overcoat and headgear. She transformed her hat into a hood

The two women of violet-red butterflies and white moths, who had created this ghastly spectacle, laughed cheerfully. And then they changed their mouths into something like straws. Stabbing those tapered mouths into the wolfman's head, which had been flying through the air, as if skewering it from the neck's base to the crown of the head, they quickly sucked out the blood and magic elements within.

Moreover, they also took measures to take in the magic elements around them.

"——The magic elements aren't really all that dense, but their quality is somewhat high." She said while taking off her hat.

The eyebrows of the woman, who had freed her boyish, silver hair, were slender as if drawn with a brush. Both her eyes had long slits as pupils. Given that her mouth had already returned to the shape of a humanoid, her head now looked exceedingly close to that of a human woman.

Her clothing consisted of a gorgeous, dress-like overcoat. But, her body consisted of violet-red butterflies with a tremendous amount of mana dwelling within. Countless butterflies were flapping their wings in the gaps of her garment.

"Even though he might have looked like this, he was still a wolfman. Well, I think one at soldier-class level though."

After making the hat she held at her side disappear, the butterfly woman recalled how the ancient wolfman had defended against her prided scythe with his claws, and spat out in slight mortification, "Soldier-classes are strong when compared to humans. He blocked my scythe."

The color of the butterflies across her whole body gained a stronger violet hue. Then, she made it

transform into a blue luster similar to morph butterflies.

Moreover, she directed a lewd look at the special metallic staff forming the handle of her scythe...as if seductively ogling a dick. Immediately following, she placed a slender finger on the black-shining magic character trenches carved onto the staff's surface, and traced them a few times.

The scythe released an eerie sound as if rejoicing over the sensation of her finger. The magic characters stand out from the surface where her finger touched, as if having burned with hot iron. The scythe began to emit mana as if the mana contained within had risen by one digit.

"But, Jody, it's been really a long time since an ancient wolfman intruded our woodland dwelling."

"The battle against the vampires might have become more intense."

After agreeing, Jody pursed her lips, looking like she was pondering, and then said, "...There's also the troops of the Tree King of Wonders. It's probably an outcome of various battles going on outside our domain. The influx of magic elements has changed as well... Look, as evidence of that, the Fumkry's Divine Scales of Calamity are tilting."

The woman wearing a hood containing huge amounts of mana changed that hood into a sort of hat with the shape of a black-lacquered headgear, just like the one of the butterfly woman.

She possessed a body consisting of white moths. Her right hand was grasping a mana-clad, big scythe, reminding one of a death god. Jody, the moth woman, extended her left hand in front of her chest.

The small moths which kept the shape of an arm, flapped their wings lightly. Then Jody manifested an item that seemed to combine a scale and a crystal ball in shape. The mysterious scale demonstrated its presence by shining bewitchingly. Following that, the white moths on the surface of her arm showed an unusual reaction. Countless small, red lips appeared as if buried between the white moths.

Those crooked lips squirmed as if having their own consciousness. They leaked quiet whispers into their surroundings, seemingly cursing anything and everything.

Her companion, the butterfly woman, looked at Fumkry's Divine Scales of Calamity releasing a vast amount of man, and after gesturing as if playing the fool, she shrugged her shoulders.

"...Hee, something like your thingy reacting...the location is also closer than Pelneet. If you like, how about going outside? With the influx of many, many humans and troops of the Tree King, it's become much, much easier since the number of enemies has grown, right?"

"Ah, going by your look, you're planning to turn strong fighters into food with Cunnariel's Blade, Ciel? You're intending to absorb various things again, aren't you?"

"Fufu, you found out~♪"

The moth and butterfly women danced across the sky like fairies while laughing.

Ancient stone monuments had still remained in South Mahaheim during the Era of Dawn, telling others in chiseled letters, 『Death Butterfly People live in the Twelve Woodlands. You must stay away from there』, but...nowadays they probably didn't exist anymore.

