

"I can't really understand that peculiar way of thinking."

"Are you okay with this? Leaving him to his death."

"I'm not worried in particular."

Indeed, I certainly can't hold a candle to Dattol Stein's amount of mana with my own. But I have Alfred-sama's support and Candy-dono's gift. No matter what means I have to use, I'll use them to get revenge for Bruno...!

"Haah!"

"You got out, eh? Moreover, you haven't been burned either?"

"An opening!"

Dattol Stein apparently got a bit flustered since I haven't been burned as he had expected. Using that opportunity to get close to him, I aim a punch charged with mana at his face!

But, as might be expected from Dattol Stein, he immediately fixes his posture, and quickly takes some distance from me.

"Pfft! I see. You punch people by putting mana into your fists, eh? That's an old trick of pitiful magicians with little mana. Your attacks won't hit me anymore. It'd be best for you to give up and scurry back home. If you were to die here, your father is going to become a nuisance. Right now, you're free to go. As long as it's just you."

Did this guy say the same to Edgar Tretter when he was on the verge of getting defeated? Close to being killed, he abandoned Bruno and ran away for the sake of surviving to win the next time. That's why he managed to get away, even while being heavily injured. Though, it's also the reason why his mind broke over it.

When I voice this question out, Dattol Stein tells me, "You seem to be smarter than your appearance suggests. Certainly, I said so to him. Since both of them were so young that it made me envious, I just wanted to see how their relationship would fall apart. I chopped up the boy, who ran away, quite a bit, but he could still walk. I cut up the other boy to the extent that he couldn't get up anymore. I told the boy still standing on his feet that his friend couldn't be saved anymore and that I wouldn't chase him if he deserted his friend and ran away. The despair on the face of the other boy when he ran away was exquisite. A magnificent, joyful sight to behold. It aroused me, resulting in me cutting him up even more."

"Scum..."

"Even as scum, I'm a superior magician who's been staying alive. As long as they're useful, any scum will be able to stay alive. This world must be crazy, seeing how royalty is actually covering me. That's why a weirdo like me continues to live on as well."

"Humph! That is going to end today! You are going to die for the crimes you have committed so far!"

"What if there are many nobles tolerating me even if they don't go as far as actively supporting me? All the leaders in this country are scum. Isn't it a fitting place for scum like me? Hating to be scorned by Duke Bürger after failing to assassinate me once, your father has left me to my own devices for years. Even you, the son of such a man, should give up on assassinating me since it'll only earn you a scolding from your father. I promise I won't chase after you."

Are you telling me to forsake Alfred-sama? What scum! You're human trash!

"You sure have a nasty character."

"That's how it works, doesn't it Alfred Reinford? Only the cunning and detestable ones survive among humans, animals, and monsters. What are you going to do? It'd be best for you to abandon him and rely on your daddy. With that amount of mana, you'll be only tormented to death by me."

Sure, if this was one-on-one, I'd be slaughtered one-sidedly. But, Alfred-sama is with me.

Besides...

"Contrary to your reputation, you run your mouth on end! Are you that scared of fighting Alfred-sama and me at the same time?"

"Dream on. I'm just curious why you came here while only possessing abilities of such a low level. Is it something like noblesse oblige?"

"That is a funny joke! I have left my family! My family's circumstances do not matter here! I simply cannot forgive you killing my best friend! I will make sure to kill you, definitely! You think I need any other reason besides that!?"

"I see. Then regret your folly while getting cut up by me. I think I'll make sure you can't move before that."

Just now I felt a bad premonition!

"Klimt-kun!"

"Alfred-sama?"

"Too late!"

"Wut!?"

Alfred-sama and I get surrounded by water that appeared all of a sudden...what the hell is going on!? What's with this weirdly smelling water!?

"..."

"Spell me surprised. Nothing less of you, Alfred Reinford. You're not going to negate it with fire magic? But, that liquid is going to volatilize right away, and then burst into flames."

As Alfred-sama gets bad vibes from the liquid surrounding himself, he doesn't try to get rid of it with fire. However, once Dattol Stein shoots a fire spell, it immediately ignites and goes up in a blaze of fire.

"Damn it!"

I've finally gotten rid of the fire, but I've suffered burns on my limbs and face. In a hurry I heal myself by sprinkling a healing potion over my body. Alfred-sama does the same.

"This is quite nasty. Burning water...let's see, somewhere I've..."

"Is water burning there?"

Water, which shouldn't be inflammable, goes up in a blaze. Just what is that smelly liquid?

"Given that I can use all attributes, such tricks are possible as well. Using the 『Burning Water』 like this..."

"Me again, huh?"

The liquid is freely being manipulated by Dattol Stein, and after changing its shape, it even enters Alfred-sama's robe. And immediately afterwards, it's ignited by Dattol Stein.

Alfred-sama is wrapped up in flames, even coming from within his robe!

"Alfred-sama!"

"I tried to neutralize it by producing ice at once, but it was impossible to block it completely."

It looks like he got burned under his robe, and thus he's casting water-based healing magic on himself.

"At this rate, things are only going to keep getting worse."

"Once I've made it impossible for you to fight any longer, I'll heal just your skin, and cut it up nicely afterwards. For both of you. I'm looking forward to it."

That guy feels like he's already won. However, it's true that at this rate...

"Burning water...somewhere...the Bahral Wetlands?"

"Correct. I've magically recreated the smelly, burnable water over there by combining water and fire-based magic. It was quite a chore."

"No wonder they call you a genius at magic. The rest of you is fucked up, though. There are places where smelly, burning water gushes out in the Bahral Wetlands, located far west from the capital. Since it's burnable enough to be used as lamp fuel, the locals gather it."

So he recreated that water with magic, huh?

"Well, it's convenient after all. Just like this."

"Damn it!"

The burnable liquid, which has changed its form into something similar to a snake, coils itself around my body, and immediately following that, I'm engulfed by flames a third time thanks to Dattol Stein's ignition.

In a hurry, I shake off the flames, and shower myself in a magic potion.

"Is there no choice but to block it with a 『Magic Barrier』?"

Right now I'm fine because I'm wearing the underwear Candy-dono gave me, but I don't know how much longer it'll hold out. Since it's already protected major parts of my body three times, it might be about to reach its limit soon.

"That'd be a problem. We'll be at disadvantage if we protect ourselves with a 『Magic Barrier』."

"What do you mean, Alfred-sama?"

"Our opponent can freely decide when to ignite the liquid. Defending against that with a 『Magic Barrier』 would only speed up the mana consumption."

It'd be meaningless even if we deploy a 『Magic Barrier』 as long it's still in its liquid form and given that the ignition depends on Dattol Stein, it'll be quite difficult to time a 『Magic Barrier』 right after the ignition without wasting much mana. Alfred-sama is quickly using up his mana as he's healing his burns.

Probably grasping that we're in a pinch here, Dattol Stein shows a relaxed smile as he watches us struggle.

"I can move it at will, have it enter any place, and ignite it whenever I feel like it. You won't be able to deal with this on your first encounter. Now then, let's bring this to a close now. At the end I'll chop you up while you're still alive."

Although I had come here in high spirits to avenge my best friend, I'll get killed by Dattol Stein without even putting a scratch on him? As I'm pondering about something like that, Alfred-sama taps my shoulder from behind.

"(At last our opponent has apparently decided to finish us two off.)"

"..."

"(As a matter of fact, this will give us an opportunity.)"

Alfred-sama makes me grasp something in my right hand while whispering to me.

"(This is?)"

"(A somewhat special magic crystal. It's crammed with a tremendous amount of mana, considering its size.)"

Why has Alfred-sama given me something like that?

"(It'd be great if you could give him a good punch while holding this in your fist. It's a bet of sorts, but I trust you that you'll definitely succeed, Klimt-kun.)"

"(But, I am...)"

Earlier I succeeded in unleashing a blow, but I can't believe that it's going to work a second time.

"(It's unthinkable that he's going to make such a blunder.)"

"(I'll somehow make it possible. Please get close to him at full speed, in a straight line, and use all your power to punch that guy with your right hand. Go in 5...4...3...2...)"

A countdown already!? Gah, whatever! Might as well go with this!

"(...1...start.)"

The instant Alfred-sama taps my shoulder once more, I start charging at Dattol Stein without thinking anything.

"A charge...it's not like I can't understand your feelings, but...it's too reckless!"

Here it comes!

This time a powerful fire spell approaches me to burn me to smithereens. However, I should be alright one more time.

I plunge into the huge conflagration without lowering my speed at all, continuing to rush towards Dattol Stein.

"You did well to hold out! Candy-dono, thank you!"

With this things will get dicey if I eat another of Dattol Stein's spells. I must punch him before he can cast anything else.

"The effect of your special armor should wear off anytime soon now."

Tsk, he's seen through it! However, it's not like I can stop now anyway!

"You won't be able to defend with just that robe of yours."

Once again Dattol Stein produces two snakes made out of burnable water, and tries to send them at me. If he ignites them once they get close, I'll suffer heavy burns...

"I won't let you!"

Before they can reach me, Alfred-sama ignites the two snakes.

"How meaningless. It's no problem for me to move them around as burning snakes while creating new burnable water."

"However, unlike snakes that aren't burning yet, I can extinguish them with my own water snakes once they've been ignited. It seems like you can't extinguish the fire once the water has been ignited."

I see. Alfred-sama ignited them first since he can't do anything about the snakes while they're not burning. Moreover, burnable water that has been ignited once is too difficult to extinguish for Dattol Stein as well. If they're simple fire snakes, they can be handled with water magic.

As expected of Alfred-sama to notice that flaw in such a short time.

"Klimt-kun, please keep running while believing in me."

"Of course!"

Even afterwards, a grand battle of magic raged on for a small period of time. When Dattol Stein tries to cut me up with a 『Wind Cutter』, Alfred-sama, who's closely sticking behind me, repels the wind blades by unleashing his own 『Wind Cutter』. When Dattol Stein shoots a huge amount of 『Ice Spheres』 at me, Alfred-sama forms a moving 『Firewall』 in front of me, extinguishing the 『Ice Spheres』.

I feel like the ground beneath my feet has risen a bit, but it immediately settles down again. It appears Alfred-sama has interfered with the creation of 『Rock Spike』.

"I will not let you get away anymore!"

"Humph, as long as I evade that silly charge, which seems to be the only thing you've ever learned...what!?"

In an instant, Alfred-sama creates 『Rock Walls』 in the shape of < behind and on the sides of Dattol Stein, making it impossible for him to retreat.

"We're at advantage with this being a 2-on-1. As long as you can cooperate like we do, that is!"

I suppose Bruno and Edgar Tretter were unable to do that...

"Well, whatever. Even if you punch me with your measly mana, it won't do much anyway."

Dattol Stein uses his huge amount of mana to raise his defense power in one go. He's sure a genius to make that switch at such a speed...my right fist...!

"I am betting everything on this one blow, straight from the front!"

"I'll block it!"

Dattol Stein crosses his arms in front of his chest, and sends a huge amount of mana into them on top of that. It's what you'd call an iron defense by a high-ranking magician.

"Pierce through!"