
vol.4
Yusura Kankitsu
Illustrator
Ruria Miyuki
Reincarnated Mage with Inferior Eyes
Breezing through the Future as an Oppressed Ex-Hero


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Reincarnated Mage with Inferior Eyes: Breezing through the Future as an Oppressed Ex-Hero Volume 4 [Complete]

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Chapter 1

Incident in the Cafeteria

My name is Abel, and I'm a mage who reincarnated two hundred years into the future. In my day, those with Amber Eyes like me were heavily discriminated against. One day, I decided that I'd had enough of that, and developed reincarnation magic to send me to my ideal world in the future. In that regard, I succeeded, and found myself waking up in a peaceful world. Even now, I was having another normal day at Arthlia Academy of Magecraft, one of the nation's many magecraft schools.

"Master! Lunchtime!"

As soon as class ended and we'd entered our lunch break, a familiar boy called out to me. His name was Ted, and he was easily recognizable by his dirty-blond hair and toned body. For the record, I had never actually taken him on as my apprentice. However, due to a certain sequence of events, he'd begun calling me "Master" after I saved his life when we were little. Since then, he essentially followed me everywhere I went.

"Let's go to the cafeteria! We won't get seats if we don't hurry!"

There were two ways to get lunch at the academy. One was to buy it at the cafeteria, and the other was to buy it from the academy store. Since all students were required to live in the dorms, it was difficult for anyone to make their own lunches, which only left the option of purchasing it.

"Oh, right, it's our priority day. We should get going."

There were well over a thousand students at the academy, and the cafeteria couldn't hold all of them at once, so students from each grade had specific days on which they had priority in the cafeteria. Today was the first years' turn, and it seemed that some of our other classmates had already left to take advantage of this.

"What're you gonna have today, Master?"

“Not sure. Haven’t really decided on anything just yet.”

“I recommend the new demi-glace hamburg steak meal set! Out of all the new items on the menu, it’s been the most popular, so it sells out really quick!”

We made our way to the cafeteria, talking about such pointless things all the while. As we descended the stairs, an appetite-enticing smell wafted towards us.

“Oh! I can’t get enough of this smell!”

Though modern magecraft had declined quite a bit from how it used to be two hundred years ago, food culture had made substantial progress. Probably, the thing I liked the most about the academy was the cafeteria’s vast repertoire of food.

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Well then. We opened the doors to the cafeteria, and were immediately hit by a wave of malice from the students. It was as though they were a pack of starving beasts.

“Whoa! I know it’s always like this, but there really are so many people!”

As Ted said, there was already a long, snakelike line. It was only after coming here that I’d learned students were very passionate about their food.

“Okay, Master. Let’s meet up afterwards! See you on the other side!” Ted said, running to get the most popular item of the day, the demi-glace hamburg steak set, after dropping one of these uncharacteristically manly phrases.

Ted was just like the rest of them, and had a great passion for food. Unfortunately, I wasn’t nearly as enthusiastic as he was, so I decided to line up for something less popular—noodles.

“Hey, look. Isn’t that...?”

“Yeah, the Inferior Eyes from the rumors. Seriously... Why is a lowly commoner at our school?”

As soon as I entered the cafeteria, I became the target of the other students’ piercing glares. However, I was used to this. As someone with Amber Eyes, I knew that there was a deep-seated tendency to discriminate against me.

“You’re eating in the cafeteria? That’s unusual,” a familiar girl with crimson hair called out to me.

I turned around to see Eliza—the descendant of the Hero of Fire, Maria, one of the heroes in the party I’d been in two hundred years ago. She was very competitive, and for some reason had been hanging around me ever since we’d met during the entrance exam.

“Yeah, I thought it’d be nice to have some warm food every now and then.”

“Oh, right. You usually just buy bread from the school store, right? I can’t believe you survive off of just that.”

Hm? How does she know what I eat? If anything, I was the type who preferred to eat quickly so as to have more leisure time.

“Are you sure you’re in the right line? This is the line for noodle dishes.”

Eliza was incredibly well developed—to the point where it was hard to believe we were even the same age—and in my mind, she was even more passionate about food than Ted. It was out of character for her to be lined up for food as plain as what you’d get in this line.

“Yep, I’m sure. I’m here for the once-a-week secret menu item—thick-cut bacon, spinach, and cream pasta!”

I could almost feel myself getting heartburn. That being said, I felt like I’d heard about these secret menus before. If I remembered correctly, in addition to the usual dishes on the regular menu, there was sometimes a secret menu on which the chefs tried out experimental dishes.

“Heh heh... Why am I even trying to hide it? I’m a premium member of the cafeteria,” she said, proudly puffing out her chest as she flashed a sparkling membership card at me.

I wasn’t even surprised. She was truly unrivaled in her dedication to food. If memory served, in order to become a premium member, it was necessary to undergo many strict tests. As a result, there were only a select few first-years who had achieved this status. Still, I’d had absolutely no clue that there was a dish this high in calories here in the noodle area.

While we chatted, the line moved along, and just as I was thinking about what to do for lunch, I spotted an unfamiliar item on the menu. *Hm? What's this? "Kitsune Udon"? What could that be?* I'd heard of udon before. It was a noodle-based dish from an eastern country. Udon noodles were made from wheat flour—the dough was kneaded, then cut into long noodles. It was as much of a staple food as rice was, in that eastern country.

What had me confused was the "kitsune" part. If I remembered correctly, "kitsune" meant "fox" in their language. Did they put fox meat on top of the udon? It was certainly a very interesting name for a dish. As of late, sampling the various mysterious dishes that the cafeteria had to offer had become somewhat of a guilty pleasure of mine.

"Order up! One kitsune udon!"

It hadn't even been that long, and my order had already come out. *But, hmm, I'm a little confused as to where exactly the "kitsune" part of this dish is. At the very least, it doesn't look bad, though.* On top of the white noodles were green scallions, red fish cakes, and a mysterious, golden, flat and rectangular object. It was a colorful dish that stimulated the appetite. Either way, now that I'd gotten my meal, it was time for me to find a place to sit.

"Ugh... It's as packed as ever."

Eliza was right. The seats were already filled, leaving us with few options. *Not much choice.* I wasn't a fan of this idea, but I'd have to find an empty seat wherever I could, even if it meant sitting next to someone I didn't know. But just as I was thinking that, I noticed something.

"Oh?"

What's this? Nobody's sitting over there. At a corner by the window, there was a table. It wouldn't have been an exaggeration to say that these were premium seats. I wasn't exactly sure why these seats had been magically left unused, but figured there was no reason to overthink it. Feeling as if I'd hit the jackpot, I approached the table.

"A-Abel, not those seats!" Eliza called out, stopping me.

Why? What's wrong with them? Just as that thought crossed my mind, I heard

a different voice.

“You. What’s the big idea?”

A guy I’d never met before had spoken, and he was *huge*. Judging by the color of the crest on his uniform, I could safely assume that he was a first-year like myself. However, he was already way over 170 centimeters tall.

“This table is reserved for the ruler of this school, the honorable Saibane Redstar—a man with the duke’s blood flowing through his veins. Do you still mean to take it, despite knowing that?”

Before I could even blink, I was surrounded by intimidating guys. *I don’t even know who that is. What do you even mean by “reserved table”?* There was no way that the academy would have allowed such a reservation system for a facility that was open to all students.

“It’s all right. Cut him some slack,” said another person, chuckling. “I’m sure the boy didn’t harbor any ill intentions towards me. It was a simple mistake.”

I see. So this is the guy in question. Though the others who surrounded him looked like thugs, he alone seemed prim and proper.

“Abel... You shouldn’t get involved with them. He’s the only son of the duke,” Eliza whispered into my ear.

I see. Now that I think about it, his name sounds familiar. In modern times, there were five classes of nobles: dukes, marquises, counts, viscounts, and barons. Though they were all nobles, they were by no means on equal footing. The nobility status of the students’ parents affected where they stood in the school hierarchy.

“Now then, Abel, would you mind vacating that seat?”

“Sorry, Sir Duke, but no can do. Would you mind finding somewhere else to sit?”

Uh... Why did his eye twitch? All I did was tell him my honest thoughts. Why is his face twisting in anger?

“I’d heard rumors, but to think you really are *this* rude of a commoner...”

Looks like his real personality is coming out now. I was used to this sort of

thing from back in my day. There were many nobles who might've seemed kind at first glance, but really, they just looked down on commoners.

"Get him, men!"

At his orders, his cronies took out their weapons and began glaring at me. *Oh, come on. Really? Taking out your Regalias in the cafeteria's not very nice.* The rest of the cafeteria fell silent as this explosive situation unfolded before them.

"What a troublesome commoner! I think you could do with a good, hard lesson!"

"You cheeky Inferior Eyes brat! We're gonna beat you to a pulp!"

Good grief. I'd really prefer not to do anything that makes me stand out. But the best I can do at this point is to use as few defensive abilities as I can to resolve this without anyone getting hurt.

"Wind."

The magecraft I used was one of the most basic available to those with Verdant Eyes. My objective was to hit their feet. Specifically, their shoelaces.

"Die!!!"

The cronies jumped at me all at the same time, their Regalias primed to attack. However, perhaps having realized that using magecraft here would be a bad idea, they seemed to have decided to only use their Regalias as blunt objects with which to deal physical damage. *Shame. You're all too slow.* I easily dodged their attacks, then quickly executed one of my own, stepping on their shoelaces and making them trip.

"Gah!"

"Oof!"

"Agh!"

Losing their balance one after another, the guys crashed headfirst into the supposedly reserved table.

"Y'know, if you're gonna pick a fight with someone, shouldn't you at least make sure your shoes are tied first?"

“Wha— When did—?!”



The guys looked incredibly confused by how their shoelaces had come undone. *Good grief. I'm breaking my back over here, incapacitating the people who come at me without standing out.* The magecraft I'd used had loosened their shoelaces. That way, it looked like I hadn't gotten involved and all they'd done was trip over their own shoelaces, sabotaging themselves.

"Dammit. *All* of your shoelaces just happened to come undone at the same time?! There's no way that's a coincidence!" The duke's son angrily bit his fingernail, reflecting on how his subordinates had been taken out in a flash.

"That's because it wasn't a coincidence," Eliza said, checking on my bowl before a confident expression spread across her face. "Abel didn't even spill a single drop of his broth."

Huh. Of course Eliza noticed. The most important part of this plan had been making it look like the guys had tripped on their own shoelaces. I'd moved fast in order to ensure that nobody saw what I was up to, but it seemed that Eliza had been able to follow my movements.

"Urgh... You despicable commoner..."

Even if he wanted to go for another attack, his cronies were still in shock from their big falls. The only option left to him was to gnaw on his nail with frustration.

"I won't forget this disgrace, you knave! I *will* humiliate you come finals!" he cried out in a cryptic fashion, before exaggeratedly stomping out of the cafeteria, his footsteps echoing behind him.

Well then. I have no clue how he intends to humiliate me in the finals. As I considered the possibilities, I sat down and began to eat the kitsune udon.

Chapter 2

The Events of a Rainy Day

I wonder how long it's been since I started at this academy. The cherry blossoms had all fallen from the trees, and new green was sprouting to take its place. We were now in the rainy season. The droplets that fell from the sky rustled the hydrangea leaves.

It'd been raining so much recently that the usually bustling academy suddenly felt subdued. *It was raining like this on the day we fought the Demon King of Twilight, wasn't it?*

One of the nice things about rainy days was that it felt like I could get a lot more reading done. Now that classes had ended for the day, I decided to go to the Olden Magecraft Society's room to do just that.

"Abel!"

When I arrived at the library, a girl who'd been waiting there energetically ran up to me. *Good grief. She's like a puppy.* Noel, also known as the Ice Queen, was a prodigy, head and shoulders above the rest of the students here at the academy. She was also the founder of the Olden Magecraft Research Society.

"How do I look? I changed uniforms," Noel asked, lightly lifting the hem of her skirt and spinning around.

It seemed that the rainy season was the time when students changed from their winter uniforms to their summer uniforms.

"Hm... Well, I think it suits you."



She was already above average in looks, so it didn't take too much for her to look good. She might've been on the smaller side, but she was very slender, which allowed her to pull off the summer version of the academy uniform rather elegantly.

"That makes me so happy. I wanted to show you, so I changed into it early," Noel said, as she leaned against me, making it clear that the fabric of the summer uniform was thinner.

Oh, jeez. When'd this happen? It seemed that, unbeknownst to me, she'd grown very attached to me. *That aside...* In contrast to our subdued atmosphere, there were two other people in the room who were visibly stressed.

"Urgh! Why do the school's tests cover so much stuff?! They're evil! Demons!" Eliza whined as she struggled with the mountain of textbooks on the table.

As an official member of the Olden Magecraft Research Society, she, too, was allowed access to the hidden library.

"I can see it... It's all so clear now! Just beyond that mountain ridge, there's a mountain of honey toast and a chocolate river!" Ted, also seated at the table, mumbled something incomprehensible as he hung his head.

Nobody had invited him, but before I knew it, he had started acting like he was a member of the Olden Magecraft Research Society.

"You two seem to be having a rough time," I said, setting my bag on the table and pulling out a book.

Now then. This research society has no specific goals or activities, so everyone pretty much just does their own thing. Not having any real goals might've sounded bad, but I personally enjoyed the freedom that came from not having any unfair or rigid rules that would've restricted my activities. Honestly, it worked out greatly in my favor.

After some time passed, Eliza looked at me curiously as I read.

"I might as well ask, even though I already know the answer, but...aren't you

going to study before the test?" Eliza asked.

"Study? Why should I study *before* the test?"

"H-Huh? What do you mean by that?"

"I agree with Abel," Noel chimed in. "If you make a habit of reviewing what you learned in class daily, then there's no need to study."

Hm? Am I imagining things, or did Eliza just pull a face like she disagrees?

"Don't even try to understand them, Eliza," Ted said. "They don't understand the feelings of average people like us."

"Huh?! You're saying I'm an 'average person' too?!"

Though Ted had meant to comfort her, it had ended up hurting Eliza instead. Now she seemed depressed.

"Eliza's one thing, but Ted...are you gonna be okay?"

From what I'd heard, the academy's tests were very difficult, and there was always a good number of students who were expelled each year due to poor grades. Eliza was already fairly intelligent, so I wasn't too worried about her. Ted, on the other hand...

"Gulp." *Looks like my guess is right on the money.* His reaction to being singled out was quite predictable. "Master, did you know that every year, ten percent of the grade are expelled?"

"No, I didn't. So what?"

"It's a terrifying system! If ten percent of the class is expelled each year, then that means by the time you're a fifth-year, half of your class is gone!"

I...had no words. *Check your math.* If ten percent of a class of a hundred disappeared each year for five years, then we'd be left with sixty people. Thinking about it from this point of view, having sixty percent of freshmen eventually graduate wasn't too bad. Then again, if Ted couldn't even handle a simple calculation like this, I was genuinely concerned that he wouldn't be able to go to the next grade.

"Master... Help me, please," Ted groaned.

“No. Help yourself.”

Ted came crying to me, so instead, I decided to be cold and push him away. It wouldn’t have been too hard to teach him, but in the majority of cases, one wouldn’t get good results if someone else had helped them too much. This was really for Ted’s sake.

If he kept relying on me every time he hit a wall, then I doubted he’d be able to grow much as a mage.

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After a while, I determined that the sun was probably setting, so I began gathering my things in preparation to leave. *Is Ted going to be okay, though?* He complained today again halfway through studying about how he was starting to feel sick, and he looked as if the life was evaporating out of him. *I’m kinda worried.* I had no intentions of tutoring him, but maybe I could find a chance to at least help him out a little.

“Abel, are you heading back to the dorm?” Eliza called out to me right as I was about to leave. It seemed that she was packing her things too. “Would you like to go back together? I just reached a good stopping point.”

“Yeah, sure. No problem.”

With that, Eliza and I walked out of the secret library and went up to the ground floor, passing through the hallway and stairs that students were usually forbidden from entering.

“Wow! I didn’t know it was raining this hard outside,” Eliza commented.

I looked outside and saw that the rain had grown more intense. *Hm, this is a problem. I should probably get back to the dorm sooner, before the rain gets any worse.*

“Hm?”

As I arrived at the academy building’s exit, it took a moment before I realized that something was off. *This is weird. My umbrella’s gone. I know I left it in the umbrella stand here.* Students were told to leave their umbrellas in designated umbrella stands, the reason being that it was unhygienic to bring them indoors.

“Is something wrong, Abel?”

“That’s weird. My umbrella’s gone.”

My guess is someone took it by accident. Of course, I considered the possibility that someone had stolen my umbrella out of spite, but I wanted to believe that there wasn’t anyone who would pull such a low-level, juvenile prank. My downfall had probably been having an umbrella with a commonplace, simple design.

“O-Oh, really?” Eliza said, averting her gaze slightly, her cheeks growing faintly pink. Then, she said something quite unexpected. “Um, Abel, if you don’t mind, we can...share.”

“Uh... Why?”

“Th-There’s no deep reason or anything! I-It’s just that—look, my umbrella’s needlessly large, isn’t it? And also, you help me out all the time, you know?!”

Oh, I see. So this is her way of repaying me. “You don’t have to worry about it. I can just use magecraft to repel the rain, since we’re not too far from the dorms.” This was a type of magecraft that was used regularly back in my day. “No matter how big your umbrella is, it’ll be a tight fit for two. If you’re worried about paying back whatever you think you owe me, don’t worry about it.”

“Oh... Right... Sorry. I shouldn’t have stuck my nose where it didn’t belong.”

Hm. This is strange. Eliza looks visibly depressed after I turned her down. Hm. As usual, I really don’t understand the hearts of women. Shouldn’t she be happy that she doesn’t have to be jammed underneath an umbrella with somebody else?

“Must suck to be popular, huh, Abel?” a guy wolf whistled at us.

And then, at this moment, something unusual happened. Several familiar-looking continuing students stood before us, blocking our way.

“Hey, Abel, Recognize this?”

In his hand was the umbrella—my umbrella—that should have been in the umbrella stand. *Good grief. Are you serious? They exceed every expectation for how low they can sink.*

“This is such a shabby umbrella. It’s perfect for an Inferior Eyes like you!”

“You only have yourself to blame for going against the duke!”

“You must not value your life if you purposely angered Lord Saibane!”

The next action they took surprised even me for how scummy it was. They threw my umbrella to the ground and began stomping all over it. The umbrella I’d just bought became twisted and was left in a disastrous state.

“I can’t believe those jerks... They’ll pay for this!” What had just unfolded had made Eliza visibly angry.

I could almost see flames erupting from her body as she shot a look that could have killed at the continuing students.

“Stop, Eliza.”

These guys mentioned the duke. Most likely, that means that they have beef with me and are following his orders to mess with me. If she fell prey to their cheap taunts, she’d be targeted by the duke too. There was no need for her to also have to endure their stupid antics.

“B-But—” she protested.

“I’ll deal with them,” I said, stepping forward to put her behind me.

The continuing students grinned creepily. “Wowie, so cool! Hey, we got a knight in shining armor over here!”

“Whew, so cool! We’ll be sure not to mess you up *too* badly.”

Something’s not right. It’s strange that despite how aggressive they seem, there are no signs they’re actually preparing to fight. In order to get to the bottom of this, I decided to use Inspect, looking for any traces of suspicious magecraft. *Oh, I see. I think I’m catching on to what they’re trying to do.*

There was a student in the back of their group that had a Regalia with a lens sticking out of one of his pockets. It was obviously some type of recording device. Most likely, they wanted to provoke me into attacking them with magecraft so they could get it on video, which they could then use to frame me for breaking the rules, which forbade students from using excessively strong magecraft. *So stupid. It’s so stupid, I can hardly even call it a plan.*

“Judgment Rain.”

I used an Azure Eye magecraft that was a little unique. It allowed me to control the rain, but obviously, it could only be used when it was raining. I could literally count on my fingers the number of times I’d been able to use it in real battles.

“Come on! What’s the matter, Abel?!”

“You scared?! Wuss!”

As I thought... They’re starting to panic because I’m not taking the bait. Their taunts were becoming more passionate. This was honestly a hilarious sight. *The whole time you’ve been trying to goad me to fall into your trap, I’ve been setting things up to punish you all.* A ball of rain had begun to accumulate above their heads.

“Abel! Is that—?!”

Of course, Eliza noticed what was going on. Though I’d been curious how long it’d take for them to notice, we were unfortunately out of time. When everything was ready, I dropped the huge ball of water on them.

As the massive ball of water crashed over them and to the ground, there was an almighty splash

“Gahhhh!”

The surging water created a torrential stream that washed them all away. *Hm. I think I went a little overboard.* I’d missed my chance to take back the umbrella they’d stolen, and now it’s been washed away too. Even though they’d broken it, I would’ve been able to easily fix it right back up with Obsidian Eye magecraft.

“That was amazing! Did you manipulate the rain?! I never knew that kind of magecraft existed!”

Is what I did really that unusual? It took a while before Eliza stopped looking starstruck. But then, when she recovered, the thing she did next surprised me.

“Here. As thanks for saving me!” I wasn’t sure what she was thinking, but she held her umbrella out to me. “Don’t worry about me. This rain is nothing. I’ll be

fine if I just run!”

I see. So she’s basically sacrificing herself so that I can use her umbrella. And her umbrella has a normal-looking design, so it wouldn’t be weird for a guy like me to use it.

“Okay, well, I’ll be off then. See you at school tomorrow!”

Good grief. What a troublesome princess. I grabbed her by the collar before she could run off into the rain, then brought her close to me.

“I changed my mind. We can share the umbrella today.”



Hm? What's going on? As soon as I brought her close to me, Eliza's cheeks turned red.

In the end, magecraft was certainly convenient, but it was silly to think that it could solve every little thing. To be honest, I didn't mind walking through the rain under an umbrella. After all, umbrellas had not changed much since two hundred years ago. Through the years, many other things had changed, but it was a relief to see that some things had stayed more or less the same.

"Are you...sure?"

Good grief. She flips between being sad, surprised, bashful, and happy so quickly. Right now, she was wearing an expression so bright, I could've mistaken it for the sun.

"Hey, Abel, um..."

"Hm? Something wrong?"

"No. Never mind..." she said, turning her flushed face away.

I wasn't sure why, but I got the feeling she wasn't feeling so talkative anymore. Thus, the two of us walked under the same umbrella as friends. With that, my life at the academy slowly progressed.

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At the same time, in the faculty room on the first floor of the main school building, the professors were busy with work of their own. Finals weren't stressful just for students, after all. Currently, the professors were in the midst of frantically writing questions for their exams.

That should do it. Looks like I just barely made it in time this year too. A beautiful, silver-haired woman sighed as she gathered papers together.

She was a woman of both intelligence and beauty, who was also highly principled. Her looks were the envy of many. Her name was Fedia, and she was in charge of the first-years.

"Headmaster, the test for the first-years is complete, with the exception of one subject."

“Good work, Fedia. As always, it’s helpful how quick you are with your work,” the headmaster, Mikhael, said with a satisfied look as he accepted the papers from Fedia.

He was a descendant of the Hero of Wind, Roy, and was one of the few people who had begun to catch on to Abel’s true identity.

He took the test questions to a special, hidden safe, and stored them inside so that nobody would see them until the day of the test. This was part of the rules to prevent any of the details about the test being leaked.

“However, Headmaster... I’m not entirely sure when the test for the last subject, Magecraft Engineering, will be completed.”

“Oh, that’s Emerson’s subject, right? No need to worry—I’ve already told him to get it done by tonight.”

Fedia fell silent. She couldn’t help but feel put off by Emerson, who was currently completely immersed in his work. He was touted as the country’s brightest mind, but his head always seemed to be in the clouds. Fedia found it hard to get a good read on him.

That being said, he’d seemed more desperate than usual as of late. With how focused he was, he almost seemed like a completely different person.

“Headmaster... What kind of questions is he writing?”

“Your guess is as good as mine. However, it seems that he’s found himself a good rival,” said Mikhael, grinning as he stroked his white beard.

Though Mikhael had no clue about Abel’s true identity, Abel at least seemed to him to be a worthy-enough opponent to make Emerson want to give his all while writing the test questions. However, Mikhael kept this observation to himself.

Heh heh... Just you wait, Abel. Soon, you and I will face each other! Emerson thought.

He was so focused that he couldn’t hear Mikhael and Fedia’s conversation. He just continued to mutter to himself, almost as if he was chanting a curse, which made a strange atmosphere descend over the rest of the faculty room.

I’m gonna test your brain. An eerie smile crept across Emerson’s face as his pen danced across the page, constructing his own original magecraft equations.

Chapter 3

First Semester Finals

The long rainy season was finally coming to an end, and only three days remained until the start of the finals. During this time, with tests just around the corner, everyone was on edge. On days like these, I found it was best to hole up in a room and continue my own personal research. With that in mind, I headed towards the secret library in the basement of the academy.

“Abel!”

No sooner had I taken one step into the library than Noel ran up to greet me. *Good grief. I can practically see your tail wagging.* I still had no clue why, but for some reason, Noel had become very attached to me.

“Could you teach me a new magecraft today?” she asked, presenting a book to me.

Most likely, she’d brought it from outside of school. It was an unfamiliar book that appeared to have seen better days. Now that I thought about it, I heard that even in the lower grades, Noel had been so masterful of every last subject in school that they’d given her a pass to skip school.

I enjoyed teaching a brilliant student like Noel magecraft. Though her physical stamina gave me cause for worry, her bottomless curiosity and excellent ability to grasp concepts made Noel a rare, outstanding modern mage.

“Sure. No problem,” I agreed.

Noel and I went to the back of the room. As we did, I noticed Eliza, who was happily humming while flipping through the pages of a book. I was surprised to see that she had also changed into the summer uniform. *When did she do that?*

From the looks of things, she’d gotten a handle on her studies because she had a book in hand that was unrelated to any subject taught at this academy. The title of the book was *Special Edition! 200 Secret Spots to Enjoy Your Summer! Everything from seasonal high-quality eats to walking/eating tours!*

I wasn't really sure what it was about, but at the very least, I got the sense that its contents were very ambitious. Now that she'd finished studying, it seemed that there was nothing in her head apart from what to do during the upcoming break.

"You sure you don't have to study?" I asked, casually sitting next to her.

"Wh-Whoa! Abel?!" She quickly hid the book behind her back, clearly flustered. "O-Oh yeah, I'm good on studying. All that's left is to do some quick review."

"Nice. Glad to hear that."

Though Noel surpassed her in some ways, Eliza was still a student with exceptional academic abilities. Purely in terms of academics, this was how I ranked everyone: Noel, Eliza, then a huge gap between them and the average student, and then finally, Ted. Most likely, Eliza was not one of those people who had to frantically cram before the test. The reason she'd been so desperate previously probably stemmed from nervousness over taking her first big test at the academy.

"I think I'm fine, at least, but I'm not sure about the guy sleeping over there," Eliza said.

I could feel a headache coming on as I looked in the direction she was indicating. Though I'd been doing my best to ignore him, it was obvious to anyone how Ted was doing. Most likely, in order to keep studying, he'd been cutting back on sleep. His face was pale as he dozed off into his textbook. He looked as dried-out as a mummy.

"See?" said Eliza. "Look! Acorn-head has only studied *this* far!"

"I can't believe it," Noel replied. "These are just the beginner magecraft analects..."

They were clearly surprised. I, too, was in disbelief, and decided to confirm things with my own two eyes. I picked up the question booklet, and it soon became painfully obvious that Ted was worse off than I'd ever expected. Even if, for the sake of argument, we said that he was simply making slow progress, it

didn’t change the fact that all of his answers thus far were wrong. He was beyond help.

Good grief. I’d always known he wasn’t the brightest tool in the shed, but I never realized he was this much of a disaster. If he sat for the test at his current level of understanding, he might honestly not be able to advance to the next grade.

“Abel, you should probably check up on him. At this rate, he’s really going to fail...” Eliza urged me.

I sighed. Though I’d wanted to hold off on helping him so that he could learn to overcome this with his own strength, this didn’t seem like a situation where I could afford to be picky. I didn’t have a choice—it’d be annoying if he wasn’t around anymore. For starters, there’d be one fewer person who could help me stay incognito if something unexpected happened. *I guess I’ll help him out a bit.*

“Ted. Let me see your textbook real quick,” I said, using this as an excuse to tinker with it.

“Abel, what are you doing?” Eliza asked, as I began drawing lines in his textbook.

“Isn’t it obvious? I’m highlighting the questions that’ll be on the test.”

“Wh-Whoa! You know what’s gonna be on the test?!”

“That’s just a result of analyzing the importance of certain topics, the points which were explained the most in class, the personalities of the professors, and some other considerations.”

Of course, ultimately, these were nothing more than my personal guesses—I wasn’t guaranteed to be a hundred percent correct. Still, though, since the questions were made by real people, there ought to be a certain amount of predictability to them. At the very least, as long as Ted was able to get these questions down, he could avoid failing.

“I’m not sensing any signs of life. Seems like he has absolutely no interest in continuing his studies,” Noel observed as she watched Ted, who hadn’t moved even a little bit.

Good grief. I think what Ted needs right now isn't an efficient way to study, but some motivation. Sheesh, he's such a handful.

"On a separate note, do you have any plans for summer break?"

Hm? Am I imagining things, or did Ted twitch a bit as soon as Eliza mentioned summer break?

"Hm, I'm planning on going back to the Rhangbalt region to visit my hometown, but I don't really have plans apart from that," I responded.

Truth be told, though, the Rhangbalt region was not actually my hometown—it was more like my second home, as my real hometown had been razed to the ground during the war two hundred years ago

"Oh, I know! Let's all go to the beach!" Eliza suddenly proposed.

I was wondering what was gonna come out of her mouth. Turns out, she wants to invite all of us to the beach? That's a hard sell, considering we all have our own schedules.

"Eliza... You might be a genius. It really pains me to admit it, but I don't think I have a choice."

Though I'd thought that Eliza's proposal wouldn't be well received, on the contrary, for some reason, Noel was incredibly excited. This might have been the first time that I'd ever seen her agree so emphatically with someone else.

"Apparently, we can see the beautiful beach in just a few hours if we take the Magic Railway!" Eliza said excitedly.

"We'll have to figure out lodgings. It's better if we make reservations sooner than later," Noel added.

"Tasty foods!"

"Breathtaking scenery."

"This summer's gonna be fun!" the two of them said in unison.

Sheesh. I haven't had a chance to say even a single word, and the plans are already practically made. It was surprising for Eliza and Noel, who had such diametrically opposed personalities, to be so in sync.

“What about money?” I asked.

“No need to worry about that,” Noel reassured me. “If we classify this as a training camp, we can write everything off as the research society’s expenses.”

Is that how it works? That felt kinda wrong, like we were abusing the system, but maybe it wasn’t actually a problem. After all, the president of the research society herself had proposed the idea.

Then, there was an incredibly loud yell of excitement. It seemed that, even if he’d been half-unconscious, Ted had heard our conversation. He was now burning with a sense of motivation that I’d never seen in him before.

“I wanna go to the beach! I’m *so* motivated right nowwww!!!”

Good grief. He’s only motivated to study when it’s in his own self-interest. For Ted, it appeared that it was more effective to dangle a carrot in front of him than hold his hand and guide him. *I’ll remember this for the future.*

“You should be careful. If you fail, you have to stay back for remedial classes.”

“Urk!”

The big question now was whether Ted could actually pass, and join us for the research society’s training camp. It felt like he had a bumpy road ahead of him.

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After a few days, it was finally time for us to take our test. The school’s atmosphere was stranger than usual. Some students looked like they were ready to kill, while others seemed beaten and tattered. And then there were others who were acting as if they weren’t fazed at all, maybe as a way of pressuring other students.

Something about this felt nostalgic. Suddenly, a memory of being a mercenary for a certain country flashed through my mind. In that memory, we’d prepared to go to battle, and it seemed that the students here were too. *I see.* Who would’ve thought that, even two hundred years later, the same kind of atmosphere which would descend upon the battlefield also existed in this time of peace.

The door rattled as I opened it and walked into the classroom. *Hm. It seems*

that most of the students are here and already seated, trying to cram whatever last bit of knowledge that they can into their heads. If only they were always this motivated, I felt that it was very likely many of them could become first-class mages, so it puzzled me why they only got like this *right* before tests.

"Be quiet, please! Take your seats, students." The professor overseeing our test today was the one with the bulbous nose who seemed to have some kind of beef with me. "I will pass out the test sheets now. When you receive them, immediately flip them face down and leave them on your desk. If I see even the slightest suspicious movement from any of you, you will be immediately kicked out of the room!"

The test sheets were distributed to the people sitting in the front row, who then passed them back, and so on and so forth until everyone had one. Taking a closer look, I saw that the paper was kind of transparent. It wasn't too hard to make out what was written on the other side, even if the text was flipped. That being said, it didn't seem as if there was any need for me to use such a shrewd technique.

"Now, begin!"

At the professor's signal, everyone flipped over their test sheets. The room was filled with the sound of paper rustling, then the pleasant sound of pens scratching said paper. As for the test itself, it was much easier than I'd expected.

We were given fifty minutes to complete the test, which I could only assume was some kind of joke. Everything was so easy that I couldn't imagine it even taking me five minutes. Still, though, I'd learned from the past. No matter how simple it seemed to me, there was no guarantee that it'd be simple for everyone else.

If I got ahead of myself and scored a hundred points on every test, I'd risk drawing unnecessary attention to myself, which would put my goal of a peaceful academy life even farther out of reach. *Hm, let's aim for eighty percent this time.*

From our talk with Ted, I'd learned that one failed by only achieving an average of thirty percent across all five subjects. Failing meant having to take

remedial classes. If I wanted to avoid that, all I had to do was score higher than thirty percent. As long as I got around eighty percent, I'd probably be seen as a good but not outstanding student. This was the move for me, if I wanted to stay out of the spotlight as much as I could.

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The test proceeded without issue, and at last, we reached the final subject: Magecraft Engineering. *Hm. From just a glance, this doesn't seem to be too hard. If anything, this might be twice as easy as the other subjects.*

The Magical Engineering portion of the entrance exam had been filled with exquisite questions, but I saw no trace of those anywhere this time. Every question seemed to come straight from the textbook, just with the numbers changed a bit. This spoke more to the test writer's lack of motivation than a conscious decision to make the test easy. It almost felt as if they'd been so busy with other work that they hadn't spent any time whatsoever thinking about test questions. It was that disastrous. However...

"Hm?"

I couldn't help but emit a sound of surprise when I reached the tenth question.

Question from Sagittarius's Logic Puzzle

Show the optimal route for the following magecraft equation.

At the very last moment, a unique question popped up. Out of the ten pages for this test, five of them were dedicated to this one question. I stared at it in silence, reviewing it. *This is excellent.* Though this question was worth thirty points, I doubted anyone but me could even score a single point. In terms of length and quality, this magecraft equation was of the highest level I'd seen in modern times.

The reason most of the questions felt as if no effort had been put into them was most likely because the test maker had devoted everything they'd had to writing this one question. This clearly wasn't something an average professor could have put together. There was no mistaking it. The person who'd written

this question was the very same individual who'd put the question regarding Depornix's Final Theorem on the entrance exam—Emerson.

"Phew..." Having encountered a problem that was actually difficult, I exhaled long and slow.

Now then. What should I do? Being able to solve an extremely difficult problem would no doubt draw attention to me, which was something I wanted to avoid. However, this question was obviously his way of throwing down the gauntlet.

I could easily imagine that he'd spent at least a month working on this question. Even I would feel guilty ignoring someone's hard work like that. *Looks like I don't have a choice.* As long as I adjusted my answers so I'd get eighty points at the end of it all, I could still avoid standing out too much. *I'll play along this time, Emerson.*

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The rays of the summer sun scorched the ground from where it hung in the sky. *Now then, as it's been a few days since the test, it's finally time to see our scores.* I only learned this later, but it was tradition for the academy to post the test scores on the bulletin board in front of the main school building. *Phew. I'm glad I didn't get full of myself and answer everything correctly. I would've drawn so much attention if I got the full five hundred points for all five subjects.*

"Whoa! There sure are a lot of people for how early it is!"

As Ted had said, there was a large line in front of the bulletin board. Everyone seemed anxious to check their scores. I was surprised at how willing they were to group together despite the summer heat and humidity. If anything, if I was in their shoes and waking up early, I'd rather have spent this time reviewing my studies rather than checking my test results.

"By the way, Ted, how did the test go for you?"

"I think I didn't do too bad thanks to you! I'm sure I got at least thirty-five points on each subject!"

In what world is that not "too bad"? Scoring thirty points or less meant that you needed to take remedial classes, so just being a mere five points above that

cutoff shouldn't have been something to be proud of.

"It's finally time to reap the fruits of my labor! I'm gonna play *so* hard this summer!"

Then again, even if he was just barely above the threshold, he *had* avoided failing, so that was the important thing...probably. Maybe I should've praised him for breaking out of the deep, dark hole that he'd found himself in.

"Hello there, Abel. Did you sleep well?" an unfamiliar guy called out to me as I spoke with Ted.

Hm. I feel like I've seen him before, but I can't for the life of me remember where.

"Yeah, thanks. I slept like a rock. What's it to you?"

"Rrgh... You really don't know how to hold your tongue, do you, commoner?"

Oh, now I remember. This is the high-class noble who picked a fight with me in the cafeteria. I think his name was Saibane or something.

Suddenly, his words flashed through my mind. *I won't forget this disgrace, you knave! I* will *humiliate you come finals!*

I'd almost forgotten. Today was the day that he was going to make good on that promise.

"I'm sure you don't know this, Abel, but every year the top students are, without fail, continuing students. There have been no exceptions. From my research, the top five students for the past ten years have never included any transfer students." For some reason, Saibane explained this proudly.

I didn't know that, but that makes sense. Continuing students had the advantage of coming up through the system, accumulating experience, and figuring out how everything worked, better preparing them for what the tests would cover. I might have taken myself out of the running for being one of the top students, and now there was a possibility only continuing students were ranked at the top.

"In other words, there's no point in any of you being here at all!"

"Gya ha ha ha!" his cronies laughed.

Did I miss the joke? At any rate, had this Saibane guy really looked ten years back into the academy's history just to taunt me? If anything, the lengths he was going to felt like the joke.

"Silence! We will now begin announcing the results," a familiar silver-haired woman—Fedia—said in a serene voice as she appeared in front of the bulletin board.

Now then. Here are the rankings:

1st: Abel - 500,370 points

2nd: Noel - 464 points

3rd: Eliza - 458 points

4th: Yukari - 456 points

5th: Saibane - 438 points

Uh... I don't really get what's going on, but I recognize a lot of names in the top five.

"Whoa, look, Eli! You're third!"

"You're just two points behind me. You're pretty impressive yourself, Yukari."

Yukari, the girl in fourth place, had been in our Hunt team during one of our PE classes. *Hm. I already thought she was fairly impressive, but the fact that she came so close to Eliza's score means that she's an excellent student.* It was impressive that as a transfer student, and despite her calm demeanor, she had managed to break into the top five, which had been dominated by continuing students for the past decades.

"Dammit! What is up with these transfer students?!" Saibane growled, seemingly unsatisfied with the results.

Then again, I couldn't really blame him. The rankings, which should've comprised solely continuing students, now had three of their five spots filled by transfer students. Since Saibane had wanted to prove his dominance over the transfer students, this had been a huge miscalculation on his part.

“This has to be some kind of trickery! How the heck does someone even get a ridiculous score like 500,370?!”

I’m right with you. I want to know the answer to that too. On my part, I’d been sure to try and aim for eighty points for each of the five subjects, which should’ve made my total 400. So how had things turned out like this? Also, wasn’t the test out of 500? Getting 500,000 points seemed a little far-fetched.

“Are you going to let this obvious cheating slide, Professor Fedia?!”

“The tests have been graded fairly. There is no trickery here,” Fedia declared sharply.

“B-But that Inferior Eyes...”

“The color of one’s eyes has nothing to do with their exam results. If you keep spouting these baseless accusations, I hope you’re ready to be punished accordingly.”

“R-Rrgh...” Under Fedia’s intense pressure, Saibane quickly folded.

Good grief. Sure, it’s nice embarrassing one of the stuck-up continuing students, but my original plan of scoring lower in order to not stand out seems to have failed spectacularly. Seriously, what is up with my score?

The answer to this question came in a letter that I received along with my test paper.

Dear Abel,

You win this one. Completely and utterly. I never imagined that you’d be able to tackle Sagittarius’s Logic Puzzle in a single hour, when it took me a whole month to come up with it. A hundred points is too paltry an amount for your intelligence. So, on my authority as a professor, I grant you 500,000 points as a present! I greatly look forward to our next match.

Sincerely, Emerson

I see. So this crazy amount of points is thanks to Emerson. Sheesh. I was trying to stay out of the spotlight, and then he went and did this. What a troublesome guy.

“Woo-hoo! I achieved my dream of being in the hundreds!”

Oh, right. For the record, out of 238 students, Ted had apparently ranked 193. I wasn't sure if that was something to be happy about, but at the very least, he *had* avoided being in the bottom ten percent, so maybe he deserved some praise.

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Around two hours later, some of the third years were gathered around the third bulletin board in the academy's courtyard.

52 out of 160 people? I guess that's not too bad. A certain student breathed a sigh of relief.

It was Ted's older brother. Though he was a student, he was a member of the Anti-Magecraft Organization, which led him to skip a lot of classes. Still, though, he was on the brighter side, so he was able to maintain decent grades.

"Hey there, Barth. How're things going?"

Someone called out to Barth suddenly. Barth turned, and then went pale as soon as he saw who the voice belonged to.

"Master N-Navir! What are you doing here?"

Navir was the branch head of the world's largest anti-magecraft organization, AMO. Despite Arthlia Academy strictly forbidding unrelated personnel from entering its grounds and having various security systems to prevent intruders, none of these things were enough to stop him.

It was child's play for Navir, the individual with the highest combat abilities in AMO, to break through Arthlia's security measures. He'd made a name for himself as a very slippery guy, using his high-level magecraft to get through all sorts of similar systems without being detected.

"I can't say I approve of you skipping our routine checkin. I gave you a secret mission to burn the books in the library. Why haven't you reported back to me about that yet?"

"Secret...mission? I'm not sure what you're talking about."

"Heh heh heh. It's useless to play dumb. I can read your thoughts."

Navir pressed his finger to Barth's forehead. He had the ability to read the

thoughts of familiars with whom he'd shared his blood by making physical contact with them. However, for some reason, he found himself unable to read Barth's thoughts.

Impossible! Did he overcome my blood?!

Navir was bewildered. He'd shared a portion of his blood with Barth and turned him into a half-demon just a month ago. There was no way to break free of the blood-binding curse of demons. Usually, this meant one would be a demonic familiar until their dying day.

"Barth, what happened to the power I shared with you?! I gave you the power of demons right here, in this place!"

"I-I don't know what you're talking about! This is the first time we've met in this place!"

Navir fell silent. He could tell that Barth wasn't lying. Even without using his demon abilities, Navir had the ability to tell whether someone was being truthful. It seemed that Barth really didn't know anything.

What's going on?! It'd be one thing if he was just missing his memories, but the power I gave him is gone as well!

No matter how much Navir racked his brain, he couldn't come up with an answer. He couldn't figure out the truth of what'd happened—Abel had freed him by using Revival Magecraft which was written in the Akashic Record. Navir had no way of knowing this.

There's no mistaking it... There's something *in this school. Something unknown to us...*

Recognizing that this could pose a setback to their plans, Navir knew that this threat had to be taken care of quickly. He thus decided to continue thoroughly investigating the school in order to get to the bottom of what was going on.

Chapter 4

A Task Before the Training Camp

The summer break for Arthlia Academy of Magecraft was long. The school's philosophy was essentially: *work hard, play hard*. Due to how all students were required to live in the dorms and take on a great many classes, they were also encouraged to rest when the time came. Thanks to that, students got over sixty days off.

Now then. Many students were using tonight to pack their belongings before going back to their hometowns. As for me, though, I was using this time to speak with Lilith during one of our routine checkins.

"Master Abel, Navir has made contact with Barth," Lilith reported, just as I brought the cup of herbal tea that she'd prepared to my lips.

"I see. So he's finally fallen into our trap."

Navir had shared his demon blood with Barth and ordered him to attack the secret library. He touted the principles of the anti-magecraft movement and had already created huge problems in the past.

"Everything has played out as you predicted, Master Abel. Now I've managed to identify the enemy's hideout."

Since the enemy had used Barth as their familiar, I had a feeling that they'd make contact with him again. With that in mind, I'd purposely used magecraft to revive Barth and use him as bait.

"Is there anything I can help with?"

"No need. I'll take care of this myself."

My body was still maturing, so my strength hadn't returned to the level it was at before I reincarnated, but I was growing stronger at an explosive rate. In my current state, I might not have been able to take out an officer in the Demon King's army, but I could easily take on their grunts.

“Oh, right. I have a favor I want to ask, though.”

“Yes? Ask me anything.”

“I want you to be the chaperone for our training camp.”

“Huh?” At my words, Lilith looked utterly perplexed.

That makes sense. Most people would have reacted like that. I proceeded to fill her in.

“And so,” I explained, “it seems like we need a professor to come with us.”

“I see—that’s what you meant.”

In order for the training camp to be approved, at least three students had to participate, and a professor had to accompany us. Though our activities would be restricted in various ways, much more so than if we were traveling on our own, because it was ostensibly a training camp, the academy was willing to fund the entire trip.

“I don’t mind helping. However, I must say that it’s rare for you to make such a request.” She set her teacup on the table, and a slightly devilish expression stretched across her face. “You’ve changed, Master Abel.”

Of course I have. All things change with time. Of course I’d change after living in the modern world. But actually...wait a second. Does Lilith really mean that in a good way? Something bothers me about the way she said that.

“Dissatisfied?”

“No. I love the new you as well, Master Abel.” She smiled, embracing me and falling with me back onto the couch.

The faint smell of perfume tickled my nose. We’d been with each other for so long, I could guess what was on her mind. This was the perfume she wore whenever she was trying to seduce me.

“I’m in the mood to spend the night with you, Master Abel...”



Good grief. She really isn't the shy type. The room felt like it was heating up. And this was how I spent the long night leading into the summer break.

Chapter 5

The Sleepless Town: Paracenos

On the first day of summer break, the bright light from the summer sun reflected off the ground, creating a sort of heat haze.

Neighboring the royal capital of Midgard was a place called Paracenos, the Sleepless Town. Compared to the royal capital, Paracenos had fewer regulations, and it was popular with the younger crowd because of its wide selection of western clothing shops.

Waiting at the center of town on Kabukiza Street was a girl with crimson hair. Her name was Eliza, and she wore a summer dress instead of her usual school uniform. Her youth and beauty drew the gazes of all the guys passing by.

Hm... I feel like people are staring at me. This is uncomfortable, Eliza thought, as she stood in front of the mermaid statue which was a famous meeting spot on Kabukiza Street.

The statue used a water magic stone as its power source to produce a fountain of water. The temperature around it felt much cooler than it actually was, so standing by it felt very refreshing.

Many guys in the area were looking eagerly for girls to hit on, and others made their livings by scouting girls for seedy nightlife businesses.

“Whoa, that girl’s super cute.”

“She’s not your average student. I bet she’s a noble’s daughter or something.”

“Holy crap! She’s a hell of a catch, then!”

“Yeah, so let’s go hit on her already.”

Two such guys, having noticed Eliza, were moving in to hit on her.

“Hey, girl. Wanna hang?”

Eliza glared at the two weak-looking guys who’d waltzed over to her. As she emitted murderous intent and put her hand on her rapier-type Regalia, they

became visibly frightened.

“Eek! Sorry!” Overwhelmed by the pressure she was emitting, the guys turned tail and ran. It seemed that they’d chosen the wrong person to hit on.

I hate those kinds of weak-looking guys more than anything...

As someone who’d undergone intensive training as a mage, Eliza felt zero interest in guys who were cowards and went easy on themselves.

“Eli—sorry I’m late!” In the midst of Eliza’s thoughts, the person she’d been waiting for arrived.

Her name was Yukari, and she was a close friend of Eliza’s. In comparison to Eliza’s fiery and hot personality, Yukari was much more timid and relaxed. Though their personalities were opposites, they’d become good friends due to the shared experience of being on the same Hunt team in PE.

“Yukari, what’re you wearing?!”

Eliza couldn’t contain her surprise as she laid eyes on Yukari’s street clothes for the first time. Her top had loose sleeves and a piece of belt-like fabric was wrapped a little bit above the stomach. It produced a very unique, frilly silhouette.

Her outfit was in a style known as “wafuku,” and there was a very small number of people who wore this style as everyday clothing.

“Hm? Does this outfit look bad on me?”



“No, it doesn’t look bad at all...”

Eliza trailed off. If anything, it was the opposite—it was almost scary how good the outfit looked on her. Yukari had the same beautiful black hair, slender body, and elegant figure as many of the women from the country in the East. This made the wafuku style look perfect on her.

“My mother instructed me to wear wafuku whenever I’m out and about.”

I had no clue, Eliza thought. *I knew that her parents were both from that eastern country, but I had no clue that it was a rule for her to wear wafuku as street clothes. She must’ve been raised in a really strict household.*

“Should we get going?” Eliza began. “By the way, I think those clothes look really good on you.”

“Really?! I’m so glad to hear that!” Yukari’s eyes glistened with tears, and she dove into Eliza’s chest. “I think your dress is really, *really* cute on you too, Eli!”

“Um... It’s kinda hot. Would you mind not clinging to me so much?”

With that, the two of them walked off, arms linked, into the dazzling shopping district. Internally, Eliza was glad that she’d been able to see an unexpected side to Yukari.

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After walking around for a bit, the two of them reached the mall and stopped by a boutique store where they were currently selling swimsuits, which happened to be their objective for the day. If they’d just wanted to buy clothes, there were plenty of other stores in the royal capital they could’ve gone to. However, this was one time when the stores in the royal capital wouldn’t cut it. For what they wanted, they had to make the trip to Paracenos.

“Whoa! All of these are swimsuits?!” Eliza exclaimed.

Though they’d seen swimsuits being sold in the royal capital, those stores didn’t even have a tenth of the selection that this one had. Since the businesses in Paracenos were specifically geared towards younger people, the vibe was much more casual than in the royal capital.

“I’m gonna try on these swimsuits,” said Eliza. “Gimme your opinion, okay?”

“Sure! You can count on me!”

Eliza put several swimsuits that she was interested in into a basket and entered the fitting room After all, the purpose of this excursion was to find a swimsuit for the summer training camp.

After a few minutes, the curtain to the fitting room opened again, and there Eliza stood in one of the swimsuits she’d picked out.

“Wh-What do you think?” she asked nervously.

The first swimsuit she was trying on was a one-piece which showed less skin.

Hm... I know I’m the one who picked this out, but I might be playing it too *safe.* Since she had a guy she was interested in, she wanted to take the chance to show off her figure in a swimsuit. Though she wanted to choose something more daring to entice Abel to come on to her, she didn’t want to turn him off by making him think she was loose. Despite appearances, Eliza was still a sensitive, delicate maiden at heart.

“Oh, wow! You’re sooo cute! I need pictures! Gimme!”

With heart eyes, Yukari began taking picture after picture with her camera Regalia. And so...

“What about this one?”

“So pretty! Soooo cute!”

“Then what about this?”

“Amazing! You have godly boobs!”

Eliza fell silent, smiling wryly at Yukari’s extremely hyper words. Yukari wasn’t acting the way she did at the academy—it seemed she doted on the people she’d opened her heart to.

Eliza continued to try on swimsuit after swimsuit, but none of them really felt like *the one* to her.

“Hey, Yukari?”

“Yes?”

“What kind of swimsuit do you think...Abel would like?”

Yukari gasped quietly, realizing what Eliza really wanted. Her expression immediately grew serious.

“Hm... I guess if you’re really trying to grab his attention, then it might be better for you to try on one from the section with all the sexy swimsuits.”

Eliza’s face went bright red. She’d been pretending not to have seen that section because she was very embarrassed about trying those on, but there was indeed a selection of risqué swimsuits that were designed to catch the eyes of guys.

“Wh-Why do you think that?” Eliza asked.

“Well, in Abel’s case, he’s... How do I put this? If you don’t choose something bold enough, he may not even see you as a member of the opposite sex.”

Realizing that Yukari had a point, Eliza fell silent. Compared to other boys his age, he seemed much more mature than they were, at least mentally. She had not once yet seen Abel act flustered or embarrassed. If she didn’t choose a swimsuit that was daring enough, he might not even notice her.

“Oh... Oh no. I can totally imagine that,” she said, eventually.

Yukari went on. “Abel does seem more mature somehow... Though I can’t really pin down what makes him seem that way.”

At any rate, taking Yukari’s advice to heart, Eliza changed up her strategy. Instead of trying on conservative swimsuits, she switched to more daring ones.

“Wh-What do you think?”

Ultimately, Eliza picked out a red bikini. It exposed a decent amount of skin, but it was modest enough that it didn’t seem indecent. It was precisely the kind of swimsuit she’d been looking for—something that toed the line between risqué and modest.



“I think it’s great! It’s a perfect mix of your pure vibe with your sexy body! I think you should go with this!” Yukari was breathing heavily, giving Eliza a thumbs-up of approval.

Is...she complimenting me? Eliza wondered.

Perhaps because Yukari gave the impression of being graceful and refined, Eliza didn’t sense the lewd emotions behind Yukari’s words. However, it seemed that Yukari had the same kind of dirty thoughts that boys her age did.

“Oh! Since we’re here, you should pick out a swimsuit of your own. I kinda wanna see you try some on!” Eliza suggested.

“Oh, no, I couldn’t possibly bring myself to wear any of these. They’re much too indecent. My mother would be furious.”

“Huh?!”

Eliza wondered how that was fair when Yukari had been the one encouraging her to try on all those swimsuits. Hearing Yukari’s true thoughts made her feel very conflicted.

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After purchasing the swimsuit, the two of them went to a nearby café for something to drink. Since this town was geared towards younger people, there were a lot of drinks on the menu that they’d never heard of before.

“Wow, this is really good!” Eliza said excitedly.

“Mine has a very interesting texture... I wonder what they used to make this topping?”

“Dunno. I think I heard one of the workers here call it ‘tapioca.’ Apparently they import it from another country.”

“It reminds me of the frog eggs I used to see in the fields as a child,” Yukari observed.

“H-Hey, don’t make weird comments like that!”

By the time the two of them finished chatting, the sun had set.

“Phew, I ate so much!” Eliza said happily.

“Is it okay that you did? Aren’t you gonna be wearing your swimsuit in front of Abel soon?”

“Urk. I-It’ll be okay. I’ll work super hard on my diet!”

As the two of them exited the café without a care in the world, they were suddenly met with a surprising scene. Though it was nighttime, there were even more people around now than there’d been during the day. The adults in the area seemed to be disappearing into stores with neon lights as if they’d been sucked in.

The reason Paracenos was known as the “Sleepless Town” was because it had the lights on 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. The way that the town’s atmosphere changed entirely as day turned to night was one of its unique attributes.

“It’s pretty late. We should get back to the royal capital,” Eliza suggested.

“Good idea! I wholeheartedly agree!”

Both Eliza and Yukari had a bad feeling about the situation, and quickly tried to leave.

“Eek!”

But right as they were about to round the corner to leave Kabukiza street, Yukari collided with a dangerous-looking guy, who knocked her to the ground.

“Hey, ladies. Moment of your time?”

It turned out to be a pair of guys, who looked down at Yukari as unsettling smiles stretched across both of their faces. These guys were on a completely different level from the ones who’d tried to hit on the two girls earlier in the day. They wore black tuxedos, and gave off an aura that told you not to get involved with them.

“I’ve got a sweet gig for the two of you. All you gotta do is endure a little something-something, and you’ll get a big payout. Whaddya say?”

“With your looks, I *know* the customers are gonna be callin’ for you two all the time! For real!”

They showed no concern for Yukari, who’d been knocked to the ground.

Instead, they kept talking in an excited manner. Though the girls weren't exactly sure what kind of work these two meant, they could at least sense that it was nothing good.

"We'll pass. We're in a hurry. Let's go, Yukari," Eliza said, grabbing Yukari's hand, pulling her to her feet, and turning to leave, all in one smooth motion.

"Thanks, Eli..."

"Hey, wait! We're not done talkin'!"

The guys made it clear that they weren't willing to let prey of such high quality get away. One of them went to grab Eliza from behind, trying to stop her from leaving.

Eliza's body moved before she could even think. Sensing danger, she smacked his hand away roughly with a loud slapping noise.

"Tsk. That hurt!" Having been struck had clearly put the guy in a bad mood. "Oh no. I think you might have broken my hand."

"Aw, man, you're making us mad."

It was clear that the situation had devolved to the point where they could no longer just talk things out. The two men each brought out knife-type Regalias. There was no need to interpret their actions on a deeper level—they were ready to fight.

"Eli!"

Eliza felt Yukari gripping her hand tighter. Fear raced through Yukari's body. Eliza was frightened as well, but then an image of someone, someone who stayed calm no matter what kind of difficult situation he found himself in, flashed through her mind.

If Abel was here, he'd... She knew that he wouldn't show any fear or anger. The most important part of composing magecraft was not letting any of your personal emotions get in the way.

It didn't matter how great the magecraft you were composing was. Suppressing one's emotions mattered more in a battle between mages than their actual power levels. Having a calm head could easily turn the tide. Thus,

Eliza unsheathed her rapier-type Regalia and courageously went on the offensive.

“Flame Edge!”

The air trembled as flames appeared from the tip of her blade. Flame Edge was the magecraft Eliza was most proficient with. She could already tell that it had come out perfectly. She’d stayed calm while composing it, and as a result, the magecraft emerged exactly as she’d envisioned it.

“Whoa!”

The attack had been intended to intimidate, so she’d aimed the magecraft at a nearby building.

“Ha ha ha! What a rowdy little girl you are!”

“Hey, come on, man! I can’t wait any longer! Let’s get her!”

However, it seemed that her intimidation tactic had only served to invigorate the men instead.

I’ll have to use something stronger. In order to completely destroy their will to fight, she knew she had to clearly demonstrate the difference in their strength. But just as she went to compose her next magecraft...

...there was a sudden whooshing of a strong wind, and then an explosion. The world shook. The ground of the Sleepless Town trembled, and a terrifyingly hot wind blew around them.

“Wha—”

The men cried out in shock. After all, the top half of the building that Eliza had fired her warning shot into had disappeared, leaving nothing but the steel beams behind.

“Eek! She’s a monster!”

“Please forgive us! We were just messing around!”

The mysterious blast made the men run away with their tails between their legs.

“Eli, was that your magecraft?!”

“N-No! It wasn’t me!”

The magecraft Eliza had used had purely been meant to intimidate, so she wouldn’t have accidentally put in so much force that she exploded the top half of a building.

“I hate to admit it, but...I’m not capable of using such amazing magecraft.”

Out of everyone there, Eliza was the only one who understood precisely what’d happened right before the explosion. The attack that’d hit the building had been a huge, booming lance of flame. It’d flown at close to the speed of sound and collided with the building, causing the terrifyingly huge explosion—one unlike any she’d ever seen. Eliza knew only one person capable of such magecraft.

Did Abel do that? No, there’s no way... Right?! The more she thought about it, the less she could come up with a reason Abel would have been there, using his magecraft at that precise moment. Having witnessed the unexpected and extremely powerful magecraft, Eliza was thoroughly confused.

However, going back an hour from when Eliza caught sight of that flaming lance, a figure walked through the night...

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It’s gotten so cold. Hard to believe it’s really summer. I looked around at the people walking about the town, illuminated by the light from the neon signs.

After getting the information from Lilith regarding AMO’s secret base, I decided to make a trip to the town beside the royal capital—the Sleepless Town of Paracenos. Though it’d been filled with a younger crowd during the day, the town changed completely when night fell.

Gambling, drugs, poverty, violence, human trafficking—the town became a place where all of these things were on full display. It became an outlet for the desires of the people of the royal capital. And the relationship between the towns was mutually beneficial—the people of the royal capital could maintain appearances during the day, then come here to let loose at night. So what was I doing in such a seedy town, then?

That was because I had business with the demon, Navir of the Moonlight,

who'd controlled Barth from the shadows to launch an attack on the academy's secret library. In my experience, it was always fastest to go straight to the heart of the enemy organization. It also kept the casualties to a minimum.

According to the information I received from Lilith, AMO's secret base was in a skyscraper on the outskirts of Paracenos. So here I was, standing outside the entrance of the building, wearing a mask and something of a disguise. I pressed my hand to the sensor to try and unlock the door.

Hm. It looks like there's a complex magecraft composition in this that needs to be solved in order to unlock the door. In other words, it was the same kind of mechanism as the Maze Circuit that Noel had given me. *Good grief. Modern demons are pretty careless, though. Noel's Maze Circuit was much more difficult than this.*

After getting through their security system, I walked through the hall until I came across two guys who'd been stationed there.

"Who're you?!" they yelled.

I can sense their demonic aura. Wow, this is starting to feel kinda nostalgic. Now that I think about it, it's been two hundred years since I've met any demons other than Lilith.

"You're a human, aren't you?"

"How'd you get through our security?!"

The demons readied their large gun-type Regalias, making it clear that they were ready to kill me. However, I hadn't come here to be merciful.

Killing the demons here was inevitable. These demons had burrowed into the local businesses that catered to the desires of humans, and as a result, they'd taken many an innocent human life. Plus, all the illegally earned funds in this town funded AMO.

"Fire! Kill him!"

One of them gave the order, and they began shooting masses of lead propelled by wind magecraft at me. *Huh. I've never seen this kind of projectile weapon before.* They weren't attacking me directly with magecraft. Instead,

they were using some kind of lead projectile. I had to say, it piqued my interest; however, that didn't change the fact that they had the bad luck of facing me down.

"Wind Edge!"

I dodged the projectiles and used a basic wind magecraft. Small blades of wind flew towards the demons.

"You fool! You really think that rudimentary magecraft will hurt us?!"

They didn't seem the slightest bit threatened by the magecraft I'd composed as a counterattack. *Good grief. They think I fired off a simple magecraft, so they're underestimating it. That overconfidence will be their downfall.*

Their weapons, which propelled lead balls, had a limit to how quickly and powerfully they could hit their target. However, there was no such limit on magecraft attacks. I'd appended Tracking and Strength Fortification to the Wind Edge I'd composed.

"Huh?!"

The two demons let out a sound of surprise at around the same time. Though they thought that they'd dodged, my attack changed trajectories sharply, accelerating towards their necks. Most likely, they were used to how weak modern mages were. And judging by their sluggish reactions, they weren't used to appended magecraft.

There was a sharp sound of wind, and in the next moment, blood spurted across the room as their heads flew through the air.

"H-How—"

How foolish. You two may be demons, but if you're this weak, then this is no different from dealing with humans. Of course, if I'd been facing a high-level demon, I wouldn't have let my guard down after just cutting off their head, but with how weak these two were, they were nothing to worry about.

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After that warm-up, I began taking out the demons lurking in the building one after another. I made sure not to use any flashy magecraft that would've

otherwise ruined the element of surprise, and took them out as quickly and quietly as possible.

“Shit! What the hell’s with this brat?!”

“S-Stay away, you monster!”

I slipped by the storm of bullets they shot at me, and separated their heads from their shoulders. I was beginning to wonder if being in a peaceful era had prevented them from getting experience in battle. It seemed that humans weren’t the only ones who’d grown weaker.

“Eek! P-Please spare me!”

Partway through my assault on their base, I encountered a demon who threw away his weapon and raised his hands, trying to surrender. *Good grief. I’m worried for the future of demons if they have individuals like this, who plead for their lives like children.* It really did seem as if modern demons had fallen from their previous lofty statuses.

“Please, I’m begging you! I have a family back home! My daughter’s turning two this year! I can’t die here!” he said through tears, his hands still raised as he knelt on the ground.

Of course, I wasn’t going to listen to my enemy’s pleas. Showing mercy and letting them flee could come back to bite me if they tried to get revenge on me later. While I thought about this, something unexpected happened—I suddenly felt a presence behind me.

“Ka ha ha! Die, you fooooool!!!”

I turned around and saw an enormous, four-meter-long tail with a venomous stinger pointed at me. *I see. So this was his goal from the start.* The reason he’d knelt down was to draw my attention to him while he set up this surprise attack behind me.

“So stupid.”

This was such a stupid tactic. And I’d also been stupid to entertain him pleading for his life for even a second.

“Wha—”

When he saw his tail stopped by my bare hand, he fell into despair. As for me, I'd been careless. Because I'd only faced low-level demons up until now, I hadn't run into any problems. But if his strength had been on a similar level to mine, his attack would've spelled the end for me.

"Repent in the next life, wretch."

Now that I'd crushed his chance to counterattack, he could do naught else. I used Azure Eye magecraft to freeze him, starting from his tail all the way back to his body.

Now, it was said that human blood freezes at -18 °C. However, since humans are warm-blooded and produce body heat, that isn't cold enough to freeze the entire body. From experience, one needed to force cold air that was at least -200 °C or colder directly into the body in order to flash freeze it.

"Gah! Aghhhhhh!!!"

In an instant, the scorpion-type demon was frozen solid, and breathed his last. Though he was a demon, I felt that it had been way too easy to freeze him. Then again, there were no creatures in this world that could survive a temperature of -200 °C.

After finishing with this demon, I suddenly remembered a conversation I'd had with Lilith in the past.

You've changed, Master Abel.

I see. I'd had a feeling that there had been more to those words than I'd thought, but now I was finally beginning to understand what Lilith had meant. She was referring to the naivete growing within me. In that regard, maybe she was right. Maybe I *had* changed. I'd been too affected by this age of peace. It wasn't like me to lend an ear to the pleas of my enemies, even for a second.

"I guess I'll try getting a little serious."

Think back to those bloody days of two hundred years ago. When I drank sewage water just to survive. Killed innocent people to earn some change, just to make it one more day. Harmed those I loved, just to be free.

I could feel my body temperature dropping as these memories ran through

my mind. I focused myself to the peak of my abilities, ridding myself of useless thoughts. Now, my head was clear.

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To be honest, I had little to no recollection of what happened next. All that remained were faint memories of the pungent smell of vast quantities of blood, and the screams of those whose lives I took. It was a bad habit of mine, and had been even two hundred years ago, to be too focused during battle to retain clear memories of my actions.

Hm. It looks like I've reached the highest floor. That means there's a good chance that Navir is waiting for me here. I could tell that the security was much stronger here than on the lower floors. However, that meant nothing to me. It was still essentially child's play for me to get through their Maze-Circuit-like mechanisms. I stepped into the final room of the building.

In the next moment, the sight of a fluttering curtain met my eyes. "Ran for it, huh?"

At the window I saw spider's silk, which stretched to the building next door. Most likely, that was how he'd escaped. His intuition was good. He must've had some way of sensing that all his subordinates had been finished off one after another, and determined that he was no match for me.

"But you should've run away a little sooner."

There was still a faint warmth radiating from a nearby chair. He must not have fled until just before I'd reached the top floor.

"Body Fortification, Fortify Vision, Nightvision, Heat Detection."

I focused my magecraft into my eyes and scanned the nearby area. *Hm. It seems he's on the roof of a building about 500 meters away. He's using spider silk to cross from building to building. I have one shot at this.* Taking into account potential casualties, I couldn't use too large-scale of magecraft. And according to my Heat Detection, there weren't many unoccupied buildings. I'd have to attack him right as he landed on one of these empty ones.

"Gungnir!"

Having determined the right timing, I activated my magecraft. I had selected something from the Crimson Eyes repertoire, but composed it a little differently. I'd made it so that, in exchange for not having a large area of effect, it was extremely precise and fast. Any average demon wouldn't be able to dodge it or even sense it coming.

Then there was a whoosh and an explosion as the flame lance flew at an extraordinary speed, crashing into the top of the building. *Did that...do it? No, I was a little naive.* According to my Heat Detection, he was still breathing. *What a tough guy.* It seemed that right before my attack had landed, he'd covered himself with his spider silk in order to survive.

"At the very least, I hope he learns from this and behaves himself from now on."

Then again, considering the regenerative abilities of demons, that might not have been possible. As I looked down on the town bathed in moonlight, this thought crossed my mind. *Good grief. I wanted to clean things up before the training camp, but this was certainly unexpected.*

Chapter 6

Magic Railway

A few days after I visited Paracenos, I was about an hour away from the academy with Ted and Lilith as we made our way to the eastern district of the royal capital. *Hm, this is my first time being here.*

This wasn't a place that students like us were particularly familiar with. The eastern district had a marketplace that faced the harbor, as well as an industrial area. It was also on the complete opposite side from the western district, where we lived. *Hm. The atmosphere here's very different from that of the western district, especially with the smell of smoke and oil.*

"Whoa! So this is the Magic Railway?! It's so cool!"

In the distance, we could see the Magic Railway—a huge mass of steel. Ted was jumping up and down with excitement after having caught sight of it. *You know what, Ted? I'm with you today. I'm extremely interested in the Magic Railway as well.* I couldn't help but wonder if that huge mass of steel functioned as a single Regalia. I'd seen such things in books before, but this was my first time seeing one in person. I felt moved, almost.

"I'm glad you were able to join us for the camp," I said.

"Yeah, I'm sorry I made you worry! I'm gonna try harder to do more review before the next test!"

At Arthlia Academy of Magecraft, if you failed even one subject, you were given a monstrous amount of summer homework. If Ted was able to participate in our training camp, it must've meant that he'd done okay on the test—at least, relatively speaking.

"By the way, what'd you even bring with you, Ted?"

It'd been bothering me for a bit, so I finally decided to ask Ted about the huge bag he had slung over his back, which was packed to the point of bursting.

"Ha ha ha... Well... Just some fun stuff to look forward to when we get there,"

Ted replied, awkwardly looking away.

Well, this is Ted we're talking about. I doubt he's got anything useful in that bag.

"Now, Ted," Lilith scolded. "This trip isn't for pleasure, but for educational purposes. Don't go overboard and treat it like a vacation, okay?" As she stood next to Abel, Lilith flicked up her sunglasses and lectured Ted in a serious tone.

"I don't think you're really one to talk, Ms. Lilith..."

Lilith was wearing a straw hat and a dress which was open in the back. She was the spitting image of someone going on vacation.

"Whoa, look at her!"

"She's so beautiful! Is she from the central district?"

Workers covered in soot gazed at Lilith and excitedly commented on her appearance. *Hm.* Lilith's usual appearance already turned heads, but now that she was wearing even flashier clothes, there were nearly twice as many eyes on her. I sighed internally. *Why is our chaperone so quick to abandon her responsibilities?*

"Sorry for the wait, Abel!"

A while after, a familiar crimson-haired girl, Eliza, appeared at our meeting place in front of the ticket gate. She was wearing a thin summer dress and was pulling a rolling suitcase. Despite the fact that our trip hadn't even started yet, she seemed to be in high spirits. And lastly...

"I missed you, Abel."

The last person to show up was Noel. She'd arrived precisely on time. *Now that I think about it, this is the first time I'm seeing her outside the academy.* She was wearing a white shirt and a black skirt—incredibly simple attire. Most likely, this outfit minimized the amount of skin she had exposed, just like her usual outfit, because she was sensitive to sunlight.

Either way, now that all the members of the Olden Magecraft Research Society had arrived, we went to purchase our tickets and enter the station.

"Whoa, seeing it up close like this is *really* amazing!"

“Yeah, seriously...”

Getting up close and personal with the Magic Railway was indeed interesting. *Do people really get inside this mass of steel and travel to different places in it?*

Up until now, horse-drawn carriages were how most people got around. Comparing the number of people a carriage could fit—about four to five at a time—with all the people that could ride this train at once really made it clear how impressive this technology was.

“Whoa! That train is moving!”

It appeared that we’d arrived right as the train on the opposite platform was beginning to depart. It let out a loud whistling as it began to move.

“That’s amazing! How does it move?!” Ted asked.

I got the feeling that even if I explained the process to him, he wouldn’t understand, so I decided not to. Simply put, though, the train had a large kettle. The steam that built up in the kettle moved the lid of a pot. The power this generated moved a piston, which in turn moved the wheels. That’s essentially how it worked. The source of power for all of this was fire and water magecraft. The mechanism was very simple, but that’s precisely what made it so revolutionary. At the very least, it felt like an idea that anyone could’ve come up with even back in my day, but wouldn’t have been possible to actually implement back then.

“Isn’t it amazing what humans come up with?” Lilith said to me.

“Yeah, this invention may change the world one day.”

Most likely, innovations in transportation would accelerate advancements in the level of civilization. Right now, the cost of operating the train was high, and it could only go to predetermined locations—that is to say, places to which rails had been built to. This meant that railways couldn’t be used everywhere, but it was only a matter of time before the technology spread across the globe. If it became possible to operate it at a lower cost, this new form of transportation would help support people’s livelihoods.

“It looks like we can board now!”

As I was lost in thought, the doors of the stationary train we'd been standing in front of opened. Though there was still time before it was scheduled to leave, it seemed that they gave passengers time to board at their leisure.

"Master, come on! We're gonna be late!"

Good grief. There's still over ten minutes until departure. You're making such a big deal about nothing. Ted rushed me onto the train, and this was how the Olden Magecraft Research Society's training camp began—that is, boisterously.

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After much trouble, we were all finally on the train and enjoying our first trip together. The train seemed to use a mixture of water and wind magecraft to keep the temperature comfortable, making the interior very pleasant. This was how we were seated:

Window	Window
Lilith	Me
Aisle	
Eliza	
Noel	Ted
Window	Window

It seemed that five was a very inconvenient number of people to have in a group when riding the train. I got the feeling that children were supposed to be seated on the right while adults sat on the left side. Then again, Lilith had been the one to reserve our seats, so maybe she'd made the seating plan according to her whims.

"Master Abel, I've baked some sweets in preparation for today. Would you like any?"

"Sure. I'll take one."

At Lilith's suggestion, I picked out a baked treat from the prettily wrapped bag. *Hm. Judging from how it's baked, I can tell that it's not store-bought.* She must've woken up early to have made these. Not mentioning any of the difficulty she'd gone through to do something for me was very like her. She really was a very diligent woman.

"Is it to your liking? I've also made some herbal tea. With this magic thermos, I'm able to keep it cool even while out on a trip."

"A cup of tea might not be bad."

The flavor of this herbal tea is a little different from what I'm used to drinking. She'd most likely made it to specifically go with the sweets she baked. The powdery texture of the sweets went perfectly with the cool, refreshing taste of the tea.

"You're very thorough."

"Thank you for the compliment."

Though I'd meant that in a sarcastic way, she brushed it off with a cutesy smile.

Then, as we were having this rather unique exchange, I noticed two pairs of eyes viewing us with suspicion. Eliza and Noel, who were seated beside each other on the other side of the aisle, diagonally across from me, were obviously very confused about something.

"This is...strange," Eliza murmured.

"There is definitely something amiss," Noel replied. "They do not seem like

siblings...”

Now that they mention it, that’s true. There was no world where a blood-related older sister would refer to her little brother as “Master.” Lilith was the one who’d come up with the whole “siblings” story in the first place, so it was a little vexing that she didn’t seem to be putting in much effort into maintaining the act.

She giggled. “Master Abel and I are bona fide blood-related siblings. Isn’t that right, Master Abel?” She flashed a devilish smile, then squished her body against my arm, very obviously trying to flaunt her proximity to me.

“Yeah... That’s right.”

I was in a fairly difficult situation—I didn’t really have any other option but to agree with her. However, the way I hesitated only seemed to make Eliza and Noel more suspicious.

“Hey, acorn-head, you’re Abel’s childhood friend, right? You know anything about the two of them?”

“Hm?”

Realizing that it’d be impossible to get the truth out of the two of us, Eliza and Noel’s gazes flew towards Ted, who was sitting by the window enjoying a lunch box. *Oh, right. I forgot that he was the only one who bought a so-called mysterious “railway bento” before boarding.* He’d gotten one despite the fact that we’d had a meal prior to boarding the train. *His gluttony knows no bounds.*

“Oh yeah, the two of them are bona fide brother and sister. I guarantee it, as the person who’s been with them since I was a kid!”

I sighed with relief. It’d be hard for anyone to dispute the words of someone who’d known us from childhood. *It’s really great how dense Ted is.*

“Well... I guess if this is straight from acorn-head’s mouth, then...”

“I still don’t accept this...”

Eliza and Noel didn’t seem satisfied with his answer, and still appeared very doubtful. However, it seemed that the issue had been put to bed...at least, for now.

“Anyway, more importantly, Ms. Lilith, are there any cookies for me?!” Ted asked excitedly.

“Heh heh heh. Nope.”

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I wasn’t exactly sure how much time passed after that, but after going through a long tunnel, the smell of the air changed.

“Wow, I can see the ocean!”

I glanced out the window at Eliza’s words. There, I saw an emerald green ocean, stretching out as far as the eye could see. *Hm. Now that I think about it, this might be the first time I’m seeing an actual ocean since I reincarnated.* There was a harbor in the royal capital, but it was very dirty as the flow of water from the inlet was very poor. This dirty water was the trade-off for having more efficient technology. I’d heard that pollution of nearby bodies of water had become a societal problem, and that neither swimming nor fishing were even allowed in nearby oceans.

“Wow! It’s sparkling like jewels...”

“So pretty...”

“Whoa!!! Holy crap! I’m so touched!”

Most likely, the others were in the same boat as me—they’d never seen such clear waters in the ocean. With this beautiful scenery in front of them, Eliza, Noel, and Ted all couldn’t contain their reactions.

“Hey... Get off of me. You’re all heavy.”

If there was one thing I wasn’t exactly happy about, it was that my seat had become very cramped due to the three of them having rushed over to my side of the train. Each of them crowded around the window, shoving me and putting me in a disastrous situation. *Good grief. If this is how excited they are right now, I fear for what’ll happen when we actually arrive.*

Chapter 7

The Island of Heroes

The smell of salt water that came through the window was very comforting. Though it'd been a little under three hours since we'd gotten on the train, the last ten minutes or so allowed us a good view of the ocean. But this was the last leg of the trip—we could already see the station we'd be getting off at.

"Once we cross this bridge, we'll reach our destination for the training camp, Centaurea Island," Noel explained.

Hm. Centaurea Island? Though this is my first time hearing the name, it sounds familiar somehow. In fact, the landscape and the location itself greatly resembled a certain island that I'd visited in the past.

"This island was once visited by the Great Four. It's the most suitable location for our training camp."

I see. So that's how it is. Suddenly, I remembered what the Hero of Wind, Roy, had said to me before expelling me from the party.

I don't want you to think we're just tossing you out to fend for yourself, though. If you head west from here, there's an island. Remember? The same one where we took down that kraken. Demons don't go anywhere near it these days. We had villas constructed there.

The reason the landscape seemed so familiar was because it was the same island where me and the rest of the party had helped to take down the kraken. How ironic. Who would've thought that, two hundred years in the future, I'd be vacationing at the very same place Roy had built retirement villas?

"This island's changed a lot since I was here two hundred years ago..."

After crossing a huge bridge, we could finally see the entire island. The first thing that came into view was the sand, white as seashells, and then the clear water. It seemed that there were a good number of people in swimsuits enjoying the beach.

“Look, Master! There are so many yummy-looking places to eat!”

I looked through the window on Ted’s side and saw a lot of miscellaneous buildings around the island. *Uh...what* is *that?* I wondered as I spotted various signs advertising strange dishes, like “Hero Soba” and “Hero Ramen.”

“Ever since you and the rest of the hero party visited, this island has been called the ‘Island of Heroes.’ It’s apparently become a common tourist spot.”

I had no words. *Really?* We’d only come here to test out the synergy of our party right after it’d been formed. None of us had intended for it to become a tourist destination. The future was seriously unpredictable. Who could’ve imagined that our achievements in battle would later be used as a tool to generate revenue?

“Last stop: Centaurea Island. Centaurea Island. Please make sure to collect your belongings before exiting the train,” said the announcer.

As the doors on the right side of the train opened, the sound of summer bugs chirping and a gust of hot air met us.

“The inn isn’t too far from here. Let’s check in first,” Lilith said.

We followed her off the train onto the platform. The train had been pretty packed when we’d boarded, but now that we’d reached the last station, fewer than half of the passengers remained. In general, there weren’t many people on the platform—it felt very empty.

After giving our tickets to the station attendee, we exited the station and went down the stairs.

“Ugh. What is *that*?” As we exited, I spotted some nostalgic faces that I hadn’t seen in two hundred years, and couldn’t help letting out these bitter words.

“Oh, that would be Centaurea island’s famous attraction—the statues of the heroes,” said Lilith. “From right to left, we have the Hero of Fire, Maria; the Hero of Water, Diana; the Hero of Wind, Roy; and the Hero of Healing, Cain.”

I shouldn’t have been too surprised by this, but naturally, although I’d helped to fell the demon king, there was no statue of me. A person like me with sinister eyes—so-called “demon’s eyes”—had not made the history books.

“Hm?” Ted tilted his head, noticing something. “Doesn’t this Hero of Fire kinda look like Eliza?”

The fact that he’d noticed this was perhaps a sign that he’d gotten a little smarter.

“Huh? Didn’t I mention? I’m her descendant.”

“Whaaaat?! R-Really?!”

Though this was a shocking revelation for Ted, this was old news to me, so I didn’t exactly share his surprise.

“W-Wait, does that mean that the statue over here is...?” Ted looked from the statue of the Hero of Fire to the statue of the Hero of Water, whose body was slightly smaller.

“Yes. I’m a descendant of the Hero of Water, Daytona,” Noel confirmed.

“Whaaaat?! I-I can’t believe it!”

Ted looked like he was practically ready to keel over after being struck by this second huge revelation. *I understand. I really do, Ted. Out of the four members of the Olden Magecraft Research Society, two of them are descended from the legendary heroes. Seriously, what are the odds?* It wasn’t like someone had planned this. It’d been pure coincidence that the descendants of the heroes were attending the same school. Even I found it slightly surprising.

“M-Master, do you think I have any secret, special ancestors?!”

“No, I think you’re perfectly ordinary.”

“Aw, come on!”

If anything, why would you think that you were *descended from someone famous?* Then again, if there was anything special about him, it’d have to be that for most of his life, he’d been learning magecraft from one of the people who’d taken out the demon king. If Ted came to know that, though, he was guaranteed to get a big head, so I decided to keep that fact to myself.

◇

It was now the afternoon, and the summer humidity was sticking to our skin.

After arriving at Centaurea Island without incident, we headed towards the inn, which was a little far from the station.

“Oh god, how many more of these stone steps are there?!”

Though Ted had above-average stamina, the mysterious, cumbersome bag that he’d brought seemed to be sapping him of his strength. This made sense, since it was almost as big as his body. I could tell how exhausted he was by how much he was sweating.

But finally, we arrived at the inn, which was indicated by an old-looking sign.

Hot Spring Inn: Amano Hakodate

“We’re here. This is where we will be staying,” Lilith said, guiding us to the door.

A charming middle-aged woman waited to welcome us at the entrance. *Hm. This inn is pretty nice. Though the exterior looks like it’s seen better years, the inside is incredibly clean and tidy.* Maybe I shouldn’t have been so surprised. After all, this was Lilith we were talking about—it was a given that she’d done her homework.

“Here are your keys,” Lilith said, passing them out. “When you’re all ready, let’s go to the beach.”

After getting my key from Lilith, I went to room 201. For the record, this was how we were split up.

201: Me and Ted

202: Lilith

203: Eliza and Noel

Essentially, there was a guys’ room, a girls’ room, and a room for our teacher. The fact that she’d arranged the rooms in this manner made me feel that Lilith had at least used common sense when planning everything.

“Phew! That was so heavy!” Ted said, dropping his bag as soon as we entered

the room.

Then he immediately went to turn on the air-conditioning, which was apparently done with a Regalia shaped like a switch.

“So, what’s in the bag, Ted?”

I’d been curious about its contents for a while. At first, I thought he’d brought something useful for relaxing in the inn, but that didn’t seem accurate. He wouldn’t have just thrown the bag onto the ground if that’d been the case. Ted had also been the most fired up out of all of us for this training camp, so it didn’t seem likely he’d be so careless with things that he’d brought to relax with.

“Well, truth be told...” Ted let out a deep sigh, then dumped the contents of his bag onto the bed. A number of familiar textbooks and reference materials spilled out.

“Ted, don’t tell me...”

“I put up the good fight, but reality is harsh!” he cried, pounding the bed with his fist out of frustration.

I see. So that’s what’s going on. Though Ted had been able to avoid failing overall, it didn’t mean that he’d avoided failing every subject. Most likely, he’d still failed one or two of them.

“So now, I’m gonna throw myself into finishing these assignments!”

If you’re trying to do that, I think you would’ve been better off staying at the academy. But the fact that he’d brought them all the way here showed just how badly he’d wanted to come on this trip.

“Don’t worry about me, Master. Go on and enjoy the beach without me!”

“Yeah, I’ll do that. Sorry.”

Good grief. I’d wanted to relax a bit in the room, but I couldn’t rest with Ted working next to me. So with that, I decided to go out to the beach for a nice change of pace.

“Rrrrgh! Yaaaaah!”

It must've been pretty rough on Ted to be left behind to do homework while everyone else went to the beach. As I left the inn, I felt like I could still hear his battle cries as he fought his assignments.

◇◇◇

A little before Abel and the others arrived at Centaurea Island, there was trouble brewing in the AMO hideout in the Sleepless City of Paracenos. In a dim room, a man was looking at a monitor screen. He was Navir—a greater demon who commanded many subordinates as the branch leader of AMO. He was currently recovering from burns he'd suffered thanks to Abel's Gungnir magecraft.

"Dammit... It aches! I *will* have my vengeance on that boy for making a fool of me!" He glared intently at the figure of a boy who was depicted on the screen.

He didn't know what the boy's face looked like because he'd been wearing a mask, but judging from his height and bone structure, Navir could guess that he was at least in his teens. Other than that, though, the boy remained shrouded in mystery.

Still, I'm surprised. I didn't expect there to be a talented mage in this era who could actually outmaneuver me. Navir played the video on loop. The boy had used three elements—fire, water, and wind—all without a Regalia.

This surprised Navir even more. It made complete sense that his lesser demon subordinates hadn't been a match for this boy whatsoever. The speed of his magecraft composition, and his precision, strength, and maneuverability left absolutely no openings to exploit.

"Master Navir, do you have a minute?"

One of his subordinates had knocked on the door.

"Enter."

"Yes, sir. I've brought the documents you requested."

This was someone who'd been hired as a temporary professor at Arthlia Academy of Magecraft. The AMO values of anti-magecraft had spread across the country, which meant the organization had gained many collaborators, both

inside and outside the academy.

“It’s the personal data of the professors at the academy. I hope that the person you’re looking for is here.”

The documents that the man had brought included pictures of the faces of the teachers, their hometowns, their work histories, their family structures, and so on. By using a certain Regalia, Navir was able to display the contents of the documents on the monitor.

Navir was confused as to why Barth, someone he’d made his familiar, had lost all of his memories. He wondered if there was something he was unaware of happening at the academy. The incident had made him incredibly suspicious.

Hm. Nobody noteworthy here. There’s no way that any one of these fools could outmaneuver me...

After going through the data of the professors, Navir let out a heavy sigh. All of them were subscribers to the idea of modern magecraft. There was absolutely no way any of them could be a match for demons.

If anyone, I guess this guy might put up a challenge... Navir thought, as he looked over Emerson’s data. Still, though, he wasn’t convinced. Emerson may have been comparatively better than the modern mage, but he was still not anywhere near being a threat. When he got to the final slide, however, Navir’s eyes widened, as he spotted someone he wasn’t expecting to see.

“Hm? Why’s there a student in here?”

Strangely, the data for a student named Abel was mixed in with the professors’ data.

“Allow me to explain, sir. This student has recently become a big topic of discussion around the academy. I thought that there might be a possibility that he may be the person you were looking for, so I included him.”

Internally, Navir agreed. And he was intrigued by Abel’s data. During the entrance exam, Abel had achieved an unprecedented rating of “incalculable.” On the finals, he had a thousand times more points than the person who’d scored second in their grade. However, the thing that caught Navir’s attention the most was the fact that the boy had Amber Eyes.

Well then... It seems that this young boy is quite the talented individual.

After living for over three hundred years, Navir had become very adept at telling how skilled others were just by looking at them. But he couldn't fathom the depths of this Abel boy's strength. Intrigued, he continued to pore through the profile that his subordinate had put together.

Hm? Wait. I feel like I've seen him before...

Navir began an analysis, comparing the data from the security cameras to Abel's profile.

99% Match.

The results came faster than he expected. Navir raised his burnt face and let out a sound of joy as he looked at the numbers on the monitor.

"Heh... Heh heh... I've found you! So it was you?! *You're* the one who wounded me!"

Now that he knew the face of his enemy, he had no choice but to take action. Though he had discovered Abel's identity by pure coincidence, an audacious smile crept across Navir's face.



Chapter 8

A Hidden Gem

The sea breeze is extremely nice. After meeting up with the other members of the Olden Magecraft Research Society, we went to a beach, which was some distance away from the inn. *Hm. This beach is really nice.*

As far as I could tell, we were the only tourists around. That most likely had to do with the fact that the beach near the station was far more popular as a destination for swimming.

The water here was deep, making it not too suitable for that. As a result, we essentially had the beach all to ourselves.

Changing subjects, though, Lilith had practically forced me to bring a swimsuit and put it on. Now, I was under a parasol on the beach, waiting for the girls to finish changing. *Good grief. I really don't understand why she made such a big fuss about me wearing a swimsuit.* With magecraft, I could reduce my water resistance, and also dry my clothes easily. There shouldn't have been any need for me to go through all the trouble of changing.

"Abel!" a serene voice rang out.

I looked over and saw Noel, having finished changing, running towards me. She had on a modest swimsuit that gave off an elegant feeling.

"What do you think?" she asked. "I bought a new swimsuit just for today." She spun around to give me a look.

"Yeah, not bad. I think it suits you."

From what I knew, Noel had extremely sensitive skin. Fortunately, today was cloudy, so she'd probably be okay to swim, but not for too long since she had to watch her sun exposure. A one-piece swimsuit like hers, which shaded the majority of her body from sunlight, was an obvious choice.

"Sorry for the wait, Abel."

Next to appear was Eliza. She seemed to have gone in the opposite direction from Noel—she was wearing a red bikini, as though her goal was to put more skin on display. The word that came to mind was “big,” although I wasn’t so uncouth as to specify what exactly gave me that impression.

“What do you think? I bought a new swimsuit just for today.”

“Yeah, it looks good. I think it suits you.”

Personally, I feel like you should have bought a swimsuit more suitable for your age, but I have no right to comment on the choices of others. Since Eliza was rather well developed for her age, she was able to don a more revealing swimsuit and look beautiful while doing it.

“Apologies for the wait, Master Abel.”

The last person to show up was our supposed chaperone, Lilith. She was wearing a...I hesitate to even describe it, but essentially it was a very indecent, black swimsuit.

“Professor Lilith...should you really be wearing that kind of swimsuit in front of a boy?”

“That is the apex of obscene...”

Eliza and Noel commented on her swimsuit one after the other, their faces stiff. For once, they were in complete agreement. It was incredibly fortunate that we were the only ones on this beach. If anyone else had been around, Lilith might have been reported for indecent exposure. That was how obscene the design of her swimsuit was. Then again, maybe the reason Lilith had chosen an inn not too close to the station was for this exact purpose—so that we’d be away from other people. I felt very suspicious.

“Heh heh, there’s no problem at all. After all, Master Abel and I are siblings by blood,” Lilith said, flashing a teasing smile while squishing herself against my arm.

She really just does whatever she wants. It was typically a professor’s job to set a moral example for their students, so it felt incredibly backwards that our chaperone was the one to be acting in this way.

“Urgh!”

“That is the apex of deplorable behavior.”

Maybe it was my imagination, but as Lilith hugged my arm, Eliza and Noel seemed to be puffing their cheeks out, looking quite displeased.

◇

“C’mon, Abel, let’s take a dip!”

“This way, Abel!”

A few minutes later, I was pulled towards the ocean by Eliza and Noel, their eyes sparkling. *Good grief. These two are hopeless.* I could tell how eager the two of them were to get into the water.

“Well then, Master Abel, I’ll wait here. Please let me know if you need anything.”

I had no words. *Really? Your plan from the start was to push the babysitting job on me, wasn’t it?* I watched as Lilith relaxed underneath the parasol and leisurely began reading. *I guess I don’t have a choice.* Since I’d gone through the trouble of changing into a swimsuit, it’d be unnatural for me not to go into the water. Noel and Eliza were also inviting me over, so I decided to give it a shot. *As expected, it’s cold.* In contrast to the warm sands of the beach that soaked up the heat, the early-summer water was nice and cool.

“Huh? It’s colder than I thought,” said Noel, sounding surprised as she entered the water.

“It’s because the temperature of seawater changes slower than that of the earth. It’s always like this at the beginning of summer.”

“Oh, I see...”

From the look of things, this was probably Noel’s first time in the ocean. It would probably come as a surprise that the water was warmest around the end of summer, when the air temperature began to drop.

Noel, brimming with curiosity, looked into the water. “Is there...something down there?” In the next moment, she dove in, her butt poking out of the water as she did.

“H-Hey, what are you doing?!”

Despite the way Eliza freaked out, Noel unreservedly searched around on the ocean floor.

Then she came back up. “Got it.” She was now holding a certain creature with a unique shape. “Abel, what’s this?”

“It’s a red sea cucumber—a species of sea cucumber that feeds on seagrass. Red sea cucumbers typically get their color from their microhabitat, but they’re not too different from other sea cucumbers. They look pretty gross, but there are areas where they’re coveted as delicacies.”

Then again, the only people who really saw them that way were those who worked in the fishing industry. Plus, cooking them took a lot of effort and skill.

“Here you go, Eliza.” After examining the sea cucumber, Noel threw it at Eliza.

“Eeeeeeeek!” Eliza screamed as the slimy sea cucumber fell into her cleavage. *Hm. Really never a dull moment with these two.*



“Abel, could you please teach me about sea creatures?” Noel asked, practically wagging her imaginary tail.

I guess I don’t have a choice. I had learned to just go with it whenever Noel got like this. *I’ll play a little longer with you in the ocean.* Fortunately, it seemed that sea creatures hadn’t changed too much from two hundred years ago.

I’d learned quite a bit about such creatures from Daytona, Noel’s ancestor. It felt kinda strange passing on the knowledge that I’d received from Daytona to her descendant.

“Okay,” I agreed. “Then stand over there and watch.”

I dove into the ocean and saw all kinds of colorful fish leisurely swimming around. *Wow, this is deep. No wonder no tourists come here to swim.* Though it was a great spot for people who wanted to look around at the bottom of the sea, it was too risky for kids since they’d lack the stamina to safely participate.

Now then. When going after fish while underwater, it was hard to get the results you wanted if you just haphazardly dove in. It was important to aim for the rock formations in which larger fish would hide. After locating a suitable target, I activated my magecraft.

Ice Needles.

I used a basic Azure Eye magecraft and fired blades of ice into the rock formations, hitting a large fish, which, having been slain, floated to the surface. *Well, that’s the gist of it.* Snagging it, I brought it back to Noel.

“Wow! What kind of fish is that?!” she asked excitedly.

“An oplegnathus fasciatu,” I explained. “The bigger ones have black stripes. They’re also called ‘striped beakfish’ because of the shape of their mouth and the stripes across their body. Out of all the fish on the coast, they’re probably one of the most expensive.”

“Wow, that’s so amazing!”

“I had no clue that such a big fish was so close by.”

Both Noel and Eliza were extremely interested in the fish I’d brought back.

“Abel! Teach me how to catch fish!”

“Me too! Me too! I wanna catch a fish too!”

Good grief. I only intended to indulge them a little, but now it’s become a whole thing. Then again, the ocean was a perfect spot for training one’s magecraft. I’d been worried about Noel and Eliza’s growth as mages, since they lacked experience in the practical applications of magecraft. Gifted as they may have been, gaining experience by hunting in the ocean might prove beneficial.

◇

After enjoying the ocean for a bit, we ended up hunting fish. We dove into the water, found targets, then used magecraft to try and hunt them. Though this seemed relatively simple, it was difficult for people who weren’t already used to it to pick up.

“This is...a lot harder than I thought it would be.”

“Urgh! Come on! I was so close!”

Good grief. At first, I’d thought this was just a way for us to have some fun in the ocean, but it was starting to feel like an actual training exercise for them. Plus, they were using olden magecraft, meaning that they had to be conscious of their mental state when composing their magecraft. If they could remain steady and compose magecraft in an environment where they couldn’t even breathe, they’d have no problems during it in combat situations.

“Yes! I got one!”

About thirty minutes after we started, Noel finally caught a fish. She looked extremely proud as she showed me its body, skewered by the ice lance that she’d created.

“What kind of fish is this, Abel?!”

“A pteragogus aurigarius—a type of wrasse. They’re not used in any kinds of dishes, and they’re not worth anything at the market. You don’t have to catch any more of them.”

Noel fell silent. *Hm? Am I imagining things, or does she seem slightly dejected? All I did was tell her the unfiltered truth, though.* The fish wasn’t

edible, had a very unnerving appearance, and was looked down on even when compared to other wrasses.

“Heh heh. What a perfectly weird fish for you, Noel,” Eliza said smugly.

“Be quiet,” Noel snapped. “You haven’t even caught a single one yet!”

Oh? It looks like there’s a school of fish passing by not too far away. This could be the perfect chance to show them how it’s done while also catching some fish for dinner. I dove into the water, focused on my target, and constructed my magecraft.

Freezing Box!

I used an Azure Eye magecraft to trap the target in a box of ice. This allowed me to catch an entire group of fish all at once. *Hm. It looks like I accidentally caught a big fish that’d been pursuing the other fish.* The only thing left now was to use Obsidian Eye magecraft to make the box weightless.

There was a huge splash and water sprayed everywhere as the box I’d created rose out of the water. *Looks like I ended up catching more than I expected.* Inside the box, I could see mackerel, sardines, and other kinds of migratory fish. I’d even caught a flounder, which had no doubt been going after the other fish.

“What?!”

Both Noel and Eliza were stunned by the scene before them.

“Well, yeah, so that’s the basic idea,” I said, nonchalantly. “Pretty much anyone can do this once they get the hang of it.”

Well, not everyone, *technically...* Though I’d be disappointed if Eliza and Noel weren’t eventually able to perform this kind of magecraft with ease. After all, they were the descendants of my old party members.

“Abel...you’re too amazing,” said Noel.

“Nuh-uh,” Eliza piped up. “*You’re* the only one who can pull this off!”

Before I knew it, the first day of the Olden Magecraft Research Society’s training camp—which was spent on magecraft training—came to an end.

◇

The ocean sparkled orange from the setting sun. Evening had fallen in the blink of an eye. *Hm. I have to say...I may have gone a little overboard with the amount of fish I caught.* After a while, both Noel and Eliza had gotten a hang of fishing and had shown some real results.

“Heh heh. What a great haul!” Eliza cried. “I feel so good, especially since I caught more than Noel!”

“Quality is more important than quantity. You caught a bunch of small fry that won’t even sell,” Noel replied primly.

“Urgh! Th-That’s fine! The person who catches more is usually the winner!”

Both of them hated losing, but either way, even after their little competition had ended, they’d continued having a petty argument with each other. The important thing now was figuring out what we were going to do with all the fish we caught.

Currently, I was using Obsidian Eye magecraft to compress and shrink the box, whose contents would remain preserved since they were encased in a box of ice, but I couldn’t leave them like that forever. If we went to the harbor, we could probably find someone to buy them off of us, but that felt like it’d be kind of a pain.

“Master Abel, it appears that our inn has a bring-your-own fish policy. Perhaps we should take advantage of that?” Lilith suggested, as she put away the parasol.

She must’ve sensed what was on my mind. *I see. That’d save us a lot of trouble.*

“I’m all for that,” Eliza said. “I’m starving!”

“Can we...eat them?” Noel asked.

It seemed that both Eliza and Noel were very receptive to the idea of eating what we’d caught, so there wasn’t really any reason to say no. With that, we changed back into our street clothes and walked back to the inn, slightly exhausted.

◇

After that, we decided that it'd be faster to talk things over with the staff first. So, taking Lilith's advice, I went to the inn's kitchen.

"Excuse me, I'd like to request some fish be cooked."

I passed through the curtains and into the kitchen, and called out to whoever was working in the back.

"Oh? You brought your own fish? That's rare."

After a few seconds, a bald chef in his late forties appeared. *He must've been in the back working on dinner for the guests.* He had on a white apron that had definitely seen many years of use. His gaze became curious as it landed on me, and he tried to size me up.

"I'm glad to see a kid your age so active and catchin' fish. So how many fish we talkin' here?"

Good grief. Judging by his reaction, I can only imagine he's only expecting me to have caught one or two. He's really looking down on me. I dispelled my Material Compression magecraft and returned the box of ice that'd been in my pocket to its original size.

"Wh-What the hell?!" The chef fell on his butt in surprise. "Is this...magecraft?! I can't believe it. I've never seen anyone preserve food like that before!"

Hm. Now that I think about it, both Noel and Eliza had reacted in the same way when I used this magecraft in front of them. Was it possible that Material Compression was no longer common, thanks to how far magecraft had fallen over the past two hundred years?

"I can't believe this... They're all still incredibly fresh! You can't even get this quality at the market!"

It seemed he at least knew his stuff. Most of the fish in here had been encased in ice by magecraft while still alive. They were much fresher than what you could find at markets. Fishermen, who weren't adept at magecraft, couldn't pull off a feat like this.

"We definitely can't eat all of them, so it'd be really helpful if you could take

whatever we don't," I said.

"You serious?! I'd love to!"

It seemed that negotiations had gone successfully. Not only had we been able to train our magecraft, but we'd been able to catch dinner, then offer the blessings of the sea to the inn for free. Everyone won in this situation.

◇

After that, we had a very luxurious meal, completely unlike the meals we were used to in the academy cafeteria. There was mackerel, sardine, scorpionfish, dark-banded rockfish, redfish, striped beakfish, largescale blackfish, chicken grunt, thread-sail filefish, amberjack, olive flounder, and more.

There were over ten different types of fish, all served in different ways—from thinly sliced to deep-fried.

"Wow, it looks so yummy!" said Eliza.

"How lavish!" Noel chimed in.

Good grief. I know I'm the one who handed over all the fish to be prepared, but isn't this too *much?* By my most conservative estimate, this could easily feed at least ten people. The five of us were going to struggle to finish it all. But that worry dissipated as soon as the food was served. It seemed that I'd had no reason to fret at all.

"Yessss!" Ted cried. "It's so good! So delicious!"



Perhaps it was because he'd used his head today for the first time in a while, but Ted seemed to be starving. As he scarfed down dish after dish next to me, I could only imagine his stomach as a bottomless pit.

"I gotta say, it was nice having the room to myself. I really feel like I made progress with my studies, whether I wanted to or not!" Ted said, through a pained smile.

Don't worry about it, Ted. I know it must've been tough staying behind to do your assignments while everyone else was having fun. I can only hope that this motivates you to work harder on the next test, so you won't fail again.

Chapter 9

A Moonlit Night

In the distance, if I listened closely, I could hear the critters of the evening chirping softly. The chirping had a distinct ring to it, which was unique to sickle-bearing bush-crickets. This bug was extremely noticeable in the evenings. Once night fell, the males of the species would gather and begin competing with their song.

Either way, we'd finished dinner, so all that was left was to bathe and sleep. Ted persistently invited me to join him in the outdoor bath, but I turned him down because I wasn't too interested. Unfortunately, I had other matters to attend to. If all I wanted was to wash off the dirt and grime I'd accumulated throughout the day, the shower in the room sufficed.

"Master, let's play Old Maid! I brought a deck of cards *just* for today!"

"No."

"Let's have a pillow fight! It's a field trip staple! I bet it'll be fun!"

"No."

What reason did I have to keep Ted company this late at night, anyway?

"Urk! Then, what should we do?! I wanna do something that people do on trips!"

I fell silent as I looked at Ted, whose eyes had become moist. *Good grief. He's most likely all hyper because he was stuck in this room all day.* Realizing that I didn't have much of a choice, I decided to join him in a pillow fight after all.

"Okay, here I go! Take this!" Ted yelled as he energetically flung a pillow at me. I dodged easily, not taking my eyes off my book. "I expected nothing less from you, Master! But I'm not gonna let up!"

Ted continued to throw pillow after pillow at me. *Hm. I have absolutely no clue what's so fun about this, but I guess it makes for somewhat decent exercise.*

Ted was already naturally physically fit, so his onslaught didn't slow down.

"Master, you should try throwing one back at me!"

Oh, it's okay for me to do that? Then again, if Ted said it was okay, then I might as well take him up on his offer.

"Imbuement Magecraft: Reflect Attack, Object Enlargement."

"Huh?"

As soon as I activated my magecraft, the pillow that Ted had thrown at me grew in size and was flung back right at him.

"Wh-What is that?!"

Even though Ted had great physical capabilities, this meant nothing if he had nowhere to run. The huge pillow collided with Ted, knocking him to the floor, and the force of the blow sent him rolling across the ground.

"Aghh! Uncle!"

Am I imagining things, or does Ted look kinda happy?

◇

Time flew as I played with Ted, and before I knew it, it was already late at night.

"Gahh... Mmgahh..."

As usual, Ted's snores are incredibly loud. Despite being on vacation, I couldn't relax at all. What a waste. Usually I'd use Noise Cancellation magecraft, but unfortunately, I had other things to do. It'd taken a while, but it seemed that the enemy had finally fallen into our trap.

I could tell by using Mana Search, which allowed me to sense the presence of creatures by detecting the faint mana signatures emitted from their bodies. Some time after we'd arrived at the island, I'd sensed something—a slightly concerning presence—but I couldn't pinpoint the exact location.

It was fortunate that I hadn't slacked off on using Mana Search while playing with Ted. *Good grief. What a rude demon, waiting until the dead of night before making a move.* After sensing the presence of the enemy sneaking around, I

surveyed the surrounding area once again before leaving the room.

◇

Exiting the room, I went onto the outdoor terrace on the inn's roof. Now that the enemy was making their move, I needed to make mine as well. *Hm. Looks like there's someone out here who responded to the enemy's movements sooner than I did.*

"Lilith, what are you doing out here?"

"Oh, Master Abel..."

Bathed in moonlight, Lilith looked very refined as she gazed at the night scenery. She'd most likely taken a bath before coming out here, because her hair seemed slightly damp, and her cheeks were a little flushed. She was even more alluring than usual.

"The moon is very beautiful this evening, so I wished to enjoy it and the night air."

Sheesh. Lying comes so easily to her.

"You've changed."

"So have you, Master Abel."

"What is it that has made you want to stand guard over human children?"

Just as the standpoints of humans and demons were different, so were their thought processes. Lilith was the daughter of the demon king, who had been killed by humans. Putting her own body on the line to defend human children might affect her standing in demon society.

"Heh heh heh. I'm simply fulfilling my duty as a professor, and ensuring the safety of my students."

I see. So she's trying to insist that she's merely prioritizing her job as an educator. It's a very on-brand excuse for her.

Still, though, I didn't want her to lose even more standing with her brethren just because she got involved with this stupid fight of mine.

"Leave the rest to me. You should take it easy in your room."

“Are you...sure you’ll be okay by yourself?” She sounded worried.

I understood her concern, since my opponent was on a completely different level from the other modern demons I’d faced thus far. From what I could tell, it seemed that demons had spent the last two hundred years gaining new knowledge and technology. My battle with him might turn out to be quite dangerous.

“I’ll be okay. It’ll be my first time in a while fighting a greater demon, but I think he’ll be a perfect opponent to limit-test my body.”

With these words, I jumped from the terrace into the dark forest ahead of me. The tree leaves sounded restless as they rustled in the night breeze.

◇

As I leapt through the darkness, moving between trees, it became obvious that the miasma around me was getting thicker. *I see. So the enemy chose to create an advantageous environment for them in this forest?* Through the gaps of the trees, moonlight flickered in, illuminating the sight of a familiar man, waiting for me.

“You’re a curious one,” he called out, as I came to a stop. “You might be the first person to willingly walk right into my nest.” Though he spoke calmly, I could tell that his words carried murderous intent. Holding his burnt face, Navir smiled at me. “I’d been trying to come up with ideas to lure you into my web, but you’ve saved me the trouble.”

Yeah, I came right to you to stop you from doing anything unnecessary. If I left him to his own devices, he might put the other members of the Olden Magecraft Research Society in danger. It was risky just waltzing into the enemy’s lair like this, but on the other hand, jumping into the enemy’s web and taking him out was the fastest way to resolve things.

“What happened to your face? You should really be careful when you play with fire, or you’ll end up like that.”

He’d healed up quicker than I’d expected. Though there were traces of burn scars, the wound I’d inflicted on him should’ve put him out of commission for at least a month. It seemed that the only injury that remained was the one on his

face. Other than that, he had fully recovered.

“Ha ha... You lowly human! You really like to talk, don’t you? This wound you gave me throbs so much, it drives me crazy!”

His face twisted in anger as he spat these words at me. It was obvious how much he wanted to kill me. *Good grief. What an annoying development.* Then again, it was entirely my fault that he was standing here like this.

If I’d actually finished him off, he wouldn’t have been here right now. *How did he even sniff me out?* Either way, I only had one option left—to finish him off for good.

“Well, that’s enough preamble. Let’s see what you got!” Navir shouted.

Most likely, he was thinking along the same lines as I was. As soon as he yelled, something strange happened. There was a cracking sound as Navir’s body began to transform. Six arms grew out of his abdomen and his rear swelled up as he transformed into a spiderlike being.

Demons had both human and demon blood mixed inside of them. Their defining characteristic was that they could transform into three different forms: human, half-human, and demon.

Hm. It seems that Navir has the blood of arachnes—huge spider monsters—inside him. Arachnes were adept at controlling their threads of silk, which were imbued with their mana, and as monsters they were infamously annoying to deal with.

“Hya ha ha ha!” Navir let out a high-pitched laugh as he kicked off from the ground with his eight powerful legs.

I see. As predicted, he’s fast. But not fast enough that I couldn’t dodge him, even in this immature body. I twisted around, easily dodging his attack.

Seeing that I’d dodged, Navir immediately changed his trajectory to come at me again. *I see. There’s spider silk strung up across the trees in the darkness.* He was bouncing off the silk, allowing him to forcefully change his trajectory. It seemed that its springiness was also helping him accelerate.

“Heh heh. Can you keep up?!” Navir cried out as he ricocheted from thread to

thread, his speed increasing each time he did.

Though he was my enemy, I couldn't help but feel impressed. Even if he was using the threads to increase his speed, there weren't many demons who could move this fast, even back in my day, two hundred years ago.

Eventually, he was moving so fast that it became impossible to follow him with the naked eye in the darkness.

"Got you!"

As soon as he saw that I'd stopped trying to follow his movements with my eyes, he chose to strike. Convinced of his victory, Navir erased his presence and attacked me from behind, thinking that he'd caught me unawares. However...

"Huh?!"

...he reacted to me just in time. *Hm. You have pretty good dynamic visual acuity.* If he'd been just a few seconds slower, I would've been able to burn his whole face. But just as I went to grab his face with a hand that I'd cast Flame Magecraft on, he made a net with his spider silk to stop himself in his tracks, forcefully.

"Impossible! How could you react to my speed?!"

It was true that relying on conventional methods would have made it hard to track his movements. However, I wasn't tracking him with my eyes. All that would've done was make me dizzy. Instead, I'd decided to track the trajectory of his mana, which could be sensed as a line, like a trail of sorts, instead of a single dot, making it possible to predict his angle of attack.

"Heh. Well, shucks," he said, shrugging as if he was giving up. "Are you really a mage who was born in this era?" A look of suspicion appeared on his face.

He has pretty good instincts. It'd been a while since I reincarnated into this era, but this was the first time anyone had asked me a question which came so close to the truth. Lilith was the only one in this world who knew my true identity—it was, after all, highly classified information.

"What are you trying to say?" I asked.

"Well, ever since we met last time, I've had a feeling that there's something

off about you. Your strength is clearly much greater than that of the modern mage. If anything, you're about as strong as the disciples of the Great Four."

Good grief. It was extremely depressing to hear this evaluation of me as "being about as strong as the disciples of the Great Four"—the very same comrades that I'd fought with as equals. *Sorry, but I'm going to have to retract my assessment of you as having good instincts.*

"At any rate, you are incredibly dangerous. You could easily make our plans go awry." Then, with an eerie smile, he snapped his fingers, sending a signal to multiple creatures which were hiding in the darkness. "You didn't notice, did you? You're completely surrounded by my subordinates!"

No, I knew that. Out of the darkness came a bunch of creepy spiders with patterns in the shape of human faces on their abdomens. They surrounded me. Navir had used his speed to distract me, buying time for his familiars to hide in the darkness.

"Now!"

At Navir's command, the spiders began to move. Spider silk flew at me from every conceivable angle. There was no way to dodge their attacks. If I took even one hit, I'd be sliced to pieces.

"Hya ha ha ha! Die!"

Honestly, not a bad strategy. But, no matter how talented one might've been at strategizing, there was no guarantee things would always go exactly as planned. From all my battle experience, I'd learned that it was always necessary to have a backup strategy, and also a backup strategy for your backup strategy. *Navir, the reason you're going to lose is very simple.*

"You picked the wrong enemy." In the next moment, I used a wind magecraft that was a cut above others in terms of strength. "Tempest!"

This magecraft was difficult to use because it couldn't be cast if one had allies nearby, but since that wasn't a problem for me, I was able to unleash it, dealing a fatal blow to all of Navir's familiars in a single attack.

A sound almost like screeching accompanied a violent gust of wind. The magecraft cut their threads of silk to ribbons, and an incalculable number of

blades of winds flew at the small fries that'd been lurking in the shadows, leaving deep gashes in the trees.

"Wh-What?!?!"

It seemed that Navir had finally noticed my attack. His surprise was understandable, given that *he'd* set up an offensive that couldn't be dodged before I had. However, my attack was a response to that—a little revenge, if you will.

"Ugyaaaaaah!!!"

Navir's piercing cry echoed into the darkness as his body was sliced all over by my blades of wind. *Hm. He really is a greater demon.* Despite having taken my attack head-on, he was still standing. That being said, he was bleeding heavily and was practically on death's door.

"Th-That glow in your eyes... I remember now...! But it can't be. Are you really __"

Apparently recognizing something in my eyes, Navir began to panic. *Hm. I can't believe how careless I've been.* Although one might share their eye color with countless others, each individual's eyes have unique qualities to them. That was why anyone who actually knew me could almost immediately identify me by a certain characteristic of my eyes.

"You're the legendary mage, the golden-eyed black cat!"

Well, that's a name I haven't heard in a while. I'm starting to feel kinda nostalgic. My eyes had a special characteristic—after I used powerful magecraft, they would glow like flames in the dark. Thus, the nickname of "golden-eyed black cat." However, this was just one of many different names that I'd been given over the years.

"I can't believe my eyes. Who would've thought that the legendary mage who vanished two hundred years ago would still be alive?"

His gaze was filled with malice as he looked at me. Then, suddenly, he rose up into the air. I couldn't tell what was happening at first, but as I turned to look upwards, I spotted small bird-type monsters carrying him.

I see. It seemed that Navir had tied his spider silk to these birds in advance as an escape plan. He was very thorough to have not only come up with this trap, but also an escape plan as well.

“Heh heh... You haven’t seen the last of me! I won’t forget what you’ve done to me!” Navir said, smiling eerily as he ascended into the air. His figure became smaller and smaller until it looked as if he was melting into the darkness.

“No—feel free to forget it. Right now, even.”

His choice to flee into the sky had put him right in the crosshairs of my own trap. After all, there was absolutely nowhere for him to take cover in the air. Ever since I’d reincarnated into modern times, I’d yet to use any of my magecraft at their full strength. If I did, I’d easily blow away an island like this in the blink of an eye. However, if I released the magecraft into the sky...

“Huh? What is that supposed to...”

“Because you’re dying right here and now,” I clarified.

Navir had now noticed what was going on, but tragically, it was too late for him to do anything about his mistake. If my opponent was in the sky, then I didn’t have to worry about damaging any of our surroundings. I could fire my strongest magecraft without reservations.

“Dragon Breath.”

The magecraft I used was the highest class of Crimson Eye magecraft, boasting the greatest power—its name was Dragon Breath. It had a devastating amount of strength and a wide area of effect. In exchange, it took a little longer than other magecraft to compose, but if used to deal the killing blow to a fleeing enemy like I was doing right now, then speed wasn’t a problem.

As soon as I finished composing it, a colossal dragon appeared, shooting forth towards the moon as if to devour it.



“I-Impossible! What is that magecraft?!”

Hopelessness must have overwhelmed Navir at the sight. My attack had an enormous area of effect, and the dragon moved as if it had its own will, tracking down its target. There was absolutely no way of avoiding it.

“Agh!”

Navir frantically cut the strings so he could fall, but this was too little too late. The fire dragon opened its mouth wide like a starving animal and swallowed Navir whole. At this point, it didn’t matter how powerful his body was. The flames from the dragon were over 5000 °C. Nothing in this world could survive that.

“Gaaaaaaah!!!”

Navir let out a piercing scream as he was reduced to ash, meeting a fiery end. *I’ll admit that I’m surprised, Navir of the Moonlight. I never expected to meet a demon who could fight this adeptly, even in this day and age.* This was my final thought about him as I watched his ashes twinkling in the moonlight as they fluttered to the ground.

Epilogue

At the End of the Training Camp

A few days later, we were getting ready to leave the island after having had a good time together. We made our way to the station to board the train back to the royal capital. I guess there was one guy who hadn't really gotten to enjoy their time on the island, though...

Perhaps due to the absolute insane stress he'd endured in order to complete his assignments, Ted had deep bags underneath his eyes.

"Master, I must be really exhausted. On the first day of the training camp, I looked outside and saw a huge flaming dragon. I think I must've still been half asleep."

A huge flaming dragon? If such a creature existed, I sure would've liked to see it. In a sense, I'd been fortunate that Navir had pursued me to the island. If he'd come after me at the academy, and I'd used this same magecraft to defeat him, there'd be a huge ruckus being made right about now.

Just as that thought crossed my mind, Noel suddenly showed me a newspaper. "Abel, look at this headline!"

Noel had stopped in front of the station store, run by an older woman, which had a large number of newspapers stocked.

This was the headline Noel was pointing out: *A terrifying event in the black of night! 24 demon bodies discovered!*

That was all right on the front page. *I'm a little surprised.* I'd only slain those demons about a week ago. It surprised me that the events of the town of Paracenos would so quickly reach an island like this one.

It seemed that, in modern times, information disseminated fast. Even two hundred years ago, when the level of magecraft had yet to decline, information didn't get around this fast. Obviously, the speed of communication in modern times had stepped up quite a bit.

“Huh?! Paracenos?! That’s, like, right next to where we live!” Ted exclaimed.

“I hear that the number of demon-related events has been on the rise. We should be careful too,” Eliza cautioned.

Even if I hadn’t really had too much of a choice in how I’d handled things, judging by how quick news spread in modern times, I needed to be more careful in the future. If I kept winding up in fights, it’d only serve to draw unnecessary attention to me. *I’ll need to avoid fighting as much as possible.*

“Abel... Might this article possibly have anything to do with you?” Noel asked cautiously.

“Hmm. Who knows...?”

The girl had sharp instincts. I dodged her question, and fortunately, the train arrived precisely at that moment. The doors closed behind us, and we were on our way.

I had a lot of reflecting to do. Most likely, now that Navir was dead, the demons who’d been operating in the shadows would begin to act more aggressively. It had become more necessary than ever before to hide the fact that I was a mage reincarnated from two hundred years in the past.

Afterword

Yusura Kankitsu here. Thanks to everyone, I've completed volume 4 of this series. In this volume, I had a hard time envisioning my ideal summer vacation.

Taking a larger view of this series, I consider the first four volumes to be act one. We'll be heading into the next act with volume 5. Going a little off-topic, all the light novel series I've written have typically had their first act end at around the fifth volume. If I had to explain why, it's because I'm always thinking hard about their potential anime adaptations (lol).

It's easier for animation studios to turn series that go for about three to five volumes into a single season of anime, right? So yeah, that's me being considerate towards them. But also, I'm very inexperienced when it comes to anime adaptations, so honestly, none of what I'm doing might be helpful at all (sob).

Sadly, there haven't been any talks whatsoever of *Reincarnated Mage* getting an anime adaptation just yet. If anybody in the industry is reading this and is interested in making an anime adaptation, please contact the editorial department of *Dash X Books*!

Thanks for the fan letter, by the way!

Right after volume 3 went on sale, I got my second fan letter from the same fan who'd sent me one for the previous volume! I honestly never thought I would get a second one, so I was extremely touched! Thanks, Mr. N from Ibaraki prefecture!

Now, let's talk about the next volume.

As I mentioned earlier, the second part of this series will begin with volume 5. That being said, we are planning to release a volume 4.5 before that. In other words, a volume between volumes 4 and 5.

People really seemed to enjoy the chapter I wrote about Abel's past in volume 3, much more than I expected, so I decided to write an entire side story that takes place before his reincarnation. I'm only able to do this because the

books have sold a decent amount, so I'm very thankful to all of you! Please look forward to future stories of both Abel's past and present intersecting! It'll be challenging, but I'm gonna do my best to come up with awesome ideas and create an exciting story for everyone!

While we're at it, please allow me to advertise the manga version a little.

Volume 2 of the manga came out at the same time as this book. Thanks to all of you, the manga has already been reprinted and has received all kinds of praise! There are some events in the manga that weren't in the web novel, so I definitely recommend giving it a read!

I also want to advertise my new series.

My new series with *Dash X Books* has been decided! The title is *Shijo Saikyo no Mahokenshi, F-rank Bokensha ni Tensei suru (Kari)*. This will be a different style of work from everything I've written up until now. It'll focus more on letting readers go through it stress-free. Please check it out if you're interested!

A page at the end of this volume shows it off, so please check that out too! It goes on sale on September 25th.

Well then, I hope to see all of you in the next volume!

- Yusura Kankitsu