

In response to the Burning Knight being on fire all of a sudden, Rollodeen gets slightly startled and distances herself from them.

Zemetas and Adomos perform their Spirit World-styled salutation once more, and then vigorously lift their bone swords and shield to the sides with stiff movements as you'd expect from skeletons, just to furiously clash their skulls against each other in the next moment.

Just what are they up to?

Next they perform turning kicks as if to imitate my kicking techniques. Their skulls and kneecaps are tough, but...cracks have appeared at the places where they've hit each other...

Moreover, as red and black smoke billows out through the gaps between their bones like shaft engines, do they make the different kinds of smoke blend with each other? They don't touch each other's fingers, but are they planning to carry out a Fusion?

A smoke consisting of red and black colors engulfs the Burning Knights. They cross their bloody bone swords at their chests, and stop moving.

"Your Excellencyyyy."

""This is our New Spirit World Blood Boiling Dance!""

"Hehe, your butts and the way you bend your waists is too unpolished, but...let's just say that you pass."

...So that's your own way of responding to Helme's poses, huh?

"Ooohh, Spirit-sama has approved us!"

"She has deemed our true abilities as acceptable!"

"Nyaa."

Rollodeen caresses Zemetas and Adomos's heads with her tentacles with a touch of praise for a job well done.

"Let's leave the dancing at that, okay? You having become strong is all fine as well, but...isn't the damage from your head-butting and powerful kicks worse than the injuries you received in the battle against the troops of the Tree King of Wonders? Your bones have been whittled down and cracked all over your bodies..." I retort.

The Burning Knights have shown me some weird dancing and kicking, but recently they look like Demonic Warriors or Demonic Samurai.

On the other hand, Alray and Hueremy have shown no interest in their dancing. I thought they'd pounce on the Burning Knights as usual, but...they're licking the backsides of their forepaws, just to switch over to play-biting their pads.

"——Something of this level is no more than a scratch! We are alright, Your Excellency!"

"Has your sturdiness increased as well? I feel like the amount of smoke has visibly gone up."

"Yes, I think it might be proof of our growth."

"We also feel a seething heat welling up from the bottoms of our hearts, so..."

I wonder whether they're going to eventually evolve their race upon some kind of impetus. Maybe becoming Heavy Knights or Light Cavalry...

It'd be something to look forward to. But, they look like Burning Knights like this.

"...Heat, eh? Your passionate, boiling feelings give me a power boost. A certain great pro wrestler also said that you can do everything as long as you're energetic. I'm expecting a lot of you in the future, you two."

""You are too kind, Your Excellency!"" The Burning Knights genuflect, obviously deeply moved.

At that moment, I can hear a terribly loud sound of bones breaking.

"——Nuguuooooo!"

"——Guuuuaah!"

As soon as one of their lower leg bones snaps, only leaving the kneecaps behind, their bodies tilt over, resulting in them falling over flashily while running their skulls into the ground.

...You guys got way too excited.

It wakes the urge in me to retort by kicking their heads. No wait, I better stop, don't I?

"...They broke down. You guys are still far from being up to my level."

Helme-san, you're an S.

She casts a sidelong glance while blinking her long eyelashes, and then declares so while linking her arms at her chest as if to lift her plump tits.

While nodding at Helme-sensei's wise words, I state, "...You two have done more than enough, so return to the Spirit World. Though I expect that I'll call upon you very soon again."

"Yes, Your Excellency——"

"Very well, then I shall be off——"

The puff-puff-knights disappear while spitting out lots of smoke. My Dark Hell Bone Knight ring reacts as well. The Burning Knights have tumbled over, but in the end they're precious subordinates who are linked to my mana. And they're also Burning Knights who have their own battles to fight in

the Spirit World.

I pray for their good luck.

"Alray, Hueremy, you two revert as well."

The two tigers return to being small cats. "Nyaa." "Nyao."

I'm bothered by the ancient wolfman they called Daon earlier. The other wolfmen are holding his corpse. Did this huge wolfman possibly die because of me? He might have died because I killed the boss who had his tentacle connected to him.

"Helme, I'm going to talk with the ancient wolfmen for a bit."

"Okay, I shall accompany you."

I grab the rein tentacle of my partner, and squeeze it a bit. After straddling her as a horse lion, I lightly tap the right flank with my foot.

"Nn——" Rollodeen responds to my feelings with a throaty growl.

I make her head towards Daon who's carrying the dead huge wolf. When Rollodeen slowly and gracefully advances, I can hear various voices, blended with sighs, from behind Higlia.

"Ooohh."

"Whoaa."

"What a dignified, cool black horse."

"Just a little while ago she was a big black panther."

"True, we were saved by a black panther. Divine Beast-sama must be capable of changing her appearance."

"Is she the same divine beast as passed down in legends among the rabbitpeople in the far Relic?"

"It's too early to conclude. There's no rabbitperson with us either."

"Assuming she's a Divine Beast-sama...is she the reason why Princess is staying in this small village?"

But it makes sense, seeing how overwhelming Rollodeen was when devouring the troops of the Tree King of Wonders. Somehow Rollodeen also seems to feel rather good about being praised. After wagging her tail, she stands it up like an umbrella's handle.

Seeing her divine beast form, the ancient wolfmen become spellbound with heart marks appearing in their eyes. Meanwhile Rollodeen draws close to the largely-built Daon.

Daon is holding the dead wolf on his chest and lap. His body with his broad shoulders is swaying left and right as he cries profusely.

Rollodeen tilts her head as soon as she looks at the big, sobbing wolfman...and brings her nose close. She appears to be worried about Daon.

I'm sitting on Rollodeen, but I still ask him whether he's okay.

"..."

He shakes his head as if answering, 『I'm not okay——』, and then lifts his head silently. Tears stream down en masse from his blue eyes. A cross mark is visible on his forehead.

Exactly because he's a middle-aged wolfman who looks handsome despite being a wolf beastman, I'm slightly taken aback. Was the dead wolf his family or lover?

Higlia and Ryokline have stopped talking, and step up next to him, apparently worried about their ceaselessly sobbing comrade.

"——Is this possibly...the missing Caem...?" Higlia identifies the dead wolfman in Daon's arms.

"Princess...it is as you say."

"I see...I don't know what to say..." Higlia looks sad as if passing on her condolences to him.

Even while crying, Daon nods at Higlia, and then drops his shoulders.

As if to demonstrate his grief...his full-bodied claw armor that has combined with their clan's clothes converges towards his wrists with viscous movements like a solvent, and turns into into two big gauntlets befitting an ancient wolfman.

In an instant he exposes his well-trained body. He's a werewolf with conspicuous black and light brown, beastman-like fur. On his striped clan outfit's chest you can see a bone mark resembling horizontal lines that signify a number, and a moon symbol.

From a distance it looks like he's got the same silver fur as Higlia, though. Looking at it closely, black is mixed in as well.

"...I guess Caem was caught by the Demonic Tree Necromancer," he laments with big tears running down his cheeks once more.

He powerfully hugs the wolf's corpse.

When I defeated that necromancer, I confirmed by sight that its tentacles were connected to the wolf. But, I focused on defeating the monster.

"...I defeated that slug woman normally, but...is it possibly my fault that this wolf died?"

"What nonsense are you saying? Of course not. Rather, you did well to have defeated it. Usually the

victims don't retain their shape when they die while being brainwashed. That's why it's a blessing for us that Caem could die as a big wolf."

"I see."

Daon nods repeatedly while holding onto the corpse.

"...Indeed, thank you, human hero..." He whispers with a hoarse voice.

"...But Daon, now is not the time to cry all the time. You're similar to Zacksel's successor. That's why I'm deliberately addressing you. Sadness crushes one's heart, but at the same time it makes you strong! Don't forget that others are anxious about your safety back at home as well!"

"...Yes, I shall take your wise words to heart, Princess."

Somehow Higlia's princess-like words and conduct are imposing. I know it's rude, but it's quite unexpected. I mean, she usually always talks about duel this and that while being jealous. Other than that, only her trying to fly through the air while chasing after Kisara and Catiza, her dancing together with the children and Puyuyu, and her squealing, "This is fun," with a lively voice as she turned Donagan's seeds into mush without even plowing his field with her claws remains in my mind.

As I'm recalling Higlia's tomboyish way of acting...Ryokline runs up to Daon, and gently consoles him.

"...Well then, we've got our own work to do."

Time to withdraw. We must hurry since the number of deer monster corpses is tremendous... We'll heat up the other world's winter. Yep, I'll cheer for the working man as I want to drink his coffee.

I must also do my best so that I can say, "Good work" to everyone.

While harboring such thoughts, I get off Rollodeen, who still has Alray and Hueremy sit on her shoulders, with a sidelong glance at Higlia and her brethren.

"Rollo, feel free to go check your forest turf."

"N, nyao."

As Rollo returns into her black cat form and starts playing around with Alray and Hueremy, we begin to dismantle the deer monsters. I don't quite know what effect the materials obtained from these corpses might have. But, they should be usable as fertilizers, for various medicines, food, trade items, clothes, and various other things.

Even as I'm in the middle of that work, the elf ghosts' hymn reaches my ears from the plaza, but...I ignore them. Since I also hear Ebe's voice, I activate <Tree of the Evil King>. After extending a tree to the cage locking in Ebe and connecting it, I make it disappear alongside the cage.

I can hear his delightful shouting echo across the plaza, but I ignore him.

Thereupon, Kisara returns from the sky after separating from Rotalz.

"——Shuuya-sama, the trees...ah, they're gone."

"You came back at the perfect moment. We're retrieving the raw materials, so help us."

"Okay!"

"It's simple work, but let's get it done in one whoosh."

Rotalz vanishes beyond a cloud. I'm curious, but well I guess it's because the sky is bustling with his kin. Though the big whales flying through the sky might be no more than fodder for Rotalz.

"Divine Beast-sama, how cute..."

Kisara-chan is quite familiar with the dismantling work. She gets infatuated as soon as she spots Rollo.

For a while I continue the stripping of the deer monsters with Kisara, Helme and everyone else. All the troops of the Tree King of Wonders have antlers, bones, and wooden armors and arms. Of course, the monster, who seems to be of platoon leader class, possesses quite valuable items.

We'll properly split them among ourselves. But, there's not much dignified equipment like the orcs had. The skinning and work to cut up the intestines proceeds smoothly.

Suddenly, "Shuuya-sama, this magnificent antler is broken on one side, but it should be possible to sell it for lots of money in the desert region."

"You mean the moose-like antler? I feel mana from it, so is it going to be turned into medicine after mashing it into powder or something like that?"

"Yes, you're quite well-informed, aren't you? If you use a special magic furnace and alchemy skills, it might become an ingredient for some kind of secret medicine."

Can Kisara use alchemy as well?

"Your Excellency, let's turn Kisara into a bloodkin right away."

"Don't be so hasty. Rather than that, please drain the moisture out of this deer skin here and clean it."

"Please leave it to me. Since it's the reverse of pew-pew, it's a simple task."

As we're doing our best at this work in such a way...Higlia, who's brought the ancient wolfmen with her, begins to help out after yelling, "I'll help as well, Shuuya!"

"Please do. As you can see, the amount is what it is. Those big amounts of deer meat will probably lure over other monsters. If we take too long, I'll have Rollo burn down all of it."

"Nn——"

Rollo consents by meowing. Then she scratches drying deerskin for dear life while roughly snorting through her nose.

"...That's no help. I'll play with you later. I've come up with a new game that uses the small cat ways in the house, so endure for now. Go on a stroll."

"Nnn, nya, nya, nyaa."

Rollo meows a few times, calls over Alray and Hueremy, and then disappears into the forest. After watching them quickly go with a smile, I resume my work.

As I'm repeatedly performing the plain work...I suddenly recall the time I've spent with Master Achilles. He taught me various things about cutting and sorting materials after a hunt...

Since I spot Higlia handling the materials roughly, I tell her, "Hey, Higlia. That protruding bone material is usable, I think. So treat it a bit more carefully. A corpse is a heap of treasures. Cut up the antlers, eyeballs, bones, fur, and intestines a bit more, and put them in one place. I'm going to preserve them with ice magic."

"Got it!"

"P-Princess, this kind of work is for us..."

"What are you saying, Ryokline? If we strip off things like these with our claws, it's going to make it easier to process them later on."

Ryokline is flustered next to Higlia, their princess. Maybe she used to be her maid.

"...Ryokline, our princess is doing it as well. So we'll of course help as well."

Once Daon says so with a somber tone, he begins to rip out the materials from a corpse as if leading them, no as if to help Higlia. Daon's movements are swift and precise. He uses his claws like a craftsman who was able to gather plenty of experience on-site.

Not bad, Daon-san.

For him to remind me for an instant of Master Achilles... As he continues with his craftsman-like movements, the other wolfmen, who seem to be rather prideful, begin to genuinely help us as well.

Thanks to that...we were able to quickly finish the work. Well, even if the number of people has increased, it's because Helme and I have been here.

After some time Quiche, who confirmed the children's safety, returns by descending the slope from the plaza. Huh? She's got Puyuyu with her?

"The children are safe. Catiza, Moga, and Nemus seemed to be unhappy, though. And as you can

see, Puyuyu has followed me."

"Puyuyu!"

Puyuyu, who's been holding onto Quiche's slender, upper arm, lightly jumps while rotating. It then lands in a pose of spreading both its arms to the sides like a rhythmic sports athlete. While swinging its small hands, it briskly walks up to me.

And then it points its wand at the deer materials.

"Puyuyu, puyu." Taro tilts its head slightly to the side after raising its voice.

Just like that, it pokes a drying deerskin with its wand while squealing, "Puyuuu, puyu!"

Thereupon, it drops its cherished wand for a change, extends its palms like a baby, and grabs the deerskin. It's apparently trying to smooth out the creases in the skin.

Seemingly having grown tired of playing around by spreading the skin to the sides, it lets go. Next it sniffs a frozen lump of deer meat, and after squealing mysteriously, it moves its eyebrows incomprehensibly, causing them to blend with its fur.

Since I can't see its nose, I don't know whether it's sniffing some smell, but...

"Puyuyu is...fine at this rate, I guess."

I think I'll have Ca-chan return to being a finger. Tsuan and Purin seem dissatisfied as well since they had no turn this time.

While looking at Quiche, "...To be honest, it's great that we could contain the battle locally."

"Yep, I could have stayed in the center of the village as well, I think."

"I believe some of the children are excellent and strong as well, though."

"You're right. The children also accumulated plenty of combat experience. But, if possible...I don't want them to get involved in battle."

She's revealing the face of a mother, no, village chief. Although the number of villagers has grown, the village has lots of children.

"But, the singing...is still going on, right?"

"Yeah." I admit feebly.

The ghosts are performing an impressive hymn. Illusionary Gramps Kistrin is also observing me with his Demonic Eyes glowing.

Due to the sudden battle, I didn't explain things properly to Quiche. That's why I should use the opportunity now to introduce Gramps Kistrin and the leaders of the hymn.

Maybe Quiche has family among the ghosts. Ah, Quiche's little sister who has passed away...come to think of it, one of the ghosts was resembling Quiche oddly closely.

...Maybe, one of the ghosts I considered to be twins... Those beautiful elf ghosts, who expressly came in front of my home so as to plead for something, are...