

## **Chapter 345 - Head Servant Hoffmann**



—I activate <Blood Path - 'Swelling Spirit Legs' (Ideoplast)>. The bluish-white spirit hand crushes the remnants of the small butterflies, causing the butterflies to vanish like a fleeting dream.

Is this a dream...? A dream of viscous, black butterflies...no, the Death Butterfly women, who vanished, were real.

...Fuck....what a failure...

I recall the scene of my <Servant Leaders> disappearing. Toyz...she was a woman resembling Marianne, but now she's gone. I wish this was all but a dream, but unfortunately it's reality. It's an outcome along the lines of what Marianne said... 『What ought to happen will definitely happen』.

...What a humiliation. I, who have become a true, perfect, spiritual being through baptism...

Did I come back a second time to taste such a disgrace?

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no! Absolutely not!

God chose a monster to establish the true thousand-year kingdom! Yes, a monster exceeding all heretics and renegades by far! He degraded me to a blood-smeared vampire! You can call this the epitome of irony for a former clergyman to be reborn into one of the chief beings defying the cross.

Having been born into such a nightmare, I suffered at first as well. When I awoke with the awareness of Hoffmann, I understood everything, but...



Everyday...I offered my prayers to the Lord...with feelings of hopelessness, sadness, and regret. Even as my body turned into that of a vampire, my mind remained unchanged. Even when my body obtained abilities with impure names called skills, my feelings towards God, my Lord, didn't change.

『Oh Lord, please protect me with your love and sincerity, never losing your compassionate heart』

『Having become evil, my body and mind were seized by sin. The number of sins is as tall as there is sand at the beach, crushing my heart. Oh Lord! Please save me. Please rescue me from this nightmare as quickly as possible』

Praying like this was rejected by my vampiric body. And yet, without minding that, I spent my days praying to the Lord everyday.

However, the God I knew never answered my prayers. It's because this world is filled with all kinds of gods and spirits.

Because I could sense the guidance of my blood...I suffered in anguish and mortification all the more. To the extent of wishing for my own death.

『At this rate, I'm on the way towards ruin...』

Having become desperate, I...assaulted the city guards while screaming and lamenting. And I deliberately received the guards' counterattacks with my brand new body. With the iron will to bear all my sins through spear and sword blades...

Even as I felt excruciating pain from my entrails through the vibrations from the spears pierced into my chest...I stoically and determinedly endured while closing my eyes and believing that I was basking in the sins of people...

The guards, who considered me dead, cruelly tossed my disfigured body into a ditch.

Next I employed horse-riding bandits wearing musty vests with knight crests imprinted, and headed into the wilderness. I dug a hole with everyone in the flat wasteland. And then I entered the hole myself...asking those I've employed to bury me in the soil.

With just my head exposed...I spent my days.

At this time I experienced the sensation of having my own eyeballs pecked out by crows.

Then I used oil and glowing embers to set myself ablaze. Of course...my body kept regenerating, even while I tasted an indescribable pain and smelled the terrible stench of my skin being burned.

Following that, I ate meat infested with the bubonic plague as if the divine protection of St. Sebastian bore no meaning. Moreover, I scratched my chest apart with my sharp claws as if to gouge out my own intestines, and attempted to get beasts to eat me by entering their nest...

I might have surpassed all the mountaineering ascetics of Persia and ancient Spain's Assyria...

I put my utmost effort into dying as if having completely succumbed to madness, but all of it was in vain. Because I'm a vampire. But, because of all of this, I also learned about my immortality.

Back then it might have been possible for me to get annihilated if I had managed to get hit by holy water after getting hunted down by vampire hunters...but, there were no vampire hunters.

Always carrying desperation in my heart, based on all those experiences, I continued wandering. And then I lay down on the ground, sprawled.

Would I be going back to soil like this? I might also get killed if I encountered Death God Namtar.

While thinking all that, I wasted my days by sleeping.

At that point, I suddenly heard the voice of a human woman, asking me, "——What are you

doing?"

"...I'm wishing to die."

"What was that? That's a language I've never heard before."

While lying on the ground, I had answered her in the language of my previous world.

"So far as it goes, I also know the common language..."

After I awakened, I understood the language of this land. After all, it felt more like waking up than awakening.

"Oh, you could talk normally then, huh? So, what are you doing right now?"

"I want to die."

"...Haah? What stupid stuff are you saying despite being still so young?" After sighing, she expressly bent one knee, grabbed my hand against my will after making sure to prop up my body, and helped me up.

She was a strong woman to lift a man, even disregarding that I didn't have any decent personal belongings on me. Her light brown hair was adorned by a beautiful hair decoration with a coloring as if to complement her hair color. The smell of grapes hung in the air.

"——You've got a °sulfur smell°, don't you? But, look, you can still walk, right?" She forcibly pulled my hand, dragging me all the way to her home.

It seems like I was clad in a rotten smell, and not one of grapes. It was probably because of <Evil Mana> or <Degenerated Heaven - Iste's Song>.

"...Why are you helping me?"

"You're saying such things again! Do you want to be eaten by jackals?" She scolded me while pressing one hand against her hip and pointing a finger of the other at me.

Since she had big breasts, they swayed in response.

While looking at her chest, "...I have already experienced being eaten by stray dogs."

"Pfft, how can you be alive after getting eaten? You're so silly!"

She apparently interpreted it as a joke, and thus laughed loudly. When I saw her cheerful smile, I felt like I could forget my despair towards God.

While wetting my lips, I explained, "That's because I'm not normal."

I couldn't tell her about me being a vampire, though.

"...Once again you're spouting some incomprehensible stuff, blondie. You're so dirty despite having such a nice face... Are you possibly a fallen noble from some place?"

She was a woman yapping lots and often.

"I'm not..."

"...Well, you're here in the Highland Forest, so no one will ask you about any details. And, you're truly lucky. After all, the knights under Arebanos-sama have cleaned up all the monsters in the area, you see? Though there seem to be rumors circulating that a dragon and the Wall King are still around."

"...I see."

Then again, I would also be included among those monsters.

"...Come on, blondie. If you can walk, it's this way."

"What are you going to do after saving me?"

"...What ought to happen will definitely happen."

"Hmm? I don't understand. Is that a family motto or something?"

"...What's your name?" The woman asked for my name without answering my question.

"...Hoffmann."

"I see. You're free to despair, but I'll regret it if it happened on my family's plot of land. What ought to happen will definitely happen is simply something gramps always told me. Right now, our fields are about to fall into ruin. It's because we're lacking manpower." She told me while pointing a sharp look my way.

To be honest, she wasn't much of a beauty. But, she had a well-tempered character, and an impressively bright smile reminding me of a sunflower.

I was taken aback for a while, but she forced me along anyway. The place she led me to was a hut with the trees on its left and right side having been cut down. Her family lived in that hut.

She introduced me to her family with the simple words, "This man called Hoffmann is going to work here as a live-in from today," resulting in a vampire like me working in the fields...

I remembered how I had helped out on a farm during my youth in my previous life, before I stood on a platform as a priest...

Why was a vampire like me...? Why didn't I kill her by sucking her blood? Why didn't I kill her after obtaining the ability to peek into the brain by tearing apart a head?

While such questions crossed my mind...I decided to obediently work on the fields, believing that it

was the perfect opportunity to learn the language of this area.

However, I felt gratitude towards her. I, whose flesh was swelling as a vampire, naturally felt nauseous because of my contradicting mind... But, back then I might still have had some parts of my time as a human left.

And thus I began to live together with that woman. Her name was Marianne.

As I lived with Marianne and her family, I gradually learned their language. I probably could have learned it easily...if I had used the skill <Keen Brain Blood Steal>, but I didn't use it at that time. Something like a new language was a breeze compared to dealing with a French woman.

『Ah bon...』 『Et alors?』 『De...』

I posed as human as I repeatedly worked hard while feeling the wind caress my cheeks like the hands of mother. I continued a life where I constantly worried whether I'd experience love just like in my previous life.

But, slowly but steadily, my vampire flesh swelled. I tried to repel the thoughts born within me one after the other, as befitting of a former, knowledgeable priest, but each time I did, I was repeatedly assailed by nausea, dizziness, and shivering. I couldn't suppress my desire for blood. My past, pious thoughts vanished... My heart of compassion continued being worn down....and eventually resigned.

Now, even the beautiful women filled with radiating youth as they wore rosaries on their heads looked to me like not more than prey. I hesitated while confused by this, but...even their lips covered by rose extract didn't look like anything but flesh stuffed with blood-smeared desires.

In my youth I had really liked the bewitching movements of the pure-white fingers of a woman with an alabaster-like skin tone plucking a koto. But, now everything had changed.

On a certain night...my body moved unconsciously. It desired blood, blood, and more blood. Although I should have sucked the blood of an animal the night before, I couldn't resist my urge for human blood...

Once I came to, I was already hugging Marianne's back.

"...At last, you feel like assaulting me...fufu."

While gently grasping my arms, she tried to turn around. I remember that I felt very happy about Marianne's words. I, who was thirsting for human blood...buried my face in her nape while pondering in my head about her words of assaulting her...and stabbed my extended canines into her delicious nape.

I kept sucking her blood little-by-little...her wonderful blood... And then, Marianne with her pretty brown hair, she...died while making me feel the autumn with her hair illuminated by the morning sun.

Sorry...Marianne. I knew that you loved me. And yet, I ended up killing you after succumbing to my desire for blood.

Ahaha, ahahaha...there is something on her cheek...oh, t-these are tears of blood?

At that moment,

※<Death Love>※ Permanent Skill acquired ※

Don't fuck with me...it's a skill...but, why don't I really feel any sadness?

I knew the answer to that. I completely understood it!

...Marianne's face was soaked with my bloody tears.

While gazing at them...I irredeemably and repeatedly answered the questions of my own feelings.

Ever since then, my voice became hoarse, as if blended with the voice of a woman, and my tone changed as well. I was sure that I had been hit by Apollo and Diana's arrows

Thereafter, so as to not meet a woman like Marianne, befitting of a vampire...I continued a life of wandering from one cemetery to another, all similar to each other, while performing <Blood Mana> experiments in underground crypts located in desolated, old enclosures.

I kept catching a glance of the fragments of this world...learning that it was a devastated world with disputes of angry bellows saturated with the clashing of weapons that never died out in this strange era. Wars repeated themselves with the weak being always weeded out in the most gruesome ways.

Even during times of peace, epochs of widespread disgrace and fraud continued under the cover of a false tranquility.

This resembled the activity of the Pope's special envoy of my previous world. It was no different from the activities of the northern, bloody Crusades and the politics deeply dyed in corruption under the banner of a peaceful diplomacy. It was an assembly of all kinds of opposing principles.

I learned about the futility of trying to regulate evil with peaceful means while hoping for the advent of a messiah. God literally only shows his power through miracles, in the end he never saves people.

I became aware of vampire hunters who chased my sinful existence, and learned about religions such as the Holy Church of Light, but those were different from the church I knew. There were no two opinions either. Only ghosts with enraptured faces were dancing right above large, darkish rivers. Even the intense rain was made out of blood.

And then, another war started. Nobles of low standing, called Broken Lances, merchants, bandits, beggars, and animals all kept dying with their throats being torn apart, being devoured by beasts, and their limbs being plucked off while suffering in resentment. The sin with the name war invited grudges and crimes, creating a worldly order where sins covered the world.

Evil swords, an evil with the touch of a caricature, and riches were the rulers of this world. Evil, swords, and money were all that mattered in this society.

It made me wonder whether the abilities I had acquired weren't the perfect counterbalance. <Blood Mana>, <Walpurgis Night>, and a skill related to those two, <Degenerated Heaven - Iste's Song>, which drew on the power of 250 "living devils" that were summoned from a city filled with things excavated from the depths of the abyss outside the dimension. And on top of that, <Keen Brain Blood Steal> which allowed me to steal abilities.

The great diversity of skills, including <Villain's Ten Swords> and <Blizzard Spirit Bug>, which I had plundered over several thousand years, became a powerful weapon for me.

I recalled a beautiful woman who introduced herself as Sumeragi Fubuki. She talked about coming from the Land of the Rising Sun in the East, Nihon Country. And to be precise, from a place called 『Toukyou』 and 『Teito』. She asked me whether I know about the terms 『Sumeragi family』, 『Twelve Distinguished Families』, or 『Kikuchi Okaryuuzou』, but was that something like the 『Habsburg family』?

As I kept staring into her eyes while appropriately giving her confirmations to allow the conversation to go on...the black-haired woman immediately trusted me. She probably fell for my <Demonic Eyes of Charming>.

The <Beautiful Nail Art> and <Blizzard Spirit Bug> abilities she possessed were a tremendous boost to my power. After all, they raised my physical abilities and boosted the ability of Ten Evil Stars Lanwen which I had taken into my body by using <Villain's Ten Swords>.

Fuhahaha! Thinking back on that time, it makes me laugh!

I can't forget the expression of despair on the pale face of that woman while I tore her forehead apart...and stole her abilities. And as thanks for giving me such a pleasant feeling, I closed up her severed forehead again...thinking that she might be still tenaciously clinging onto her life, somehow.

In addition, I repeated blood experiments using <Blood Path - Real World> and <Blood Path - Ideoplast>, both skills derived from <Blood Path Open Second Gate>. I could feel my growth, knowing that blood was my nourishment and source to keep living.

A blood-stained power brought about by the Valmask family. This would become the truth of a new thousand-year kingdom.

That's why I was born and thus accomplished my second advent as vampire

And then I was discovered by the empress, the top of the Valmask family, and managed to even climb all the way to becoming her <Head Servant>.

...But. Even my contributions to the family as <Head Servant> over many long years...have come to nothing. I lost all my <Servant Leaders> in the battle against the Death Butterfly women.

Although I can create new <Servant Leaders>...it's extremely painful to have lost Toyz, Bianco, and Yuo whom I had given precious abilities I couldn't use myself through <Demonic Brain Transplantation> and blood experience spanning over a long time. The work of several hundred

years has turned into dust within an instant...

The puppet research, which was in the middle of close examination after having managed to combine living beings with blood, was gone, and my precious items and materials were unreasonably stolen as well.

Rare Treasure 【Card of Golden Tortoise Eeron】  
Succubus Princess Diperil's 【Honey of Kingly Lewdness】  
Secret Arts Book 【Knot's Original】, a favorite of Spirit World Eight Sages Sedeluguo Seil  
Karamnian Book 【Secret Town of Maids】  
God of Order Orimil's 【Counterfeit of the Guild's Hidden Arts Book】  
【Collar of the Blue Sealing Stone】  
【Divine Picture Scroll of the Twelve Barrier Masters in the Sea of Trees】  
Nine Purple Institution Tergamot Senior Correspondence 【Misran Demolition Style Book】  
【Immortal Mountain Wizard Liver】 of Sky Emperor Phyffindo  
Wild God Gujut's 【Gujut's Oily Skin】  
Skill God Abkul's 【Abkul's Golden Dark Pot】

All of these...were not inferior to the Six Treasures. Even though I had gained enough trust to be entrusted with experiments using such precious items by the Empress...

For the blood factory to have been destroyed again right after the earlier incident with the alchemist...

At this rate, I'm going to go through the hell of becoming an agenda for the Grand Elder Council. I guess I can't complain here after having blamed Lunz over having lost his <Servant Leader>.

...There's a limit to how long you can continue failing. However, it's extremely rare for the Death Butterfly people to leave their territory. Isn't that no more than simply having bad luck then?

I've been negligent after having obtained tremendous power. So far, it's still far off from being anything beyond a house of cards.

However, I've pondered it over many times, but how should I report this to the Empress...? What should I say at the Grand Elder Council?

At this point, it's undeniable that Arnald, who has devoted himself to just reconnaissance and information-gathering, obtained 【Bustard Jewel】, one of the Six Treasures. But...being frustrated about this won't solve anything either.

It's set in stone that I'll lose the Empress' trust. I thought I'd hold back for several thousand years on stealing her abilities, but I didn't expect...to keep failing like this.

The Death Butterfly people are strong. They wield powerful weapons reminding me of Adamas' Scythe. They swung them around with a speed as if their shoulders were blurring while using the scythes with a staggering finesse.

I was showered by diagonal slashes thrown up from the ground. And the sharpness of the blades...

It's been quite a while since I could last experience a fresh, bleeding wound.

They put all their spirit into their slashes. Well, I also wounded the white moth woman with my magic swords, but it probably didn't work on her as well as her slashes worked on me. Lanwen's <Ferocious Slash General> didn't get through either. Even <Summoning Technique> using <Walpurgis Night> couldn't bring her down.

Well, it's not like I used all 250 secret summoning techniques at once, but...that applies to the Death Butterfly people as well. There's no way that they used all their trump cards.

However, that arrogant, condescending attitude... From the beginning to the end, they fought as if they were just messing around... ..They looked down on me quite a bit.

To make a fool out of me who survived several thousand years as a vampire...

However, since I failed to kill them in the end, it might be only natural for them to take me for a fool. For me to be unable to pursue them even after using <Jiel's Fire Dash> of <Blood Gate - Open Third Gate>...

Aaaaaarggh, I can't calm down ——but then again, no point in fretting over spilled milk. I'll just replenish my blood here...

At this point, I stop moving so as to survey the air. My sight is blocked by the trees, but it's the usual sight. For now I'm going to return to the destroyed blood factory, and start over from scratch, huh?

However, earlier I spotted the spearmaster fighting against one of the Death Butterfly women in front of the cave. Why was that spearmaster...in this place? Was he on a request as an adventurer? Or did he also have some business with my blood factory? Was he here to steal precious information and items? Or did I get simply caught up in Lunz's mess?

No, that's impossible, I think. If he had business with me as an individual, he should have chased after me. He didn't look like was chasing anyone in the area.

Assuming that the spearmaster had the objective to crush the Valmask family...he should have marched straight for the 【Great Tomb of the Blood Court】.

Still, it's a fact that he was there. It's also true that he fought more than evenly against that Death Butterfly woman and forced her to retreat. Negotiating or forcing them to pull back through power...was nothing I was capable of.

In the first place, the Death Butterfly people are beings as they usually appear in legends. Are they beings you can negotiate with? In such a case, just who is that spearmaster...?

It's also possible that he's still investigating the blood factory. He possesses his own, peculiar blood smell, an abnormal person requiring special attention as holder of powers that repelled templars. Based on the battle at the Dignified Heaven's Shrine, the Empress has strictly ordered to not turn him into an enemy...

But, right now I'm thirsting for blood. If I meet him, it's possible that I won't be able to restrain my urge to steal his unknown abilities in addition to resupplying my blood... Still, I'm not reckless either. I can't believe that I'll be able to steal his abilities, if I couldn't even do the same to the Death Butterfly women, who crushed my ambitions. On top of that he's an irregular opponent who's strong enough to make the Empress herself speak up.

I'm not that foolish at my age...to start a battle because of my hunger for blood and my interest in his strength. I'll resupply my blood with the small fry lying around all over.

Fuhaha, I might call them small fry, but...it's possible that they possess valuable abilities. Fortunately, the Sea of Trees is teeming with the smell of blood even without me using <Inhalation of Odor Technique>.

There's lots and lots prey♪

Kuuh...the Death Butterfly people's words are...



While thinking that, Hoffmann caused his bloody crimson eyes to light up. Half of him was a blood wave, an abnormal creature of darkness representing a blood world.

The blood wave drifted through the air while swaying. It looked like a crooked patching for his mantle that was full of patches.

Hoffmann proceeded through the forest at a crazy speed. Even though he was Familia's <Head Servant> he was thinking to himself that he wanted to take a peek into the Empress' head through <Keen Brain Blood Steal> and steal her abilities if only an opportunity presented itself.

The abilities related to his <Walpurgis Night> were manifold and diverse, such as <Enmedouranky's Book>, <Schmihazar's Coffin Giant> which he used in the fight against the Death Butterfly people, <Ash of Lemashell>, <Demonic Eyes of Erohealm>, <El's Handax>, and many more.

However, the Empress also possessed bottomless power. Hoffmann predicted that he wouldn't be able to win as of yet. And, although Hoffmann boasted the strength of a <Head Servant Leader> class...he didn't hate being under the influence of Vampire God Lugnad.

Though, he himself didn't know whether this stemmed from his loyalty for having been discovered by the Empress, the charm of blood, loyalty towards the Valmask family, or because he had loved Marianne, albeit only for a short moment.



——At once, I spotted prey through the scent of blood. It's just around dusk. A perfect time. I'm not

one of those shitty Death Butterfly people, but this time I'll be the one to play around...

I powerfully focus on <Blood Path - Open Third Gate>, and then <Walpurgis Night>, ordering the <Araginus Archers>, who are resembling Lucrezia Borgia...

White-haired women with Chinese characters written on tokens that stick to their foreheads appear from the body half with <Walpurgis Night>. They're pretty women with all of them having white forelocks. Everyone holds a longbow in their hands and has a black eyepatch covering an eye.

They manipulate a flock of magic arrows with embedded crimson gems, swaying around them. They are dressed like pure dolls, seeing how their bodies are clad in whitish one-pieces, but even among the 250 devils, they're specialized in ranged combat. They are capable of shooting their arrows consecutively with an unparalleled accuracy.

Those Aragus line up next to me, and all at once bent their slender legs, genuflecting with their heads bowed.

"Spare the formalities. It's time for hunting."

"Yes..." The Aragus answers with upturned eyes.

The token stuck to their forehead shines crimson.

"Let's go."

The Aragus nod all at once. They spread out as if melting into the darkness of night, befitting of darkness kin.

Now then, I've also confirmed several people who seem to be adventurers in the distance. Suddenly, a blood arrow stabs the head of one of them. Once the arrow starts to absorb the blood, the adventurer dries up in no time.

——Fuhaha, well done, Aragus.

Next is my turn!

As typical for me, I diligently adhere to the basics. I'll simply use a leg charged with mana.

I begin moving as if dissolving my darkness half into the twilight. While cautious of my surroundings, I look at a walking adventurer. It looks like her accuracy in mana detection is low...

Well, I'm a vampire, so that's why. If you have <Blood Mana>, you can cope with mana and wind detection techniques.

Using <Jiel's Fire Dash>, I soundlessly creep up on the adventurer from behind while remaining vigilant. At the same time as I slip out of the darkness, I entangle the adventurer's entire body with <Blood Spirit Net's Toy>. Its spirit threads expand into a binding armor.

Fuhaha, the female adventurer's pussy is in plain view. With a long and thin toy stuffed into her

mouth and her legs spread to the sides, everything is exposed without any pity. The net-like armor composed of blood spirit threads makes her armor vanish. New, semi-transparent threads have coiled themselves around her body, including her nipples, immobilizing her.

...I can't use this skill during battle, but it's the most reliable one among my skills when it comes to assaults.

"Aaahh..."

Having mostly become naked, her face is filled with ecstasy. <Blood Spirit Net's Toy> is...an ability I stole from a male reincarnator...the natural enemy of any woman.

Now then, she's a weak woman, but she might actually possess valuable abilities. I guess I'll take a peek while enjoying myself to get rid of the bad aftertaste thanks to the fight against the Death Butterfly women.

I place a finger on her flushing face, gently tracing it down all the way to her chin.

"Nnh, aahhnn..."

With the woman's heavy panting as a signal, I lift my finger from her slender chin, and move it to her forehead. And then, while pressing it against her forehead, I activate <Keen Brain Blood Steal>. The finger transforms into a knife. Of course the blade is made out of blood...

I move the blood knife sideways, cutting open her forehead and skull in a straight line, and the instant I obtain a clear look on her brain, my finger transforms once more. The knife breaks apart in many smaller parts, looking like tiny hands.

The flock of tiny hands invades the woman's brain, and her abilities flow into me. They're nothing worth mentioning, but it allows me to obtain a sensation different from magic elements and blood... However, it looks like she doesn't possess any abilities I can take in.

...This is inevitable since it's a matter of affinity. It's not unusual for me to not be able to use a skill even though I stole it.

The woman seems flustered, donning a mysterious expression as if having gone through a special pleasure. Well, I'll lead her to true death now. Leaving the forehead open, I bury my face into her slender nape, and bite her. My canines enter her neck, and I immediately suck out her blood.

After he brain glows for an instant, the human woman dries up.

"...Fresh blood is great."

While tossing away the dry flap in my hand, I look at the Aragus who seem to be envious for some reason. A part of them breathes out hot, lewd breaths with their lips glistening.

"...Can you go ahead for the next one as well?"

One Aragus hands me the magic arrow which has collected blood earlier. I absorb the blood

stored in the gem...

And then, while indirectly telling them that I don't intend to answer their feelings, "...No, that's plenty for a resupply. You can do as you please for the next."

"Affirmative——"

The Aragus have guessed my feelings. With their faces becoming gloomy, they disappear as if assimilating with the world of darkness.

That spearmaster...

Thousand-Year Country...no...not yet.

