

## **Chapter 360 - Battle against a Semi-Transparent Orc**

"Nnn, nyaa~" Divine Beast Rollodeen meows while having her tentacles head our way as she circles in the sky.

She's greeting Helme while entwining a tentacle around her body.

"Fufu, I'm sorry for avoiding your greeting earlier, Rollo-sama——"

Helme is being tightly hugged by Rollo's tentacle. And then Rollo begins to play around with Helme as if imitating a sky trampoline, lifting Helme's body up and down.

"Hauuu~ Please treat my butt kindly, Rollo-sama——"

"Puyuyu? Puyuuuu."

I can't see Puyuyu because it's so small.

"I've caught you, Puyuyu~"

"Ahahaha, Puyuyu's legs are so tiny~~"

"Puyuyuu~"

"Did we finally reach paradise? I'll do my best!"

"Even though we haven't even negotiated yet, the prospects look grim."

"It's still too early...you got to challenge your negotiation partner with a mindset along the lines of, 「What cannot be achieved with the power of one man can still be achieved with the power of many」."

"——Oh Shuuya, so you can also jump through the sky!?! However, I can't really look ahead since Divine Beast-sama's fur blocks my sight!"

Everyone happily chats away on Rollo's back. The grandpas and grannies, including Gramps Ton, admonish the young folks.

"Voices and weird noises of the people Your Excellency brought along...and I can also see a lively beastwoman among them..." Helme comments while casting a sidelong glance at my entourage as she's being toyed with by the tentacle.

It sounds like she's curious about Puyuyu and Higlia's voices. Higlia with her conspicuous silver attire is visible, but...Puyuyu's tiny body and the children are out of sight.

For the time being...we should hurry back to Quiche's village——

"——Rollo, follow slowly as you have everyone with you. If the battle should be violent——"

As soon as she hears my words, Rollo stops playing with Helme, reeling her tentacle back into her chest with a whoosh, and then extends sharp claws from her paws, making it look like she's getting ready to fight.

"...Your Excellency, there's still something I have not told you yet."

"Hmm, what is it?"

"Most of the orcs have already been annihilated thanks to the strenuous efforts of Catiza and the Burning Knights under the command of Commander-in-Chief Quiche. Thus the village is safe for the moment."

I see, that's a relief, I guess. Well, I suppose it's only to be expected with Catiza and the Burning Knights being over there.

"However, I cannot exclude the possibility of an ambush by an enemy as of yet. Moreover, in addition to the roaring of trolls, a huge, semi-transparent orc is currently eating the corpses of its former allies at a spot further away from the village's front."

Troll voices and a semi-transparent orc?

"What's up with it eating the corpses?"

"I don't know any details since we haven't fought it, but it might be the orc's secret weapon."

"Okay, I got it. I suppose we don't need to hurry if the orcs have a falling out. Anyway, since it's faster for me to see it with my own eyes, come back into my eye, Helme——" I beckon her over with my left hand.

It's a gesture carrying the meaning of "Hey, come on!"

"Certainly——" Helme breaks into a broad smile after seeing my gesture.

In the next instant, she turns into a fervent spiral while rushing into my left eye, just as usual. Immediately following, a tiny, smiling Helme-chan manifests at the edge of my visual field.

"Eh? Inside his eye..."

Having watched everything from near proximity, Kisara is astonished. She probably can't see how the tiny Helme is swimming around in my visual field, but still stares at my left eye.

"A Demonic-Eye-like small mark has..."

"Hey, Stranger. Are your eyes something like the Focale I stole from Schmi hazard?" [efn\_note]The "Stranger" here is 稀人 (Marebito), usually meaning visitor from afar, and literally rare person. It's pretty much the way the inhabitants of that world call people from other worlds and is also reflected in the LN's title "Stranger and Black Cat." I'll capitalize it as coined term.[/efn\_note]

For some reason Rotalz calls me a Stranger... If I recall correctly, Strangers were...

"Be silent, Rotalz. You were allowed to take it rather than stealing it, right?"

"Guess so. I won't forgive you for having a part of my head devoured and absorbed, but I'll overlook the pain of my butt with this." Rotalz says while projecting an illusion right above him from the burning magic symbol on his forehead.

It's an illusion of a small wand and a tiny R letter.

Still, it's funny how his butt swelled up. He's a whale, but...I sure didn't expect him to wake up to a liking in that direction.

"Hmm? Rotalz, you like it in the butt...?"

"Like hell! It was caused by the flames of the divine beast over there. She basked the witch spear in a ridiculous amount of fire in the middle of its transformation, didn't she? Those flames evaporated not only Schmihazar's prided <Inner Eye>, but also most of his elements, such as his Flair." Rotalz looks at Rollodeen with eyes full of fear.

Rollodeen only responds with a questioning look though.

I guess he's talking about the time when Rollodeen got back. Well, even though it got deflected in the end, that fireball definitely looked like a mini-sun.

"Indeed. It was convenient for us, but let me ask you, Shuuya-sama, is the mark in your left eye a Death Angel (A'Geladey) type of magic circle (Phugruh Lo) as it was possessed by Schmihazar? The power of a spirit with a consciousness and a definite shape?"

"...I've seen such spirits before, but very rarely. Or rather, the great desert houses many entities like ancient spirits and blood bone nymphs, but I've never seen a spirit just like her among them. Even the hollow wolf beasts, which are worshiped by the Ahmeph people, are different." Rotalz agrees with Kisara while making his forehead tremble.

"Yep, isn't she a being originating from an ancient city treasure or demonic tools as they appear in fairy-tales like the ones circulating among the Ahmeph people and North Mahaheim people in the great desert, and the Muryu tribe of the Eyhabla Plains next to the desert. I'm sure she must have been in direct contact with a supreme god as kin, fused with Shuuya-sama after getting absorbed by him, or had some other °special circumstances°..."

"Oh, you mean the Stranger himself is a legendary, sacred treasure? The ancient hougu is said to have been loved by the last emperor of the Dawn Empire at the height of its glory."

"...The legendary hougu or sacred treasure called Ruby Abyss? Ufufu, how thrilling! So he's a crow piercing through the moonless dawn after all. A being as hailed in the song about the attendant of witches following Damo'Anun! For this very reason I believe it's got to be Shuuya-sama, who's also the bearer of the Dawn's sorcery skills."

Kisara has noticed Helme's mark, huh? Speaking of songs, I might accompany hers with my Justice

lute.

As I'm pondering about such things...Kisara's eyes gleam up. The design of her black mask, which actually reminds me of a black queen, resembles the reliefs I've seen in the underground world, just like before.

The look she's sending my way through that mask is one of reverence towards a sect leader. It's filled with intense passions, but...it also contains an impressiveness that reminds me of a cold wind, not to mention a refreshing, azure sky.

Honestly, it's scary, but Kisara's conjecture isn't that far off the mark. And Helme's mark, which seems to exist in my left eye, is the same one that was imprinted on my butt in the past, isn't it...?

Oh, is that the reason?

I remember Sol's place, where Viine, Mysty, and Hankay are currently staying, from back when I spent some time there with Yui. When I entered the bath after finishing my training, Yui stared at my ass.

While I'm carefreely reminiscing here...

"——The fur and tentacles of Divine Beast-sama felt wonderful, but—— right now something else is more important!" Freeing herself from Rollo's fur, Higlia climbs atop Rollo's forehead.

Rollo looks up to her, and tries to get her off by extending her tongue. She seductively licks Higlia's body as if grooming it. But in the end, Higlia manages to somehow escape Rollo's tongue, moves to the edge of the forehead, and hesitatingly looks at Kisara, Rotalz, and me.

And then she shouts, as if declaring war as a woman, with a tense and frantic expression, "——Shuuya! Aren't you forgetting that you have something more important to deal with than Boobs (Kisara) over there!", while pointing at Kisara with a silver claw that had its shape changed.

"Fufu, what a cute beast girly." Kisara isn't perturbed in the least.

"This again, huh?"

"Quite so. We have to hold a duel on the plaza with the statues of Hurley-sama and the twin moon gods! It's a promise for you to strive for glory (love) together with me!"

She might be an ancient wolfwoman and a divine princess, but it doesn't change the fact that she's cute. She's a gentle woman who's been trying to protect everyone, despite acting tough on the surface. And I also thought so when we fought together, but I feel like it'd actually be fine for us to pair up. Though I doubt it'll become the pairing she desires...

I guess I'll humor her just this once.

"...You mean the duel where you exchange fist blows after having learned each other's names? Okay, I'll fight you once after I'm done with all my other business."

"Fufu—— Yahooo!"

Higlia grabs one of Rollo's tentacles and adopts a triumphant pose in joy, and then jumps. After pulling off a "Shoryuken" out of overflowing happiness, she almost falls off Rollo's forehead, but Rollo saves her by twining a tentacle around her body, just to do the same trampoline play with Higlia she had earlier done with Helme.

『Aahh~ Being inside you is really the best, Your Excellency~』

Helme's telepathic message echoes in my mind. After swimming around furiously, using all kinds of different forms, Helme stands up with the leafy skin waving, turns around, and asks with a tense expression, 『...Your Excellency?』

The tone resonating with her voice has a touch of Iglued's enviousness. Helme transforms from her small illusionary form into an adult illusionary form that seems to fill half of my visual field. Her boobs are shaking quite conspicuously.

『...Is there still anything else you are keeping hidden from me besides the witty beastwoman and the increased presence of your water, Your Excellency?』

It's not a question teeming with jealousy, but still, nothing less of Helme. She's sensed not only the matter with Iglued and the demonic duke, but also my growth. After all, I've acquired <Super Brain - Hazy Moon Reflection on Water> which requires the <Instant Wand of Water> divine protection.

It looks like she's felt the faith of the water goddess, albeit faintly.

But, if that's not it, does she mean Saraten when she's talking about hiding something from her?

『...You mean this palm, right?』

『Yes! I sense a foreign object inside your left hand! What is that about?』

『I'll tell you about the details later. Although it's safe for the moment, I'm worried about Cydale's situation——』

Bringing our telepathic conversation to a close within milliseconds, I shift my eyes to Kisara and Rollo.

"Kisara, Rollo, we're going to head over to Cydale!"

"Don't forget about meee!"

"Higlia, you can't fly, can you? Although you'll be safe atop Rollo, someone has to protect everyone, including Gramps Ton and Magrick who are taking care of Iglued's seed and the Aodm-something wood cluster. Just Moga and Nemus are too unreliable as guards. So, I entrust everyone's safety to you, Higlia."

"...Oki, count on me."

Higlia is still entangled by Rollo's tentacle, but...she nods with an adorable smile after seeing me relying on her.

After answering her with a smile, I wave my hand as a signal, and then kick off the <Magic Hand guided by Thought> beneath my feet with my whole body clad in Magic Combat Style, dashing through the sky.

I'm curious about that semi-transparent orc, but first comes Quiche.

At the same time, I hear Kisara reciting with a magical voice, "Thou hast glared, hyureya——", behind me. It seems she's keeping up with me.

Without paying any further attention, I continue running through the sky as if tearing the air apart with Baldok's red spear which I'm holding with my right hand. Passing the horse-shaped rock, I take a turn, following the water stream in the valley beneath my feet. In the blink of an eye I pass through the area where grasses are dominating the base of the mountains.

Below I can see a path meandering towards a Bewitching Palace-like hill. I've come back to Cydale!

『We are back! The semi-transparent orc is on the other side of that hill』 Helme points with a finger at a semi-transparent monster.

『So that's the one, huh?』

Moreover, it's tossing an orc corpse into the air, just to catch it with its wide open mouth as it falls down. After closing the mouth, it munches on the corpse, devouring it while looking as though it's truly enjoying the taste. It's chewing with such a verve that you can hear the noise all the way over here.

Furthermore, each time it eats a new orc corpse, richly colored lights glow around its abdomen. Those glows travel through its body like electrical signals. It's also keeping a sizable amount of mana in its body.

I'm really interested in that orc, but...I'll fight it later.

I pull my eyes off that new orc species, and look at Cydale. Just as Helme said, the village is safe. I guess the narrow, wooden gate is on the verge of toppling over? And there are traces of a small house having burned. The damage of the attack is still fresh.

Seeing how my servants had been present, the attack must have had quite the quality to have left such damages behind. Intelligent orcs, eh...?

There's a gravesite at the foot of the hill I saw earlier. The watering hole, where the water is drawn from a spring, is the same as before. I look at a place where graves are lined up...

Right, that's how it is, right Quiche...?

『No, I won't return to everyone. I want to drop in for a visit to Hino. Besides, the Evil Dragon King

was killed. I'm going to head back to the place where my hometown had been, dig up graves, and tell my family...and everyone else about his death」

Quiche had told me, clearly passing on her feelings of wishing to rebuild the village to me. Back then her face was twisted in pain and anguish. Tears had streamed down her cheeks...

And then we deeply kissed each other with me trying to tell her to cheer up and stop crying. It was a kiss between friends, but it held deep affection...

While being moved to tears, I check the vicinity while circling around the village.

『——Your Excellency, do you wish to examine the situation with Spirit Sight? Or by using Spirit Ball Conception?』

『No, it's fine for now——』

Immediately after my telepathic conversation with Helme, I spot Catiza whose silver hair is standing upright. She stretches her arm towards me atop the gate, and waves it furiously. Then again, it's funny due to her weird waist movements.

Moreover, she keeps switching her face with those of Purin and Tsuan. Maybe the three are fighting for dominance within her. It's weird because it happens with her waist bent like that.

『Fufu——』 Helme laughs and dances in a corner of my visual field.

It appears she's given Catiza lessons.

『Your Excellency, this is a pose I came up with just recently!』

She's demonstrating her new pose to me...but, I ignore both with their posing.

I've also found the Burning Knights. They're riding my precious pets. Sure looks awesome. Just like shoguns or military commanders.

The children are in the center of the village with the monument.

It looks like Catiza and the Burning Knights have properly protected the village and its inhabitants. Or rather, did they get influenced by Catiza's posing?

The children have started to imitate her dance of twisting her waist.

Catiza is about to summon her bone fish, but stops midway. Suddenly Alray and Hueremy roar. They shake off Adomos and Zemetas, climb the roof of a building, and frantically keep jumping up as if to fly. However, they cannot fly despite being magically created tigers.

——Sorry, you two. You want to hug me, right?

Or maybe they've perceived Rollo's presence, who's like a mother to them. Rollo is still behind me since she's flying slowly.

But, I suppose it's typical of me to ponder about Alray and Hueremy rather than the Burning Knights who were blown away. At that point, the children gather around Adomos and Zemetas, who've crashed into a wooden wall, and touch them. Alray and Hueremy join in as well.

Then the children leave the Burning Knights, and gather around Catiza, probably lured in by her strange dance. Catiza raises a hand, cheering them on to participate, starting a ridiculous dance. The children copy her.

This is going to make Quiche worried. Still, it seems the children have received more influence from Catiza and the Burning Knights than the butt lover Helme.

Well, the Burning Knights are talking steam locomotives. And when it comes to Catiza, I can fully agree considering her usual behavior. She can change into Purin and Tsuan, even just her face, and she can also turn into a golden caterpillar. Quite the eccentric, funny person for the children...

Okay, now I know that the village is safe.

While feeling relieved...I look ahead where hills line up beneath a cliff. Orc corpses are strewn all over the place as if to cover the hills with a crimson layer.

A part of the woodland has been mowed down, exposing Holker stone lookalikes. Though it doesn't look like it has developed into a large-scale battle...

Oh, I found Quiche!

With her light green hair fluttering in the wind, she's quickly descending the cliff. A magnificent heavy knight armor encases her delicate body. She's still carrying her beloved sword in one hand, and a shield in the other.

...Her appearance hasn't changed, but I feel like she's become faster than before.

Her target is that semi-transparent orc, huh? She hasn't noticed me yet. ...She's doing her utmost to protect her village.

『Your Excellency...your mana...』

『...Yeah』

Seeing Quiche, my emotions seem to surge to such an extent that it surprises Helme. It appears that my mana has naturally leaked outside, too.

"Shuuya-sama——"

"Kisara, the elf with the light green hair is my friend. Don't mistake her for the enemy. Also, I'll go ahead and kill that monster over there. Kisara, you make Quiche stop in a gentle manner so that she won't come close to me as I fight."

"As you command——"

"Kisara~, you've got a tough road ahead, don't you?"

"Shut it! You run your mouth too much——"

Kisara, who gives me a formal response with a clenched fist, immediately reacts after being teased by Rotalz. While whirling around the witch spear, which is shrouded in filaments, she lifts one leg like a rhythmic sports athlete.

"——<Heavy Dropkick of Evil>." She delivers a splendid heel kick - bewitching me with her gorgeous panties at the same time - against Rotalz.

"——Ahyaaa!"

Rotalz becomes a pitiful mess. His forehead, which had recovered at long last, caves in with a sound similar to a bubble bursting. He crashes into the valley while rotating like a battleship that has been shot down.

A blow of her combat boots packs quite a severe punch.

...Or rather, I tasted it as well, so I can feel you, Rotalz.

But leaving that aside, I cannot afford to let Quiche fight that monster. Focusing on my shoulder dragon, I changed Hal'Konk from its tank top version into its Evil Dragon King armor.

I pass Quiche while dashing through the sky, closing in on the semi-transparent orc.

『——Helme, lend me your strength』

『Yes, "just as usual."』

I don't give any particular response to Helme's telepathic comment, but I'm sure a smile is blooming on my face right now. While strongly thinking of a certain image, I activate <Spirit Ball Conception>.

The glittering liquefied Helme slides out of my left eye with a wet sound. The fluid, which is hard to describe as liquid or sap, spreads out from my left eye, dyeing a part of my left shoulder turquoise blue as a new defense layer.

※Piing※ <Elixir Law - Catfish Conception> acquired

Oh, I got a skill when I created a strong mental image. The left field of vision for <Elixir Law - Catfish Conception> that's based on <Spirit Ball Conception> is as mysterious as ever.

If you look at it from the side, it might seem as though a huge, planet-like catfish is floating above me on the left. Maybe it even looks like a Spirit Beast.

Immediately following, the orc reacts to me approaching it from the sky, and roars loudly, "Don't get any clooooooser! Nuguuoooh!", with its muzzle cracking open to the sides.

It then throws an orc corpse my way.

Whoa, how amazing! There's still quite a bit of distance left between us.

I quickly rotate my body vertically, swinging Baldok by drawing my right hand back. The orc body, which closes in on me trying to completely fill my visual field, is bisected by the red ax blade. I continue rotating forward while getting basked in blood.

Just like that, I land on the ground, firmly planting my feet down. The corpse had been awfully heavy. It might have been a special <Throw> technique that transforms corpses into meatballs.

It was spot on to not allow Quiche to fight this thing.

Right when that thought crosses my mind, the orc's attack is incoming after it's closed the distance between us. The attack consists of semi-transparent tentacles which have extended from the orc's crooked fist.

We're still separated from each other quite a bit, but...that guy got a considerably high reaction speed. And the approaching tentacles are abnormally fast, too.

Before deploying my <Chain>, I manipulate <Elixir Law - Catfish Conception> that covers the area from my left eye to my left shoulder, making a warped, catfish-shaped defense layer expand in front of me.

As soon as the tentacles get in contact with the <Variation of Ball Conception>, they get instantly absorbed in <Elixir Law - Catfish Conception> as if disappearing.

"What are youuuuuu?! A trooolll vanguaaaaard?" The orc screams loudly.

"Do I look like a troll to you?" I ask through <Elixir Law - Catfish Conception> as it blocks the orc's ranged attack while drawing closer to it.

"...Humph! So you're a collaborator of the Tree Apparition King who's slipped in among the humans?"

"Who the hell is that? I know the Death Butterfly people though." I answer while getting even closer.

"Whaaaaat, stay awaaay! A person from the underground world, eh!? Nuuuuuaaaa——"

The number of tentacles shooting out of the orc's fist increases. However, small, Helme-like hands extend from the catfish shape, grabbing the tentacles instead and pulling them into the turquoise blue interior of the catfish. The tentacles closing in on me vanish in an instant. It seems like the tentacles just have a semi-transparent color, but otherwise don't differ from flesh or material-based tentacles.

"You ate them!?"

"Smart boy——"

I kick off the ground, and shoot <Chain> ahead from my left factor mark. As the chain's tip stabs into the ground, I reel it in like an anchor, forcing my body to move. Using that movement force, I keep shortening the distance to the surprised orc.

The orc swiftly brandishes its extended left arm downwards while making its body's interior gleam. It tries to squash me from above, but I quickly erase <Chain> and dodge to the left.

An intense noise as it happens when the ground caves in reverberates across the vicinity. At the same time rock fragments hit my neck and face, causing a certain amount of pain.

——However, I ignore that pain.

After the evasive movements, I kick off the ground once more, shifting towards counter-attacking from a right angle. I spread out water from life magic while simultaneously manipulating <Spirit Ball Conception> through <Elixir Law - Catfish Conception>.

Then I crouch down while creating multiple water layers beneath my feet. Yep, it's the technique of spear user Soleck. With my body half-risen, I unleash a low thrust, invoking <Fang Stab> as I stab out Baldok with my right hand.

The spiraling red spear drills through the orc's leg.

"Nuguuoooh——"

Once the orc releases its mana with its upper body trembling, its body splits apart. The suddenly appeared smaller, semi-transparent orc versions are slender in contrast to their main body. Each of them holds a silver magic sword.

The situation has abruptly developed into a 3 vs. 1, but I cope with it calmly.

——Blood Mana <Blood Path - Open Third Gate>.

I activate my blood acceleration. Making Baldok disappear, I summon Ganghis into my left hand. Tilting Ganghis diagonally below, I parry the low stab aimed at me by the orc on my left. Next I switch to a two-handed hold, and lift Ganghis above my head, blocking an upper slash coming from my right.

Then I move Ganghis vertically, parrying a mid-tier slash targeting my side, and at the same time I stoop down to dodge a sweeping slash by the main body.

At that point, I ward off another approaching sweep by tilting Ganghis' blade diagonally once more. Making Ganghis rotate as if drawing an arc, I rotate myself as well. The blood and water sticking to my feet is being scattered around me, representing my movements.

Ganghis' circular movements belongs to the Wind Spear Style's 『Branch Twine』. I wield Ganghis

to draw a circle in the air dragging the silver sword I've turned aside along. It's a counterattack by entangling the sword with my spear, but the enemy is strong and fast.

Two orcs have synchronized their movements, both stepping in towards me with their swords at the ready and simultaneously swinging their swords.

I put priority on defending myself. I move Ganghis, which I've been rotating up until then, vertically, allowing me to receive the synchronized sweeps of both orcs with the middle part of Ganghis.

Sublime, fickle sparks scatter as Ganghis clashes with the two silver blades. Moreover, a shrill metallic screech hits my ear drums.

——Don't think I'll just keep defending, okay?

I step forwards as if sidling up while intentionally smiling. At the same moment, I stab Ganghis into the ground. While focusing on the hand holding the spear, I deliver a front kick, driving Arzen's Boot into the chest of the orc on my right, sending it flying.

At that instant, the main body's sword lunges at me. It's a thrusting technique that's attempting to pierce through my chest. It has apparently judged that I'd be defenseless when my kick comes to an end.

While evading the incoming sword point by shifting my body sideways, I wind up the sword approaching from my left with the <Spirit Ball Conception> I've deployed at my feet, causing the left orc clone to become defenseless instead.

I make use of Ganghis as it's vertically stabbed into the ground, and twist my waist as if performing a pole dance on Ganghis, dispatching a right turn kick. The kick, with mana charged into Arzen's Boots, impacts on the orc's head.

A dull gong and sprays of blood scatter into the surroundings, but without paying any attention to that, I use the momentum of my kick. While registering how the orc clone with the pulverized head vanishes, I rotate my body.

Suddenly, the main body extends its arm, aiming the point of its sword at my foot. Is it trying to crush the foot that produces all my swift rotational movements?

——I use the approaching silver sword against the orc. Measuring the timing by watching the sword point, I jump as if making my body float a bit, and adjust my balance by pouring mana into my left foot.

Just like that, I trample down on the sword's middle part with the image of crushing the orc to death with the sole of Arzen's Boot. I place my body weight on the sword, pushing down the sword even further with the intent to completely bury it in the ground.

In the next instant, I summon Baldok into my right hand, and whirl around while pinning down the main body's sword with the sole of my left foot.

Yep, it's a shift from a spear stance to a spear stabbing technique.

At the same time I erase Ganghis, and resummon it into my left hand again, before thrusting out Baldok in my right hand.

I activate <Water Drill> on the spiraling red spear. The spear covered by water looks unusual. Given that it's being clad with water while that very water keeps evaporating, the attack looks like a steam stab. Even as I consider that the spear and skill might not be very compatible with each other, the red spear's <Water Drill> penetrates the main body's abdomen.

I feel feedback, but it's kinda shallow?

"Gununununu——"

The main body falls prostrate, groaning while holding onto Baldok.

At that moment, the clone orc I've blown away with my front kick aims its sword at my torso, but it's too slow. While letting go of Baldok, I dodge the sword thrust with <Hazy Moon Reflection on Water>. Continuing from there, I direct one hand towards the ground with a cartwheel motion while my body stands sideways. Thrusting that hand into the ground like a water surface, I lower my waist while closing the distance.

Even as I'm showing my back to my opponent, I drive an upper vertical kick into the clone's bosom. A dull thud reaches my ears from its abdomen accompanied by a solid feedback from my foot.

Having suffered a counter, the clone is hurled high into the air. With its body folded, the orc's body is slowly disappearing, but I won't let it get off so easily. I unleash <Dark Water Moon Pierce> at the clone's belly.

It's a nimble spear technique that continues to alter my posture from propping my body up with a hand to drawing a half moon in the air alongside Ganghis. I thrust myself towards the orc's belly as if having become one with Ganghis' spearhead which seems to pierce the heavens.

"Gyaa——"

The scream by the clone orc concludes with it ending up on Ganghis. In that instant, foggy blood is released from the clone orc's muzzle, and it disappears.

"Hiii."

This scream comes from the main body that's still alive. The main body orc has maintained its semi-transparency even after getting hit by Baldok's red spear and ax blade at the abdomen. Quite the tough guy.

I try to pull Baldok out of the orc's abdomen, but it doesn't allow me to do so.

"Don't touch it with your dirty hand——" I shoot ice pebbles at it from Hal'Konk's shoulder dragon.

Next I fire <Chain> from point-blank. The chain's spearhead penetrates the main body's body. The

ice pebbles stab the area around the orc's eyes.

"Guuuaaa."

Moreover, I shoot a series of 《Ice Bullets》, controlling them so that they don't damage Baldok. The orc's flesh is scattered as it's showered by a spray of machine gun bullets, continuously becoming smaller while unable to even scream.

I erase <Chain> as it meaninglessly cancels my spells. In the middle of that, the orc's body changes its color, becoming dark. Without caring about that, I advance with my Blood Acceleration while absorbing the scattering mana, flesh, and blood with <Spirit Ball Conception>.

Grabbing Baldok with my right hand, I pull it out of the now small lump of meat that used to be an orc. As soon as I extract the spear, the hole in the orc's abdomen becomes visible. Blood quickly surges out of that hole.

At that moment, Baldok's red spear and ax blade glow. Baldok releases threads similar to the witch spear's filaments, and sucks up the orc's blood.

A huge heart with a magic square talisman stuck to it is visible through the hole that has become spot-clean after the blood was absorbed. Its heart is located in its abdomen?

Also, Baldok seems to be slowly changing.

At that instant, the heart squirms. For the time being, I erase Baldok.

"Is it possibly stuffed with several magic hearts? Oh well, not like I care——" I rotate sideways while muttering this indifferently.

If Mysty was here, she might have stopped me, telling me that she wants to research it, but I've no reason to stop.

Yep, of course I'm holding Ganghis in my left hand.

——I activate <Darkness Drill - Evil Destruction Spear>.

It doesn't suit Ganghis to be clad in darkness. Still, its spearhead buries itself entirely in the hole that had been opened up by Baldok.

Accordingly, the huge darkness lance, Destruction Spear Gladopalus, penetrates through the orc while swallowing its body. In an instant, the orc's right body half turns into small pieces, and vanishes.

I cancel my blood mana while also erasing Ganghis. I don't look at the main body dispersing like wind. Rather, I turn in the direction of the women's voices that seem to be quarreling behind me. I won't go as far as calling it a fight, but Quiche and Kisara are exchanging complaints.

Aren't there any other orc soldiers around?

Asking myself, I warily scan the vicinity with Grasping Perception and Magic Observation while approaching the two. But it looks like there are no other enemies around.

"Ah, Shuuya..."

The moment Quiche notices me approaching, she lets go of her beloved longsword. Dropping her shield next as well, she covers her trembling lips with both hands. Green jade earrings adorn her earlobes. Were those Emerald Meditation Gems?

In addition, her white, porcelain-like skin, and a bird on her right chest armor that's bulging out as characteristic for female breastplates. Just as before, small, crane-like emblems are drawn on it.

I don't know about her butt since I can't see it, but it should be alright. I'm sure it's still properly split in two.

"——Shuuya-sama." Kisara props herself up with one knee on the ground.

I nod at her, and then look at Quiche, "I'm back, Quiche——"

While focusing on smiling, I lift my hand to exchange a high-five with her, but Quiche leaps into my chest instead.

"...I saved the children. It appears Azola's amulet did its job."

"I see, I'm glad to hear that. But, I knew that you saved them from you being here."

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

"And just like you said that you'd devote all your power into it, you kept your promise. Shuuya, you're a true hero..." Having been hugging me, Quiche pulls away her face a bit, and praises me while staring at me.

Tears are spilling out of her eyes. The tall Quiche...her dear, slender shoulders...

She isn't carrying a knapsack anymore, but memories of us lying atop each other like lovers cross my mind. And a slightly sweaty scent wafts over from her.

I can tell that this fragrant, nice scent doesn't only belong to battle, but also to an elf even without relying on <Inhalation of Odor Technique>.

"Quiche."

"Shuuya..."

Just like that, I steal Quiche small lips.