

Chapter 368 - Shout of the Burning Knight

I brandished Baldok as if to break the silence created by Destruction Lance Gladopalus. The chunks of meat sticking to its red spear scatter in all directions.

Then I shoulder Baldok, and check my surroundings with Grasping Perception. And then I grab Holker's wood splinter and expose it to the air with a tadah.

The splinter shook from the forest's wind stirring it, but it trembled like a vibrator, showing reactions to all around. Kisara, who was on the receiving end of the play using this, was raptured to the extent of crying... I reflect on having used the splinter for something inappropriate, and quickly put it back into my pocket.

At that moment, Helme returns gallantly.

"Your Excellency, it looks like Gladopalus has become more powerful from using it in combination with <Water Pierce>."

"You're right..."

I feel from the sensation and feedback how the speed and combat range have been going up little by little, so...you can definitely say that <Darkness Drill - Destruction Lance Gladopalus> is growing.

On top of that, the evolution of Magic Halberd Baldok which has been created by Zaga and Bon out of the Evil Dragon King's materials.

Is it growth as a technique? Or is it my ability?

"I'm happy about your growth, Your Excellency. But, I don't want to get anywhere close to the effective range of Gladopalus. Judging from what I've witnessed with my eyes, I think its range has changed again, but you mustn't think of using it in combination with <Spirit Ball Conception>. If my water gets dragged into that, I feel like it'd get pulled into another dimension like a magic hole, darkness, the realm of the dead, the deepest underground, the Spirit World, or the boundary between the dimensions of the veil..."

Helme is obviously scared. It appears she's experiencing the same dread towards the effective range of Gladopalus as the Rollo's flames. But, for me it's a praise.

While maintaining a dignified pose of throwing out her voluptuous chest...the bluish-black and blue leaves composing her skin are waving. Of course that causes a certain event to occur.

Yep, her boobs. They're wobbling repeatedly like pudding. Her fantastic tits would excite every man on this planet, I'm sure.

But enough of that. I instantly switch my thinking away from that playful, perverted mindset.

"...That's true. I sucked up Schmihazar's blood and mana, and I believe I got a huge experience boost through the battle against Iglued."

"You've talked a bit about it before. You mentioned that your sight was taken..."

"Yeah. To be honest, that battle surprised me. I was saved by my Master's voice. I also learned that some things are impossible to deal with even as Lucival. I can't tell whether it was Iglued's memories or spiritual world, but...I won't be able to forget the swarm of trees resembling the roots of banyans."

You could call it an attack exceeding my regeneration, or an mental and space-based attack completely outside the concept of regeneration, I guess?

"If I had been with you..."

"Don't worry about it. Battles depend on the time."

"Yes, of course! Your Excellency, the corpse of a huge wolf is over there though..." Helme points a finger.

The corpse of a huge wolf is connected to the aquatic monster as its squid tentacles serve as a collar. The wolf has fallen prostrate in a patch of grass like a broken doll. There are traces of it being dragged along after having fallen into the grass, but...the tentacle collar, which seems to be the cause for the dragging, has been apparently swallowed up by Gladopalus as it's gone midway.

"It looks like the wolf escaped the fate of getting swallowed up by your Gladopalus, Your Excellency."

"Seems so."

The effective range of Gladopalus has created a depression as if the ground has been scooped out with a gigantic spoon...

Just as Helme says...the wolf's corpse would have likely disappeared if it had entered that area.

At that point, Higlia's brethren kick up a fuss.

"An amazing lance who manages a divine beast!"

"His violet magic spear is glowing red!"

"Did you see the other spear blade?"

"Of course I did... It had two ecliptic moons, didn't it?"

"Is he connected with the Twin Moon Gods? But leaving that aside...he defeated the enemy so easily!"

"True, he killed that formidable enemy——"

""That Demonic Tree Necromancer!!""

The ancient wolfmen shout with voices full of profound fighting spirit.

"Hehe, that's my Shuuya for you. He's worthy of being my important male!" Even Higlia joins the shouting.

"——The Demonic Tree Necromancer was taken down!"

The boss-level monster I killed last seems to be called Demonic Tree Necromancer. Though it might also be its class or rank, and not its name.

Come to think of it, the huge deer monster also mentioned something along the lines of 『Tree of Wonders Battle Spear Gijyedeah』.

Among all the clamoring wolfmen, only one tall wolfman remains dumbfounded. With a stride as if being giddy, he feebly walks several steps while faintly whispering, "...T-That's..n-no way..."

He runs up to the fallen huge wolf. His deep black tail is long.

"Is that Daon-sama?"

"Probably..."

"What a shame..."

Some of the ancient wolfmen express their pity. That huge wolf wasn't a monster of the Tree King of Wonders, but a captured ancient wolfman? He doesn't look like a wolfman, but like a regular wolf, though...

Maybe Higlia can also transform into a huge wolf? But, I haven't seen her do that.

Thereupon, Higlia orders a pretty wolfwoman with a stern look, "...I'm bothered about Daon. But, Ryokline, please continue with your report for now. The troops led by the Demonic Tree Necromancer had a fairly big size, but what's going on back at our homeland?"

Ryokline is a beauty with eyes like Helme and a fine-boned nose. Her chin is long and slender, and her upper lip is just slightly bigger than Higlia's. Unlike the other wolfmen, she's got light black and brown fur, conspicuous enough to stand out. She's similar to a human.

"Princess, the Tree King of Wonders...the turf that got attacked by Zacksel..."

Zacksel is the ancient wolfman the vampire Yuo killed, isn't he? Higlia avenged him.

"I mentioned it earlier, but I've already taken revenge for Zacksel, but...is it because of that? Did our clan's combat forces decrease because you formed a unit to chase after me?"

Higlis seems to feel at fault here.

"No, I don't think it'd have made a difference even if you had been present, Princess. Moreover, the

underlings of an ancient god invaded the turf Wolf Commander Bidoln. On top of that, it turned into a chaotic fight as some of the enemies slipped among our allies, resulting in many casualties..."

Ancient gods appear to be strong as far as I hear.

"Additionally, a young, excellent soldier was killed after trespassing into the territory of the Death Butterfly people... There's also troubles in the turfs of other wolf commanders as orcs and goblins are invading. Humans have been laying waste to our turfs, too."

"...Again? Also, I'd say it's the eternal prison that remains unchanged even with me being present."

Higlia's expression becomes gloomy after hearing Ryokline's report. Or rather than gloomy, she's different from the usual Higlia. It's not her expression when she's jealous about me, but more like an awe-inspiring princess conducted with style.

I suppose that means even the jealousy she's turning at me is a kind of enjoyable fun for her. Well, it's clearly proven by her continuing to stay here without going back home.

"...With the situation being so grave, the vampires took the slightest opportunities to attack."

"The vampires are a problem too, but..." Higlia looks my way with eyes full of respect.

"But, as expected of you, Princess! It's amazing for you to have killed a leader of the vampires! Your fame will rise a lot higher than challenging the hundred labyrinths of the dead! Moreover, for it to have been one of the 12 family's Valmask family! It's going to boost your right to speak at the Great Chief Wolf Council! The power granted to you by God Wolf Hurley-sama will drastically increase as well!" Ryokline raves on while furiously swinging her tail.

It's pretty obvious that she likes Higlia.

"...Me having been able to get rid of Vampire Hoffmann's <Servant Leader> was thanks to a female vampire hunter and Shuuya. You can tell Shuuya's strength without me having to explain anything, right?"

"Yes. The level of command ability to crush the military forces of the Tree King of Wonders and the moves to rescue us. Furthermore, he possesses a predominant individual combat ability that allowed him to slaughter the Demonic Tree Necromancer all by himself. The very definition of a hero. He looks like a black-haired human, but...hihi."

Just now she looked into my eyes and blushed. Ryokline-san sure is a nice catch too. I love pretty women.

"...Ryokline, you better stop with that look. But, since your little sister was directly saved by Shuuya's technique...I feel like I can understand." Higlia's cheeks turn red while she boasts proudly. "But, it's still a no! I won't let you have Shuuya! Shuuya is a powerful male who has employed a great divine beast. And he's the man I personally told my name to. He's also the male whom I promised to cross fist with for glory on the Idol Plaza."

Higlia-san is getting carried away as usual. Her eyes are obviously teeming with lust.

"Princess—you exchanged an engagement with a male of another race!?"

"W-W-What a scandal..."

"Don't tell me, the Kagura ritual..."

"Ugh, no, not yet...but, that's okay. After all, I've decided to follow Shuuya, even if I might become a ···· fragment of a grass blade."

"Princess..."

Ryokline scowls at me, implicitly asking me with her eyes, 『You were the one who deceived Princess?』. But, what's the point in asking me with such a look?

The wolfwoman I've rescued by entangling my <Chain> around her is behind the ancient wolfmen such as Ryokline. It looks like she's Ryokline's little sister, but seeing how she smiles sweetly once our eyes meet, she's a cute wolfwoman.

When I smile back at her, Higlia starts to make a racket, but...she naturally quiets down once she goes to talk about the future with Quiche. I think it's heading into the direction of an alliance between Cydale and the ancient wolfmen.

Just as I make Baldok and Ganghis disappear, the cawing of a crow reaches my ears.

"——Shuuya-sama, I've performed a simple reconnaissance, but I couldn't sense all that many monster magic sources."

Several black crows are fluttering around Kisara. Are they her familiars who are capable of doing simple scouting work?

Suddenly the crows, whom she'd sent out to scout, went back into the bulging rosary mark on her wrist. Let's simply ask her.

"I got it. Are those crows your familiars?"

"It's slightly different. "Hundred Ogre Path" is a kind of Ogre Princess Armament——"

I don't understand the part about Hundred Ogre Path. But, it sounds like it's going to become long-winded if I ask her for an explanation, including the grimoire. Let's leave it at that for now.

She's apparently wise enough to have perceived that I won't try to probe further. Silently she makes the mana blades extending from the daggers in her hands contract back into the hilt with a whoosh. The instant the daggers became regular knives again, they reverted back into two black crows. The two crows flap their wings, cawing as if divining a fortune. They're different from the crows that went back into her wrist.

Just as evident from them turning into weapons, I doubt they're crows, despite looking like ones. Their tail is as long as that of a long-tailed fowl. Moreover, it's identical to what had been attached

to the daggers' pommel. Their tails have a color similar to a silver chain. A decoration designed like a cross strap is visible at the tips of their tails.

In other words, the daggers were Lulodis-type of weapons? Though it didn't feel like the mana blades carried a light attribute.

Kisara faces the special, magic crows, and the instant she reveals a bewitching smile, the crows are sucked into the rosary emblem on her wrist. She kinda looks like a magician who uses doves.

The rosary emblem has been sticking out like a barcode printing. Furthermore, the grimoire bound to her waist belt by a silver chain and metal fixtures shines as well.

I don't know whether the grimoire is made out of human skin, but the leather it uses for its binding is eerie. Although the grimoire's pages have been flipped automatically, it's currently closed. Maybe it's linking up with the rosary emblem instantly.

"...That's also Hundred Ogre Path?"

"Yes, it is just as you have guessed. Well then, Shuuya-sama, Spirit-sama, wolfmen, I am going to join up with Rotalz to personally scout from the sky——" Kisara flashes a smile at me, but only spares a sharp look for the ancient wolfmen.

Then she turns around in a way that makes me feel the depth of her skill, and flies up into the sky in no time. Her tight waist and her footwork of dancing through the sky like a celestial nymph are elegant. Truly the epitome of 『A sight for sore eyes』.

Kisara lowers her bum on Rotalz's forehead, and seductively crosses her legs. And then she even winks and throws a kiss at me...before starting to circle in the sky together with Rotalz.

"...Shuuya, do you like Kisara?" Quiche asks, apparently feeling uneasy about me gazing at Kisara.

She deliberately asks me something she should be fully aware of. She's stopped her important conversation with Higlia in the middle, but is that okay?

Still, since I've got no intention to hide my feelings about Kisara, I answer honestly, "...Yes. I didn't feel like that in the beginning when I met her for the first time."

Because Quiche knows that I've slept with Kisara, I frankly tell her my feelings. Quiche lifts an eyebrow, and for an instant her nostrils swell up.

"...I see. I'm concerned about the children in the village, our comrades, and the discussion with Higlia."

"The children are at the meeting place, right?"

"Yep. I'm immediately going back to pick them up. Spirit-sama, see you later as well——"

"Okay."

Quiche recovers her smile after shaking her head, and turns on her heels, climbing the slope in the direction of my house.

The ghosts' hymn is still reverberating from the direction where Quiche is probably headed.

At that point, the Burning Knights appear while bringing Alray and Hueremy along. They step up in front of me while matching strides.

Zemetas and Adomos perform a Spirit World-styled salutation. Rollodeen reacts to that. As if tempted by the Burning Knights' greeting, she licks their skulls.

"Rollo-sama!"

After Zemetas's skull, Rollodeen continues with Adomos's.

"That's where the fire eyeballs are dweliiiiiiing!"

Does it feel pleasant to his eyeballs? I don't really know, but Adomos makes smoke billow up in excitement. His red smoke covers Rollo's head.

My partner sneezes. It looks like she's breathed in some of the smoke through her nose. She grandly showers Adomos with her nasal mucus which is tinged red.

The red smoke shrouding Adomos's skull is blown away. And the red mucus from the sneeze is stickily clinging to his breastplate. But, Adomos doesn't really mind. After a simmering sound, new puff-puff smoke rises up again.

"Adomos, let us use the opportunity to show it to His Excellency and Rollo-sama."

"Oh, you're right! We'll exhibit our will to not lose to Catiza-dono!"

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.

"——Nuguuoooo!"

"——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...