

Chapter 352 - Walking Across Water and Gramps Ton's Retort

Using the <Magic Hand guided by Thought> as a foothold, I kick off it, clad my whole body in Magic Combat Style, and also accelerate by using <Blood Acceleration>.

It's no match to the lightning-like acceleration when using <Demonic Brain Speed>, but it should look like Crazy-Eye Togma's <Shukuchi> to Schmihazar.

I close the distance to him in no time, and swiftly brandish Murasame. The bluish-green blade heads for Schmihazar's flank accompanied by a beam-saber-like sound.

"——Fast," Schmihazar mutters while fixing his posture.

He lifts his reddish right arm greatsword, and tries to parry Murasame with its tip. But, I'm superior when it comes to speed, resulting in Murasame slipping past the greatsword.

Murasame's blade hits Schmihazar flank, immediately cutting through the flesh at his abdomen while melting his orange armor with its bird embroideries alongside a weird sizzling and bubbling sound as the light beam gnaws its way through the body. As if the sound of bones and flesh melting tells a story, I can sense the vibrations of the flesh being torn apart through the hilt, but the feedback is somewhat lacking.

I cancel <Blood Acceleration>. Meanwhile, Schmihazar's skull jolts.

"——Guuuooooaahh!"

He shivers with his lips trembling. And then the abdomen, cut up by Murasame, explodes. At the same time, floods of violet blood and completely asphalt-colored entrails spill out. He's roughly 30 meters above the river, but the huge amount of violet blood pours down into the river like a waterfall. It's so much that it looks as if another river has been created in midair.

Schmihazar continues to spill blood in such a way, but is it a fake? As if using the repulsive force of his own blood gushing out, he retreats while swiftly rotating as if performing a backwards pirouette. The violet blood from his abdomen slashes on his own white hair. The whole spiraling revolution looks like the movement of a punctured, huge balloon, and the violet blood sprays seem like a gigantic pinwheel shooting blood into the vicinity.

Those blood sprays come flying at me in waves. At once, I use the opportunity to partake in the blood. Even if it might actually be poisonous, I judge that blood still remains blood, and thus might become nourishment for me.

Focusing on the vampiric <Blood Path - Open First Gate>, I leap off the <Magic Hand guided by Thought> while spreading my arms to the side, as if carrying out some kind of religious ritual.

The <Magic Hand guided by Thought> underneath me vanishes. My whole body is basked in waves of violet blood as if I'm receiving a baptism while floating in the air with my posture imitating a cross.

The cold blood seems to tightly squeeze down on my heart. As I begin to fall, I create a new <Magic Hand guided by Thought> underneath me, landing on it. The blood coming in contact with Murasame evaporates instantly. A sulfuric smell hangs in the air.

Within that short moment, I suck up all of the violet blood. The blood itself smells just like you'd expect blood to smell. While licking my lips, I also take in the blood that splayed on my face, whetting my own thirst. It doesn't taste like sour summer strawberries or grape juice, but...it does have a fairly rich taste.

I'd call this the Holy Communion if only I had bread with me.

『Take it and eat it, as this is my body』

I'm reminded of this part of the Bible's Matthew Gospel.

Then I <Throw> Murasame at Schmihazar. The beam saber heads for Schmihazar's right chest in a straight line. However, before it can pierce into his chest, it's repelled by his red greatsword.

Schmihazar is in the middle of a slow rotation, but it looks like he's kept me in sight.

But, the sound as his sword flicked Murasame away felt somewhat viscous. Murasame falls into the river while buzzing. The beam saber emitted from the hilt's emission muzzle disappears, seemingly withering away back into the muzzle. I guess I'll obediently pick it back up.

—Using <Magic Hand guided by Thought> as a foothold, I hold out my right hand towards the falling hilt, and chant, "Come, Murasame."

The hilt flies back to me while whirling around. Its flight speed gives one the impression of it being forcibly pulled over by the force of a super-conductive magnet.

Murasame's hilt safely reaches my hand, but I instinctively gaze at it to check whether it has been broken or something. The emission muzzle and the hilt itself are both fine. My fingers and hand haven't been ruptured either.

I mean it'd be a big deal if you make Riki snap. [efn_note]This is a very Japanese pun that is impossible to localize. It's about an iconic comedy act of Koriki Choshu who mocked the famous Japanese professional wrestler Riki Choshu. As you can see, the comedian's name is actually a pun on the wrestler's name with Koriki meaning something like "little Riki"...[/efn_note]

...is the silly pun I make in my mind, but even the metal with its round, repulsor-styled shape on my palm is alright. After nodding that "everything's a-okay," I directly pour mana into the hilt through my right hand.

In response, the beam blade shoots out from the emission muzzle with a buzzing. The turquoise light of Murasame also illuminates the waterweeds on the river. The weeds, which follow the river's flow line, have obtained a violet coronet. It must be Schmihazar's blood. After all, his blood is spreading in such quantity that it dyes the river's surface violet.

Schmihazar himself has retreated while rotating exaggeratedly. I've considered pursuing him,

but...it looks like the cut caused by Murasame has been shallow.

He continues to revolve, but it happens in an unnatural state of hovering while making himself turn. I suppose he's trying to lure me in with those movements. Or maybe it's also possible that he's shedding so much blood because of his large build?

With the whimsical feeling of wanting a cowboy hat, I make Murasame's hilt rotate on my palm as if toying around with a revolver. After stopping to provide mana, I holster the hilt back into its sword belt. I also erase <Magic Hand guided by Thought>.

"——Shuuya, you're falling!" Higlia shouts at me from the riverbank.

Well, that's only natural with my foothold now gone. As I fall, I pull off a gun spin with Murasame's hilt, but at this rate I won't sink into the river, despite falling towards the river, as long as there's no interference from elsewhere.

Thus I cast a certain spell - 《Water Control》. Using that spell on the gently flowing river underneath me allows me to easily land on the water as if my soles are glued to the water surface.

Just like that I walk across the river, then jump, land one one leg, and walk again, as if performing a dance.

Changing the distribution of Magic Combat Style in my body, I have some fun with 《Water Control》 while imagining a combat footwork on and beneath the water that uses <Spirit Ball Conception>. I feel like I've grown wings on my back. I'm totally excited about the future possibility of developing battle techniques utilizing water.

While dashing across the water surface, I sever waterweeds with Murasame. The sprays of water underneath my feet feel great.

——Moving like a heat haze is possible! Heat haze, lightning, lunar water?

"——Wh-!? Water magic without chanting all of a sudden!?" Higlia's surprised outcry reaches my ears.

While focusing on increasing my volume, I shout towards her, "——I have a pet called Balmint, but—— that Bal is an Ancient Dragonia who lives with a dragon granny, no, a dragon mother, or rather, young dragon lady called Sazihali, also an Ancient Dragonia. She's teaching him how to live as a dragon. I've received the magic book allowing me to learn this spell from her——"

Hearing my shouted explanation, Higlia covers her mouth with both hands, and blathers excitedly, "...Those dance-like movements...there's too many...things I feel...", while twisting her tight waist.

Thrusting out her chest, her body suddenly quivers all over. The shape of her silver armor changes a bit as if to show off the shape of her breasts.

"...Shuuya, you're the perfect male partner. I've already thought that you're a great male, but now the urge to cross fists with you has become even stronger! And I feel like licking and play-biting you! I want you to experience...my fervent love. I'm sure even God Wolf Hurley-sama and the Twin Moon

Gods..." Higlia bashfully mumbles a confession of love.

Her skin with thin fur growth has turned crimson, looking as if it's releasing a steam that wraps up her whole body, and she's started to restlessly rub her inner thighs. She keeps demanding eye contact, and the motions of her tail are cute as well.

As I'm thinking that it might be fine to pair up with the charming Higlia, who's releasing some kind of pheromones,

"——Be careful as it's said river departures perish in rivers."

Wha!? That retort with the voice of a grandpa... Come on, Gramps Ton, you should have evacuated with Nemus and the others...why are you next to the river...?

Higlia yells with a very angry look, "Stupid geezer! Get away from here. Can't you see the enemy!?"

She scolds Gramps Ton who dons a carefree, retarded expression while changing the location of the acorn in his mouth. However, the same applies for you as well, girly...is nothing I can voice out.

I'll leave Gramps Ton to Higlia. Actually, it lessens my worry that Higlia could try to join the fight or something.

She grabs Gramps Ton's arm, and drags him away towards Nemus' group. All the while, Schmihazar hasn't come attacking.

Alright —— I'm going to enjoy walking across the water then. It's a natural waterbed. I don't plan to mess around by making weird groans, but since the vibrations and sensations coming from my soles are changing every now and then, it's actually fun.

Come to think of it, isn't this the first time for anyone to use water walking in actual combat? Well, you could call it a stunt that's possible because of my chantless casting. I kinda feel like an immortal mountain wizard.

While activating or canceling <Magic Combat Style> in the middle of the fast-flowing river, I hop around while minutely adjusting the timing. I think next time I'm going to dance with Helme on the water. We'll whirl around together while practicing <Spirit Ball Conception> at the same time. Pair skating with Catiza as the judge to score it.

Still, I must give my thanks to Water Goddess Akreshys. And while at it, I'm also going to pray to Kokbruuundozoo-sama, despite her being an ancient, cursed goddess. Which reminds me, the spear unified with Schmihazar's left arm might is also related to curses...maybe I'm simply fated to encounter curses.

Schmihazar is still hovering. Meanwhile I'm admiring the beauty of the moonlight as it's reflected on the river...and then I look beneath the water surface. The water is mixed with purplish, glowing blood, and there's waterplants growing in the river... As all of this is illuminated by the moonlight, it produces a deeply impressive scenery.

I also thought so back at the crystal pond, but I feel like I've entered the world of a fairytale-like, fantastical painting. It's as if I'm walking through Monet's garden 『Giverni』. While recalling the beloved garden of that great painter, I shift my eyes towards Schmihazar.

He's still hovering while rotating.

Violet blood is sticking to his white hair. He makes his whole body tremble while the shape of his big skull is clearly visible thanks to the wet hair. And then he gets caught in the branch of a tree protruding out from the riverbank right behind him, causing his hovering to come to an end.

Schmihazar dangles from that branch. If he were to represent a tarot card, it'd be the Hanging Man.

Is the area around his eyes shining?

Schmihazar lifts his left arm, now transformed into Iglued. The ethereal woman appears from its tip, but I feel like she's come out on her own. Iglued with its apparently strong self-consciousness, seductively entwines both arms around Schmihazar's thick neck after lifting her upper body with the help of the magic lines as if pulling herself up.

Then she directs an uneasy look at Schmihazar's abdomen.

"——Schmihazar, does your tummy hurt? My poor, lil' Schmihazar..." She says to him with a tone that's teeming with evil.

Iglued's ethereal body relocates to Schmihazar's lower body. She doesn't suck the tip of his big cock like some succubus, but still, she sniffs the smell of his nether region. And then ponders, before kissing the wound caused by Murasame with her leaflike lips. Moreover, she extends her snake-like, green tongue, and repeatedly licks his wound —— while posing. Her pose resembles that of Helme when she's flaunting her butt.

Iglued's red eyes gleam, and then she laughs, "Fufu, fufufufu, but, in exchange——"

She doesn't finish her remark that's filled with wickedness...and instead moves like a wave. As soon as a chrome green, sinister mana from the spear begins to emanate, it covers half of Schmihazar's body in the blink of an eye. Flooded by that mana, Schmihazar trembles. Did he react to her succubus-like action? I mean, it's because it's a behavior completely resembling a succubus, so yea.

Schmihazar's body sways with movements you wouldn't expect from a giant. And then the thick eyelids of his Demonic Eyes open and close, like the eyelids of a lizard.

As he repeats that peculiar blinking, "Guguguooo...even I, guaaah."

Is he rejoicing or screaming in pain? I can't really tell right now when looking at his face and listening to his voice.

The breathing wheezing through his shark-like fangs is ridiculously intense...has the amount of blood gushing out of his wound increased? Also, I don't know if Iglued's kiss stimulated him, or if it was for her own pleasure, but...Schmihazar's Demonic Eyes are glowing.

He widens his mouth by spreading his jaw, and continues to loudly roar like a beast, "Guburaaaaaa."

His sausage-sized lips trembling is nothing new, but...it gives off an atmosphere as if I'm going to hear another voice screaming 『Gimme prey!』 from within his mouth at any moment.

Looking at the interior of his mouth reminds me of the time when I was wandering about in the underground. Reflexively, I shoot out <Chain> from my wrist.

Schmihazar didn't react to my chain attack, and just when I thought the chain's tip would collide with his head, Iglued extended its wood blade, repelling my <Chain>.

"——Be patient, boy. Please don't send any weird chains this way."

She calls me boy, huh?

While erasing <Chain>, I decide to watch what's going to happen with Schmihazar.

And just then, I recall Granbar, whom I encountered in the underground. The movement of releasing a tongue from a split-tongue... But Schmihazar has no wings on his back like Granbar had. He also has no gas-mask-shaped face protector or organ covering his mouth. Schmihazar is an unknown race differing from Granbar.

The instant I've reached that conclusion, a single, vertical stripe appears on the magic symbol of Schmihazar's blood-smeared epiglottis. That stripe looks as if a sharp blade has completely cut through the neck in a vertical direction. The stripe splits open, tearing apart to the left and right...

...Ugh, his uvula is clearly visible in the gaping tear. The shape of the torn magic symbol transforms into an abnormal genital area. ...Has the interior of his throat extended? It looks as if another dimension or something has formed in there. At its bottom is an indecent, round hole. The flesh around his thyroid cartilage has also taken on a crooked shape.

Hey, wait a sec...for him to change the interior of his mouth...is he actually a Granbar-type?

Right after I had that thought, the upper part of that hole inflates like a balloon. The head of a baby grows out of that obscene bean. Moreover, both its eyes are messily stitched shut with black strings.

What the fuck is this——

The sickening baby head twists and turns in a supple way. Mana converges in that head, and the baby's mouth moves. As it makes a sound like a tongue that's wetted with blood...

"...Here comes the true magic circle~ Demonic——《A geradeh, phugruu ro phokar》!"

Its voice has a tone going beyond my wildest expectations. It feels childish, and yet old-styled. It's a voice different from that of Schmihazar and his two talking weapons.

And then, as if the words spoken by the baby have obtained form, an R wrapped up in a heat haze floats up in its mouth. A character for fire? Moreover, an R?

On top of that, a tiny wand clad in flames twists out of the indecent hole beneath the baby. A small magic wand clad in fire? Its handle seems to be made out of metal, but...is it a fire element item?

While rotating, that magic wand passes right through the mouth, overlapping with the R letter floating within. The R letter turns into particles after coming in contact with the wand, and vanishes. The flames engulfing the wand expand, obviously having absorbed the power of the R letter.

The interior of Schmihazar's mouth is big, but the inside does seem rather hot. Usually it should fester, I believe, but...I suppose it's pointless to consider Schmihazar as normal. After all he's got a monster-like tongue, a cluster of sharp fangs, and a weird hole.

Even while I'm thinking all that, the magic wand slowly advances through the mouth with its split tongue, and then it leaves through his big lips.

But, first the shoulders, and now a burning magic wand coming out of his mouth? He hasn't changed his tongue in the way like the Death Butterfly woman Ciel did, but...is this guy's entire body a bundle of items? Does the coffin actually possess some secret door? Does that place have 70 ways to open it or something?

"...Are you some kind of trick box? As if it's a named huge coffin..."

Several seconds after I asked this while imagining the opening of such a box, the baby and the indecent hole start to squirm. Once a flesh cover engulfs the baby's head, the indecent hole closes. The black worm-like meat and the threads are automatically sewed together as if to fill that hole.

Disgusting. But, at the same time, it's funny in a strange way.

Schmihazar has now closed that big mouth opening, and after lifting a cheek into a crooked smirk, "...It'd be a perfectly fitting description, but you're wrong. This is the outcome of me having been endowed with a magic symbol." He explains pridefully.

That means he was bestowed a symbol like Eva or Mysty's on the throat.

"...You were given one, you say? By magic symbol you mean a crest, right?"

"You're right, but that's unexpected."

"What is?"

"It looks like you don't know much about magic symbols."

"That's...rather than not much, I..."

...don't know about them at all is what I was about to say, but on my neck...I have <Dark Dream Celebration>, a symbol given to me by Vaamina-sama, the goddess or queen of nightmares. It might be nothing you'd call a magic symbol, though. And the <Granted Seal of Light> is maybe also something equal to a magic symbol?

Following that train of thought...if I asked Heavy Knight Leader Claude who was dispatched by the Religious State to the Holy Kingdom, the guy whom I beat up in the past...I feel like he'd deny it fervently, but well, I suppose the <Granted Seal of Light> is something else. I mean it's a rare Extra Skill.

Besides, my <Head Servant Leader> Mysty mentioned a dream she has had since her childhood. And Bon has also a special crest light up whenever he uses his enchanting magic.

There might be different kinds despite all of them being called magic symbols. Are all marks looking like crests...simply lumped together into the category of magic symbols?

"...I guess you don't have any powers like the great Hoffmann-sama." Schmihazar looks at me full of disappointment.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I doubt that I have any powers like your master. In the first place, I don't really know what powers he possesses anyway. And, since my bloodkin also possess such magic symbols as crests of nobles, I just knew a bit about its power and its abilities by chance."

Does the Lucical Crest Tree also enter into the category of magic symbols?

"...Hoh, spearmaster, you have bloodkin with magic symbols?"

Bah, my tongue slipped and I ended up revealing information about my family members. In exchange, I've bought some time for Rollo to come back...or rather, I think Schmihazar is also stalling for time.

Is mana and spirit indispensable to summon the other spear?

The small magic wand has been rotating while relocating to above Schmihazar's head. A shower of blood is pouring down on him from the tip of that wand. Bright red blood similar to embers. Schmihazar has violet blood, but the blood released by the wand isn't violet. Is the blood raining down on him the healing type?

I should soon deploy Hal'Konk's Evil Dragon King armor, huh? No, it's too early. I don't need to prepare my defenses yet. Right now I'm wearing the jet-black combat uniform. The fibers of Gatrance-form have been restored after getting cut.

But, I feel like the healing of my abdomen and hand injuries progresses slowly. I don't know whether it was caused by the holy sword, the magic sword, or both, but...those swords doubtlessly possess special blades.

I guess I'll check it out later. Moga seems like he'd snatch them quickly away, though.

Now then, before transforming...I guess I'll draw out some information about Hoffmann from Schmihazar. The time for recovering and summoning Baldok...it looks like Schmihazar has also judged that it's smarter to chat while at the same time buying time.

Besides, I cannot help but feel like there's some ulterior motive behind what Schmihazar does. You

can also say, there's more to him than meets the eye, or there's a bottom beneath the bottom...

I'm also curious about what he suddenly let slip earlier. The order by Hoffmann to have me investigated...can be interpreted in various ways.

As I sort my mind, I speak up, "Rather than such things...the ability with the grid-patterned net...the power that bundled up the tentacles of my partner...is that a skill? Or magic?"

That one's a pain. I don't want to be caught by it either. Well, if I get completely entangled in it, I'd simply use my suicide attack aka becoming a blood spear by cladding myself in a blood chain armor...

"You mean <Demonic Star - Spirit Net Formation>? That's a skill."

"I heard you say that Hoffmann stole it personally, though?"

"Indeed, I received it from Hoffmann-sama."

Nice, you're a great blabbermouth, Schmihazar-kun. Let's raise his mood...

I switch from my evil smile to a pleasant one, and focus on a friendly look, "...From the great Hoffmann-sama, huh? So, who owned it before him?"

The instant I ask that, Schmihazar's large frame responds with an obvious reaction of getting all lively.

"——A sacred knight protecting one of the western sages! Hoffmann-sama, who was looking for the Rindel Antidote, was very happy over having obtained that skill by chance, and praised me for my work. As a reward for it, he bestowed me that skill! Since it uses a lot of mana, it's limited in its application, but...it's highly effective against big animals." He honestly answers.

For some reason, he's very cheerful. I can feel his delight from the movements of his eyebrows. ...I won't deliberately point out the movements of his lips.

"So Hoffmann possesses an ability allowing him to transfer skills and magic symbols, huh?"

"Correct, spearmaster. It piques your interest, doesn't it?"

Schmihazar's words...sound as if Hoffmann is speaking here in person.