
ASCENDANCE OF A BOOKWORM
I'll do anything to become a librarian!
official FANBOOK


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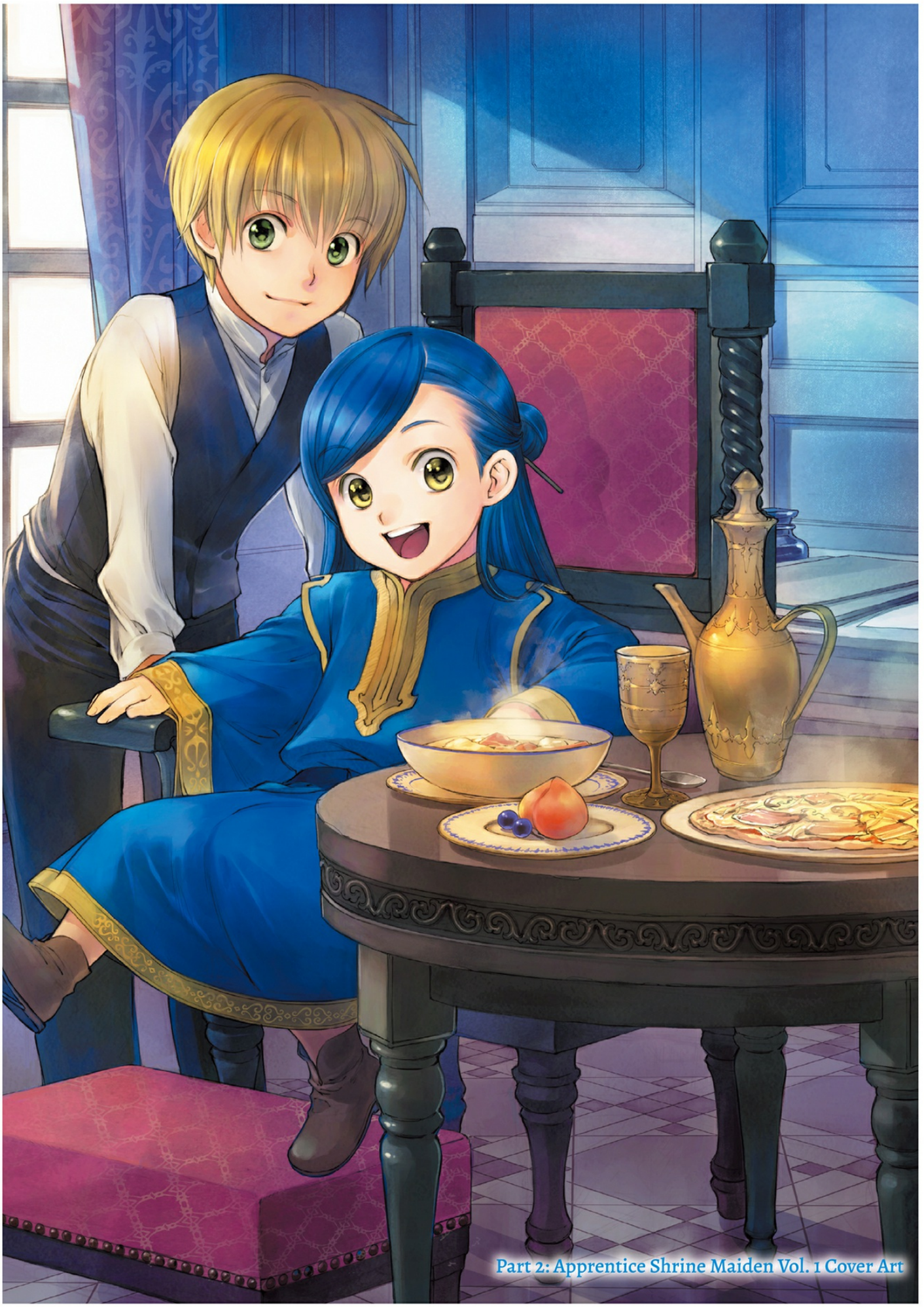
Part 1: Daughter of a Soldier Vol. 1 Cover Art



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Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 1 Cover Art



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Part 1: Daughter of a Soldier Vol. 1 Color Art Sketch



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Part 1: Daughter of a Soldier Vol. 3 Color Art Sketch



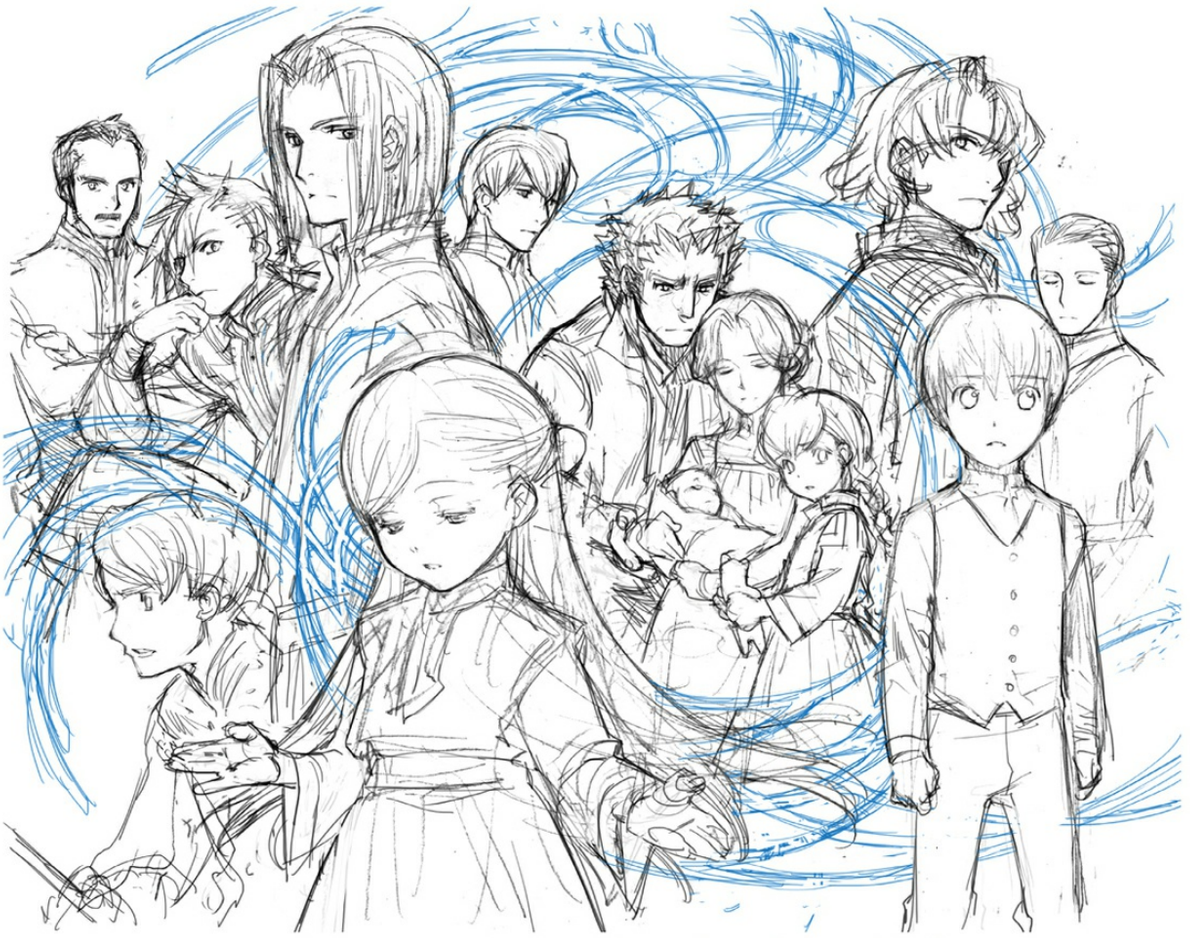
Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 1 Color Art Sketch



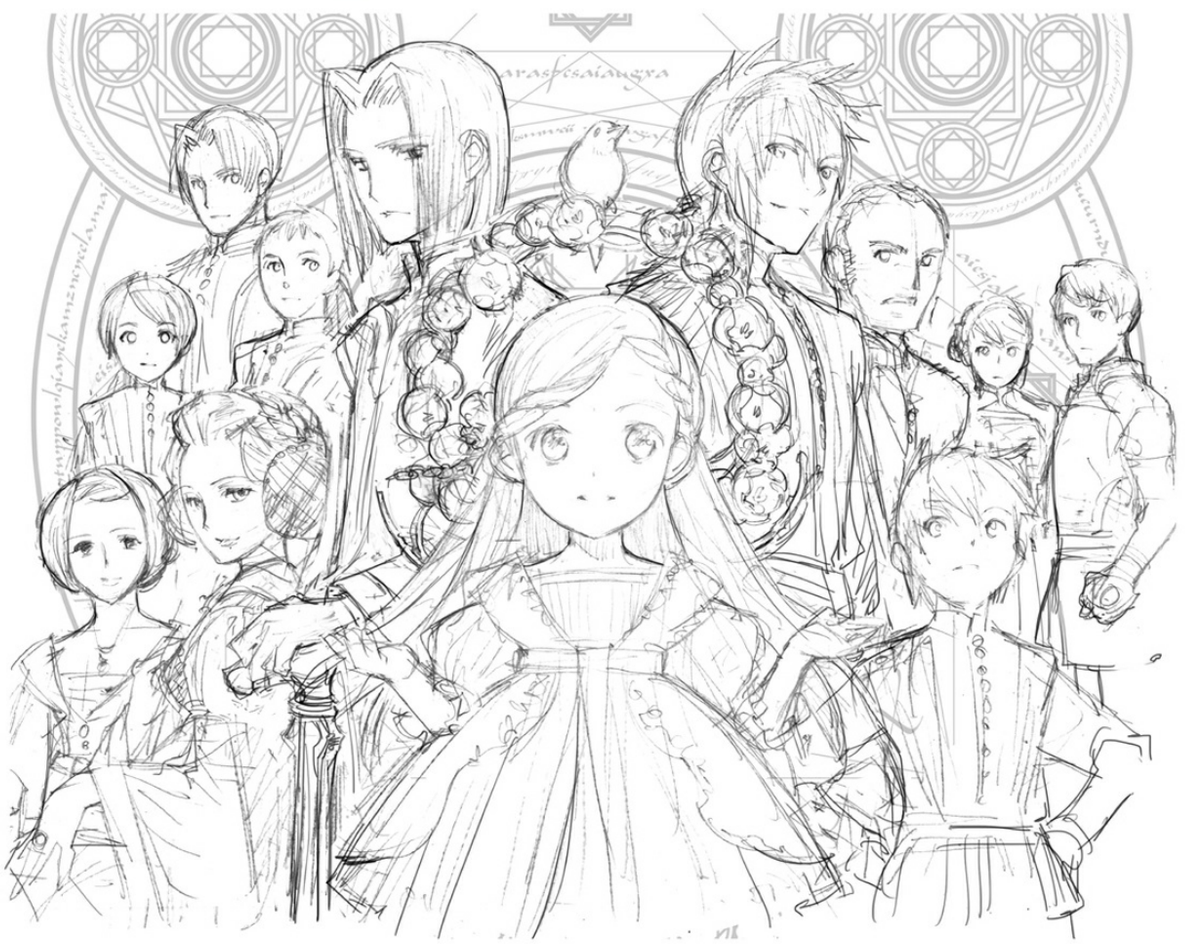
Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 2 Color Art Sketch



Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 3 Color Art Sketch



Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 4 Color Art Sketch



Part 3: Adopted Daughter of an Archduke Vol. 1 Color Art Sketch



Part 1: Daughter of a Soldier Vol. 2 Cover Art Sketch



Part 1: Daughter of a Soldier Vol. 1 Cover Art Sketch



Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 1 Cover Art Sketch



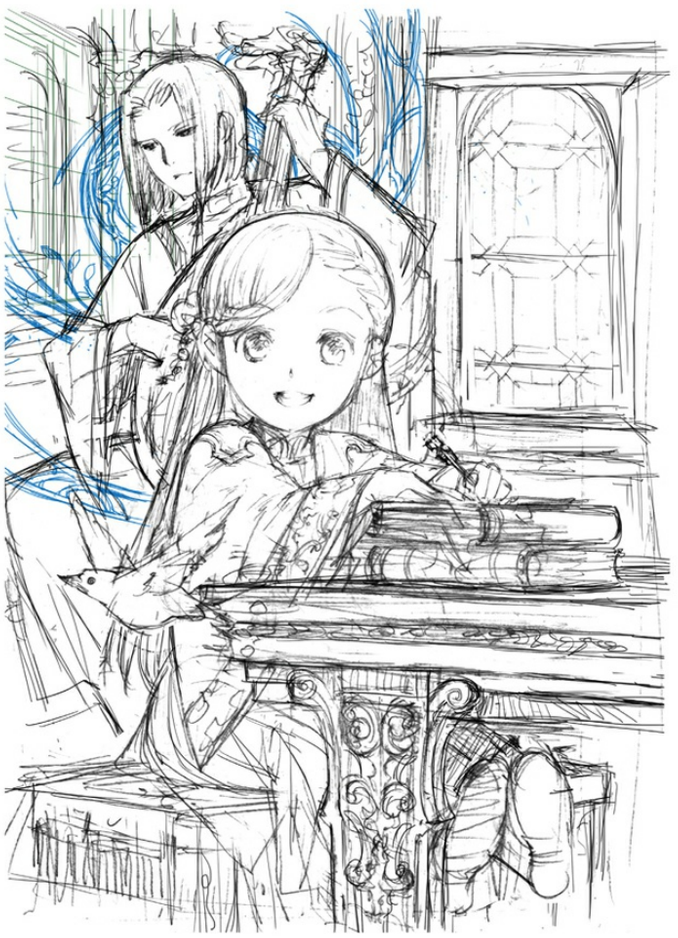
Part 1: Daughter of a Soldier Vol. 3 Cover Art Sketch



Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 3 Cover Art Sketch



Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 2 Cover Art Sketch



Part 3: Adopted Daughter of an Archduke Vol. 1 Cover Art Sketch



Part 2: Apprentice Shrine Maiden Vol. 4 Cover Art Sketch

Temple Tour by Miya Kazuki “Nicola, you should see the look on your face,” Monika said.

I shot her a glare, holding one of my braids against my cheek. “I mean, this is our first time going to the noble section of the temple,” I protested, trying to defend myself. But then I noticed that her dark-brown eyes were wavering anxiously too. She was always the calm, mature one, so seeing her worried actually calmed me down a little.

We could hardly be blamed for being nervous—only adults were permitted to clean in the noble section of the temple, so up until now, Monika and I had only ever cleaned the orphanage and chapel. But now, Lady Rozemyne had taken us both on as apprentice attendants, and her living quarters were being moved from the orphanage director’s chambers to the High Bishop’s chambers. We would be living there with her in the noble section of the temple, and so Fran was going to give us a guided tour.

We’re going to be apprentice attendants in the High Bishop’s room, despite us not even being used to the orphanage director’s chambers yet...

Monika and I had regularly visited the orphanage director’s chambers over the winter to help out with the cooking, so we at least had some experience there. But since we only ever went to the kitchen, it was hard to say we were very used to the place.

“Things are a lot more lenient in the orphanage director’s chambers. As the noble section of the temple is where the blue priests live, the environment won’t be nearly as forgiving as it is here,” Rosina said, taking a brief pause from the paperwork Fran had given her.

“Please don’t say that, Rosina. It only makes me more nervous...”

The only blue robe in the orphanage was the kindhearted Lady Rozemyne, and while that meant the atmosphere in the orphanage director’s chambers was very lax, the same wouldn’t be true for the Noble’s Quarter. There, no mistakes would be permitted—a thought that made me start trembling again.

“Everything will be fine, Nicola. Fran and Lady Rozemyne are both very kind,”

Monika said.

“You’re right. It *will* be fine,” I reassured myself, clasping her hand in an attempt to help us both calm down.

Rosina gracefully tilted her head. “Oh no, Fran is quite harsh. At work, ‘kind’ is the last word I would use to describe him.”

“And what exactly are you talking about now?” came Fran’s quiet voice. I jumped as I spotted his brown eyes looking down at us, but Rosina simply smiled as though it was nothing and held out some boards to him.

“Nothing important. It is about time for you to head to the noble section, correct?

I have finished my paperwork.”

“Much appreciated, Rosina. Now, take care of Lady Rozemyne while I am gone. If she awakens, the High Priest has said to give her a potion to drink,” Fran replied, not pushing his previous question despite doubtlessly having heard what Rosina said.

I knew it! Fran is a kind person who knows how to act like an adult!

“Monika. Nicola. Follow me.”

Leaving the bedridden Lady Rozemyne to Rosina, Fran exited the orphanage director’s chambers with Monika and me. The hall immediately outside was part of the second floor of the boys’ building.

“In the temple, blue priests and shrine maidens use the second and third floors. The noble section differs from the orphanage director’s chambers in that all attendants live on the first floor, while the kitchens and servants’ quarters are in the basement.”

“So we’ll be farther from the kitchen?” I asked, subtly complaining since I so frequently went there to help Ella.

Fran responded with a bemused frown. “The distance to the well is even greater—that is, the High Priest’s chambers are located the farthest from it. But even so...”

He pointed to the well that could be seen from the hallway. It was really close

to the orphanage directors' chambers, so we would usually just need to climb up and down the stairs to reach it. But from today onward, our daily task of carrying water would be a lot tougher.

"You must not use the second-floor hallways while carrying water. Use the western entrance to the noble section and enter the High Bishop's chambers through the basement."

The western entrance was for servants and commoners who brought donations like food. We apparently needed to go this way while carrying water and washing clothes so that the blue priests wouldn't see us at work.

Monika glanced over at the well with a dead look in her eyes. "I think I will grow to hate the winter more than I ever have before," she said, and the thought of walking that far through the snow to gather water made me wholeheartedly agree.

"I'm sure Ella's going to look just as sad as you do..." I replied.

During our brief exchange, Fran had already started walking to the door to the noble section, so we promptly hurried after him. Behind and to the side of the chapel's altar were storerooms for all sorts of seasonal religious stuff, as well as the repentance chamber where Gil—the former problem child—always used to get sent. According to him, it was a smallish room where you had to pray to the gods close to the altar until you received forgiveness.

Oh, and I've never been sent to the repentance chamber! I actually do my duties!

We passed it by, and soon the doors to the noble section came into view. They were currently open since spring was ending and the weather was nice, but during the winter, they were almost always kept shut. The hallways beyond it were very different from those in the orphanage, with tapestries and art covering the walls behind fancy ornament-decorated tables.

"Let's go, Nicola," Monika said, a stiff expression on her face as she took my hand and fearfully crossed the threshold. As soon as we were inside the noble section, we saw a door, with hallways stretching out on either side of us.

"To the left are the chambers for the blue priests who live in the temple. To

the right, on the southern side closer to the temple's front entrance, are the chambers for the blue priests who commute here from the Noble's Quarter. The northern side closer to the Noble's Quarter is much more spacious and contains chambers for those from more high-status families. As Lady Rozemyne is an archnoble soon to be adopted by the archduke, she will be moved to the High Bishop's chambers, located at the most north-western point of the temple," Fran said, finishing his explanation by noting that there were presently three blue priests who traveled to the temple from home.

Fran then turned right and started briskly walking past the chambers used by those commuting blue priests. Monika and I followed after him, having to power walk a little just to keep up. He was walking way faster than he did when he was with Lady Rozemyne.

"The chambers here aren't very large," Monika said, her bundled dark-green hair—fashioned after Wilma's—swaying behind her head like a tail as she peered around curiously. It really did seem a lot more cramped than the orphanage director's chambers.

"The commuting priests do not require beds, nor are the stairs used by their attendants located within the chambers themselves."

"How do their attendants get from place to place, then?"

"Here, there are staircases exclusively for attendants. They go from the basement to the third floor, and all the attendants who serve commuting blue priests use them," Fran explained. The stairs apparently got really busy and crowded since the priests generally came and went at the same time.

"It's a good thing our mistress has staircases in her chambers."

"Yes, but the attendants of priests living in the temple must deal with washing clothes, bathing their masters, taking care of guests, and so on. We have much more work overall, which makes it untruthful to say we have it easier in the broad scheme of things."

Oh, wow... I didn't know there were so many differences between serving live-in and commuting priests.

I nodded along as we reached the end of the hallway and turned left, bringing

us to one that was much brighter thanks to the light streaming in through the windows. The white ivory walls of the temple made even a little sunshine seem dazzling.

“This is the front entrance to the noble section, used when blue priests are leaving or returning to the temple. The tables and chairs in this entrance hall on occasion serve as a waiting area,” Fran explained. Examples of such times included when many blue priests traveled simultaneously by carriage, such as during events like the Starbind Ceremony and Harvest Festival, or when return carriages were being prepared for duchy-approved merchants.

“Wilma mentioned that there are actual waiting rooms too, though...” Monika said, trailing off as she peered down a nearby atrium to see the entrance hall on the floor below.

“Ah, yes. In the past, blue shrine maidens used the waiting rooms nearby to avoid being seen by men, and so, over time, it came to pass that men used the entrance hall while women used the rooms themselves. Please take Lady Rozemyne to the waiting rooms when necessary.”

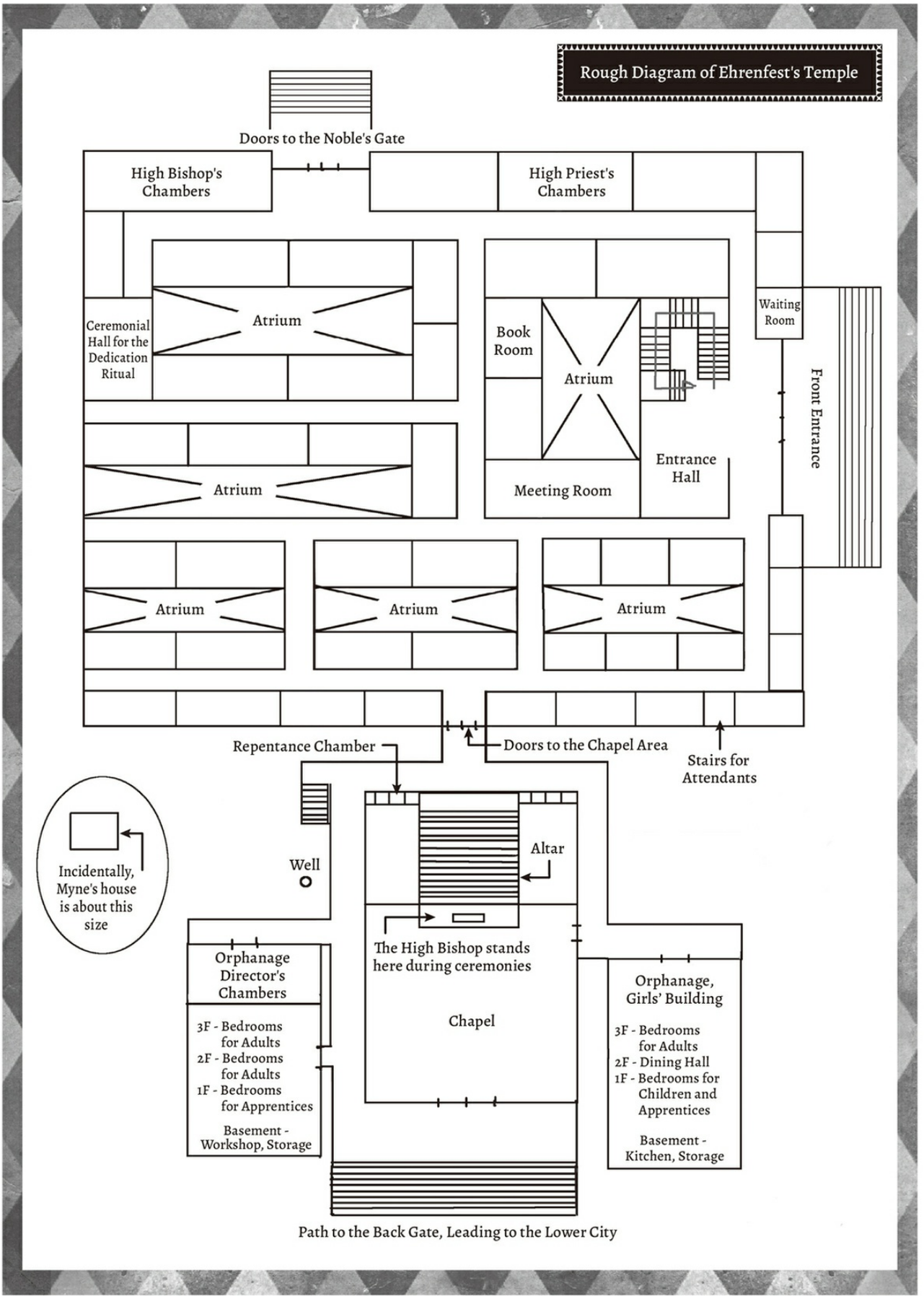
“Understood,” Monika said with a nod. But what I was curious about was the large, wide staircase. It spiraled up so high that I had to bend my head back to keep following it.

“Fran, is this staircase for blue shrine maidens heading to their chambers? It doesn’t look like it’s connected to the first floor.”

“This staircase is used exclusively when blue shrine maidens are exiting from the front gate, which is why it is indeed not connected to the first floor. As there are presently no blue shrine maidens other than Lady Rozemyne, the third floor is currently sealed off.”

It seemed that Lady Rozemyne would have used this staircase had she not been the High Bishop and the orphanage director. But if she ever did stop being the orphanage director, the whole orphanage would certainly be in big trouble.

I pray that the day when Lady Rozemyne has to use these stairs never comes. Praise be to the gods!


Rough Diagram of Ehrenfest's Temple
Doors to the Noble's Gate
High Bishop's Chambers
High Priest's Chambers
Ceremonial Hall for the Dedication Ritual
Atrium
Atrium
Atrium
Book Room
Atrium
Meeting Room
Entrance Hall
Waiting Room
Front Entrance
Atrium
Atrium
Atrium
Repentance Chamber
Doors to the Chapel Area
Stairs for Attendants
Incidentally, Myne's house is about this size
Well
Altar
The High Bishop stands here during ceremonies
Chapel
Orphanage Director's Chambers
3F - Bedrooms for Adults
2F - Bedrooms for Adults
1F - Bedrooms for Apprentices
Basement - Workshop, Storage
Orphanage, Girls' Building
3F - Bedrooms for Adults
2F - Dining Hall
1F - Bedrooms for Children and Apprentices
Basement - Kitchen, Storage
Path to the Back Gate, Leading to the Lower City

“Nicola, my apologies for interrupting your prayers, but please pay attention and follow me. You must now learn where the meeting room is,” Fran said, regaining my focus once again.

With that, we turned back in the direction we came and took a right down another corridor.

“This is the meeting room. How provinces are distributed among the blue priests during Spring Prayer, the Harvest Festival, and so on are determined here. In most instances, I will be the one accompanying Lady Rozemyne to such meetings, but you would do well to remember this location in case the time comes where you will need to do so instead.”

From there, we continued past the meeting room until we reached a corner, where Fran stopped. Directly ahead was an atrium, and sunlight streamed in from the lined-up windows nearby.

“There sure are a lot of atriums here...” I observed.

“Indeed. They are necessary to allow light in. All living chambers here have windows without exception so that the priests are not kept in darkness. Take care to keep your voice down, as many chambers in this area are presently being used. Now then... I shall show you the most important room in the entire temple for a servant of Lady Rozemyne to know.”

We took another right and continued walking for a short while until we reached a door. “Here it is,” Fran said, opening it to reveal desks, chairs, and bookshelves, on which were several books that I had seen in Lady Rozemyne’s chambers during the winter. “This is the book room. The paperwork used in the administration of the temple is stored on those shelves. I imagine the both of you will come to this room quite often, since Lady Rozemyne is particularly drawn here. When she starts reading a book, she does not move an inch until sixth bell. Thus, it is our important duty as attendants to borrow books from this room and coax her into reading in her own chambers instead. Remember this well.”

Up to this point, Fran had been following the High Priest’s recommendations when borrowing books for Lady Rozemyne. But now that she was the High Bishop, she could manage the keys to the book room herself, meaning she

could come and go as she pleased. Fran's prediction was that keeping her out of the book room by any means possible would soon become our most important job.

"Um... Will we really need to wage war like this, with the book room as our battleground? This isn't anything at all like what I expected attendants would need to do."

"Your assumptions were correct; I had no such work when I served the High Priest. You should consider this specialty work exclusive to those who serve Lady Rozemyne," Fran replied flatly.

My jaw dropped a little. I couldn't believe I had extra work to do—and specialty work, at that!

Monika let out a small giggle. "I now recall Wilma once saying that each master expects to be served differently, and that you can never be sure what is expected of you until you actually begin serving them. It seems that when Wilma and Rosina were serving a blue shrine maiden named Sister Christine, they were expected only to compose music, play instruments, and create art."

"Well, I'm not good at art or anything... I much prefer helping in the kitchen, so I'm glad Lady Rozemyne chose me!" I exclaimed, recovering from my shock almost instantly. Monika burst out into a brief giggling fit, and even Fran gave a smile.

"Sister Christine was an unusual blue shrine maiden as well, but I would say Lady Rozemyne is one of a kind," he said. "I have never heard of any blue priest or shrine maiden who showed such compassion for orphans, nor one who had connections with the lower city and actively earned their own money through doing business. This is my first time serving one who acts as both the orphanage director and High Bishop, entrusts their cooking to gray shrine maidens, and asks to spend all day in the chilly book room even when it means being bedridden for three days after."

Fran wore a serious expression as he spoke, and it was only then that I realized just how much work he was having to do to keep up with Lady Rozemyne's unusual behavior. I couldn't help but laugh at the thought of him pondering how best to deal with his master, his poker face remaining

unchanged all the while.

“You sure have it rough, Fran.”

“It is not easy, but serving Lady Rozemyne is a worthwhile endeavor. In fact, Nicola... she is also the first person ever to take two new attendants at once despite only needing one, simply because she had two gray robes help over the winter and did not want to leave one behind.”

Monika and I exchanged looks. We already knew we were lucky to have been taken on as attendants together, but we hadn’t known it was entirely thanks to Lady Rozemyne’s goodwill. Had she only chosen one of us, it certainly would have been Monika; she was a lot more skilled than I was so it was an understandable decision, but I still would have been dying of jealousy.

I really am blessed...!

It was my mistress, Lady Rozemyne, who had saved the orphanage, showed consideration when choosing her attendants, and taught even an apprentice gray shrine maiden like me what good food truly was. If she had chosen me to be one of her attendants for a weird reason, then I had nothing but gratitude for her weirdness.

“You would both do well to be grateful for Lady Rozemyne’s concern and serve her appropriately.”

“Right.”

As I steeled my resolve once again to serve Lady Rozemyne as best I could, I noticed that a door farther down the hall to the west of the book room was wide open.

“Fran, that room over there... It looks like its door is open. Is something going on?”

“A blue priest is moving his belongings from one chamber to another. Do not stare, Nicola.”

“Ah, of course. Sorry.”

We passed by the book room and kept walking until we reached the end of the hall. Fran turned right and continued forward, then pointed toward a door.

“This is the High Priest’s room. Lady Rozemyne will need to travel here the most, as she assists him with his work from third to fourth bell every day. You two are going to be helping as well.”

“Oh? We’ll need to help too...?”

“Is that not obvious? The High Priest is taking on the bulk of Lady Rozemyne’s High Bishop duties, so it is work we should be doing in the first place.”

Fran had used to serve the High Priest—a man said to be incredibly strict and who had even fired several of his attendants before.

I’m terrible with paperwork... I hope I can be useful. Like, um, at all...

This was just another area where I was worse than Monika. While I slumped over in sadness, Fran continued his explanation.

“Under normal circumstances, the High Priest’s chambers would be located at the opposite end of the hall to the High Bishop’s chambers, or directly to the east on the other side of the doors. But the High Priest was so busy when he took the position that he simply continued using his existing chambers.”

Fran gave a bemused smile. “The High Priest will surely be even busier now that he is helping Lady Rozemyne with her High Bishop work, so I do not believe he has the leeway to move chambers. And, despite her youth, Lady Rozemyne is still a woman; the High Priest has instructed all blue priests living by the High Bishop’s chambers to move elsewhere, and so I doubt he himself would move closer.”

The blue priest we had seen moving rooms had presumably also been ordered to do so by the High Priest.

“The chambers near the High Bishop’s chambers are going to be turned into male and female chambers for Lady Rozemyne’s guard knights. Thus, all rooms to the west of these doors shall belong to those affiliated with her.”

After turning back and passing by the doors leading to the Noble’s Gate, we stopped in front of another room.

“Behind this door is the ceremonial hall for the Dedication Ritual.”

“The Dedication Ritual...?”

The name didn't ring any bells, and I was sure all the ceremonies and stuff were held in the temple's chapel where all the gods were. The idea of such a ritual being held anywhere else just confused me.

"It is an important winter ritual during which the blue priests in the noble section of the temple offer up their mana to the divine instruments. I shall give you more details as we approach next winter. Today, I ask that you read these boards and look over the inside of the High Bishop's chambers."

Fran handed over the boards he had been carrying this entire time to Monika and me. On them were measurements and instructions detailing what furniture and other smaller bits were needed for the High Bishop's chambers, written in Rosina's handwriting.

As we were reading the boards, Fran unlocked the door for us. "This is the High Bishop's chambers," he said.

It was completely barren inside due to everything having already been moved, and this emptiness made it look even bigger than it already was.

"Merchants and craftsmen selected by Lady Rozemyne's family will arrive in great numbers to prepare these chambers according to Rosina's specifications. You two are expected to direct them using those boards as a guide."

"Wha? *Wha?*"

As I looked between Fran, Monika, and the boards, Monika gazed up at Fran with an expression just as unsettled as my own.

"Fran, I... I haven't ever given anyone instructions before."

We were apprentices who had only just been taken on as attendants. In our positions, we only ever did as instructed, occasionally asking for advice from those with more experience than us. We certainly weren't in a position to give anyone else instructions.

As both Monika and I shook our heads fearfully at Fran's unexpected orders, he gave a calm smile. "Do not worry—Gil has grown to the point that he is capable of giving orders and running the workshop, and I can guarantee that you are both capable of similar feats. It will simply take a little getting used to."

“This is way too much for us! It’s unrealistic! Impossible, even!”

“Saving the orphanage was also said to be impossible, but Lady Rozemyne accomplished it all the same. Putting forth the effort to accomplish even the most unlikely tasks is a trait expected of Lady Rozemyne’s attendants,” Fran said, his expression making it clear he would accept no disagreements. Then, as Monika and I tightened our grips on the wooden boards, barely containing our screams, he continued. “Now, I shall explain where all the furniture will go. Listen carefully, as I will only be saying this once.”

“Only once?!”

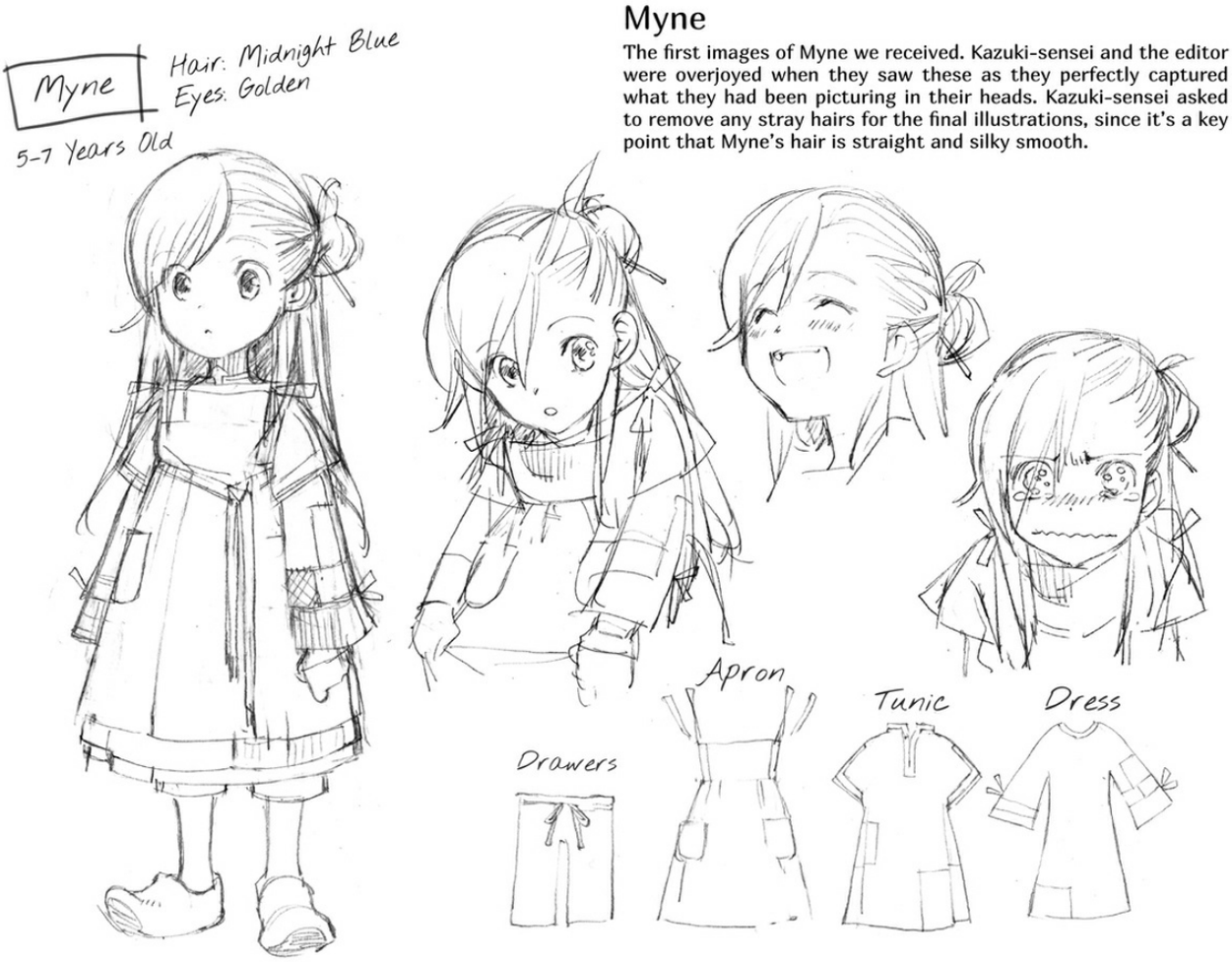
As tears welled in my eyes at this unexpected brutality, the words Rosina had said to me not too long ago flashed through my mind.

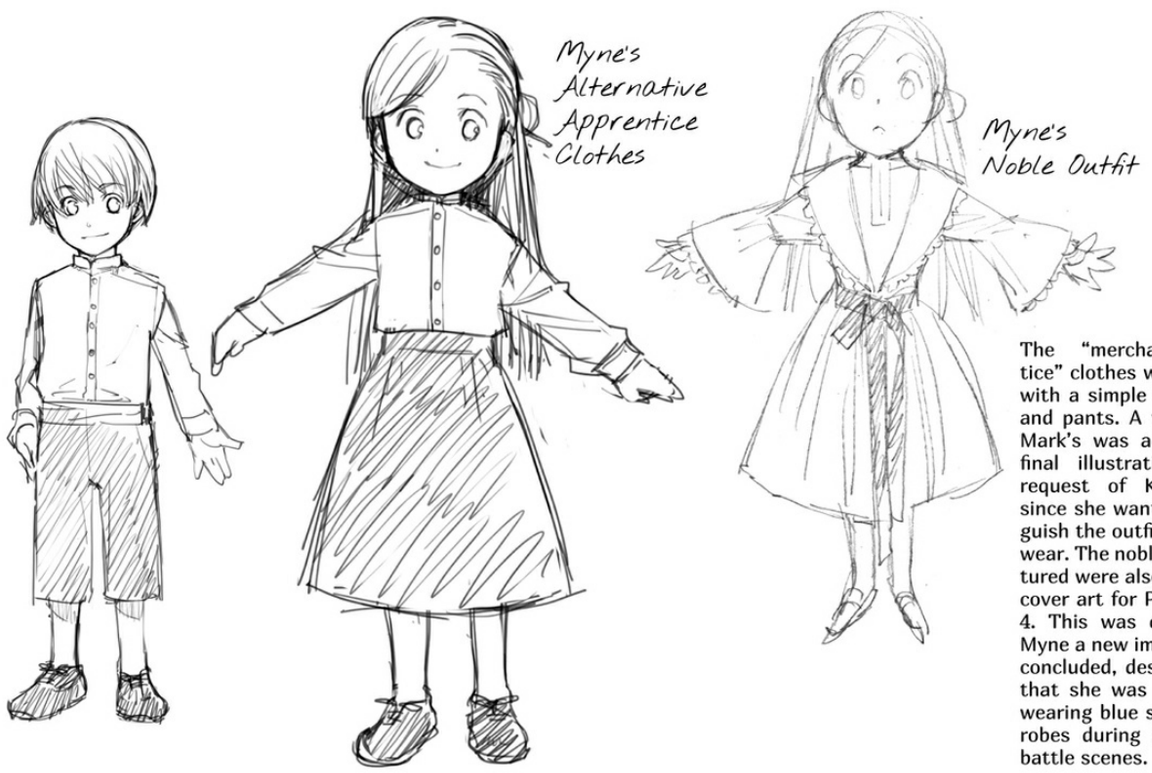
“Oh no, Fran is quite harsh. At work, ‘kind’ is the last word I would use to describe him.”

Character Design Sheets

Myne

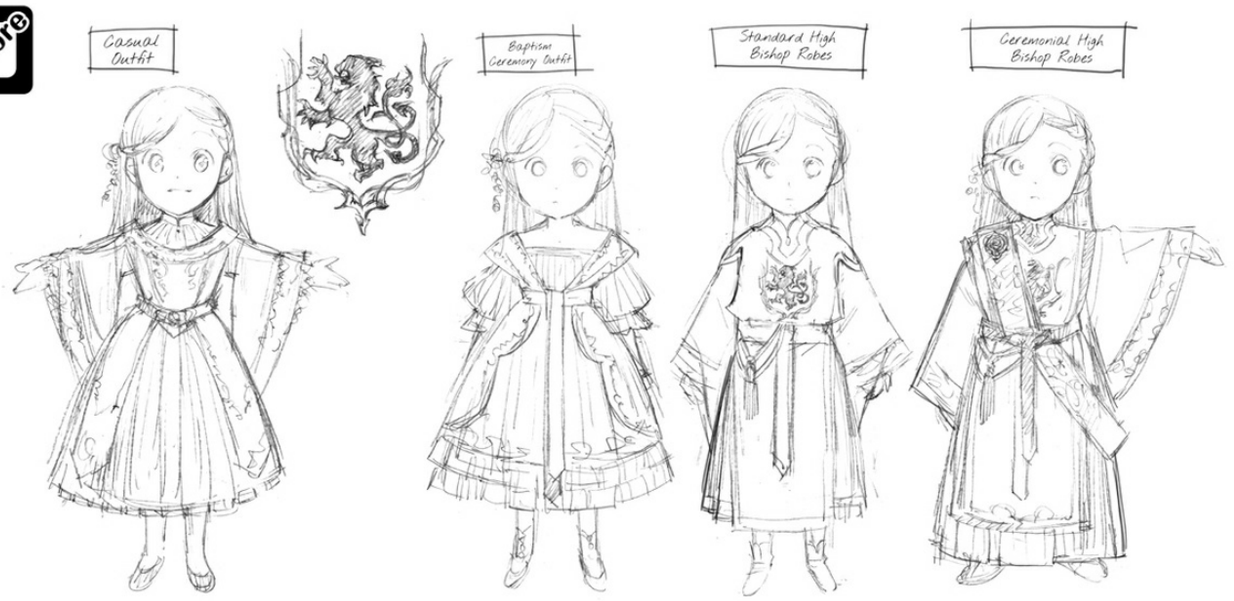
The first images of Myne we received. Kazuki-sensei and the editor were overjoyed when they saw these as they perfectly captured what they had been picturing in their heads. Kazuki-sensei asked to remove any stray hairs for the final illustrations, since it's a key point that Myne's hair is straight and silky smooth.





The "merchant apprentice" clothes were designed with a simple blouse, skirt, and pants. A vest just like Mark's was added for the final illustrations at the request of Kazuki-sensei, since she wanted to distinguish the outfit from casual wear. The noble clothes pictured were also used on the cover art for Part 2 Volume 4. This was done to give Myne a new image as Part 2 concluded, despite the fact that she was described as wearing blue shrine maiden robes during the volume's battle scenes.

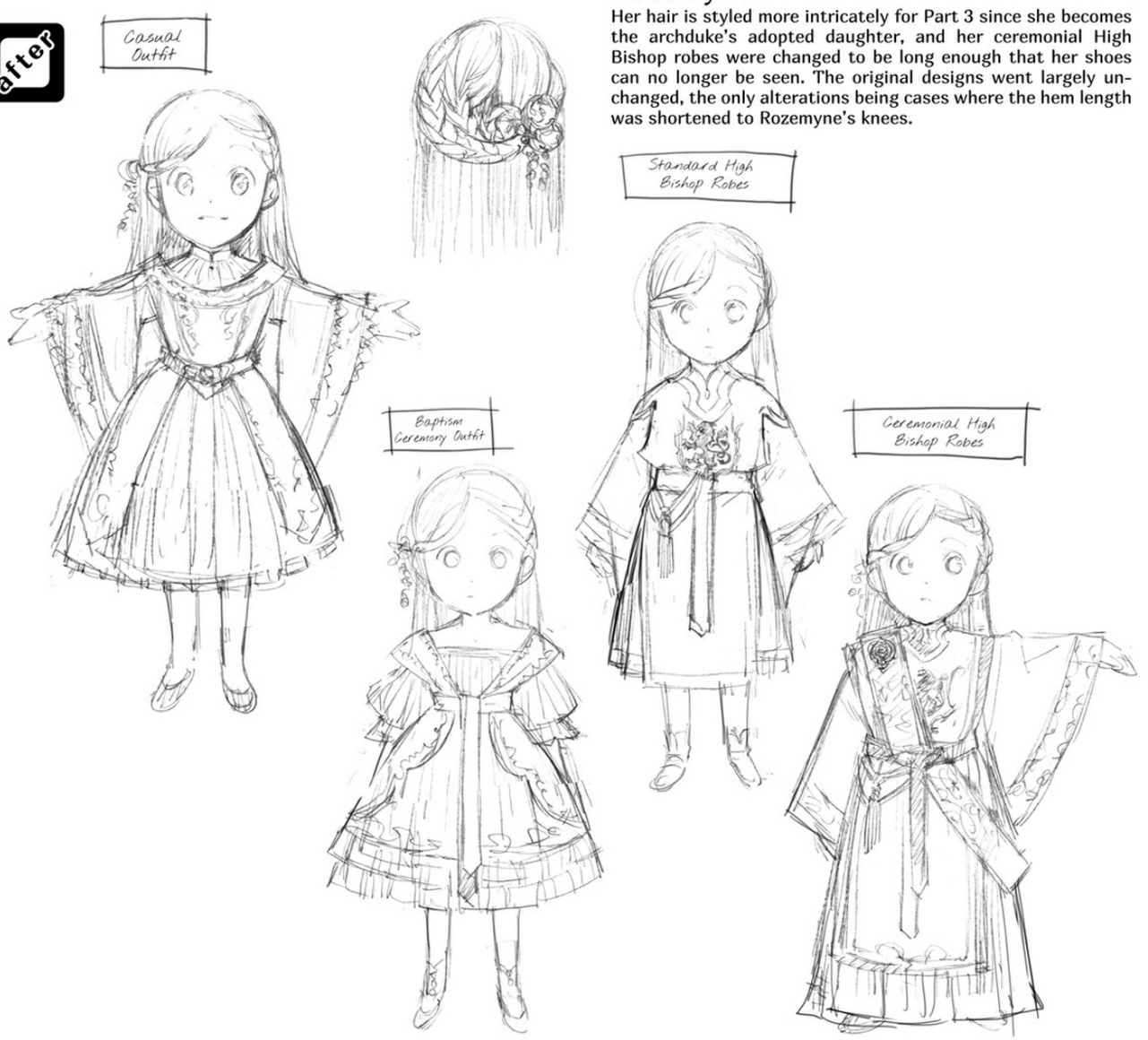
before

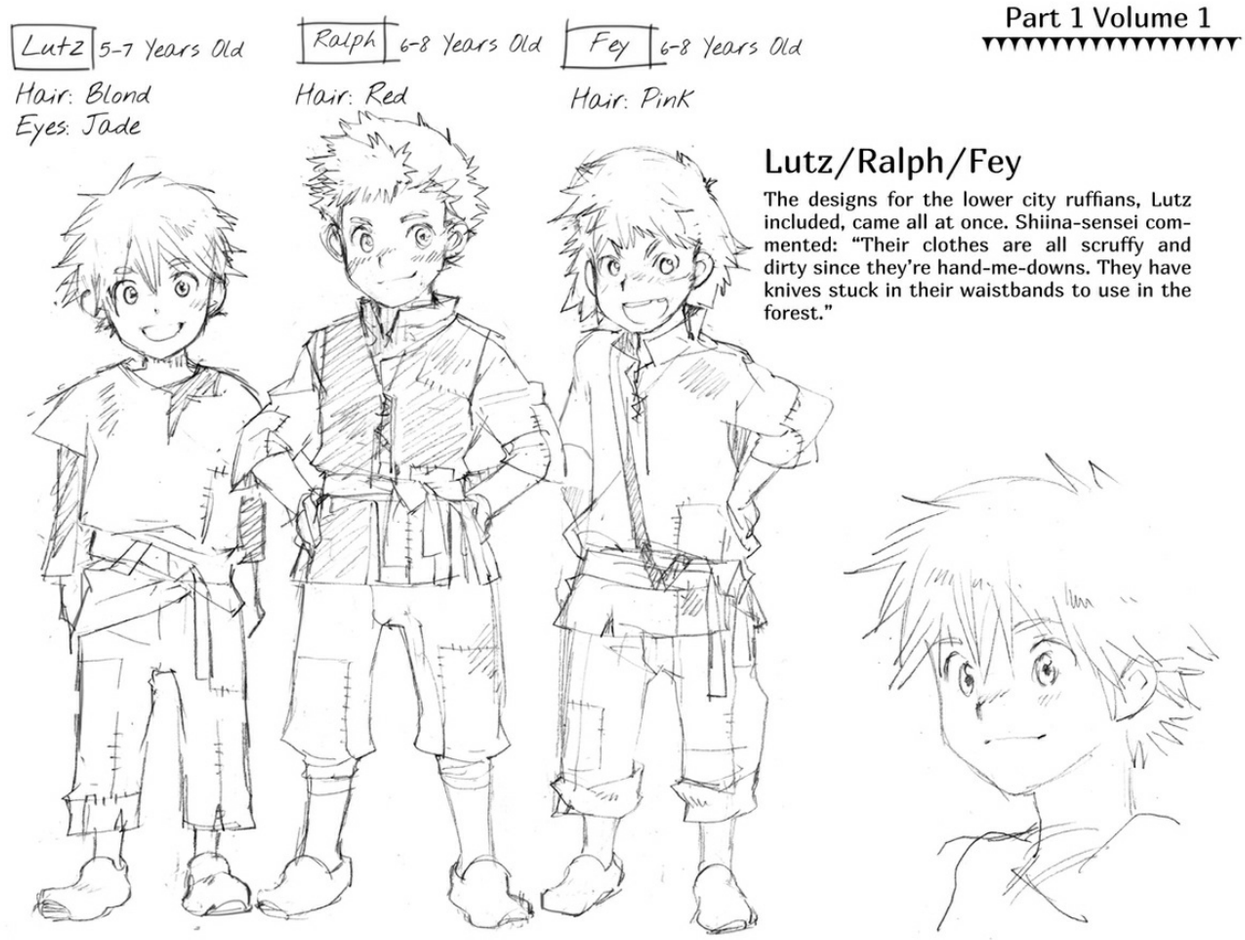


Rozemyne

Her hair is styled more intricately for Part 3 since she becomes the archduke's adopted daughter, and her ceremonial High Bishop robes were changed to be long enough that her shoes can no longer be seen. The original designs went largely unchanged, the only alterations being cases where the hem length was shortened to Rozemyne's knees.

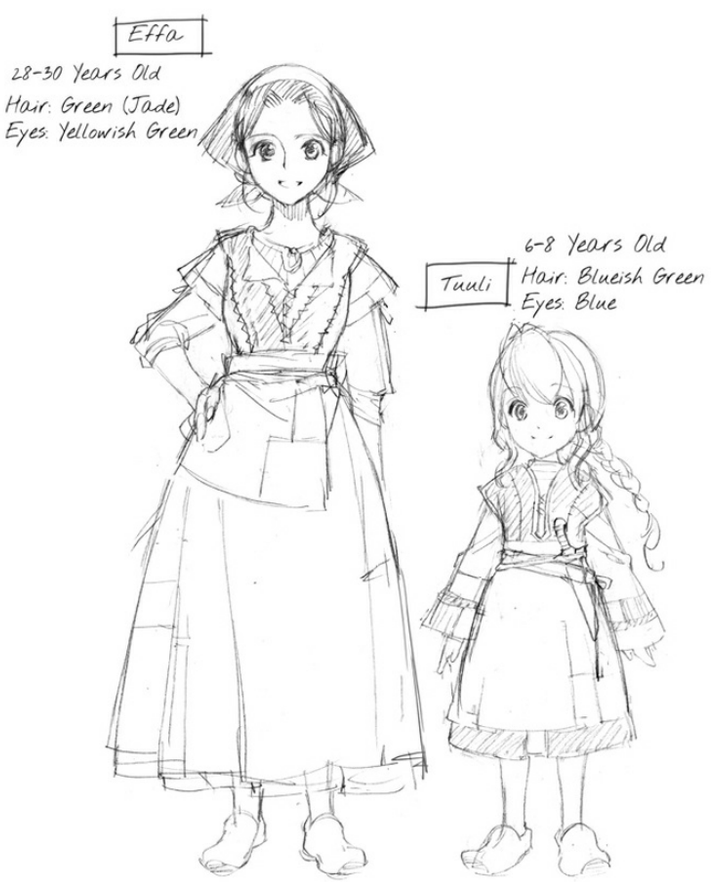
after





Lutz/Ralph/Fey

The designs for the lower city ruffians, Lutz included, came all at once. Shiina-sensei commented: "Their clothes are all scruffy and dirty since they're hand-me-downs. They have knives stuck in their waistbands to use in the forest."



Effa/Tuuli

Tuuli ended up exactly as Kazuki-sensei pictured her. Effa came across as a bit too young in her original design, however, so she was touched up in the final illustrations to look a little older (so as to not appear too much younger than Gunther).







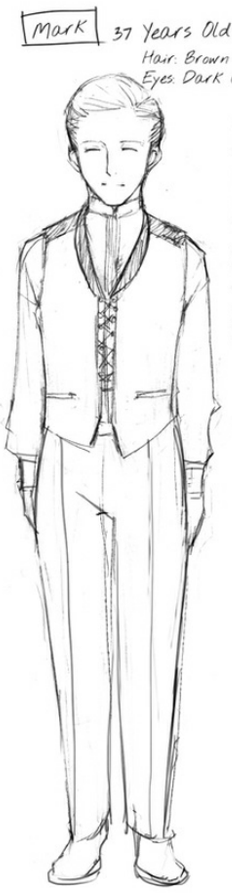
Gunther/Otto

The hair sticking out from the sides of Gunther's head was removed. The design of the soldiers' outfits was changed as well, since, in the world that the series is set in, they wear light leather armor while guarding the gate. Kazuki-sensei provided reference material regarding the clothes for us.

Benno/Corinna

Their original designs already matched what Kazuki-sensei had in mind. Shiina-sensei said, "They're dressed fairly neatly and cleanly. Benno's a fancy guy, so I added buttons to his clothes and gave him leather boots."





Guildmaster/Mark

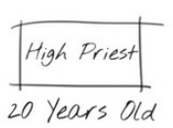
The guildmaster looked just as Kazuki-sensei pictured him, but Mark initially appeared younger than Gunther. Wrinkles were added around his eyes and mouth in the final illustration to remedy this. The Guildmaster wears long boots just like Benno, as well as a leather belt.



Freida

This matched Kazuki-sensei's mental image shockingly well. Shiina-sensei took into consideration that, despite Freida being a very rich merchant, there are nobles who are even wealthier. In this regard, she noted that, "Freida dresses fancier than Myne, but her clothes only have decorative embroidery near the edges."





High Priest Ferdinand

On the left is his casual outfit, and on the right his ceremonial robes. Documents regarding noble fashion were consulted before the final illustration, resulting in his sandals being changed to shoes, the sleeves on his casual outfit being widened, and his ceremonial robes getting considerably more frills. For his ceremonial robes, the embroidery seen on his sleeves and hem is the same as that around the neck area.



Leise

No problems at all with her original design. Is this not the quintessential jolly chef?



High Bishop

Shiina-sensei designed him with Santa in mind. For the final illustrations, details about noble fashion were considered and embroidery was added to his sleeves.

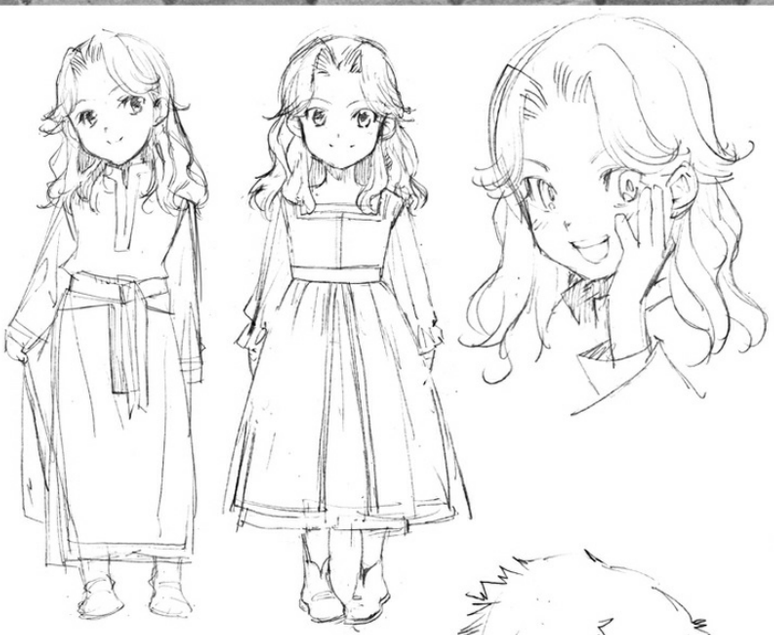


Fran

His original design really captured his serious and stern personality, but his hair was lengthened to better match how Kazuki-sensei pictured him. Several potential hairstyles were proposed, with the middle one ultimately being selected.

Fran: Potential Hairstyles





Delia 8 Years Old

Hair: Dark Crimson
Eyes: Light Blue

Delia

Her design was absolutely perfect. Upon seeing it, Kazuki-sensei said, "She's just as much of a beauty as I wanted. She would look very cute, even when shouting 'Geez' all the time."



Gil 10 Years Old

Hair: Light Blond
Eyes: Purple, Close to Black



Gil

His hair and general look matched what Kazuki-sensei had in mind, but given that he would be spending a lot of time alongside Lutz, a few additional changes were made to differentiate him. His design was modified to make him look visibly cheeky and rebellious, but with cute-looking eyes.

Part 2 Volume 2



Hugo & Ella

20 Years Old
Hair: Chestnut
Eyes: Brown

14 Years Old
Hair: Auburn
Eyes: Light Green

Hugo/Ella

Ella looked just as Kazuki-sensei pictured her, but she requested that Hugo receive a shorter, spikier hairstyle like Gil. The concept of him throwing taues as hard as he could while yelling "Know the pain of a man who's unpopular with women!" was considered while trying to make him look a little defiant.



Deid

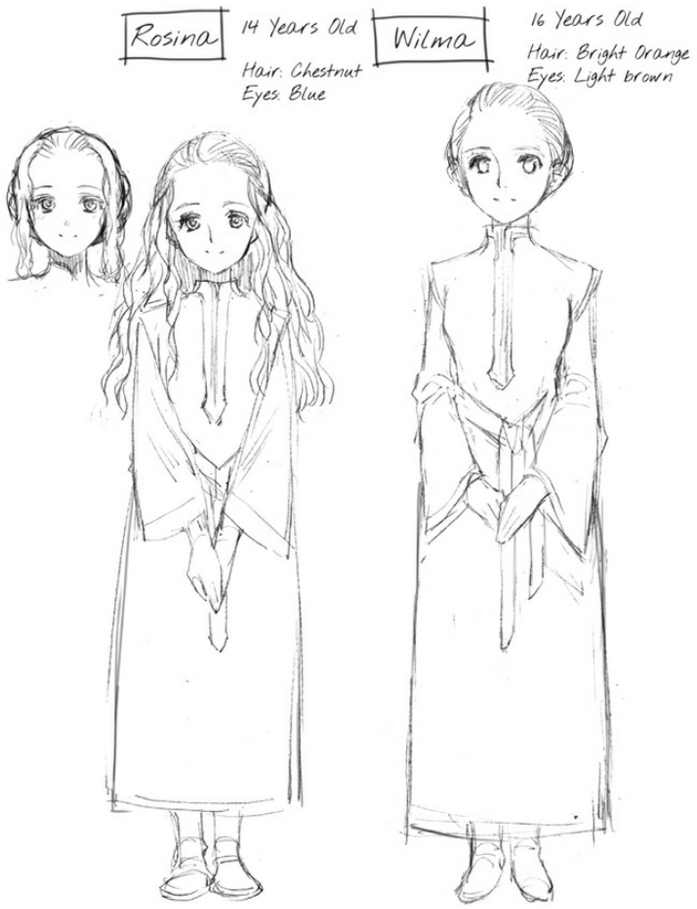
Hair: Blond, Almost White
Eyes: Jade
35 Years Old

Johann 14 Years Old

Hair: Orange
Eyes: Blue

Deid/Johann

Deid looked as old as the guildmaster here, so his mustache and cheek creases were removed in the final illustrations to make him look about the same age as Gunther. Johann was perfect on the first go.



Wilma/Rosina

With her hair tied in a tight bun, Wilma was designed to look composed and always on top of things. Since Rosina was going to change her hairstyle after coming of age, Shiina-sensei drew both before and after styles for her.



Armor/Staff/Ring/Circlet

These are designs for things that were relevant in Part 2's plot developments. For the armor, feystones were added to the back of each gauntlet. The helmets were also originally meant to cover the face, but after seeing Shiina-sensei's design and falling in love with it, Kazuki-sensei rewrote the text to fit the new style.



Karstedt
37 Years Old
Hair: Auburn
Eyes: Light Blue



Damuel
16 Years Old
Hair: Brown (Basic and Plain)
Eyes: Gray

Karstedt/Damuel

Karstedt's appearance perfectly suited his cool yet rough personality, while Damuel's accurately portrayed him as an unfortunate individual who's always getting bullied. Both also have a clear kindheartedness to their characters which can be seen in their designs.



Sylvester

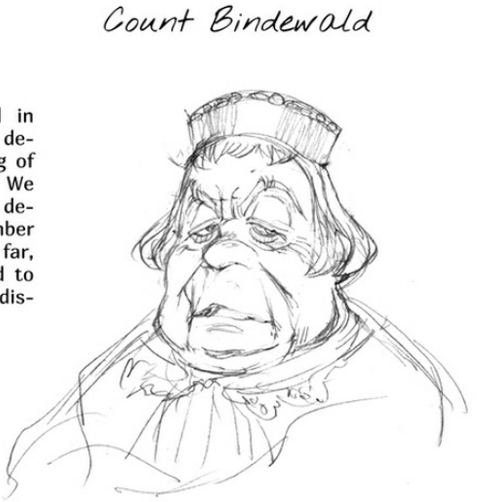
This comment from Shiina-sensei says it all: "I made him look like a wild guy." Kazuki-sensei replied on the spot, saying, "Sylvester looks perfect as a wild guy. You've done it again, Shiina-sensei!" It's incredible how deeply they empathize with one another and how often they share the exact same mental images.





Heidi/Josef

These two first appeared in Part 2 Volume 4 and were designed to exude the feeling of lower city craftspeople. We were surprised to see that, despite the considerable number of characters designed so far, Shiina-sensei still managed to make them look fresh and distinctive.



Bindewald

A spot-on interpretation. This design was used as is.

before



Elvira/Florencia

Elvira was given sharper eyes for a stronger, bolder appearance, and her sleeves were altered. Both her and Florencia wear feystone necklaces, which are worn by all married women, as well as those who are engaged but have yet to actually be married.

after





Eckhart/Lamprecht/Cornelius/Wilfried

Eckhart and Lamprecht had their hairstyles swapped at Kazuki-sensei's request, while Cornelius had his eyes sharpened to match the change made to Elvira. Wilfried had the hair sticking up around the back of his head removed.

before



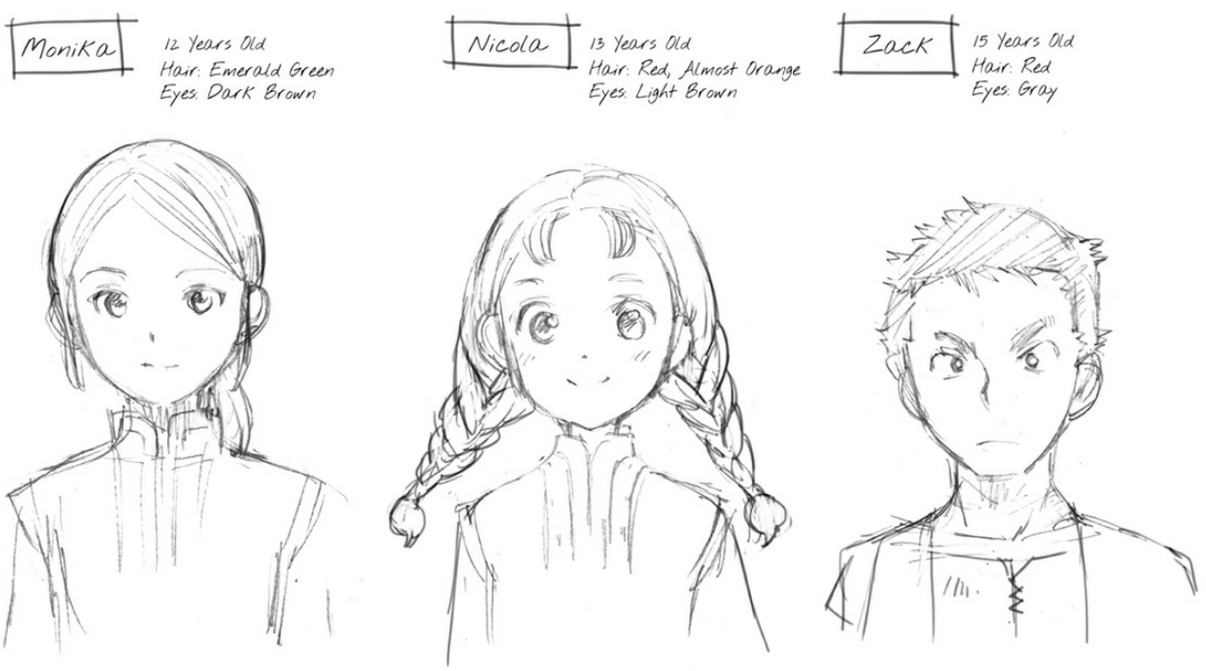
after





Brigitte/Rihyarda

Brigitte's hair was styled into a looped, braided ponytail in the final illustration. Other minor alterations were made to her outfit so that it would be better suited to combat and the setting notes. Rihyarda looked exactly like someone who would scold Ferdinand, so her design worked just fine.



Monika/Nicola/Zack

A bunch of characters appearing in Part 3 Volume 1 were all designed at once. Monika and Nicola look refined due to serving as attendants in the temple, whereas Zack looks just like a smith working in the lower city. The initial illustrations captured them all perfectly.

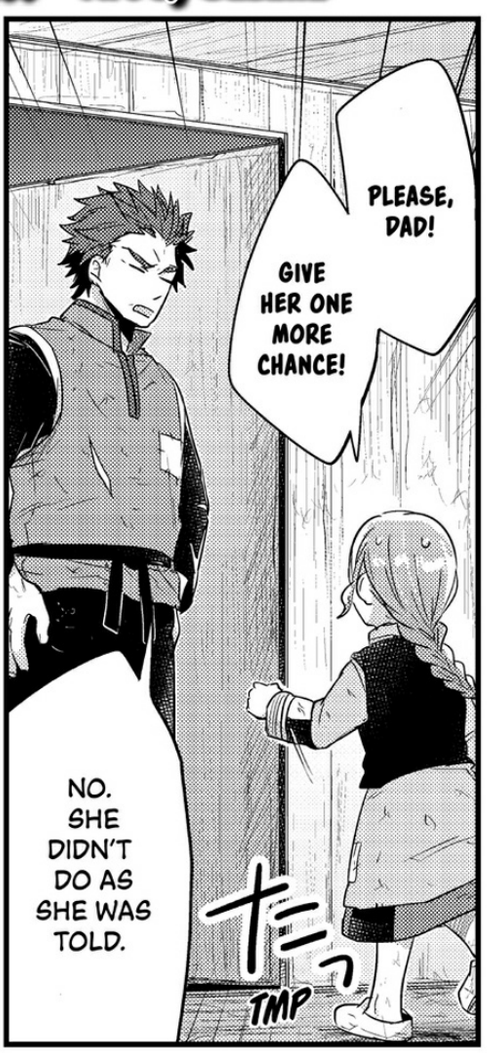


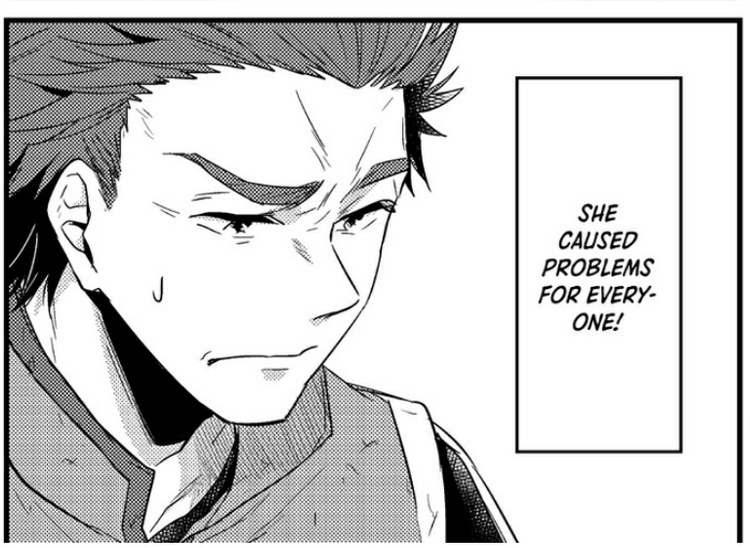
Side Episode

My Daughter's about to Be a Criminal?!

Art by Suzuka



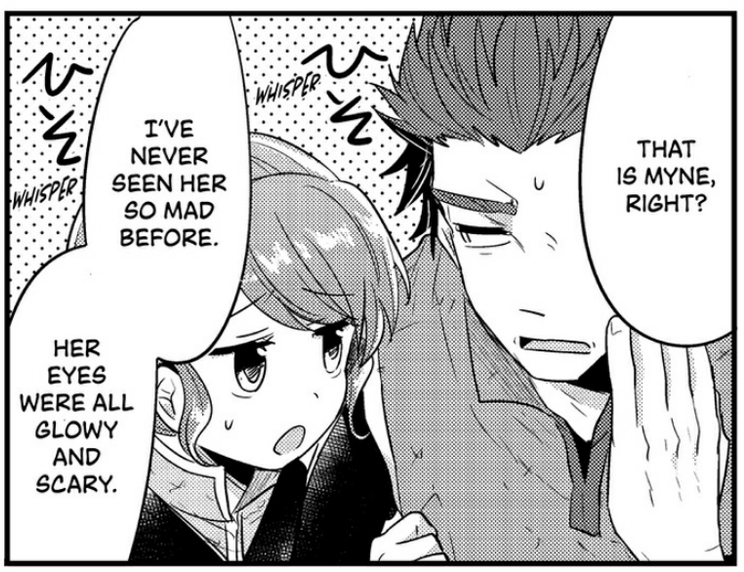





DAD, PLEASE... JUST ONE MORE TIME.
I NEED TO MAKE (CLAY TABLETS).
RUSTLE
NO! NEVER AGAIN!
SHOUT
FORGET ABOUT THOSE THINGS!
DO YOU REALLY MEAN THAT, DAD...?
OF COURSE!
OH...
THEN I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO SQUASH FEY AND THE OTHERS LIKE THEY SQUASHED MY TABLETS.
EH EH EH...
HA HA HA.
PANIC
DAD!
YOU HAVE TO LET MYNE GO BACK!


HA
HA
HA
HA
I'M JUST THINKING ABOUT WAYS TO MAKE SURE THEY CAN NEVER GO TO THE FOREST AGAIN, EITHER.
PERHAPS SOME (PSYCHO-LOGICAL TRAUMA)? SOMETHING FROM A (HORROR MOVIE)?
MYNE, WHAT ARE YOU PLAN-NING...?
OH...?
URK!
うっ
MAYBE I SHOULD PULL A (SADAKO) FROM (THE R*NG)...
I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE WHAT SHE'S SAYING, BUT IT DOESN'T SOUND GOOD AT ALL!
WHAT'S, UH... FEY GOT TO DO WITH THIS?
EVERY-THING.
BUT I UNDER-STAND NOW...
FEY
I SEE YOUR POINT.
ほっ
WHEW
THAT'S GREA—

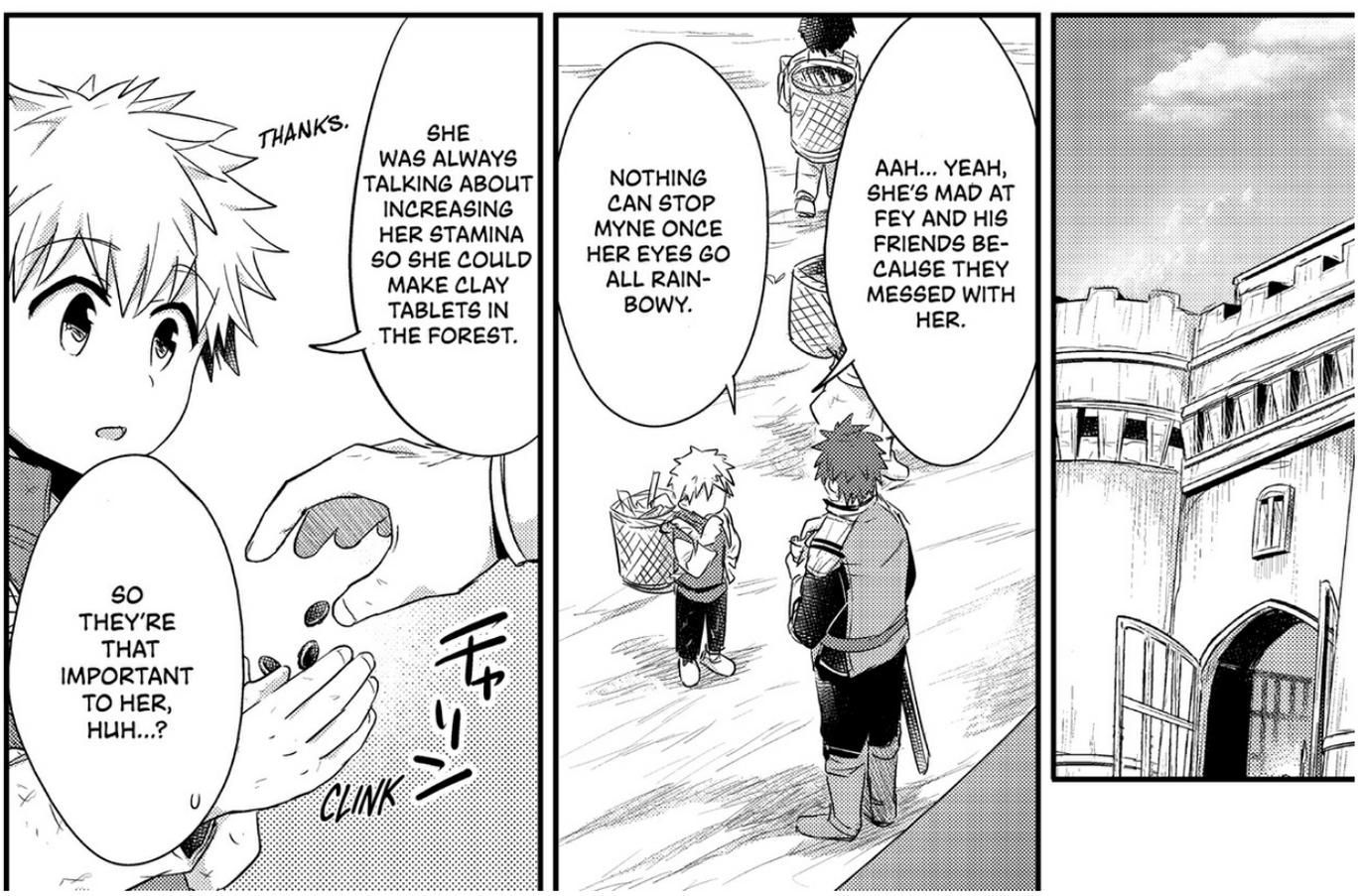

I'LL JUST MAKE HIM CRY AS HARD AS I CAN.
GOOD-NIGHT.
HOLD ON! WE'RE NOT ON THE SAME PAGE AT ALL!
IF SHE REALLY UNDERSTOOD, WHY WOULD SHE MAKE HIM CRY AS HARD AS SHE CAN?!
NOW I WANT TO CRY!


THAT IS MYNE, RIGHT?
WHISPER
WHISPER
I'VE NEVER SEEN HER SO MAD BEFORE.
HER EYES WERE ALL GLOWY AND SCARY.


PULL
PULL
DAD, OVER HERE!


THE SAME THING HAPPENED RIGHT AFTER FEY AND HIS FRIENDS STEPPED ON HER TABLETS.


THAT REALLY MUST'VE TERRIFIED YOU KIDS.
DAD, CAN SHE GO TO THE FOREST JUST ONE MORE TIME?
I'M SCARED MYNE'LL STAY ANGRY AT FEY FOREVER.
SQUEEZE
ぎゅ、
WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL CALM HER DOWN...?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT...
LUTZ WENT TO THE FOREST WITH HER, SO MAYBE HE KNOWS.
MAYBE...


AAH... YEAH, SHE'S MAD AT FEY AND HIS FRIENDS BECAUSE THEY MESSED WITH HER.
NOTHING CAN STOP MYNE ONCE HER EYES GO ALL RAINBOWY.
SHE WAS ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT INCREASING HER STAMINA SO SHE COULD MAKE CLAY TABLETS IN THE FOREST.
THANKS.
SO THEY'RE THAT IMPORTANT TO HER, HUH...?
チャリン
CLINK


STILL, THINK ABOUT IT. HER TABLETS WERE DESTROYED AND THERE WASN'T ENOUGH TIME TO REMAKE THEM...
SHE GOT A FEVER ON THE WAY BACK AND WAS FORBIDDEN FROM RETURNING TO THE FOREST...
AND SHE'S NOT ALLOWED TO BRING THE CLAY HOME.
WELL, LET'S HOPE THEY SURVIVE WHATEVER SHE DOES TO THEM.
DON'T SAY THAT! D'YOU WANT MY DAUGHTER TO BE A CRIMINAL?!
ALL THAT ANGER'S DIRECTED AT FEY AND HIS FRIENDS NOW.
I MEAN, YOU'RE THE ONE PUTTING HER IN THIS SITUATION, MR. GUNTHER.
HUH?
YOU'RE THE ONE STOPPING HER FROM GOING TO THE FOREST, AREN'T YOU?
THE THOUGHT OF MYNE AT FULL POWER SCARES ME.
TAP
TAP
HER BRAIN'S BUILT DIFFERENTLY FROM OURS.
NOT KNOWING WHAT SHE'LL DO JUST MAKES IT THAT MUCH WORSE.
YOU HAVE A POINT...


GROAN
うーん
RIGHT...
THIS IS A SERIOUS QUESTION, BUT...
WHAT CAN I DO TO CONTAIN MYNE'S WRATH?
チャリーン
CLINK
THAT'S EASY.
JUST PILE A TON OF CLAY IN FRONT OF HER.
ぽしっ
SQUEEZE
DO THAT, AND ALL SHE'LL THINK ABOUT IS FINISH-ING HER TABLETS.
...
SO, YEAH...
NGH...
YOU CAN GO TO THE FOREST AGAIN ONCE YOUR FEVER'S GONE AND YOU'RE FEELING BETTER.


AW, BUT I THOUGHT UP SO MANY REVENGE PLOTS...
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE A SHAME TO WASTE THEM?
SHOUT
NO, I REALLY DON'T!
FORGET ALL THOSE PLOTS OR WHATEVER!
TCH
BOOO.
SIGH
WHEW. I'VE SAVED MYNE FROM A FUTURE AS A CRIMINAL.
SHUT
AND NOW FEY'S BUNCH WON'T GET CRUSHED UNDER HER WRATH.
...HM?
I'VE PROTECTED MY CITY AND MY FAMILY'S HAPPINESS.
WAIT.
WHAT HAPPENED TO PUNISHING HER FOR BREAKING HER PROMISE?
END

Q&A with Miya Kazuki

Here I'll be answering some of the questions I received from readers on my Narou page between September 23 and October 10, 2016. I naturally couldn't address them all due to page count limitations and such, but I did my best to respond to as many as possible.

Miya Kazuki

About the Bookworm World

Q: Given that there are traveling merchants, are there also mercenaries for hire who guard them?

A: Merchants with city citizenship are actually the ones who hire guards, like Benno and Co. when they go to other cities on business unrelated to the orphanage. Traveling merchants, on the other hand, hardly ever hire them; they have to protect their money and themselves alone. Plus, there aren't that many guards available for hire. Traveling merchants are honestly more at risk of getting attacked and having their money and wares stolen by the very mercenaries they hire to keep them safe.

Q: How do commoners fight feybeasts?

A: They set traps and swing their weapons around. For an example, please consult the short story "A Day Without Myne" from Part 1 Volume 1. Commoners take on feybeasts they know they can beat and run from those they can't, since failure usually means getting eaten.

Q: How do livestock like pigs, chickens, goats, and so on differ from feybeasts?

A: They're as different as commoners are from nobles.

Q: You describe commoners using magic tools at one point—were these made by nobles, or did commoners make them?

A: Nobles. Commoners can't make magic tools.

Q: Are caretakers like old lady Gerda registered with the Merchant's Guild?

A: She's an unlicensed practitioner.

Q: It seems like everyone can tell what the weather is going to be, even without a weather forecast. Why is that?

A: You can kind of do the same thing in Japan by smelling the rain in the air or feeling the wind change against your skin, right? They likewise smell the air, feel the humidity, observe the clouds, and so forth to detect changes in the weather. Ehrenfest gets abundant snowfall during the winter, and since there

are a lot of sunny days from spring to autumn, there's ample opportunity to pick up on these signs. Myne just doesn't know how to do this as she rarely ever goes outside and doesn't care about the weather too much.

Q: Why is it that, among commoners, the fathers often decide who their child is going to marry? And why do couples have to live near each other?

A: This was fairly common practice about fifty or sixty years ago, even in Japan. The biggest concern for them is ensuring that the marriages don't cause any problems between adults. Let's say, for example, that Tuuli and the future owner of the Othmar Company in the northernmost part of the city fall deeply in love and get married. The two families would be unable to prepare equal dowries and such, thereby causing things to break down during the preparatory phase. Regarding the second part of your question, the two people don't necessarily have to live together. It's just that living closer generally leads to the two people getting to know one another better and means they're in similar financial situations, which in turn makes their marriage happen more naturally.

Q: What happened to the book in the lower city that a noble had to pawn for money?

A: Please take a look at Justus's short story in Part 3 Volume 2. This is kind of irrelevant, but it's one of the books lost by the family of Eckhart's late wife, Heidemarie.

Q: Is throwing away the broth strictly a part of Ehrenfest culture, or was it inspired by any real-world examples?

A: Something similar was done in old English cooking.

Q: How did Myne brush her teeth while she was in the lower city? And how do nobles brush their teeth?

A: For your first question, please consult the short story from Lutz's perspective in Part 1 Volume 3. For your second question, nobles have special gargling water that they use to cleanse their mouths.

Q: Is Ehrenfest a safe place to be? Gunther goes out drinking, so does that mean it's safe enough to walk around at night?

A: You can get mixed up in a little trouble or stopped by drunks, but it's not

that dangerous. Needing citizenship to live in the city means there aren't any gangs of children or homeless people who have to steal to survive. Plus, major criminals are banished from the city after having their citizenship revoked, which prevents them from entering again. Travelers that cause problems are booted out, too.

Q: What would you say is the lowest-ranked occupation to use guild cards like the ones Myne and Lutz have? Do craftsmen like Lutz's father have them too?

A: The lowest-rank occupation tends to be foremen who manage workshops.

Q: Was the paper-making workshop that Benno made right around Myne's first baptism constructed outside the city gates by a river?

A: That's correct. You can't destroy ivory buildings or ivory roads to draw water, so they had to make it outside.

Q: To quote Part 3 Volume 1: "Stores in the lower city worshiped the God of Trade and the Goddess of Water...and those at the gates worshiped both the Goddess of Wind and the patron deity of travelers." Which primary gods are the God of Trade and the patron deity of travelers subordinate to?

A: The God of Trade is subordinate to the Goddess of Water, whereas the patron deity of travelers is subordinate to the Goddess of Wind.

Q: I don't think Ehrenfest has an ocean or sea nearby, so where does it get its salt?

A: From fruit. Salt is surprisingly bountiful there.

Q: The smaller copper is equivalent to ten lions, but are individual lions ever actually used? Are there really cheap stores that specifically use them?

A: Think of them like pennies—they aren't used normally but they cover small amounts of change, and you can toss in a few extra as a tip.

Q: What are Effa's and Gunther's parents doing during the story?

A: Their respective parents are deceased. Lower city commoners have a shorter average lifespan compared to those in the Noble's Quarter.

Q: It doesn't look like Lutz's family lives with his grandparents either. Do people move out when they get married? Wouldn't the lower city be too small

for that?

A: It's generally the last male member of a family to leave the house who ends up staying with the grandparents. Lutz has already left his family home, which means this responsibility will go to Ralph. Homes in the lower city are too cramped to support so many different families; as you imagined, the lower city is extremely dense population-wise, and many commoners move to cities where the rent is lower to live and, on occasion, establish workshops.

Q: Do commoners keep working until they die?

A: They work until their bodies physically can't handle it anymore. There is no retirement age.

Q: What do people think the first time they hear that Ewigeliebe the God of Life imprisons and rapes Geduldh the Goddess of Earth every winter? I think it's a pretty startling idea, so it kind of bothers me that nobody seems to react to it.

A: Commoners first hear the bible stories during their baptism when they're seven years old. They can barely comprehend what's being said to them and so they largely ignore it. Most everyone, Lutz included, are simply thinking: "This is taking forever. I hope they stop talking soon." As for nobles, so many noble euphemisms are used that they, too, struggle to understand the story at a young age. It isn't until they properly start learning things in the Royal Academy that they truly grasp what happens, by which point they've already mastered the art of the poker face. So regardless of their feelings on it, they don't let them show on the outside.

Q: Did you stop mentioning Benno's late fiancée Liz because there was no point in delving any further into their history together? Did she die from a normal disease, or did she in actuality have the Devouring? The latter would explain why Benno knew so much about it despite being a normal commoner. (I would guess that personally knowing someone with the Devouring would lead to him knowing more about it).

A: Wow, you're sharp. That's entirely right—Liz had the Devouring. But she had an exceptionally low quantity of mana, so her symptoms only surfaced after she had gone through puberty and gotten engaged to Benno. I stopped writing about her because, from Myne's perspective, she never comes up again, though

she would definitely be a major player in a story from Benno's perspective.

Q: I would like to know which blue priest performed Myne's first baptism. I'm a little curious about whether it was Ferdinand or not. I think it was.

A: All shall be revealed in the manga adaptation.

Q: What kind of feyplant is a parue tree, exactly? What happens to the fruit left on them?

A: Parues are parues. The fruit left on the trees flies all over the place and then gets absorbed into the snow, so only the seeds remain on the ground come spring.

Q: Given that nobles would never wear gray priest or shrine maiden robes, what workshop is making them? If there aren't enough available, do they have to rely on blue priests for more? What do they wear for underwear and such beneath their robes?

A: It's winter handiwork for some sewing workshops, and new robes are provided once a year at the temple's expense. Those that become too tight are stored as hand-me-downs, so they have a lot more apprentice robes than you would think.

Q: Among Myne's gray shrine maiden attendants, Delia is the only one who doesn't hate flower offerings. But is she really of the minority opinion? Are the people who do it unwillingly, like Jenni, fewer in number than those who readily choose to?

A: Before Myne became the orphanage director, the terrible state of the orphanage made getting out even more important than before, and all those who hadn't served somewhat-out-of-the-ordinary people like Christine happily rushed to serve blue priests. There were some who regretted this once they started their service and learned what they had to do, but everyone thought it was much, much better than returning to the orphanage, especially after all the gray shrine maidens in the basement were eliminated.

Q: Dirk appears to be the only orphan to enter the orphanage in the entire year that follows Myne becoming the orphanage director in Part 2. Are there really that few orphans coming in? Even if we consider the orphanage as an

absolute final resort, I assumed there would need to be a lot more for them to maintain the number of gray priests and shrine maidens.

A: The orphanage usually receives a sudden influx of orphans following a disease or some such that causes the death of their parents and any family members who might have otherwise taken them in. Though, in all honesty, a big reason for the lack of new orphans is that I wouldn't know what to write about them.

Q: Ferdinand seems to really like and trust Fran. What happened that led to that?

A: Ferdinand took on many gray priests as attendants when he first became the High Priest, and about ten of those were sent back to the orphanage after they failed to pass his training. Fran took his work seriously during this training phase and quietly focused on getting his assignments done, which Ferdinand took notice of. Fran's dedication to his work caused Ferdinand to put more and more faith in him over time, and his success at serving Myne only boosted this even further.

Q: I believe Myne started paying the gray priests and shrine maidens after becoming a blue shrine maiden, but what exactly are they doing with that money? It doesn't seem like they're spending it. Does Fran actually have a huge stash of savings or something?

A: When they pass through the lower city on their way to the forest, they sometimes take this opportunity to buy food and other things. This all started when Lutz told them it was important that they visibly spend money in the lower city. Gil spent a surprisingly large chunk on clothes to wear when visiting the Gilberta Company, Fran does indeed have a huge stash of savings, and Wilma is using some of hers on art supplies.

Q: It's my understanding that blue priests have chefs and the like serving them, but are those chefs commoners? Are they commuting to the temple from the lower city? If they lived in the temple, they wouldn't be able to get married, right? Or are there gray priests who know how to cook?

A: The chefs are indeed servants. Some live in the temple, some don't. There are some who live in the family home of the blue priest they serve and

commute to the temple with them, while others simply stay in the temple. Servants aren't priests or shrine maidens, so they can still get married, but as there aren't any rooms for married couples in the temple, they would have to move out and start commuting. Cooking is not the job of priests, so there were no priests or shrine maidens who could cook before Myne started using them as assistant chefs and having them make their own food in the orphanage.

Q: When and where did Ferdinand learn that Myne had enough mana to enter his hidden room? He did say during the earth-healing ritual that she had more mana than the archduke, but she entered his hidden room before that, so I'm curious.

A: At the beginning of Part 2, Ferdinand's hidden room was set such that only those with more mana than the High Bishop could enter, specifically to block him from going inside. He knew from Myne's first offering to the divine instruments that she possessed more mana than the High Bishop, so it was pretty early on that he knew she could enter. It was then during the trombe extermination that he became confident in just how much she really had. Also, Sylvester messed with his research and magic tools upon entering his hidden room for a meeting prior to Spring Prayer, which prompted Ferdinand to alter the settings from that point onward.

Q: Why did Ferdinand seem so surprised when Myne found the synchronization potion sweet? Does the flavor change depending on one's mana quantity?

A: The potion is easier to drink the more elements you share and the closer your mana quantities are, and likewise harder to drink the less elements you share and the further apart your mana quantities are, which explains why Ferdinand was so surprised. That said, Myne having the Devouring means she would find anyone's synchronization potion easy to drink.

Q: I know the name "Shikza" is a pun based on "zako kishi" in Japanese—meaning "small-fry knight"—but is there an interesting story behind the name "Damuel" as well? Also, did you intend for him to disappear after his first appearance like Shikza did?

A: The truth is, I actually intended for his name to be Samuel, but I

accidentally hit the D key instead of the S key. I ultimately decided to just roll with it, since it's a cute mistake you wouldn't have really noticed without me pointing it out. I always planned for Damuel to stick with Myne as the only one of her guard knights to know her commoner origins, so no, I didn't intend for him to die with Shikza or anything. Though he definitely is the most pitiable character in Bookworm, especially considering that his name was misspelled from day one! Hahaha.

Q: From the perspective of an average noblewoman, just how turned off would they be at the idea of marrying Damuel?

A: He's the second son and not his family's successor, so he won't be inheriting any magic tools, property, or the like. He also received a formal punishment at work. In modern Japan, he would be equivalent to an ex-convict with no house, no money, and a job he might be fired from at any moment.

Q: It seems that parue fruit absorbs mana. Are they trombes after all?

A: No, the two are not the same.

Q: It seems like knights primarily fight with melee attacks, using their schtappes as weapons. Is the attack magic used at the end of Part 2 just not that relevant?

A: You can consider that attack magic to be blasting someone directly with your mana—it's not exactly irrelevant, but it's largely used for long-range attacks or when a higher-status noble wants to bully a lower-status noble with their overwhelmingly superior quantity of mana. In other words, in that scene in Part 2, Bindewald was mocking Damuel, and Ferdinand was treating Bindewald as totally inferior.

Q: Why aren't nobles aware that taues are trombes? It's really important information, and taues are everywhere during the Star Festival, so it feels like something they should know.

A: Nobles don't go to the lower city, nor do they participate in the Star Festival, so it would actually be weirder for them to know. Commoners don't actually know, either—under normal circumstances, a taue fruit will go underground and drain mana from the earth for several years before it sprouts, so as far as they're aware, trombes pop up out of nowhere. Myne discovered

the connection between the two by complete accident when she picked up a taue fruit that was halfway buried and poured mana into it.

Q: What plant or tree do taues come from? There are enough on the ground for there to be a festival every year, so I can't imagine they fall from matured trombes.

A: Trombes have male and female forms—the growing trees are male, whereas the taue trees are female. The males distribute pollen while flailing around.

Q: Is the tradition of throwing taues at newlyweds founded in a historical practice of people using them to check whether someone has mana?

A: Not really. Their main goal is to decrease the number of taues, with dissipating the mana in commoners and those on the borderline of having the Devouring being a welcome side effect.

Q: What is Rosina and Wilma's former master Christine doing right now?

A: She has returned home to her family by Part 3 Volume 1.

Q: I want to ask about Christine's social status. I re-read Part 2 and noticed that the descriptions of her family made them sound as though they had a lot of assets. Were her parents possibly an archnoble and his concubine?

A: Correct.

Q: What do those in Henrik's estate, especially his first wife, think about Freida? In honest terms.

A: As of Part 3 Volume 1, they consider her an important source of mana and money.

Q: What would Freida do if she got pregnant?

A: It would be up to Henrik, not her. He would take care of the child assuming it has enough mana to become a noble, but whether or not it actually becomes one depends on how many magic tools they have for their kids. If the child doesn't have enough mana to become a noble, it would become a servant that dumps its mana into the magic tools of others, and if it doesn't even have as much mana as a Devouring child, it would be sent to the Othmar Company

some time before its baptism.

Q: Freida mentions that she wants to open a store in the Noble's Quarter. Does that mean the Noble's Quarter has stores?

A: There are places where noble wives sell magic tools, restoration potions, and hobby-related goods. Most are located in one corner of their estate's side buildings, but they're more like workshops than actual stores. This is all treated more like a side job than anything else.

Q: Does Henrik have enough resources and influence to secure Freida a store in the Noble's Quarter?

A: He would simply be giving a side building to his concubine for her own purposes, so he wouldn't need any resources or anything.

Q: How much mana does Freida have, comparatively speaking? As much as a laynoble?

A: Even without going to the Royal Academy, she'll have somewhere between a laynoble's and a mednoble's amount of mana once she comes of age.

Q: Myne was registered with two medals—one when she was a commoner, and one when she became a noble. Is the medal on her commoner grave still active?

A: No, Ferdinand knew the dangers of this and acted accordingly. The medal on her grave is an unused one that nobody is registered to, while her commoner one has been safely disposed of.

Q: Did Ferdinand execute Arno because he knew that keeping him alive would be bad for Rozemyne's future?

A: That's only part of the reason. Arno's self-centered actions put a blue shrine maiden planned to be an archnoble at risk, and him not reporting Fran's visit almost entirely ruined Ferdinand's plot. His crimes were immense and it was obvious that he would continue making trouble, so Ferdinand eliminated him.

Q: I have a question about highbeasts. Rozemyne's Pandabus keeps getting mistaken for a grun, so I assumed that highbeasts are all colored according to

the animal they're based on. But they seem to be pure white in the illustrations. Why is that?

A: At the start, you're dyeing the feystone with your own mana, so the color of your highbeast reflects that. You can change it over time, but they're always a single color. If you want a description of the highbeasts other people have, you can read one of the later chapters in Part 2 Volume 2. Really, it's because Rozemyne's highbeast isn't the color you would expect that people mistake it for a grun.

Q: How much fighting power do highbeasts have? Even if nobody morphs their shape or has them spit fire, surely they can bite things or slash with their claws.

A: Well, they're feystones. They grow limbs and wings based on what the owner pictures, but I'm not sure biting or slashing would do much; dedicating mana to strengthening that image would ultimately be less effective than just using mana directly for attacks. Highbeasts are ultimately just magic tools used for travel.

Q: I would like to know what highbeasts Rozemyne's retainers and noble family have. Also, what kind of highbeast is the most popular?

A: The Karstedt family's three sons all have winged wolves, but winged horses are the most popular highbeast shape.

Q: Given that there are magic circles for conducting medical checkups, there must be doctors for nobles to go to. But are there any doctors in the lower city? Also, why aren't doctors called when Rozemyne collapses?

A: Lower city doctors don't study in the Royal Academy, so they're an entirely different beast from noble doctors. Not to mention, doctors are expensive in both the Noble's Quarter and the lower city, and Myne collapsed so often that calling them just wasn't feasible; imagine going to the doctors without insurance and having to cover the full costs yourself. When her condition was really bad they would at most buy medicine for her, but even that was expensive. As for after she became Rozemyne, Ferdinand closely cares for her himself when she collapses so that they don't need to call for doctors and reveal to everyone that she has clumps of mana stuck in her body.

Q: Given that second and third wives aren't rare, is it safe to assume that more girls than boys are born among nobles?

A: The sex ratio among nobles is actually pretty equal. But once a successor is born, it becomes a priority to give girls magic tools so they can be used in political marriages in the future, which means they have a higher chance of surviving as a noble. Boys, on the other hand, more often end up as servants in their family's estate.

Q: Please, oh please! Tell us who snitched and told Sylvester about the Ferdinand illustrations!

A: It was actually Karstedt who told him about them first. Elvira had chatted to him about how happy she was to have bought them.

Q: Are there any tone-deaf nobles? Are they able to overcome this when undergoing harspiel practice?

A: Since they start practicing harspiel at a young age, any tone-deafness is corrected almost naturally. I wouldn't say that nobody is tone-deaf, but most tone-deaf people are simply described as being poor players.

Q: I believe there are commoners in the Noble's Quarter working as servants, but do they all live in the Noble's Quarter? Are there any houses for them?

A: They all live at their workplace in the Noble's Quarter. There are no houses for commoners.

Q: According to Part 3 Volume 1, there are about three hundred nobles who live in the Noble's Quarter. How many of them are archnobles, mednobles, and laynobles, respectively?

A: The ratio is about 1:4:3.

Q: Do the titles of count, baron, *etc.* depend on how much a noble contributes to the duchy? We have seen counts, viscounts, and barons so far, but are there lower ranks too? I'm also curious about whether there's any connection between these titles and the person being an archnoble, mednoble, or laynoble.

A: These titles are only given to giebes, and there aren't any beyond count,

viscount, and baron. The title they receive depends on the size of their land and whether they're an archnoble, mednoble, or laynoble.

Q: Is there a visible difference between mednobles and laynobles, or is there just an arbitrary line drawn somewhere between them?

A: There aren't any visible differences, but once you get old enough, you develop an ability to sense the mana of people whose quantity is similar to yours. The fact that you can only have children with someone of a similar mana quantity means this is important for judging who might be a potential marriage partner, as well as who might prove to be a rival in love. It isn't possible to tell how many elements someone has just from looking at them either.

Q: The series often describes how much more mana archnobles have than laynobles, but what about laynobles who have as much mana as a mednoble? They don't move up a rank, do they? I was also wondering whether there's any way for noble houses to rank up.

A: Whether someone is an archnoble, mednoble, or laynoble depends on the status of their family during their baptism ceremony. The only time an individual moves from one rank to another is through adoption or marriage. If a noble house produces heirs with a higher rank of mana for three generations, then their house ranks up.

Q: Some of Rozemyne's attendants are nobles, so do they have attendants of their own?

A: Rozemyne's attendants who live in the castle have attendants for keeping their chambers and such in order, and they hire them with their own money. If these attendants are nobles themselves, then the chain continues, with their attendants having attendants for their chambers as well. If a layattendant is unable to hire a noble attendant, then they hire family members who were not given magic tools, or former gray priests and shrine maidens.

Q: Are there any domesticated feybeasts or cultivated feyplants?

A: There are shumils, for starters. Guinea pig-like feybeasts are also used for magic tool experiments, while others (some resembling dogs) are kept as pets. As for feyplants, those necessary for brewing restoration potions are grown in gardens and greenhouses. But raising feybeasts and growing feyplants require

mana, so only feybeasts that need a small amount can be kept as pets, and feyplants can't be cultivated when there isn't much mana to go around. The feyplants that are cultivated are mostly those that it is much more efficient to grow than to gather.

Q: What were you picturing for the fluffy bread that Myne makes? Bread rolls, soft baguettes, brioche, or something else?

A: I was imagining bread rolls.

Q: Is the idea that you can only have children with someone with a similar mana quantity founded in tradition or medical science?

A: Medical science.

Q: Does the Bookworm world have anything like family names or last names?

A: Nobles have them, but their names are already so long that using them would make things confusing for the reader. For giebes in particular, you would need to remember the name of their province, their family name, and their own name all at once. That would really increase the letter count and introduce way more confusion than it's worth, especially considering that there are people struggling to remember the names as they are now. Retrospectively, I definitely think it was the right decision to not use them.

Q: What was your inspiration for Urano Motosu's name? Also, I see "Gunther" and "Effa" come up in lists of German names, but not "Myne." What was that based on?

A: "Urano Motosu" is a Japanese pun that means "all books should belong to me." For the English localization, I chose the name "Myne" from a list of possible romanizations the translator sent me. It comes from the English "mine," meaning "belonging to me," and the German "main," as in "main character."

Q: I have a question about the terminology used to describe the buildings in Bookworm. Does it follow the same logic as the UK where the floor at street level is called the ground floor, or Japan where this is called the first floor? I assumed it was the latter in Part 1, but the scenes at the orphanage keep talking about the basement as though it's actually at street level.

A: It's important to note that different terminology is used for commoner and noble architecture. Commoner architecture uses the same logic as Japan. As for noble architecture, however, I took inspiration from the UK using "ground floor" but used the term "basement" in its place. This means the floor at street level is the basement, then above that is the first floor, *etc.*

Q: Do commoners in Ehrenfest rent their homes, or do they buy them?

A: They rent. Every building in the duchy belongs to the aub.

Q: I've been wondering about souls and the concept of death. What happened to Myne's soul from before Urano came into the picture? Is this reincarnation? At what point do nobles "climb the towering staircase" like commoners? What happens after they do? This is a story that doesn't focus much on death, which actually makes me even more curious.

A: This is a reincarnation story, so Myne's soul remained Myne's soul. It's just that she remembered her time as Urano, and since Urano lived so much longer, the sheer quantity of memories overwhelmed Myne's. She's not strictly a different person, so to speak, but... it's complicated. The Bookworm world doesn't have any concept of reincarnation; they simply think that, once the sun rises after the night of the funeral, the soul of the deceased climbs the towering staircase. There also aren't any festivals for the dead, since death is equivalent to being welcomed by the gods, and there would be no reason for them to return.

Q: Where is Ehrenfest's time-keeping bell? Is the bell ringing something that was there from the very start when the aub made the city?

A: There are actually several bells, located where the archduke has magic tools set into place to protect the city: the castle, the temple, and each of the four gates in the lower city. They've been there since the city was made.

Q: Is Myne's current energetic, determined nature based more on Urano's personality or the original Myne's? (Given that she's Gunther's daughter and all.)

A: Who can say? But we know that the original Myne would do nothing but cry about how unfair it was that she was unhealthy, whereas the Myne we know is like, "Staying in bed won't get me any books to read!" It's tough to

argue that the original Myne is having much of an impact here.

About the Writing Process

Q: What first inspired you to start writing Bookworm?

A: Once my duties as a parent calmed down and I had more time on my hands, I thought it might be fun to start writing as a hobby, since it doesn't cost money and can be done at home. It never even crossed my mind that it might one day become my main job.

Q: Just to get a general idea of your creative process, how do you write the story, and how far ahead do you plan things? Fantasy worlds like this have an entirely different culture and religious system from what we're familiar with, not to mention a bunch of colorful characters—how do you plot all this out?

A: I began by building the world the story would take place in, considering the geography, climate, history, architecture, cuisine, fashion, industries, general economy, status structure, religion, their views regarding love and marriage, the relationship with nearby countries, and the fantastical elements. I'm not very good at creating things from scratch, so I based a lot on German culture, while also taking inspiration from places like Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Sweden. There are also some elements that draw from historical Japan.

I think it's fine to sometimes play it a little loose with your setting as this leaves it room to grow, but you really need the basics in order so that, if someone asks a fundamental question, you have an answer for them. In my case, I read somewhere over fifty books as research before I started. This Q&A session has made me really glad that I did all this, too!

Once the world was built, I started formulating the plot. The first things I decided on were the beginning and the end; knowing how the story opens and concludes provides the overarching framework that I can fit everything else into.

I mostly write on copy paper, and what I initially did was outline the plot from the beginning of Part 1 up to the very end on an A4 sheet. To give you a general idea, it was something like: "A soldier's daughter so sickly she's on the verge of death." → "Uses her modern knowledge to invent things, which leads to her

meeting a merchant with connections to nobles.” → “Finally makes paper! Woohoo!” → “Barges into the temple’s book room during her baptism.” → “It’s discovered that she has mana.” → “Uses negotiation skills and her connections with the merchant to become an apprentice blue shrine maiden in the temple.” → “Saves the orphanage and gets more manpower.” → “The printing industry steadily advances.” → “Draws the attention of nobles during a ritual that requires the use of mana.” → “Finishes a book with mimeograph printing.” → “Some trouble with a noble from another duchy that begins with a Devouring orphan.” → “Separates from family and enters noble society.” → “Becomes the archduke’s adopted daughter.” As I’m sure you can see, I focused the plot on her progress making books and her ever-increasing status.

With the broad outline established, next comes the... less broad one. My rundown for Part 1 ended up covering a full A4 sheet, taking up just as much space as the full outline. I wrote all the events that needed to happen between her reincarnation and her joining the temple—things that had to happen no matter what detours she made along the way.

Once the more detailed outline was done, I started creating the main characters: the daughter of a soldier, her family, a merchant to serve as her bridge to noble society, someone to connect the soldiers to a merchant, a childhood friend to make paper with her, and so on.

I consider the personality and role of a character to be their most important aspects, so names and appearances are settled on last. During the plotting stage, I give characters placeholder names like Merchant A, Childhood Friend (Male), and Attendant 1 (Adult Man).

Then, once the characters are in place, I write the most detailed outline yet. What I do here is fill the spaces between the essential events. “This scene needs X, so I’ll write a scene about making X.” “I should have a scene with X before Y happens.” “I want a scene describing X at least once.” These are the kinds of thoughts that cross my mind during the process. Something that often keeps me motivated is wanting a character to say a certain line, or having a particular back-and-forth that I really want to include.

The chapters I post to Narou are based on this most detailed outline. In some instances, I might detour a little based on the feedback I get, but it’s usually

pretty casual and I'm always ready to get back on track with the important stuff. I don't really like things being too strict and rigid, since I find that less enjoyable. The idea of being satisfied in the plotting stage and not changing anything is a bit, well... Either way, I try to give myself some leeway when it comes to the story.

Q: In what way do you write Bookworm? It's really impressive that you publish a chapter every weekday, so yeah. I'm curious.

A: The night before, I grab some paper and write a detailed outline of what will happen next, including some lines and explanations that I absolutely need to include. I then flesh out the conversations before finally putting everything into order. Next, I type that all into my computer. One time I injured my arms and had to use voice-to-text, but speaking the lines out loud was really embarrassing. The next morning, I add details for the environment and situations, then publish the chapter. I still spend about five to six hours every weekday working on the web novel, and I believe that's been consistent ever since I started.

On weekdays, I also read and send emails regarding the book and manga adaptations, with the latter having a lot of mapping out, rough drafts, and finished pages for me to double-check. When a lot of double-checking work builds up, I can spend more than an hour just looking over things and replying to emails.

I do work regarding the novel adaptation on weekends so that I can publish chapters every weekday. As a recent example, I spent August having a nigh constant back-and-forth about the finalized illustrations for Part 3 Volume 1, while also beginning preparations for Part 3 Volume 2. Around this time, I also had deadlines for the TO Books special edition short story, as well as the third manga volume's bonus short story.

During September, the month Part 3 Volume 1 was due to be released, I spent a lot of time putting together the manuscript for Part 3 Volume 2. In the end, I was able to finish the main text in the first half of the month and the two original short stories in the second. I also spent this time simultaneously writing documents for the new characters, listing out which pages I wanted illustrations for if possible, and putting together the comments on the character

introduction pages. If there's a holiday in the month that the book is published then I get some extra time, which I'm always overjoyed about.

In October, the month after Part 3 Volume 1 was published, I spent my time going over the Part 3 Volume 2 galley proof; I absolutely without fail perform two checks for both the first and second proofs. The afterword and author comment are also usually due this month, and in this case, so were the temple map, short story, and Q&A for this very fanbook. I also needed to use this time to write the bonus short story for the fourth volume of the manga adaptation, which I started during the first half of the month. It's at the end of this month that I started sending emails about the illustrations.

November, the month before Part 3 Volume 2 was due to be published, had me checking the finalized illustrations and making preparations for the next volume, Part 3 Volume 3. This whole process continues in a cycle for each book in the novel adaptation. Then there's also the manuscript for every other issue of the monthly magazine Everybody's Library. You know, I don't think I rest much on the weekends at all... (Hahaha.)

Q: How do you decide on the names of characters, original nouns, chants, and so on? (I do know that a lot of your inspiration comes from German.)

A: For the main characters, I regularly consult European name registries and directories of German names. There are a decent number of characters who have anagrams for names, and sometimes I just think of some relevant adjectives and such that I plug into German. I believe Bezewanst's name was based on the words for "bad" and "fat belly," though I changed the spelling a little. I did something similar for the gods and chants. I ultimately go by feel based on their role and personality.

Q: Do the words just flow out of you, or do you visualize the scene and then describe that visualization?

A: I often visualize things in my mind. I've had anime dreams before with voices, sound, and everything! Gunther sure looks cool when animated. I also had a dream where Lutz and Myne played together after seeing a moving illustration on Pixiv, which was really cute.

Q: I'm always surprised by how all the characters act with their own agency.

How do you keep track of all their schedules and the foreshadowing? I feel like everything that happens in Bookworm is more than what you could accomplish with just a notepad.

A: It's less a notepad and more sheets of copy paper. When writing the middle-depth outline, I detail the actions of not only Myne, but all the other major characters too. It was pretty easy to manage in Part 1 when there was only the lower city, but starting with Part 3, the characters were split between the lower city, the temple, and noble society, which has demanded that I use a lot more paper lately.

Q: How do you decide on a character's hair and eye color?

A: I kind of just go with the flow. There are some characters that I originally thought up as having one hair color, then changed it later after feeling that it wasn't quite right. One time, I forgot to change the setting document after changing someone's hair color, so some time later, I got a comment online that I had mixed things up.

Q: It seems to me that this work is roughly based on Cinderella, but is that actually the case?

A: No, I didn't base it on Cinderella. I originally had four or five stories in mind that I wanted to write, though. These included one about making things, one about a fantasy world, one about gathering materials and creating things like in the Atelier series, one about good succeeding over evil, and one about school. I thought long and hard about which one to go with, and then finally realized that I could just mix them all together. So I took my favorite parts out of each plot and combined them into one new story.

Q: Were you consciously considering popular trends on Narou, like isekai reincarnation, when you started Bookworm?

A: Actually, it was the exact opposite. I wanted to write about libraries with "books" as the main keyword, but then I realized that wouldn't be feasible with a protagonist who grew up in the culture of my fantasy world. Having her be reincarnated was like a solution to that problem. I mean, it would be weird for a poor commoner girl to know so much about books and making things, wouldn't it? I simply couldn't progress the plot without the main character having some

baseline of modern knowledge. It was just a happy coincidence that Narou readers happened to be really receptive to it, and I was overjoyed about not having to hold back with what I wanted to do.

Q: Are there any characters who were revised after you outlined the plot? If so, I would love to hear who they are and how they changed. Was it a personality change? Did they get a bigger role? Like how Damuel wasn't supposed to be such a pitiable character, but keeps getting more and more pitiable as the series goes on.

A: I usually add substance to the characters after thinking up the general story outline, but there are several that I ended up reworking or combining into one. Myne is one such character. I originally pictured her as a meek, quiet girl who lived deep in the mountains. But a meek girl wouldn't be able to overcome the barriers of status and distinctive cultures, so she ended up becoming the rampaging little gremlin that we're all familiar with.

Other than that, Benno comes to mind. In my initial plan, it was Otto who would take Myne to the guildmaster. But the guildmaster was old enough that he couldn't run around himself, and he was from such a historied store that he was too conservative for new inventions and ideas. I thought about how to bridge the gap between Otto and the guildmaster, and ultimately came up with Benno. He has connections to an ex-traveling merchant and a historied store, plus he's young with lots of ambition and motivation, so he basically stole all the roles that I had expected to give to the guildmaster! Haha.

Lutz was in a similar situation. I originally intended for Myne to make paper with Tuuli, with Freida joining in midway through, but then it struck me that all the physical labor would be an issue with only girls involved. My solution basically involved Lutz taking over most of the work that I had planned for Tuuli and Freida to do.

I also thought up two potential routes for the temple, where either the High Bishop or the High Priest would work to protect her. In one scenario, the kindly old grandfather High Bishop would dote on her while the High Priest tried to eliminate her due to the threat her immense amount of mana presented. In order to save Myne, the High Bishop would turn to the noble society that scorned him, begging his nephew the archduke to save her. I wasn't really

satisfied with how the kindly High Bishop behaved, though, so I ultimately went with the High Priest route.

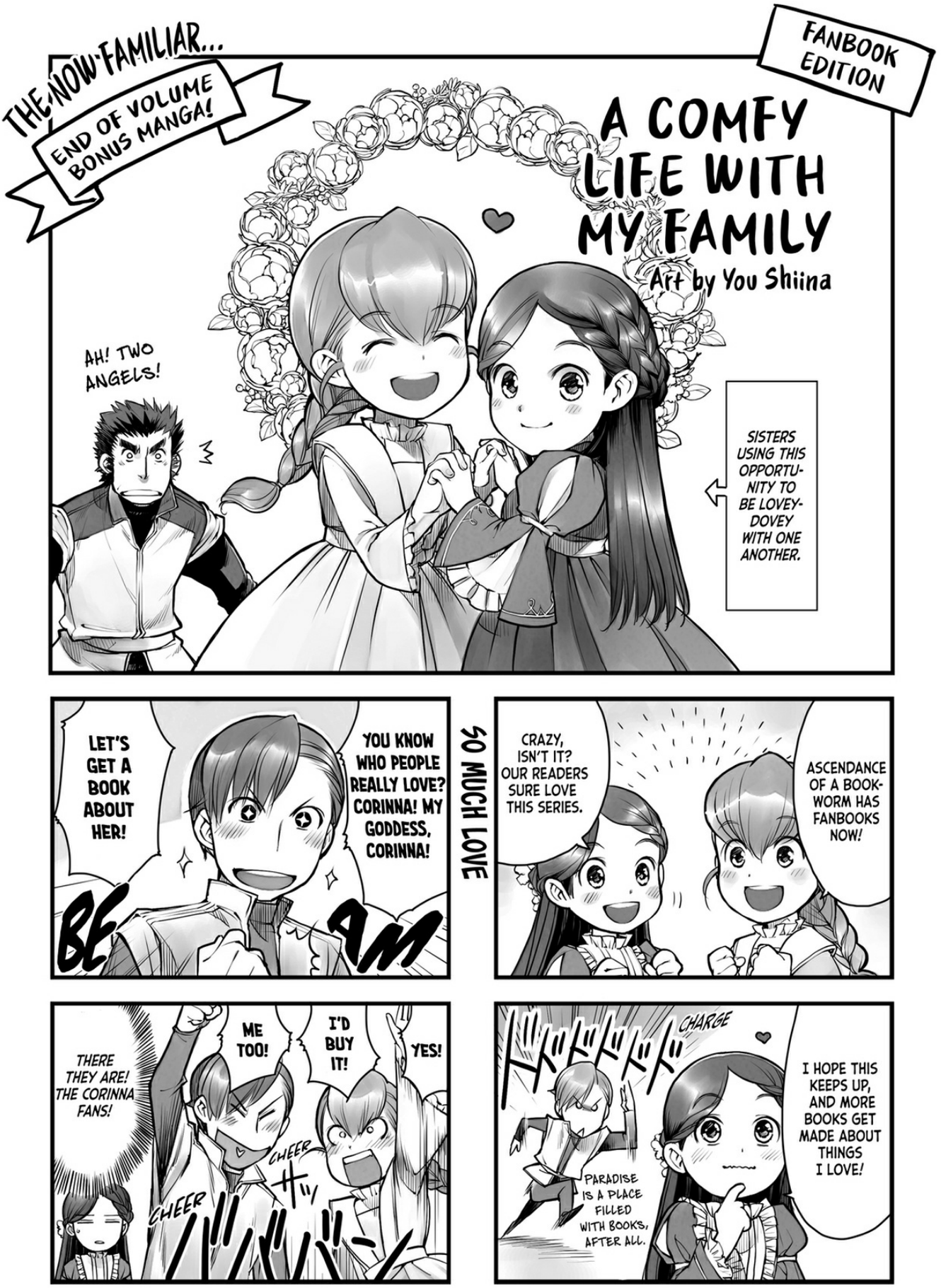
Q: Were there any stories that inspired you to make this incredibly lengthy and ambitious series?

A: I think I've been influenced by all sorts of movies, books, and games that I've watched, read, and played. If you ever think, "Wow, this is a bit like X!" then you might just be right. To be honest, I have so many inspirations that I can't really point to just one and say, "This is it!"

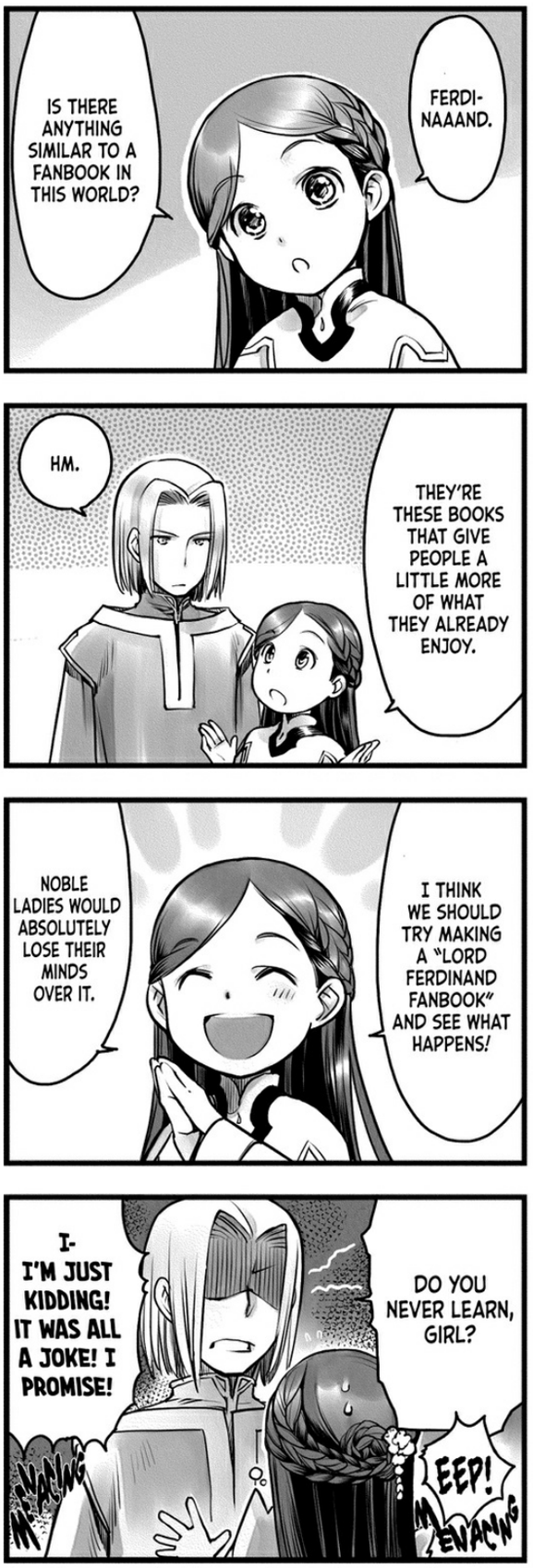
About Miya Kazuki

Q: I would like to know what your associates (mainly your family) think about you.

A: Let's see... "I think it's weird to have a mom who suddenly gets ideas for her books in the middle of cooking and stuff, then shouts, 'Get me my notepad! Someone, take my place!'" "Don't write until you collapse. Get some rest. You don't have much stamina as it is." There we go.


THE NOW FAMILIAR...
END OF VOLUME BONUS MANGA!
FANBOOK EDITION
A COMFY LIFE WITH MY FAMILY
Art by You Shiina
AH! TWO ANGELS!
SISTERS USING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BE LOVEY-DOVEY WITH ONE ANOTHER.
LET'S GET A BOOK ABOUT HER!
YOU KNOW WHO PEOPLE REALLY LOVE? CORINNA! MY GODDESS, CORINNA!
BE AM
SO MUCH LOVE
CRAZY, ISN'T IT? OUR READERS SURE LOVE THIS SERIES.
ASCENDANCE OF A BOOKWORM HAS FANBOOKS NOW!
THERE THEY ARE! THE CORINNA FANS!
ME TOO!
I'D BUY IT!
YES!
CHEER
CHEER
CHARGE
PARADISE IS A PLACE FILLED WITH BOOKS, AFTER ALL.
I HOPE THIS KEEPS UP, AND MORE BOOKS GET MADE ABOUT THINGS I LOVE!

SPIRIT OF A MERCHANT



She sadly gets punished for letting her merchant spirit show too much.

SEEDS



Messages from the Creators

Miya Kazuki

Ascendance of a Bookworm's first light novel volume was sold on January 25, 2015, and the manga adaptation began on October 30, 2015. Two years' worth of content has been released prior to this fanbook, and I hope you enjoyed it.

You Shiina

It feels like Ascendance of a Bookworm began only yesterday, but in reality, there are so many volumes out. Is this maybe the power of the protagonist's bookworm nature? I'm going to keep working my hardest, with the series giving me its power!

Suzuka

I'm Suzuka, the artist for the manga adaptation. I decided to use this opportunity to include here as a manga an online short story not covered in the books. Myne's dad is so cute!

Ascendance of a Bookworm: Official Fanbook Volume 1
by Miya Kazuki
Illustrated by You Shiina and Suzuka

Translated by quof
Edited by Kieran Redgewell
English Lettering by Nicole Roderick
English Print Cover by Meiru

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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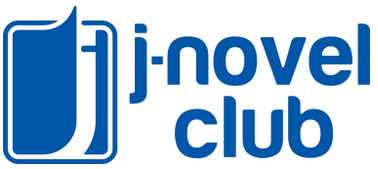
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