

I punch his chest with all of my remaining mana and the huge amount of man stored in Alfred-sama's magic crystal.

"With your amount of mana, it's easy to block...no way!"

My full power punch first tears open Dattol Stein's arms, and then smashes into his now defenseless chest. My fist only stops after penetrating all the way through his body.

No matter how excellent a magician he might be, he's still just an ordinary human. This blow, which damaged his lungs and heart, should be fatal.

"N-No wa...why?"



"Why are you so surprised?"

It's impossible for someone of your level to not have noticed the magic crystal in my right fist.

"With your...mana...this much...firepowe...impos..."

Having his chest drilled open, Dattol Stein doesn't say anything further anymore. Once I pull my fist out of his body, he falls to the ground, and stops moving altogether.

"We did it. But..."

Dattol Stein apparently died while apparently not being able to understand why my punch pierced through his body.

"I have been entrusted with a special magic crystal by Alfred-sama. You should have been able to predict that I might break through your 『Mana Defense』, if add the mana in the crystal to my blow."

"No, that's not true."

"Why?"

"That's easy to explain. Assuming your mana is 1, the magic crystal I lent you contains several hundreds. However, in case you were to add that mana while putting it into your fist, the crystal would usually provide you with no more than 1 mana. Going by your remaining amount of mana, the supply might have been even below 1."

I see. The magic crystal can't provide more mana than my own aggregate amount of mana.

"Otherwise, you'd very likely explode. That's why the crystal won't provide more than your own maximum amount of mana. Even when it comes to offensive abilities, it follows the same principle. Dattol Stein noticed that, so he defended against your punch."

I guess that means I unleashed a blow going beyond the supplied amount of mana when he expected that he could defend against it with ease. Once I look down at the crystal, it's become gray, signaling that it's empty. So I delivered a punch that drew out everything, and not just a bit above the amount that would be supplied normally.

"I've thought that you're a little exception, and this has confirmed it. That's why I gave you this crystal and told you to hit him with all your strength. Since it somewhat was a gamble, I must apologize to you. But, you went far above my expectations."

"No, there is nothing for you to apologize about..."

If Alfred-sama hadn't gambled there, we would have been killed by Dattol Stein.

"It's a relief for you to say so..."



"You bastards!"

We have been chatting while the two of us linger in the aftertaste of our hard-earned victory, but suddenly we're interrupted in a rude way.

"I guess it's only natural after this much time has passed, huh?"

"Alfred-sama?"

"The big boss has shown up."

Once I look in the direction of the voice, I spot a dozen soldiers and a fuming man, who seems to be a very important noble and appears to be close to 70 years old. He must be Duke Bürger who has continued to cover for Dattol Stein for more than 30 years.

As a matter of fact, it's my first time meeting this man. There's another, inconspicuous, middle-aged noble next to Duke Bürger, but I think it's a safe bet to say that he's his son-in-law, Viscount Basel. He seems to be panicking while looking at Duke Bürger rather than being angry at us.

"You assholes! How dare you kill Dattol Stein!"

"Dattol Stein? Him? If I remember correctly, it's the name of a magician who died 30 years ago." Alfred-sama sarcastically says without any shame whatsoever in response to Duke Bürger's shouting.

He's hinting that the man lying on the ground can't be Dattol Stein since that person has officially been declared as dead.

"The likes of a commoner and the second son of an Earl House! Don't think that you'll be able to get away from here alive!"

Upon Duke Bürger's signal, all his soldiers draw their swords. At the same time, the underlings of Viscount Basel, who have rushed over from all over the forest, surround us.

Come to think of it, I don't have any mana left after putting everything into that one punch.

"Alfred-sama?"

"It's no problem with opponents of this caliber, but...I wonder what we should do about this."

"What do you mean by that?"

"It's possible to give them the slip and run away, but Duke Bürger is likely going to become a pain afterwards. After all, he's the younger brother of the previous king, even if he acts like that. It'll be a pain if he holds a grudge against us. Cardinal Hohenheim sure is late..."

"What are you saying! I'm perfectly on time! I'm sure you noticed me a long time ago!"

When I hear a voice other than that of Duke Bürger and look in its direction, I find Cardinal Hohenheim standing there. A dozen knights in the same outfit stand around him...they must be the church's paladin unit. In addition, I notice the presences of military forces that have spread out as if to surround Duke Bürger and his men.

"Cardinal Hohenheim...you were the mastermind behind this, eh!?"

"Even if you realize it at this point, Dattol Stein has already fallen into hell. It's too late to whine about it now."

Cardinal Hohenheim looks down at Dattol Stein's corpse while provoking Duke Bürger by treating him like a little idiot.

"Even a guy like him must receive a funeral service. I guess we'll bury him in the cemetery for those without relatives."

"You piece of shii——it!"

Even though Duke Bürger gets angrier by the minute, Cardinal Hohenheim treats all of this very calmly.

"Kill that rotten priest!"

"I wonder whether you'll be able to do that. You think you can fight off the elite paladins of the church with your dogs?"

The soldiers stop moving upon Cardinal Hohenheim's question. As might be expected, they don't want to turn the renowned paladin unit, the elites of elites among the church defenders, into an enemy.

"Haven't you noticed the military units surrounding you? You have no chance of winning, be it in numbers or quality."

"You rotten priest, don't act so arrogantly!"

"Father!"

The person appearing from behind Cardinal Hohenheim is my father, Earl Armstrong.

"Long time no see, Klimt."

"I'm happy to see you in good health, father."

"Did you kill him, Klimt?" My father asks me while looking at Dattol Stein's corpse.

"Alfred-sama and I defeated him together!"

"I see. Well done. It's an achievement that can't be recognized officially, but it's an honor for me to have you as my son."

"Earl Armstro——ong! You asshe——ole! Even though you stayed docile after I gave you a warning eight years ago——o!"

"That's the reason. Back then, the previous king was still around. Thanks to his silly consideration of your circumstances, I had to do my utmost to restrain my bitterness for eight years. I feel relieved to be able to see Dattol Stein dead today."

"Earl Armstrong! Cardinal Hohenheim! I'll bring this matter up with His Majesty!"

"Are you an idiot?" Cardinal Hohenheim spits out while looking at him as if watching an utter fool as soon as Duke Bürger claims that he'll complain to the king.

"A guy who wasn't supposed to be alive has died. So what about it?" Father apparently can't suppress his scorn of Duke Bürger either.

He looks at him with the same expression as Cardinal Hohenheim.

"I don't know about the paladins, but do you believe that I can arbitrarily dispatch the guards to surround you?"

"What do you mean?"

"You're really slow on the uptake. It simply means that His Majesty has discarded you."

"Lies!"

"You mean the rumor about you being the true king as the elder brother of the previous king? How retarded."

Duke Bürger gets even more enraged at Cardinal Hohenheim who ridicules that rumor as absolute nonsense.

"Retarded, you say!?! Don't you know who I am!?!"

"Try to calm down a bit and use your brain. It's different when it's brothers born by different mothers at the same time, but what would be the point in switching the elder and younger twin brother of the same mother? Do you think there's some kind of difference in ability between babies that were just born rectifying doing something like that? You were of the same blood."

"I am..."

"You've been led astray by the nonsense prattled by those standing against the royal family. Neither the previous king, nor the current one have taken you into consideration. They merely worried

about the rumors and were vigilant towards the powers trying to use you as figurehead. Right now Dattol Stein isn't with you anymore either. I guess we'll have you exit the stage of life about now."

Once Cardinal Hohenheim lifts his hand, several big guys from among the paladin unit surround Duke Bürger, immobilizing him. Next they pin down his face, force his mouth open, and toss some kind of medicine into it.

"Ugh! What have you given me!? Poison?"

"Correct. Once you die here, we'll make your son succeed a Baron House, Duke Bürger. Viscount Basel, we'll spare your family. But this territory is going to be confiscated."

I've noticed just now, but Viscount Basel is likewise being restrained by strong paladins, and has been forced to swallow the same medicine. Until the very end, he didn't stand out at all.

"Cardinal Hohenheim! Daring to do something like this to the true king...!"

"That's wrong, isn't it? You merely continued sulking that you couldn't become king because you were born moments later. That's why you created this rumor, linked up with other nobles, and amassed a fortune while using Dattol Stein. Humans are truly terrifying, aren't they? You've started to believe that your own rumor might actually be true, haven't you? Or am I wrong? Oops, it looks like you're starting to get sleepy. That's the kind of poison it is."

"What...did I...do...wrong...? I'm the...genuine king...."

With those being his last words, Duke Bürger passed away while looking as if he had simply fallen asleep. Viscount Basel died in the same way, but it might be his misfortune that no one noticed it happening.

"How foolish."

That's the last comment by Cardinal Hohenheim before he orders the paladins to restrain the soldiers affiliated to Duke Bürger and Viscount Basel and to transport the three corpses. They silently carry out the work asked of them, but as they're wearing weird face guards today, I can't tell who they are.

I guess Cardinal Hohenheim has made sure to hide their identities because of the nature of this job.

"Now then, Alfred, Klimt-dono, could I ask you to accompany me?"

"Are you going to seal our mouths?"

As usual, Alfred-sama snarls at Cardinal Hohenheim with his words being full of sharp bitterness.

"As if! I'd get killed by Earl Armstrong!"

"Yeah, I'd beat this rotten priest to death without any hesitation."

Since I'd definitely protect Alfred-sama if they tried to kill him, they won't have any choice but to

kill me as well. As might be expected, even Cardinal Hohenheim isn't gutsy enough to pull off something like that in front of my father.

"His Majesty has called for you. Time is precious though."

"Understood. I'll be fine as long as I get a reward. Including the hush money, it should become a nice sum of money."

"No one would ever be able to imagine from your gentle face what a truly shameless man you are!"

"I'm sure he'll settle down once he grows a bit older."

"I sure hope so."

Cardinal Hohenheim and father lead Alfred-sama and me to the royal palace. Either way, it's good that I managed to avenge Bruno by killing Dattol Stein.