

無職転生

12

理不尽な孫の手

異世界行ったら
本気だす



MFマックス

Chapter 1

Saying Farewell

Part 1

Begaritto Continent.

That continent is a different land isolated by the ocean.

The place of our objective is Labyrinth City Lapan, inland on the eastern side of the continent.

There are two kinds of routes for the sake of crossing over to the continent.

The method of traveling to the edge of Central Continent, Dragon King Kingdom's port city East Port and then moving across by boat.

That would mean you enter the Begaritto Continent on the eastern side.

It's somewhat of a roundabout way, but it's the safe course.

The other one is a route to take a boat from a port city in Asura Kingdom and enter the Begaritto Continent from the northern side.

It's a bit dangerous because it means crossing Begaritto Continent, but it can drastically reduce the time it takes.

Taking that into consideration, the former would take 18 months.

And the latter would take 12 months, or at least it could be said to be around there.

Even if we were able to find some sort of efficient method to move, we can say from the start it's still impossible to do the round trip within seven months.

In other words, I won't make it in time for the childbirth.

That's not the only concern.

This time I'm completely opposing Hitogami's advice head on.

Although, since it's him, the fact that I would disobey it might have been within his assumptions.

However, if it comes down to opposing him head on, as I thought the story is different.

If I were to say it, during the time we crossed over to the Central Continent, it's almost like not going to Shirone Kingdom.

Without ever meeting Zanoba, it would mean Lilia and Aisha continue to remain captive. Just, in that case, things might have changed so I wouldn't have ended up running into Orsted.

If I had done that, I wonder what would have been going on around this time.

Without any specific problems we would have arrived at the refugee camp.

Still, I wonder if it would have ended up with my first night with Eris and then separation? About 10 years later, after finding out about Lilia and the others whereabouts, I wonder if I would have regretted it.

Right, that guy said that I would regret it.

The advice from last time is unchanged from this time's advice as well, that I would regret it.

Most likely it's not something related to time.

If I go to Begaritto Continent I will regret it.

I don't know what kind of regret it will be.

There are several things I can imagine.

For example, it could be that... I might lose something.

Right hand or left hand.

Or, Paul or Zenith...

No, I should stop with thinking about it too deeply.

In any case, if I decided not to go and didn't go, then I would have ended up living another year or two worrying endlessly.

As a result of that, if I hear notice of someone having died, it could be possible that I get criticized by a worn-out Paul or Gisu.

There are any number of possibilities.

I have no choice other than to go.

Even knowing I will regret it.

Part 2

First I decided to talk with Elinalise.

If Sylphy starts to cry when I talk to her, then my resolve might get dull after all.

First by talking about it with those around, I want to fortify my resolve.

I called out Elinalise to an empty classroom at school.

There, I informed that I had decided to go to Begaritto Continent. She made a bitter face.

"You know, Rudeus, I told you stay behind here?"

"Yeah, however..."

While I was hesitating to say it, Elinalise said it.

"In the first place, that letter, it might just be Gisu jumping to conclusions you know?"

"Jumping to conclusions huh?"

"I'm sure you know as well Rudeus, but that man has times when he jumps to conclusions without confirming the important things first as well."

Well, I'm sure there are things like that as well.

Gisu is the type that doesn't tell the whole truth while moving around and doing things in the background.

"This time as well, that possibility is plenty likely. Unexpectedly, one month or so later it might become the case that we get a letter saying, [Previous Statement Withdrawal, Zenith is Safe.]"

"I've considered that possibility myself as well."

After going to carry it out and by the time we get there Paul and the others have already resolved it.

It would be a difference in passing.

That's certainly a possibility that exists but...

"But, think about it a bit, isn't it strange that Gisu would know my location?"

"...Ha?"

"The time when we sent a letter after deciding our residence was one and a half years ago. If Gisu has been in Begaritto Continent for over half a year, how did he find out our location and send a letter?"

Just by moving, it will take close to one year.

Even sending a letter will take about that amount of time.

It's not like we can just use a cellphone or mail.

Even the special express delivery, takes more than half a year to arrive.

The time doesn't match up.

If Gisu had come together with Elinalise, separated soon after and moved straight to Begaritto Continent, then it would still be better.

How could a guy who has always been on Begaritto Continent know of our location?

"Most likely, Gisu has already joined father and the others. Then he heard my location and sent out a letter using that express delivery."

"Then, why is the sender Gisu?"

"Either it's Gisu's own judgment or something with my father's pride, I guess."

"Pride...?"

Elinalise put her hand to her chin and considered it.

Paul wrote down in the letter sent to me as well, that he's leaving things afterwards to me. That matter is probably interfering and making it hard for him to ask for help.

Elinalise looked at me.

However she made a [Hmm] and considered it some more.

In the end she finally nodded in agreement.

"...It can't be helped, can it? Let's go together with the two of us."

I don't know what kind of conclusion she came to.

However, while smiling bitterly, Elinalise said it.

It was almost like she knew it would end up like this.

We'll be going together to Begaritto Continent as a party of two.

That's our plan.

Part 3

One hour later.

"Then, let's decide on the route at once."

Elinalise returned to her own room and quickly came back carrying a large map.

For the sake of the journey it must be something she prepared and left out in advance.

The two of us studied the map.

The detailed roads and locations of the towns aren't written down, it was a simple map with just the shape of the continent and the locations of the mountains.

These past few days Elinalise must have been investigating the roads in advance.

The rough location of Lapan and various important points along the way have marks next to them.

Just as I thought, there are two routes.

"For the time being the sooner we arrive at Lapan, the better isn't it?"

Elinalise pointed her finger at the shortcut.

The route that enters from the north.

"But, the route that enters from the north is dangerous you know."

This route is dangerous.

We don't know the roads either. It's a route where we have no choice but to cross a dangerous continent.

I have a reasonable amount of confidence in my own ability at fighting monsters as well.

There are no worries about combat potential.

Even though I say that, an unknown land is still scary.

"If I remember correctly Rudeus, you can speak the Fighting God language right?"

"Eh? Yeah. It's not very native sounding though."

"Then it would be fine if we hire a guide when we get to the actual place."

"I see."

Following Elinalise's advice we decided on the route in a flash, since she was used to traveling.

After that, we roughly decided the flow of the journey.

First, we'll buy a horse in this town.

We'll travel with the minimal amount of luggage necessary until Asura Kingdom.

If the luggage is too heavy then the movement speed starts to dull after all.

The lighter we are, the more distance we can cover.

Along the way we'll continue to replace our horses, moving as quickly as possible towards the port city of Asura.

After we arrive at the port city of Asura, there we'll buy and prepare equipment and food. Especially food goods, it's not confirmed that we'll be able to buy what we need in Begaritto Continent.

The price of goods in Asura is high, but at least in regards to food, we'll without a doubt be able to gather it.

After the preparations are done, we'll get on a ship to Begaritto Continent.

In the port city we'll hire a guide.

Depending on the situation, we could hire a number of escorts as well.

Elinalise will conduct the negotiations at that time. I'm the interpreter.

With the help of the guide we'll traverse Begaritto Continent and arrive at Lapan.

There we'll merge with Paul and the others and solve the problem.

Then we'll return using the same route.

"Up until Asura at least, it's a journey we've done any number of times so it will be fine. The problem is choosing what we take with us when going to Begaritto..."

It's not like we can just take anything and everything.

If we could get our hands on something like a carriage it would be easy, but Begaritto is a land of continuous desert.

Most likely there's some other kind of different transport used.

If I were to compare it to Magic Continent, it would be those lizard-like fellows.

According to my predictions there should be something like a camel.

"That is something we'll complete somehow or other relying on experience."

"As expected of an old-one's wisdom."

"Please don't flatter me."

I was an adventurer for five years or so as well.

Even though I say that, if I were to be compared to a great veteran like Elinalise, it would still be fine to call me an amateur.

It's come down to where I'm considerably leaving it to her.

"Since we have physical strength after all, we should be able to move at a considerably quick pace."

"That's right."

Elinalise is probably fine, but the problem is how far I'll be able to keep up I guess.

I've been continuing my training, but I still wonder if I'll end up slowing down Elinalise since she's used to traveling.

Though I think it will be fine.

"Since there are horses raised for the purpose of traveling long distances around here, it's just right."

The objective is to arrive within Asura in less than two months.

I don't know how long the trip on the boat will take, but we can assume one month.

Neither of us have been to Begaritto, but since it seems to be a harsh land, we'll try to move to our objective within half a year.

...One-way it'll take about eight months.

That's reasonably faster than first assumed.

I have the feeling that if I use magic then I can reduce it even more, but the shallow thinking of an amateur can cause some kind of mistake. It's quite possible that it will end up taking unnecessary time as well.

This is where I'd like to go with a more reliable method of arrival.

Other than that, there're various other things we need to keep in mind while confirming one by one on the way.

I'd say as expected of a veteran like Elinalise.

She's ironing out the details to avoid conflicting opinions from coming up during the journey.

Worthless disputes can't be stomped out in just a single day.

Even down to the details, we confirmed each and every thing.

"The problem is..."

In the end Elinalise put her hand on her chin and made a difficult face.

I feel that we decided all the main points, but I wonder if there's anything else.

"It's about my curse."

"Ah..."

If she doesn't have intercourse with men, she'll die.

If it's a willful journey, then it's fine.

It's fine to just find a relevant partner in a town she stops by.

If it comes down to a long journey, then there's also the possibility of sticking together with a party from somewhere as well.

But, on a journey in a rush, there will be times when nothing can be done about it.

".."

"...."

We both kept silent.

There's a method to resolve it.

It would be fine for me to be the partner.

I'm a man as well.

Before we attended the university, it's different from the time when I formed a party with Elinalise.

If I was told to work as a partner, then I can do something like being a partner.

However I don't want to betray Sylphy or Cliff.

"During the journey, Elinalise-san and I can't do it."

"Yeah, that's right."

"Let's try to make use of something like a brothel on the way."

During the journey, we won't lay our hands on each other.

We need to make that clear.

If we don't do that, we might end gradually moving in a direction where we end up doing something after all.

"Come to think of it, that one magic tool? It can weaken the effect of the curse right?"

"If I were to bring that out, then Cliff will.."

"You don't intend to speak to Cliff?"

Elinalise intends to silently leave Cliff it seems.

No matter what, isn't that just too pitiful for Cliff?

"It's no good if you don't talk to Cliff."

"But, I.."

"Please leave it to me. I won't let it end up badly."

We started towards Cliff's place.

Part 4

Cliff's research room.

After Cliff saw us, he came up to show us that one diaper magic tool with a full face smile.

"Just look at this, I've improved it a bit and it's become smaller. With this, even if you wear it for long periods it won't rub against your crotch and cause any pain..."

"Cliff-senpai, do you love Elinalise-san?"

I interrupted with my words and asked straight to the point.

Cliff looked at me with a puzzled face.

"That's obvious, right?"

It was a face like he was asked, [Yesterday, did you eat food?]

As expected of him, I'd say.

"Do you intend to continue to love her no matter what happens?"

"Naturally. I love Lize. You know that much right?"

"I wanted to hear those words."

I explained the situation.

The possibility that my family has fallen into a predicament.

That my father has a deep relation as friends with Elinalise and she wants to go help them.

That it will be a long journey.

During that time, the probability is high that Elinalise will end up having relations with other men.

In addition, I talked about various things.

"..."

Cliff remained silent while listening to the story advance.

And then flatly said it.

"...If I were to try and go with you, I'd be nothing but a dead weight."

That is frankly true, but they're words that are hard to reply to.

The one who replied wasn't me, but Elinalise.

"That's right. Honestly, Cliff's physical strength won't last."

If it was the usual Elinalise, then she would continue more oblate.

However, this time she said it quite clearly in order to bluntly refuse.

"I see..."

Cliff dropped his gaze in regret.

That gesture felt like it was stabbing into my chest.

I wonder how much he really takes matters to heart with her. ^[1]

If she goes on the journey, then Elinalise has no choice other than to have intercourse with other men.

No matter how much Cliff accepts her in his heart, even if he understands that it's because of the curse, it's still something heartbreaking I'm sure.

"Hey, Elinalise-san, why don't we have Cliff-senpai come along as well in spite of it. He can use barrier magic as well. Even his Exorcism is Advanced level. Certainly he might be lacking in physical strength, but I'm sure he'll be useful somew..."

"No, it's fine Rudeus. During the time when we went adventuring together as well, I was just slowing things down. I'm sure, this time as well even if I were to follow along on the journey, I would just end up as a hindrance."

While saying that, Cliff placed the diaper-like magic tool in my hand.

"Rudeus."

"Yes."

"I entrust Lize to you."

Honestly, I thought he would cry out about it more.

However, still even more than I thought, it seems Cliff understands his own power.

"Lize."

Cliff faced Elinalise's direction.

And then, from a somewhat lower height from her, gently embraced her.

"Cliff.."

Just like that the two tightly embraced each other.

"Lize. After you return, let's have the wedding ceremony. The curse still hasn't been solved, but we'll buy a house for the two of us and live there together. I've made you feel uneasy because we haven't done that until now right? That it might just be talk like that."

"Ah, Cliff, but I'm a cruel woman you know. This time as well, I was actually planning to leave silently without telling you."

"The marriage ceremony will be a Milis ceremony, but is that fine? Even though Lize isn't a Milis believer.."

I wonder if Cliff was intentionally ignoring Elinalise's words.

In any case, for Elinalise that was fine.

Just by hearing those words from Cliff, it seems she was overcome with emotion.

"Ah, Cliff..I love you! More than anyone in this world!"

Elinalise pushed down Cliff.

By the time Cliff's lower half had been peeled bare I had left the research room.

From here on out, it's time for the two of them.

The hindrance will be left here.

However, that Cliff, he really knew she was feeling uneasy about his promise to marry when he said that.

Part 5

I went around to say farewell to others in each place as well.

I won't be able to return for a year and a half.

If any trouble happens on the other side, then it might even take two years.

Two years is a long time.

It's no good if I don't do it properly rather than just a short greeting.

The first place I went towards was the staff member room.

It's Jinas's place.

It won't be good if I don't make sure to take care of the formal office work-like procedures ahead of time.

The same as always, he had a pile of documents in front of him as he worked energetically.

"Greetings, vice principal Jinas."

"Ah, if it isn't Rudeus-san. It's been a while. I heard that you succeeded on a large scale experiment or something at Seven Star-san's place."

"Yeah, it's thanks to the assistance from Zanoba and Cliff."

"Is that how it was?"

It seems that story of that one experiment has circulated around to Jinas as well.

I wonder if that kind of information unexpectedly seems to make it around.

"And then, what is it for today?"

"Yes, I need to do preparations for an absence of about two years or so."

"Two years is it?"

"Something important has come up."

"Is that so..."

It's not that I'm trying to avoid the topic, but Jinas didn't try to ask anything more than that.

"I understand. I'll do the paperwork for a temporary absence from school, at the time when you return, please show yourself in front of me again."

"Is it alright to take a temporary absence for two years?"

"If it was a normal student then it wouldn't be something good, but it's permitted as a special privilege to special students."

I'm sure it would have been taken as dropping out normally after all.

"Thank you very much."

"No, the special student system is for that sake after all."

"Then, in addition could I ask to allow the student known as Elinalize to be treated as a temporary absence as well? She isn't a special student, but she intends to go along with my convenience as an escort."

"Is that so... I understand. I'll try to make it work out somehow."

Jinas pleasantly took that on.

It's a really appreciated talk.

I said my thanks to Jinas and left the staff member room.

Part 6

Soon after leaving the staff member room, I ran into Rinia and Pursena. After seeing me, the two of them raised their hands and approached me. I told the two that I would be absent for about two years or so as well.

"I see. It will become lonely nya."

"If it's going to be two years, then we'll have graduated. We won't meet again nano."

After it was said, I realized it.

They're sixth year students. In another two years, they'll have graduated.

They'll have returned to the Great Forest.

It sure is lonely not be present at that farewell.

"That's right isn't it..."

Come to think of it, the Human God said to start a relationship with one of these two. In another two months or so the mating season will start. I wonder if a development like that would come up.

I take a good look at the two.

"What nya? Is there something on me?"

Rinia.

Those cat ears that twitch as they move, the tail that swings back and forth, and those healthy looking thighs are her characteristics.

Her chest size is big as well. About D or E size.

Since all the Beast Race are big, it might just be average.

She gives off the feeling of a healthy kyonyu-chan.

Even on top of the bed, it seems like it would be enjoyable for her to show that cheeky reaction.

"[Sniff][Sniff]... could it be boss, since we're not going to see each other again, you're thinking something like, [At least once] nano?"

Pursena.

With those soft looking dog ears and that plump full body as her characteristics.

Even among the beast race the dog type seem to be large, but I think her chest is around F.

I've groped them several times, but they're considerably soft.

If you were to embrace her enough to be buried in them, I'm sure that would feel great.

"Excuse me. The other day, a certain person gave me the advice to push you two down during the mating season. So I was just remembering that."

"Seriously, boss, did you have such intention nya?"

"Even though I've tried seducing you, since you never get on board I thought we were hated by you nano."

While the two said that indifferently, they were smiling with a grin.

Making children with them.

Furthermore, according to the way Hitogami put it, Sylphy doesn't blame me for that it seems.

I wonder if it's because she's pregnant, or else if she doesn't want it to turn into a scene of carnage, I don't know.

However, if it means that I'm going to become even happier, I wonder if that means it would result in something that's convenient for me.

It's one thing to have a sword to protect Sylphy's honor, but I'm a man as well.

It's still somewhat captivating.

Having a harem is the dream of a man after all.

Accept them as the concubines and do some foursome play with Sylphy.

I guess there was such a future out there.

"Rinia, Pursena."

"Yes nya."

"Yes-nano."

After calling out to them, the two of them were looking at me with somewhat tense expressions.

"Let's continue being friends."

The two's features crumbled.

They shrugged their shoulders and came up from both sides.

"...It can't be helped nya. Boss is the lonely type after nyall.

"We'll remain friends, don't want to betray-nano."

I exchanged a handshake with the two.

Thinking about it, this might be the first time I've shook their hands.

Female friends huh.

Friendship doesn't exist between men and women, I've heard such talk before though.

Well, even if there's some amount of sexual desire mixed in, friendship can still hold true as friendship.

What's important is to maintain a mutual sense of distance.

"Then, we'll meet again. Ten years later, or twenty years later I don't know though."

"Right nya. In another ten years, I'll have become great, so you'll need to prostrate before me nya."

"For the conquest of the Great Forest."

The two speaking of their ambitions, I left just saying one thing, "I'll pray that it doesn't become a case of gekokujo." [2]

If luck permits, then I'm sure we'll meet again.

Part 7

After arriving in front of Nanahoshi's research room.

I wonder how I should break the ice.

She's the solitary type.

While taking a tsuntsun attitude, on the contrary she might show a large amount of loneliness.

I'm going to be absent for up to two years.

If it comes down to that, her research will stagnate as well.

Her journey home has already been progressing slowly at best.

Natural as it is, I'm sure she'll try to restrain me.

Probably with some kind of reason attached.

She might try to threaten me as well.

[If you're going to go on a trip then, I'll ***** Sylphy] If I'm told something like that I wonder what I should do. ^[3]

I don't think she's yandere to that extent though.

"Fu..."

I took a single breath. A single knock.

"Come in."

After waiting for a response, I enter the research room.

Nanahoshi raises her face from the desk and looks over here.

"What? It's different from the usual time though."

"Actually, I've come to give notice of something unfortunate."

"Unfortunate notice?"

Nanahoshi was making a puzzled face.

Well, it doesn't really change how I talk about it.

I'll just say it as it is.

"I'm leaving on a journey. Since my family is in trouble. I'll be going as far as Labyrinth City Lapan on the Begaritto Continent. Round trip it will take about two years or so."

"...Eh?"

After spending a short while dumbfounded, Nanahoshi stood up while kicking off from the chair sharply.

She put her hand on top of the desk and looked at me with a dumbfounded face.

"....Begaritto, Labyrinth City Lapan, two years..."

She continued to repeat my words like she was considering over them.

"I'm very sorry about this, even though I said I would help you. But, no matter what, this is something that I have to go and do."

Nanahoshi opened her eyes after hearing my words and took a deep breath.

And then, sat down in the chair with a bang and looked up at the ceiling.

"Two years..."

"After I return, I'll properly continue to help out with your research."

"...Two years."

Nanahoshi crossed her arms and didn't say anything but two years.

More than that, she didn't say anything else.

She's not trying to restrain me or cry out either.

Just, she's looking at the ceiling like she's thinking about something.

Just like that, about half the time passed.

Today is nothing but painful times.

"Well then, please excuse me."

It can't be helped.

Even she should understand that I'm only helping out of good will.

I'm sure she really wants to restrain me, she's enduring it.

I turned heel and was about to leave,

"Wait a minute."

I stopped my feet at that voice.

Honestly, I don't really want to chat.

I know she's going to try and stop me.

But, I'm sure it's better to properly talk it out.

Thinking that, I turn around.

From the lowest drawer of her desk Nanahoshi takes out something like a notebook.

She turns over the pages flipping through that, she opens it to a certain page and shows it to me.

"Look at this."

Just as I was told I take a look.

The notebook had scraps of a map attached to it.

I have a recollection of the map, it's the surroundings of this city.

Even though I say that, the scale is somewhat large.

On the top part of the map, in somewhat large letters, "N1" was written.

In a certain forest in the southwest a red cross mark was made.

Above the cross mark the letters, "B3" were written.

"This is?"



"...."

Nanahoshi was clearly hesitating.

Whether to say it or not to say it.

However, in the end she said it.

"It's a map of the locations of the ruins scattered around the world with teleport magic circles in them."

Teleport magic circles?

"Eh?"

I let my eyes fall on the notebook again.

The letters, "B3".

Could this perhaps be.

"It's the teleport magic circle to Begaritto Continent."

"O well.." [4]

Come to think of it.

Come to think of it, Nanahoshi did say she traveled around together with Orsted.

If I remember correctly, they were making use of the teleport magic circles scattered across the world to travel here and there.

"You said you didn't remember the location..."

That's right. Nanahoshi said she couldn't remember the location of the teleport magic circles.

"Orsted forbid me from speaking about it and that I shouldn't reveal it. That time, I said I couldn't remember it either way, so I couldn't say it anyways but.."

But, she left a record of it in case the time ever comes up where she needs it huh.

Secretly drawing a map in each place, or else writing the map in text.

Casually asking Orsted the name of the land.

Nearby towns and remembering the general location...

It's not memory, but a record.

I flipped through the pages of the notebook.

It's far from perfection.

In places where she couldn't buy a map or she couldn't even arrive in a town, she just wrote [A mountain can be seen on the left side. Most likely three days to the east, we'll cross a single river, furthermore two days.] and used that sort of writing manner.

The alphabet shows the continent name and the number seems to show the order they're passed through.

N is for the northern part of Central Continent.

S is for the southern part of Central Continent.

W is for the western part of Central Continent.

MT is Magic Continent.

ML is Milis Continent.

I guess as expected there's none for Heaven Continent.

And then, B is for Begaritto Continent.

In places where she didn't know which Continent she was on she used the alphabet letters X and Y.

It was a single volume showing the effort Nanahoshi put in afterwards.

"I've certainly heard the name of the city known as Lapan. I remember it. This teleport magic circle will take you to somewhere nearby a certain Bazaar, if you move North for about a month or so, you should arrive. Therefore, it shouldn't be a mistake."

"One month... you say..."

I turn back to the page from just now.

Ranoa Kingdom. It's in the forest southwest from the Magic City Sharia.

The scaling of this map makes it hard to tell. It seems to be about 10 days or so of distance?

It might be even closer.

It's there, the location of the magic circle that will take you to "B3".

I turn the page.

"B3" is on the previous page.

In order to get to a nearby town from the "B3" magic circle it will take about one week it seems.

From there it will take about one month, in other words that means...

47 days.

Round trip would be 94 days.

We can do a round trip in just three months.

If we can finish things up on the other side within one month then...

Four months.

We'll make it.

We'll end up making it in time.

For Sylphy's childbirth.

It won't make it in time for the mating season of Rinia and Pursena, but that is, well... that doesn't matter at all.

"But, is it fine? You were forbidden from speaking about it right?"

"I hesitated over it, but I relied on you the other day after all. Although, I'd like for you not to talk about it too much. Since teleport magic circles are a forbidden technique, if they're spread around in the world, they're something a country could easily destroy."

If they were to be destroyed then that would mean Orsted's means of moving around would be decreased huh.

The ones who he would be angry with are those who revealed it, which would be Nanahoshi or me for sure.

Orsted...

Just being reminded of that name makes me start trembling...

I won't say it, to anyone at all.

"Thank you, Nanahoshi. This is a big help."

"I just want to return home faster."

Nanahoshi said that while snorting through her nose with a [Hmph.] Embarrassed Tsundere.

I took the notebook in my hand and deeply lowered my head.

And then, turned heel and left in high spirits.

"Ah, I forgot to say it, but on the first page there's the mark that shows the location of the ruins with the magic circle, and the method to break into the concealment magic is written down there, so make sure you properly read it."

"Understood. I'm indebted to you."

"I'm just repaying the debt."

While making a bitter smile at those words from Nanahoshi, I leave the research room.

Part 8

And then I returned to Elinalise's place.

I returned quickly.

It's good news. I'm sure she'll be delighted as well.

There's no choice other than to change our plan for the journey.

One and a half months.

It could be that we could even manage to bring along Cliff.

Naturally, we'll make it back in time for Sylphy's delivery with time to spare.

My mouth was becoming slack.

While I continued to strike my cheeks I opened the door to Cliff's research room.

In the next instant, something like Venus with a Renaissance feeling came jumping into my sight.

"I'm very sorry Rudeus. As I thought I can't go!"

Elinalise is unstable. ^[5]

With a body like a model wrapped in a blanket, it was a seductive appearance.

Elinalise's breasts almost like the Niagara Falls and long slender symmetrical body, you would feel it was almost artistic.

However, I didn't feel anything like art or otherwise.

Just simply erotic thoughts came up.

In the first place, there's no way I would understand anything about the arts.

If I were to convert it into a figure then I would just think it's erotically cool.

Cliff was in a corner of the research room and he had become like a Pharaoh.

It's a mummy.

His face is quite happy.

This side is far more artistic I'd say.

The Interval Between Life and Death, or some title like that seems like it would fit.

"There's no way I can endure being separated from Cliff for two years! Even if I know it's dishonorable, I will not go!"

Women are creatures that live based on feelings.

Such a line floated across my mind.

"In the first place, if Rudeus is going then there's no necessity for me to overdo it and go is there?

There's still things hovering the background between Paul and I as well?

I'm sure he doesn't want to show his face in front of me as well?

If Rudeus is going, then the job of protecting my granddaughter's first childbirth will be mine as well?"

"..."

There was no longer even the shadow of the woman who coolly declared, [Leave things after to me and wait.]

Quite effeminate.

I'm sure, in the period these last few hours, she was able to go to quite the good feeling paradise.

"I see. As a matter of fact, a method for reducing the round trip time to at shortest three months has entered my hands though.."

"Eh!!?"

Elinalise stopped her movement.

"What is that?"

After confirming that Cliff is sleeping I whispered into Elinalise's ear.

"To tell you the truth, Nanahoshi has.."

"Ah...my..my ears are no good, I'll feel it."

"Listen to me seriously."

"Cheh. It was a joke."

I showed her Nanahoshi's notebook and explained the outline.

And then the fact that Nanahoshi firmly forbid us from speaking about this as well. After Elinalise flipped through the pages of the notebook, she couldn't hide how surprised she looked.

"In just this amount of days.."

"That's right, if it's this, then we'll make it in time for Sylphy's childbirth."

"...We can do it."

One-way, one and a half months.

It's not a long journey.

The color in Elinalise's eyes changed.

If it's this number of days then, it was that sort of face.

"Well, if it's this then there's no problem. As I thought I'll go."

It seems her mind has changed. How self-interested.

But, well, two years would be a long time after all.

"If it's one and a half months, then physical strength-wise we could bring along Cliff-senpai as well."

"...No, we'll leave behind Cliff."

"Is it fine?"

"I'm sure Cliff, if he comes to know about the matter of the teleport magic circles, he won't be able to keep from talking about them."

No, I don't think Cliff-senpai is that kind of person.

I don't think so but...

But, among my acquaintances he is the number one person to suddenly let leak something like that.

Humu. After all, going with a large number of people would be bad.

If the number of people that know increases, it will mean the secret just spreads that much easier.

However since it seems to be a dilemma, I'd like to bring along someone with real ability. A party consisting of a few elites I'd say.

Those I would bring along would be for example, Ruijerd right.

There's no other person as reliable as that person.

Since he's silent, I'm sure he'd never reveal the teleport magic circles to anyone as well.

Otherwise Badigadi.

If it's a guy that lives in denominations of the thousands of years, then as a matter of fact he might already know about the teleport magic circles.

It seems like he knows about Orsted as well, I feel like it wouldn't be a problem to talk to him about it.

Well, since I haven't seen either recently, I can't make the request of them.

If it comes down to this, other people who we could bring along... there aren't any.

It doesn't seem like Zanoba is very familiar with traveling after all.

...That's right.

We might as well just go, if there's not enough people on the other side then returning with another is still a possibility.

Right now it's the first time we're walking down this path therefore we're cautious, but if it's a path we've taken once, then it's not all that difficult to walk it leading someone.

It will mean talking about the matter of the teleport magic circles, but we can't change things that need to be done. ^[6]

It takes three months for a round trip, but in reverse that means in three months we can certainly bring back enough helping hands to finish it.

"For the time being, let's go with just the two of us."

"Let's quickly go and put an end to this, then quickly return home."

Just like this, Elinalise's short period of hesitation cleared up.

Part 9

And then, finally I discussed it with Sylphy.

In the living room of our home, I gathered together Sylphy, Aisha, and Norn.
I started to talk.

"I'm planning to go assist father and mother."

Sylphy muttered in a small voice, "Eh?", and showed a color of anxiety.

It was a confused face.

However, she soon shook her head and nodded with a serious face.

"Yeah, I understand. Leave things with the house to me."

"I'm sorry that I'm not able to protect the promise that I won't suddenly disappear."

"You're protecting it. It's not sudden at all."

Sylphy smiled shyly.

However, that smile, I felt like it was somewhat artificial.

Even though she might say this or that, she's shaken as well I'm sure.

Somewhat, it's become a feeling like running away.

"Umm, I wonder how long it will take? About two years?"

"No. Actually, thanks to Nanahoshi's cooperation, it's become that we can make use of teleport magic circles. Therefore, I think we'll be able to return in time for the delivery."

I'll talk about the teleport magic circles.

If I can't talk about them with Sylphy then who in the world could I talk to about them.

"Eh!!"

Sylphy was looking at me with a surprised face.

And then, it still turned into a worried face.

"Teleport you say, is it safe?"

We both went through quite a bit of hardship thanks to that teleport incident.
Those sorts of words coming out are only natural.

"I don't know. But it seems Nanahoshi actually used them herself, so I think it will be fine."
"Ye..Yeah."

Sylphy was still making an uneasy face.
I embraced her and whispered close into her ear.

"It's alright, since I'll absolutely return home."
"Yeah."
"Sorry."
"Yeah..."

I'll leave things after to you, such things are proof of trust.
I call out to the little sister in the maid outfit standing behind Sylphy as well.

"Aisha."
"Onii-chan...?"

Aisha was making a more uneasy face than Sylphy.

"Can I entrust things to you?"
"It's fine..is what, I think. Since I properly learned things about a pregnant woman from Okaa-san."
"If you feel it's no good then ask for help from someone reliable. Don't try to do everything yourself. You're excellent, but you're still inexperienced. Get an experienced adult to help you."
"Wa, Yes."

Aisha nodded.

There's some uneasiness remaining, but it can't be helped.

Things never go flawlessly.

"Norn."

"Yes."

"If you feel that Aisha or Sylphy are at their limits, indirectly try to help them. It's fine even if it's just talking or listening to their complaints. If it's something about emotional suffering, then you should understand as well right?"

"Yes! Nii-san!"

"Also, don't neglect your studies as well."

"Yes!"

Somehow Norn is enthusiastic.

It's almost to the point where I'd like to make sure she doesn't get into a fight with Aisha for being too enthusiastic.

Well then, what else is there.

I wonder what else I should say.

"...That's right, should we at least decide on the name of the child before I go?"

I do intend to return home.

But, it's possible that the worst case may happen.

At least it's probably best if I leave after naming it.

I wonder what kind of name we should go with.

Since they think the chuunibyou type is cool in this world, maybe we should go with that type.

If it's a girl then maybe Ciel or Sion.

..If it's a boy then maybe Nero or Wallachia. ^[7]

No-no, since it's not a game after all.

Umm, since it's the child of Rudeus and Sylphy.

If it's a boy then maybe Shius or Sirius?

If it's a girl then maybe Lucy or Lulushi?

That might be too simple.

It might be good to ask around Paul about names in this world.

After taking a look and the three of them were making complicated faces.

"Na..Name you say, Rudi??"

"Onii-chan, why are you saying something like that?"

"Nii-san?"

Everyone is looking at me with uneasy stares.

There's tears starting to build up in the edges of Aisha's eyes.

I wonder if I said something strange.

I wonder if there's such a thing in this world that it's no good to give a child their name before they're born.

"If you do something like give the child a name before going on a journey, you won't be able to come back??"

Sylphy's face was full of uneasiness.

It seems like only I don't know about the death flags of this world.

Ah, No.

I remember.

Come to think of it, there was an act like that in the Legend of Pergius.

One of Pergius's allies, "The Man of Fortune" Fire Emperor class magician, Furouzu Star, said that he might not be able to return from the battle, so he gave a name to the child before he left on the journey.

The name he gave was the same as his own.

Furou Junior. ^[8]

However, Furozu Star lost his life midway through the battle.

And then, while being reminded of his own son, he was defeated by the hands of Demon King Raineru Kaizeru. ^[9]

That son, trying to succeed his great father's name, ended up growing up into a splendid magician.

And at least that's how it goes according to the story, but in reality it's said that they became burdened.

Because such a story is famous, giving your conceived child a name before you leave on a journey is considered taboo.

It's not like Furozu died was because he gave his son a name, but well, it's the so called shouldering of an omen I guess.

"...After all, would it be better not to decide on it yet?"

"I..I wonder."

"But, I want to participate in naming it as well... even taking into consideration the worst case..."

"Don't say things like the worst case."

"Sorry."

At any rate, it's my first child.

The sense of reality isn't all that there yet, but I want to try giving it a name.

"[Cough]."

Aisha tried clearing her throat.

It seems she has some kind of plan.

"Onii-chan. Let's do this. If the child is born we'll decide to call it Rudeus Junior, if onii-chan returns home, at that point we'll decide on a name for it. Just like that North God Kaaruman, if we make "Rudeus" into the middle name it will be fine."

Rudeus Junior huh.

In this world it's not all that unusual to give your son the same name as yourself.

For example how about giving it the name Lucy, Luci..el Greyrat is what it would become I guess.

It's not bad.

Doing the same thing as a great man, thinking that feels strangely embarrassing though...
It seems like a large number of people are already doing it after all.

Hn?

Wait, if it's a girl then, moreover if I'm unable to return home then I wonder what they'll do.

Will she be stuck as Rudeus Junior her whole life?

Isn't there something wrong with that name? ^[10]

If she ends up being picked on over her name and says [What's wrong with Rudeus being a woman's name!] won't she grow up into a child that shouts and hits?

No, there's no way, it's not like she's a Mad Dog from somewhere.

...Yeah, it's better to do it after I return.

"I understand, let's do that. Sylphy."

"Yes."

"...Umm."

I thought to say something to Sylphy, but I can't think of the words for it.

During times like these I can only think of words that seem to give of a bad premonition.

"Sylphy."

I stood in front of Sylphy and placed both of my hands on her shoulders.

"Eh...Ah."

Sylphy sensed it and closed her eyes.

She raised up her jaw and crossed her hands in front of her chest and was trembling.

It's not like it's the first time, but this might be the first time that she's obeyed respectfully with this kind of feeling.

After taking a glance at Aisha and somehow it seems like she's looking over here while leaning her body forward.

Norn was covering her eyes with her hands and looking over here through the gaps in her fingers.

I give a single wink [Pachitto] to the two of them.

And then, suddenly Norn closed her fingers.

In contrast with Aisha who returned the wink [Pachipachitto].

She sure is playful.

You want to see the kiss scene that much huh.

Well, I guess it's fine at these sort of times.

I gently kissed Sylphy.

While listening to small "kya~" shriek from Aisha...

Chapter 2

Towards Begaritto Continent

Part 1

We changed the plans for the journey.

First we buy a horse.

Then we both ride it heading towards the forest with the teleport magic circle.

We make use of the teleport magic circle and then we'll arrive in Begaritto Continent.

According to the story from Nanahoshi, if we travel one week North from there we'll arrive at an Oasis and Bazaar supposedly.

Just, it seems to be a considerably severe desert.

Nanahoshi was in a completely groggy condition and supposedly she had to be moved while carried on Orsted's back.

Since that's the case, it just means we need to firmly take care of preparations.

Well, I have magic as well.

It's possible to create a giant block of ice in the dead center of the desert as well.

I'm sure the flexibility will be effective.

There's no map up until the Bazaar.

However it seems Elinalise has confidence in regards to her sense of direction, she said it was fine to leave that part to her.

It seems the elves don't lose their sense of direction even in deep forests.

When I pointed out that deserts and forests are different she got angry and said, "Exactly how many years do you think I've traveled?"

If she has that much confidence, then I'm sure it'll be fine.

After we arrive at the Bazaar, from there we'll hire a guide.

Lapan is roughly one month north from there.

According to Elinalise, if we only know the direction, then the method of hiring someone is probably faster.

We'll move until we get to Lapan, rapidly assist Paul and the others, then return using the same route.

I'm a bit afraid of letting them know about the teleport magic circles, but it can't be helped. It would be a strange talk to try and force just Paul and the others to return on the normal route after all.

On the other side, if I remember correctly, there were six people.

If we include Gisu, then it would be seven people.

It won't be good if I don't at least be careful to make sure they keep silent.

Incidentally, I've already finished forbidding Sylphy and my little sisters from speaking about it.

I told them if they spread it around a person who can instakill Ruijerd might show up, so they should sincerely keep it secret.

Part 2

Preparations for the plan were progressing.

We already gathered all the fundamental types of equipment.

My partner [staff] Aqua Hartia and the robe Sylphy picked out for me.

After that, it's only stuff at the level of the summoning magic scroll I received from Nanahoshi that I'm carrying.

I don't know what I'm going to use it for, but for the time being I'm carrying about ten of them along.

If I have the negative, then I can make more in about a day.

I'm bringing along the drawing material as well, if it's not enough then I can use a mold. If I were to sell them it would be good money as well after all.

Speaking of money, there's no currency exchanges on the other side.

What kind of currency they even use on the other side is unknown.

For the sake of making money, we need to make sure to prepare something that can be turned into money.

After that it's just to the degree of preparing preserved food.

Since it's the first time we're traveling to Begaritto Continent, we don't know if there's some other special thing necessary.

I'm sure it would be better to get our hands on supplies on the other side as well.

Begaritto Continent is said to be a desert.

In order to prevent direct sunlight, I'm sure it's better to carry a coat.

No, there's the robe, I'm sure it will be fine if I just wear a hood.

After that I can deal with things using magic.

If it's a journey of only about one and a half months, then we have considerable leisure with our baggage as well.

We can manage to bring along several unnecessary things as well.

Even though I say that, it's not like we can just bring along anything and everything. It's better not to take along anything unnecessary.

It's said we'll arrive in the Bazaar one week from the location of the teleport after all, it's not like it's a completely uninhabited place.

There we'll investigate the things we need and gather them.

However for the time being as insurance, we decided to take along a book that has details written down about teleport magic circles.

No matter how much it's said that Orsted makes use of them, that we're using them makes us a bit uneasy after all.

After proceeding to the staff member room once more and lowering my head to Jinas, I received permission to borrow a book for a long period.

In addition, I borrowed one volume of the books on the Fighting God language from the library.

It's insurance for the worst case scenario if I can't communicate any words.

"Exploration Record of the Teleport Labyrinth" and "Begaritto Continent and Fighting God Language".

It should be fine with just these two books.

Part 3

It seems Ginger was knowledgeable in regards to horses.

Since that's the case, we requested her to accompany us to the stable.

In addition I said greetings to Zanoba as well.

"Is that so, you'll be able to return in just half a year or so."

"Yeah. Well, I can't explain the circumstances though."

"Is that so... since that's the case would you like to bring along Ginger?"

"Don't say foolish things."

I don't want Ginger holding some kind of grudge against me.

"Humu. Is that so."

"More than me, please take care of Sylphy and my little sisters."

"It doesn't even need to be said. Since that's the case, how about I place Ginger as their escort."

Unintentionally I let out a strained laugh.

"You, why do you keep trying to keep that person at a distance like that?"

After asking that and after Zanoba took a glance at Ginger, he secretly said it into my ear.

"She nags a bit too much. Since the time when I was small, she would always be grumbling about trivial things. Even about Julie, recently it's always been about this and that, it's so annoying I can't stand it."

Since she nags too much he doesn't want her nearby.

It's almost like a statement a college student would make towards his mother.

Zanoba is still in the middle of his twenties.

It's not as if I don't understand it.

However, Ginger sure is pitiful as well.

She's still young as well.

Spending her precious twenties looking after this kind of large friend.

"Julie what do you think about her?"

For the time being, I'll try asking Julie as well and see.

I need to tell her to properly keep up her everyday training during the time I'm not around as well.

It would be fine to start working on the Ruijerd dolls after I return.

"Ginger-sama. She taught me about all the bad places of Master."

"Is that what she says. It won't be good if Zanoba fixes his bad places right. He should learn from Julie's example."

"Mumu.."

It's like a mother that has plunged into the life of some siblings living an enjoyable life on their own.

There's that sort of atmosphere here.

It's truly pleasant.

"Ah that's right, Julie. Even when I'm not around as well, make sure you properly do what you were told."

"Yes, Grand Master, I'll give it my best."

Julie's human language has improved considerably as well.

This is the result of Ginger's education as well I'm sure.

And, that moment, Ginger returned from searching for a horse.

Holding onto the reins of a single horse.

"Rudeus-dono. Please judge whether this horse will be good."

"Oh."

It's a huge horse.

The horses around this area are all generally massive for the sake of crunching along even in the snow.

It feels like they're an even larger size than even the horses of the Ban'ei horse racing. ^[11]

It seems their speed isn't all that great, but they have physical strength and they're fine running for a full day as well.

It seems like there are many horses that are like monsters in this world.

For the time being, I'll give it the name Matsukaze I guess.

"Thank you, Ginger-san."

"No. Thanks are unnecessary."

"As a reward, is there anything you'd like from Zanoba? Like a shoulder massage?"

"..Rudeus-dono. No matter how much you are Rudeus-dono, don't very much on the side of royalty.."

"Ah, no excuse me, it was a joke."

She seriously started to glare at me.

In any case, we've purchased the horse, we've already said all our farewells properly with those related to the school.

...Huh?

I feel like we're forgetting someone.

No, I'm pretty sure we've said farewells to all our acquaintances.

Badigadi isn't around so he's fine though...

Yeah, it's alright.

I properly forbid everyone I told about it from speaking of the teleport magic circles.

Yeah, there's no problems.

Part 4

Day of departure.

Saying the final farewells to my family.

In front of the entrance way, my wife and two little sisters are seeing me off.

"Sylphy, I'll return soon."

"Rudi..."



With tears building up in the edges of her eyes Sylphy embraced me.
It's the sensation I've grown used to embracing this past half a year.
Small, but it firmly has warmth, almost like a small animal.
Such shoulders trembling.

"[Sniffle]..."

Sylphy wasn't making any noise, just sniffing with her nose.
When faced with this sort of response, it makes me not want to go.

...As I thought should I just stay home.

...Couldn't Paul get by somehow or other until the delivery.

...That's right, after giving it some thought, normally then it would take close to a year for the one way trip.

...Even if I just stay at home for another seven months or so, wouldn't it be fine to depart after watching over to make sure the delivery goes safely?

...Since it takes one and a half months to get there, even so isn't it like meeting within 10 minutes.

Such a thought was floating through my mind.

However, Gisu especially went out of the way to use the express post to deliver it.

On the Begaritto Continent, in order to contact other continents, it's a high speed post that only goes one-way.

Since you can't send anything other than extremely short messages, on top of that it's expensive, it's not something you can use any number of times.

He especially went out of his way to send the letter using such a method.

It's an emergency.

It's without a doubt a situation where every minute matters.

Even though I say that, we'll make it in time for the delivery.

It's something like going for a short business trip.

I wiped Sylphy's tears.

And then, I called out to my two little sisters standing behind her.

"Aisha and Norn as well. I'll leave things to you."

What I'm leaving to them I don't really know myself.

However my two little sisters nodded with meek faces.

"Nii-san. Please don't worry about anything, since I'll give it my best."

"I understand. Onii-chan as well, may the fortunes of war be with you!"

I quietly nodded to those words.

"Yeah. Anyways, both of you, make sure you don't fight."

"Yes."

"Yes."

The two who faithfully nodded were making bitter smiles.

"Sylphy!"

Elinalise who was on the horse approached us.

On top of the horse two weeks worth of luggage was packed, but it's movements haven't even slowed a bit.

As expected of Matsukaze.

"It's alright, even without the husband a child will still be born. Since I'm the one saying it there's no mistake."

"...Yes, Obaa-chan as well, please take care of yourself."

"There's no need for worry, everything will go well."

Elinalise gallantly flipped her hair back.

How cool.

It's almost like a female knight that comes out in a fairy tale.

If it comes down to this, I'll just have to pretend I didn't see the scene of Elinalise going back and forth the other day.

It will halve the moving impression.

Well, I guess it just means that the usually aloof Elinalise has her weak points as well. Everyone has times when they lose themselves.

"Then, we'll head off and return."

I jumped up onto the horse.

Behind Elinalise.

It was a slender but reliable back.

And then warm.

Sorry about this Cliff, I'm borrowing it for a bit.

"Rudi?"

Sylphy tilted her head just a bit.

No it's not like that.

If I don't properly hold onto her then I'll fall I say.

"I'm heading off and shall return."

Let's depart.

Part 5

Five days southwest of the Magic City Sharia.

We arrived at a forest.

These past five days we've been traveling together with a single man we hired at the adventurer's guild.

For the sake of taking the horse and returning.

The horse would just be a hindrance in the forest after all, we don't know the size of the teleport magic circle as well.

It might be convenient for carrying our luggage through the desert, but I'm sure that it would be better to purchase something from the other side instead.

That land should have its own animals more suited to the desert.

Then, it's better for someone to take the horse and return I'm sure.

It's not a cheap purchase after all, we'll make it into our horse.

Since I can't ride a horse, we're moving while I cling to Elinalise from behind.

Naturally, it's not like I'm not doing anything at all.

And, that's not in an erotic meaning.

Everyday I'm pouring magic power into that diaper type magic tool.

Since I have my arms around the area of her hips, the adventurer who was accompanying us was making an envious face as he watched me.

We separated with the horse at the entrance of the forest.

We had the adventurer person take it and return home.

Goodbye Matsukaze.

Live energetically, since Aisha is probably the one who will be looking after you, get along well.

Well then, it's the southwestern forest.

What was the name of it again.

If I remember correctly, it was the Forest of Lumen or a name with that kind of feeling.
If we were to go with a literal translation it would be Stomach Forest I'd say. ^[12]

If I were to try and express this forest in a single word then it would be, "thick", I'm sure.
The density of the trees is thick.

There are many trees that are huge and the trunks are thick as well.

Since the leaves have overgrown and obstruct the sunlight, the entire area is dim, the ground as well, rather than call it the ground it's more like walking on enlarged roots and the footing isn't all that good.

Since the trees are larger, the roots are thick as well; there's a considerable difference in the sizes.

There's places where the trees and roots ended up like a stairway as well.

It's like a natural dungeon. ^[13]

If it's like this, then I'm sure even people who are used to walking through the forest could easily get lost as well.

And then, inside of the forest you get attacked by monsters and almost fall to your death slipping from the roots at high point.

As a result it means you end up becoming nutrients for the forest.

The Stomach is a nicely way of putting it.

Most likely, lumberjacks don't stop by this forest very often.

Maybe because of the frequency at which monsters come out, some of them are strong, or else other forests are just much better for providing lumber.

I'm sure in regards to a reason it would be along those lines.

Oh my, you shouldn't go making light of lumberjacks.

The lumberjacks in this world, they're stronger than the average adventurer and they work like an organization.

There's an abundance of lumber in the forest, but monsters come out.

Even just cutting the trees you have no choice other than to take on a high danger.

Forming a team and occasionally hiring some adventurers as your combat potential, then while fighting the monsters on the expedition, you cut the trees.
There's no way anyone in the Lumberjack Guild would be weak.

If no Lumberjacks enter it then the trees won't be cut down.
If the trees aren't cut down, splendid Treants will grow up. ^[14]

"Rudeus, just as we arranged, we'll go with the same formation as before."
"Understood."

Although, in the case of veterans like us there's no how about it.
Without particularly working ourselves up we enter the forest.
Elinalise is the advance guard and I'm the rear guard.

For Elinalise I'd say as expected of the Elf race.
Her method of walking through the forest was really well done.
Her ears are good, she can detect enemies very fast as well.

"On our right, there's three of them!"
"Understood."

Just as I was told, I fire a rock bullet in that direction.
And then, in the distance an emerald green wild boar has blood spraying out.
I see the remaining two panic and run away as well.

Search and Destroy.
Elinalise finds them and I dispose of them with magic.
The monsters are annihilated without even being able to approach.

It's nice and easy.
Honestly, there was no close combat.
It seems Elinalise was avoiding the territory of monsters that swarm as we pass.
Rather than it being the special characteristic of the Elf race, it seems more like something from her own experience.

"We've found it, it's this stone monument right."

After walking for a short while Elinalise discovered the landmark.

It was a stone monument with a crest carved into it.

In front there was something like a wall covered in densely grown ivy.

I had prepared myself to end up walking around in the forest for two or three days, but we managed to quickly find it before the sun went down.

I'm sure without a doubt Elinalise has such a skill as, "Detect Secret Doors". ^[15]

The stone monument was similar to the stone monument of the Seven World Powers and it has the crest of the Dragon God carved into it.

It's a design with triangles combined together into an acute angle.

Somehow or other, the image that floats into your head looks similar to a crest that gives off an impression of overwhelming power. ^[16]

The details are completely wrong, but as I thought it seems to look like a wooden printing block of a dragon's face.

However... this crest.

I feel like I've seen it somewhere before...

Ah, I see.

It was in the basement of my house, it looks similar to the crest that was on the research data of the automatic doll.

But, the details of that crest are somewhat different as well.

It's just the ambiance of it that's similar.

I wonder if it could be that the producer of that doll was someone related to the Dragon God...

No well, I'm sure there are any number of similar crests.

Even the national flags in the world of my previous life, there were a lot of them that looked similar.

"What's the matter?"

"No, it's nothing."

After being asked by Elinalise I shook my head.

We don't have the spare time to worry over something like that right now.

"For the time being, let's release the barrier."

"I'll leave it to you."

After a short exchange, Elinalise started to keep lookout of the surroundings.

I placed my hand on top of the stone monuments and looked at the memo.

It's the notes Nanahoshi blessed us with.

What was written there were the words for an incantation.

"That dragon lived solely while following its faith. Nothing is able to escape from the grasp of those grand arms. The second dragon that died. He who possessed the most ephemeral eyes Dragon General of Lustrous Green Scales. Borrowing the name of the Holy Dragon Emperor Shilard, I now pierce that barrier."

Just then, the stone monument started sucking magic power out of my arm.

Simultaneously the space in front of my eyes around the stone monument started to distort.

We could see ahead of the stretched distortion.

With trees overgrown in the place where there was the wall like thing, a building made of stone appeared.

"Oh, amazing."

"I've never seen magic like this before.."

Seeing that spectacle the two of us just let out voices of wonder.

However, I have a recollection of this sensation of magic power being sucked out.

It's the same sensation as the time when you make use of a magic tool.

Most likely, this stone monument itself is a variety of magic tool.
I wonder if the Seven World Powers stone monument is a magic tool as well.
If you were to split it open, you might find a magic circle inserted inside it.

However, this incantation.

I can't shake the feeling that it's an original of the Dragon God.

Holy Dragon Emperor Shilard, or something like that comes out after all.

This is, that right.

One of those guys that comes out in the legends, the "Five Dragon Generals" right?

This incantation, since it has no magic name most likely you can't figure out what it is from just the middle of it, but if I could understand it through the end, it may or may not be able to achieve the same effect as this stone monument.

For example, cancelling out all barriers.

I'm troubled since it seems possible.

"Let's get going."

"Sure."

If I could I'd like to extract this stone monument and take it home with me.

But if Orsted were to find out about it, he might come to kill me.

I'll stop there.

"Nevertheless, they certainly do give off the feeling of ruins."

"Occasionally, the entrances of labyrinths are this sort of feeling."

What appeared was just a single floor made of stone.

The walls had ivy crawling all along them, several places were worn down and crumbling.

"Rudeus it's your first time in a labyrinth right."

"Yeah."

"Be careful not to step outside of my footsteps."

"Understood... or rather, this place, isn't a labyrinth is it?"

"It's just in case."

Traps are scary after all.

However, I'm sure Elinalise isn't particularly a master or anything.

I wonder if it's alright.

Even if we get caught in a trap, I wonder if we would be able to stand it.

For the time being, I'll keep my Demon Eye open.

If anything happens, I should be able to deal with it on the spot.

"Then, let's go, if anything happens cover me."

"Understood."

Together with Elinalise we walked into the ruins.

".."

Inside was made of stone as well and from in there ivy and roots were coming out.

It's exactly the feeling of ruins deep in a forest.

Even though I say that, it doesn't seem to be all that large of a building.

There were only four rooms.

We decided to take a look at them in order.

There was nothing in the two rooms near the entrance.

They were just a space of about 4.5 tatami mats filled with clutter.

In the third room there was something like a closet.

After opening it to look inside, winter clothes for a man were placed inside for storage.

There are traces of it being used.

I wonder if someone would get changed here.

Someone, though I can't think of anyone other than Orsted.

According to the story, on the other side of the teleport it's a desert. I guess in the winter around here it ends up a snow-fallen area

You can't get your hands on winter clothes in the desert.

Therefore, that would be why they were left here beforehand.

Humu, if there was this sort of room, then it might have been fine to bring even more luggage.

Well, it's too late now.

"What's the matter? Staring at those clothes, is there something that's bothering you?"

"No, if we were to leave behind some luggage here, I was just thinking we could have made use of something."

"...Here, then it would be like throwing things away as you go."

Well, as expected you wouldn't be able to leave behind food goods or that type of thing in storage.

Even if there's a barrier, it seems like bugs or such things could get in after all.

"Let's go."

"Yes."

There were stairs in the final room.

Stairs going underground.

"Oh my, how suspicious..."

Elinalise was carefully investigating the surroundings of the stairway.

It was a movement kind of like clearing in an FPS. ^[17]

It seems there are many cases of traps in the vicinity of stairways.

"It's alright."

However, it seems she wasn't able to find anything.

In the first place, if there was a trap set, then I'm sure there would be more placed in other locations.

For example, the entrance of the ruins.

"We're going to descend. Follow me."

"Understood."

Elinalise was carefully proceeding down.

I was following behind in Elinalise's footprints as well.

I would look at the same place as her footsteps and step on the same spot.

Even though we're going underground, our surroundings are mysteriously bright.

The reason for that became clear at the time when we descended into the underground.

"...It's there, isn't it?"

Ahead of where we descended from the stairs there was a large magic circle.

The size would be about 4.5 tatami mats, I guess.

It's about the same size as the one I saw in the cellar of the Shirone Royal Palace.

That was releasing a bluish-white light.

"This is a teleport magic circle?"

"Most likely, I'd say it is."

For the time being, I took the book out of my luggage and looked at it while making a comparison.

It had a resemblance to the type of magic circles which are capable of two-way teleportation.

The details are different, but there's no mistake on the characteristics.

If the story I heard from Nanahoshi is true, then if you place your foot here, just like that, you'll be in Begaritto Continent.

Elinalise just kept staring at the teleport magic circle while standing still.

"What's wrong? Let's go."

"No, I have somewhat bad memories from teleportation."

Bad memories of teleportation, huh.

There must have been something that happened during her adventurer days.

"If it's just at the level of bad memories, then I have some as well."

"That's right, isn't it?"

Elinalise shook her head and looked at the magic circle with an "alright."

"If we end up being dropped into some weird place, let's punish Nanahoshi."

"...Yeah. I'll capture her with both of my arms, and during that time you can thrust into her."

"No, in a sexual way is just a bit."

"I didn't particularly say what you would be thrusting into her and where. For example sticking your fingers into her nose, easily coming to those sorts of ideas, you sure are lewd!"

"Thrust my fingers into a girl's nose or something like that, wouldn't that be something to get excited about."

"Oh my, is that so? Next time I'll have Cliff give it a try."

"I won't take any responsibility for that."

While we were making immodest jokes, my hand was grabbed by Elinalise.

It was a slender but sinewy hand.

It's the hand of an adventurer.

Warm and a bit sweaty.

My heart's beating a bit.

Even though I have Sylphy.

Even though Elinalise has Cliff.

If I take her hand, I wonder what would happen.

Rather than an affair, it's more like adultery.

It's not like we particularly like each other.

"It seems like you're making some kind of misunderstanding, but if you aren't in contact with some part of their body then you won't be teleported together you know?"

"Ah, that's right isn't it? Excuse me."

No good, no good.

It's not like I'm a virgin. These sorts of misunderstandings are no good.

"Ah~, to be seducing my granddaughter's husband. How sinful of a woman I am!"

"In order to atone for the sin, you should do it for once."

"Ah, wait, don't say those sorts of things."

Humu.

If we can poke fun at it with this kind of feeling, then it doesn't seem like we'll cross over the line.

As expected of Elinalise's ability to read the mood.

"Now then, shall we go?"

"Yeah."

We stepped foot on the teleport magic circle.

Chapter 3

Natural Enemy Encounter

Part 1

I felt a sensation almost like suddenly waking up from sleep.

I guess it would be the feeling of being taken aback.

It clearly felt like my consciousness was interrupted for a moment.

After looking next to me, Elinalise was looking over the surroundings with a face like a fox had her as well.

"We've teleported haven't we?"

"I wonder."

I look at our surroundings.

It's the same as just before, ruins made of stone.

It really doesn't look like there are any differences.

No, in the corner there's a bit of sand piling up.

There's no ivy along the walls anymore as well.

The light brown color has increased as a whole.

It's a different place.

We slowly and carefully leave the magic circle.

There's nothing unusual with our bodies.

We have our baggage.

Elinalise and the contents haven't changed places either.

After we left, the magic circle started up activity again and began to release a bluish-white light.

That sure is convenient.

From what I can see, even though it doesn't seem like a magic crystal has been established anywhere, I wonder how it works.

I wonder if there's a crystal left deep underground.

If it's capable of absorbing the magic power from its surroundings, then I would certainly like to know the method but...

"And. For the time being, I'd like to ascertain if we can return."

"That's right."

There are magic circles for two-way teleportation, but that doesn't mean we are able to return unconditionally.

In the case of a one-way passage, we'll have to return on foot.

We've already managed to come here, but the return trip on foot would still be half a year.

"Then I will..."

"No, I'll go. I'll go for a short while and if I can't return, then go on ahead without me."

After saying that Elinalise had me step back.

"If the worst case happens and you end up disappearing, I'll pass on reporting that to Paul."

"I see, then I'll leave it to you."

Well, I don't really mind which of us does it.

It does seem like we were teleported, but it's not certain that this is even Begaritto after all.

"Then, I'm going."

Elinalise jumped onto the magic circle.

In the next instant, it was almost like the magic circle sucked her up and her figure disappeared.

It's the first time I've seen the moment when someone was teleported.

It gave off a feeling kind of like being swallowed up by the ground.
I wonder if you move through the inside of the ground.

"..."

For the time being, I'll wait at ease.
I have faith in Nanahoshi's story.
Orsted claimed that it doesn't particularly require any incantation.
There's the possibility that it might have required some kind of magic tool as well, but for the time being we've already succeeded on the teleport once.
Then, I want to think that returning will be fine as well.

Five minutes.
Ten minutes.
Fifteen minutes.

"She's slo...O."

After fifteen minutes Elinalise returned.
In the moment she appeared it was like a reverse playback of the moment she disappeared.
From the ground it seemed like she was almost exhaled out as she appeared.

Elinalise was restlessly looking around her surroundings, after seeing my figure she nodded deeply.

"I was able to properly return it seems."
"In any case, you were just a bit slow though."
"Is that so? I had intended to return immediately though."

Is there some sort of time lag.
Even though I say that, it's at most several minutes.
On the one-way path only about seven minutes.
I wonder if the time difference has some relation to it.

Ah, come to think of it, I feel like I heard the story somewhere that there was a bit of a lag between the time when Fedoa Region disappeared and the refugees started to appear as well.

Was the one who said it Sylphy I wonder?

Teleporting isn't instant movement, but it might be high speed movement.

Or else maybe it's something like Boson Jump. ^[18]

"In any case, if we're able to return then there's no problem."

"That's right."

If it was something dangerous, then I'm sure Orsted wouldn't use it after all.

We should just be fine with the fact that we were able to confirm we can return.

"Then shall we go."

After we confirmed that we can make use of the magic circle, we went up the stairs.

Part 2

The moment we arrived on the first floor, I felt the temperature quickly rising.

It was a gust of hot air.

However, maybe because the humidity is low, but it doesn't feel all that sticky.

I heard that the desert stretched out around the surroundings of the ruins.

Then, I can understand this heat as well.

The first floor was made well with stone the same as the ruins in the forest.

If there was something you could call a difference, it would be that there's no ivy on the walls and roof, and there's sand piling up in the passage.

There's almost enough sand that you can barely see the floor.

And, there's a number of footprints still remaining.

It better not be those of Orsted.

If we end up running into him, I'll have to surrender in a dogeza.^[19]

There were four rooms.

I wonder if the layout of the ruins is the same.

Inside of one of the rooms, there was a thick white mantle and a canteen deposited.

...As I thought this should be something that belongs to Orsted I'm sure.

"The footprints, what should we do, should we try and erase them."

"Is it that one Orsted? I think it will be fine but.."

But, it's scary.

I wonder if we should leave a note or something.

With Nanahoshi's referral, I've made usage of your teleportation magic circle. We will make sure to keep to the obligation of confidentiality, so please do not get angry. Something like that.

...Since we don't know when he'll come, unexpectedly the probability that he doesn't find out might be high as well.

There's the possibility that the note itself might be the snake in the bush.

For the time being, I'll avoid going with that.

After that, we investigated the rest of the ruins, but naturally we didn't run into Orsted.

After investigating the rooms we went outside.

It was hot outside.

It wasn't warm.

It was HOT. ^[20]

The breeze blowing across my face hurts.

In front of my eyes was the scenery of sand dunes spreading out that I've seen a number of times in pictures in my previous life.

It's a desert.

However, the sun has started to set.

I'm sure it will be night very soon.

How did it go, was it better to walk around in the desert at night?

Or since it's below freezing at night, was it no good to move around?

I wonder if it's fine to apply that sort of common sense to this world as well.

...If I remember correctly, there are many monsters in the desert that are active at night.

Moving around in the darkness, I'm sure getting surprise attacked by monsters would be dangerous.

"Elinalise-san, what should we do?"

"Even if we started walking now, we wouldn't cover very much distance. It's a bit early, but let's sleep in a place with a roof."

It became that we would be staying over night in these ruins for today.

Part 3

The night was an intense cold.

I had heard that the temperature difference from the day and the night were severe, and that certainly was the case.

It's fine right now because we're inside of the ruins, but I can't help but think about the time when we'll be camping outside.

I wonder if it would be fine to create a shelter with earth magic and pass time there.

Using earth magic to create an "Earth Fortress" is convenient, but if I stop supplying it with magic power it will collapse.

However, if I tamper with it a bit, maintaining it in the shape of a Kamakura is possible.

We could make a campfire inside of there and warm it up.

Yeah, let's go with that.

For today, we're laying down in sleeping bags in one of the rooms in the ruins.

For the time being, before sleeping I poured all the magic power I could supply into Elinalise's magic tool.

Putting my hand on the diaper and pouring magic power into it.

It's an idiotic scene.

Elinalise said it in passing.

"...Rudeus, if you end up not having enough magic power, at that time put off the magic tool."

"But, if I stop supplying this magic power, won't Elinalise-san be unable to endure it?"

"If it comes to combat, then your magic is absolutely essential. Let's go with placing priority on that."

The monsters on Begaritto Continent aren't as strong as the ones on Magic Continent.

Even though I say that, there should be monsters at the same level.

We can't let our guard down.

"No, with just this much then it's not like my magic power will disappear after all."

"Is that so? It's really endless isn't it.."

"It doesn't match up to Elinalise-san's sexual desire though."

"Ara, it's not to that degree at all."

In the first place, if I skip out on pouring magic power into the magic tool and Elinalise becomes a sex beast then it would be terrible.

If I'm attacked then I'm sure I won't be able to endure it.

[Just once, it'll be fine as just a secret between the two of us.]

[I resisted it, but I wasn't able to do anything to prevent it.]

Like that, I can make up a lot of excuses for myself after all.

If I can't endure it, both of us might end up experiencing disaster.

Like Elinalise getting pregnant.

Cliff would resent me for his whole life, Sylphy would look at me with an empty look, my little sisters would scorn me.

Yeah, if I were to lay my hands on Elinalise, I can't see anything but a bad future ahead.

If, you end up unable to endure it, at least make do with just the mouth.

And, that's no good.

By the point that such thoughts as those rise to the surface, I start to accumulate it as well.

This past week I've been clinging on to Elinalise after all.

We haven't done anything particularly erotic, but I am young after all.

Tonight, at the time when I'm standing guard, I need to make sure I take care of it.

"Well, let's sleep. It seems that for a short while this desert will continue, it won't be good if we don't preserve our physical strength."

"That's right."

Even though it's no good if we don't preserve our physical strength, if I don't let out what needs to be let out it won't be good.

It's painful being a man.

Part 4

That night.

While we were on standby in a room of the ruins I suddenly could smell a sweet scent.
And simultaneously I suddenly felt a throbbing.

My heart was beating fast.

After opening my eyes, there Elinalise was sleeping.

While embracing her sword close she seemed unable to sleep well.

The nape of her neck is white.

Her hands are white and supple.

Her face looks similar to Sylphy, but more adult-like than Sylphy.

Her figure as well, her height is taller than Sylphy and slender.

Especially, the line going from her waist to her hip, more than any other woman I've seen until now it was a perfectly drawn curve.

Elinalise, if I remember correctly, she was unreasonably skilled right..

"Haa..haa.."

By the time I realized it, my log had grown into a large tree.

My head feels fuzzy.

"Nn.."

Elinalise twists her body.

The blanket opened up and I could see her thighs tightly wrapped in those fur pants.

It's a good butt.

It makes one want to start groping it with all their strength.

Subconsciously, I started to stretch my hand out towards her inner thighs.

I want to touch.

I want to touch.

Tempted by emotion, I touch her inner thigh.

Her legs are almost like an antelope. ^[21]

After I touched them and Elinalise let out a moan of "nn", she slightly opened her legs.

This person, isn't she tempting me...?

By the time I realize it, my lower half is already in a situation where it can't endure.

It's fine. It's alright. If it's just once, just once.

Elinalise won't refuse it.

She'll silently accept it.

It's no problem, just like that.

"Cliff...?"

With her sleep-talk, I returned to myself.

I crawled on all fours and left the room.

Just like that, I left outside the ruins like I was running away from something.

I thought I was still safe, but it seems like it's somewhat saved up.

No good, no good.

I can't be swept away by a moment's feelings.

This sort of sinful fluid, it's restricted to being ejected.

Thinking that, I sit down on top of the sand.

And then around the time I pull down my pants.

Suddenly, I feel a presence.

"...Nn?"

I wonder if it's Elinalise.

Thinking that, I face the direction of the presence and there was a bewitching female standing there.

Even though it's cold, she's wearing attire like a dancer.

The cloth is thin. If you look in bright places, it might appear transparent.

Her hair was short and the color is black I guess. The ends of her hair have some curls.

It's hard to tell what color her skin is in this darkness.

Just, in this darkness, it appears to shine dimly white.

In any case, it's a good body.

Almost like the kind you would want to hug. I'm sure this would be that case.

It's a dynamite body.

If I were to make the comparisons, Elinalise is like a tree branch.

She placed her finger to her lips.

Then she licked the tip of her finger.

That bewitching gesture, I had my eyes stolen.

I couldn't take my eyes off her lips.

Just like that, she slowly walked over to my side.

And then crouched in front of me and slowly spread her thighs.

In that instant, the same sweet scent that I just smelled before went into my nose.

A scent with a more overwhelming richness than just before was stimulating my nose.

"[Gulp]..."

I swallow my saliva.

I felt like something was dripping from my chin.

After wiping it and taking a look my hand was stained in deep red.

I realized I had a nosebleed.

"Ufufufu.."

She extended her arms telling me to come.

I grabbed that hand almost like falling towards her and...

"Rudeus!"

In the next instant, I heard a shout echo from inside the ruins.

Simultaneously, a woman jumped out.

In the place where the woman was, Elinalise, while holding a sword, jumped.

Just like that, she thrust herself into the space between the woman and I.

"Get a hold of yourself!"

"Eh?"

Bewilderment.

Elinalise was standing at the ready, she charged towards the woman.

"Ki.....!"

The woman raised a high-pitched scream and grew out strangely long nails.

Before my eyes, her physique was changing and wings grew out of her back.

Moving those wings, she flew into the sky.

There she leaped to attack Elinalise.

Ga~n!

After, she hit the shield and with a dull metal sound let out, the woman rolled onto the ground.

Without delay Elinalise pinned down the woman's body with her foot.

And then, she stabbed her sword into the torso of the struggling woman.

"Gyo....."

The woman let out an eerie voice.

Without negligence, Elinalise stuck her sword into the woman's body a number of times.
After that, she stepped back taking some distance.
For a short while, the woman moved with a twitch, but after a little while she stopped moving.
She died.

"Eh..."

I watched that scene in a daze.
Wait, what happened I don't know.
Same as always, my lower body was ecstatic.
Huh?
Why?
What happened?

While I was in confusion, Elinalise started slapping my cheeks.

"Get a hold of yourself, it's a Succubus!"

"Eh? Succubus? Just now was?"

The dead woman.
No matter how you look it, she's a normal woman.
Though she was growing wings like a bat from her back and her nails were abnormally long.

Ah, after looking properly, her skin is blue.
The parts of her face as well, if you look closely, they're a little different from a humans.
But, it's a good body.
Though she died.
If she's dead, then she won't get angry if I grope them.
There's holes on a corpse as well after all...

"It's the first time I've seen one as well though. Just as it was said in the rumors, there's a scent strong enough to twist your nose, there's no mistake.."

"Scent?"

Rather I feel it's a good scent.

I feel amazingly aroused.

In any case,

look at Elinalise's body.

While her chest is on the small side, she has a beautiful face and long slender legs.

That splendid curve around her hips.

"Elinalise-san, you have a good body right?"

"Wa? Wait, Rudeus. Get a hold of yourself."

It's alright, this woman is lewd.

If I praise her, I can do it.

Do it. She's an easy to do girl.

"I feel like I want to be embraced by a gentle person like Elinalise-san..."

"I'll tell on you to Sylphy?"

"If you don't say anything, it'll never be exposed.."

I stand up and face Elinalise.

Elinalise prepared her shield and drew back.

"Ah, come to think of it, I heard that Succubi bewilder men."

"Hey, Elinalise-san..let's do perverted things.."

Elinalise lowered her eyebrows and sighed once.

"Hnnn!!"

Ga~n!

I was hit with the shield.

I was thrown back on top of the sand.

My eyes are flickering.

No, that's fine, rather than that it's Elinalise.

If I don't violate the woman in front of my eyes right now.

"Haa..haa..one time, it'll be fine just one time. I'll absolutely make sure to satisfy you so..."

"Ah, geeze..Rudeus. While I count to 10, use Detoxification magic."

"Detoxification magic? Then will you let me do it?"

"...Quickly use it."

Without even trying to hide my rough breathing, I say the incantation for detoxification magic.

Starting with elementary and then moving into the incantation from intermediate.

Suddenly my body feels lighter.

"...Huh?"

Suddenly my head feels refreshed.

My lower body is a bit heavy, but the unbearable sexual desire is already gone.

I look at Elinalise.

Well, her figure is erotic.

Certainly it's erotic.

But, it's just that.

"The scent that Succubus let out, I had heard that it has the effect of seducing men, but it sure is exceptional isn't it?"

After letting out a sigh, Elinalise put her sword into its sheath.

And then, crossed her arms and "fu.." took a deep breath and sighed.

"..Fu.. Good grief."

".."

Just now I. What was I doing?

The words I said a moment ago.

...This is bad.

"Now, let's sleep. Please take care not to let your guard down next time."

While saying that, Elinalise returned back into the room.

While fidgeting with my hands together, I called out to her.

"Umm, Elinalise-san. That is, I'm sorry about just now."

After saying that, Elinalise turned around with a suspicious face and then laughed with a grin.

"I want to try being gently embraced by a person like Elinalise-san."

I felt my face get hot.

That is something the Succubus forcibly made me say!

"Let's do perverted things?"

"Gununu"

What is this?

Why is this so embarrassing?

While Elinalise was laughing and grinning, she walked up to where I was, and patted my head with a [Ponpon].

"I understand. Succubi are that sort of monster. It can't be helped. Of course, I will make sure not to say anything to Sylphy or Paul as well."

"Elinalise-san!"

Erinarise looked like a goddess.

"But it's not good to be too trusting. Until now I've been able to handle things myself, but since the curse is gradually getting stronger. Eventually I will be unable to endure it anymore."

"I understand. Please take good care of me at that time."

"That's not it, at that time you need to endure it!"

"Yes."

After saying that, Elinalise quietly smiled.

"Then, since I'm going to sleep, please take care of continuing to keep a lookout...also, please burn the corpse as well."

"Understood."

Elinalise went inside of the ruins.

I did something bad.

I burned the body of the Succubus and buried the bones.

After looking from nearby, the Succubus didn't have a cute face or anything at all.

It was a face like a bat.

Why did I feel desire towards this kind of thing I wonder?

When I looked at it just now I thought it had a human face though.

If you reveal it's real nature you'll see it's true face, or something like that I guess.

It's like a Vampire from western movies.

Body huh, this body is no good huh.

It had a good body though.

Bon-kyu-bon. ^[22]

It feels kind of like having the option to attach breasts to Elinalise.

And, no good, no good.

In any case, that was dangerous.

If Elinalise hadn't jumped out there, I wonder what would have happened.

Just like that, if I took that hand...

I might have died from having my vitality sucked out.

Wu, nevertheless, my lower body is heavy.

This and that as well, it's all because of that Succubus.

If this is going to continue, I might really end up attacking Elinalise.

Before I enter the ruins, I should make sure to take care of it.

In any case, from now on, I need to be cautious of Succubi as well.

Just like this, we passed our first night on Begaritto Continent.

Chapter 4

Desert Ecology

Part 1

Our trip in the desert began.

My body was tense thanks to the surprise attack from the Succubus.

Perhaps due to spending the last few years in school, my intuition might have dulled.

Although, my intuition was never that sharp anyway.

These sorts of things are dependent on the feeling.

This is the Begaritto Continent.

It is different from the safe Central Continent.

I may die if I'm not careful.

"Let's wear thick clothes for now. Making sure to keep well hydrated, please tell me if the water in your flask runs out."

"Understood."

We are wearing a hood and a coat.

We aren't letting our skin get exposed.

If Cliff was here, he would probably complain about having to wear thick clothes even though it is so hot.

Even though we're in a desert, I can make water and ice with magic.

However, we don't know what might happen.

Neither me nor Elinalise know the proper ways of traveling through the desert.

I have to make sure I don't suddenly get heat stroke and become unable to use magic.

"The direction we should advance, well, is North fine?"

"Yeah, I'm in your care."

Looking at the map, the closest town is due north.

Elinalise began walking precisely North without relying on a compass.

The elves do not lose their sense of direction even within a dense forest where you can't see the sun.

With her decades of experience, Elinalise can move straight in the correct direction.

Although, even without being an elf there are many people in this world who can safely arrive in the village as long as they have a map.

It probably comes from experience.

"Anyway, it's hot isn't it."

"Should I make rain fall on this whole region?"

"You'd better not, monsters will come."

In any desert, living things seek water.

In the Great Forest as well, during the rainy season lizard-like beasts came out in large quantities.

However, I heard that the beasts of the Begaritto Continent are weak to cold.

If the time comes, I will freeze the whole area.

Obviously making sure I don't drag Elinalise into it.

While thinking such, I followed Elinalise.

Just in case, I confirmed the position of the stone monument as well.

Part 2

It's the first time I have ever walked in a desert.

It feels like my foot is buried in soft sand every step I take.

It's good that I got used to walking in the snow in the northern lands.

Although, I can't say it's the same thing, the burden on my legs is about the same.

Like this I won't have any problem even walking through the whole day.

Or that's what I thought, but I was exhausted after walking for just a few hours.

The strong sunlight must be affecting me.

The strong rays and hot winds raise my body temperature and make me dizzy.

Although, I am regulating my body temperature by replenishing fluids, the lethargy that occurs is beyond control.

Perhaps I should have made at least one cloud in the atmosphere.

Compared to me, Elinalise was full of energy.

"Rudeus, unexpectedly you have no stamina, do you?"

"Well, I think the sand is fine since I am used to walking in snow. But I can do nothing about the heat."

"But I'm sure if it was Cliff or Zanoba here they would have collapsed long ago. I think it was the right call not to take them along."

As I thought the warriors of this world have monstrous stamina.

Perhaps this is thanks to Fighting Spirit?

I'm jealous.

Still, the heat is dangerous.

It feels like my sweat evaporates the instant it comes out.

When I was in the northern lands, the cold was dangerous.

Back then I just used magic to raise the temperature in the space around me.
It was an application of the fire magic [Burning Blaze].
If I tamper with that it might be useful here.

I'll try activating it right now.

"Oh, that feels nice, did you do something?"
"I tried lowering the air temperature around us."

It feels like the temperature dropped something around 5°C.
It's still too hot.
This flashiness^[23] must be because of the never ending sun.
Even though I am wearing a hood, the top of my head is burning.
It might have been good to prepare a parasol.

For now, I walked forward while lowering the temperature around me and froze a water flask to put under my clothes.
If it melts I will freeze it again with magic.
This made me feel a lot better.
Like this, I can handle the heat.

Part 3

During the day, we encountered several beasts.

What we first saw looked like a big scorpion.

About 2 meters I'd say.

The tail was separated into two and each attacked by moving separately.

According to Elinalise it was a [Twin Death Scorpion].

Because the tails emit deadly poison, you can't treat it without Intermediate detoxification.

It's good that I learned it.

The [Twin Death Scorpion] had a somewhat hard shell, but its movement was slow.

After Elinalise stopped its movement, I shot a single [Rock Bullet].

It was an opponent we could defeat in two seconds.

It seems to be B class, but the affinity with the party was good. It's a small fry.

However, if it was Elinalise alone it would be a close fight due to her lacking a bit in attack strength, it seems.

"Phew, it's pretty big isn't it?"

"Isn't it pretty normal?"

"About the same size as the beasts on the Demon Continent."

Well, now that you mention it...

The beasts on Begaritto Continent are weaker than the ones on Demon Continent.

That's what I heard, so this size was a bit of a surprise.

I expected the size to be about half of this.

"This one might be especially big compared to the others, right?"

"The one you meet first being the best is something you hear often."

"No, it's not."

"Well, maybe the opponents in this area are just stronger."

"That might be the case."

While conversing like that, we hurried forward.

The next thing we saw was a treant.

This monster is really everywhere isn't it.

This time it was formed into a cactus.

By the way, it's called a [Cactus Treant].

It's a C rank monster.

It came in shooting needles and used something similar to earth magic as well, but still it was nothing special.

"I feel sort of relieved whenever I find a treant."

"It's something you find everywhere after all. It's like a slime."

"Hmm? You only find slimes in caves though?"

"Uhh don't mind me just talking to myself. Anyway, you can't really make this cactus into firewood can you?"

"It has absorbed too much moisture after all. If you have no magic though it's a thankful existence."

Elinalise can currently use water magic as well.

Although I thought she was skipping classes, it seems she was properly learning whatever she could.

Then that thing suddenly appeared.

"Enemy attack!"

While suddenly shouting that, Elinalise took a back step.

In the next instant, something big came out of the ground where Elinalise had been.

It's an earthworm.

With a thickness of one meter and a length of about five meters, a giant worm burst out of the ground.

After making a weird "bakun!!" sound in midair it immediately dove underground again.

"Phew, that surprised me."

"What was that?"

"It was a Sandworm. A bit big though."

Sandworms are a monster that waits motionlessly in the earth waiting for prey to pass above, at which point they burst out of the ground to eat it.

Although I didn't see any, it seems there are similar monsters in the Great Forest. Just the size is different.

The one in the Great Forest is apparently around 20 to 30 centimeters in diameter. It's not really a threat to humans.

"There are big ones in the Demon Continent as well, right? Have you seen any?"

"I only saw snakes and wolves in the Demon Continent. And some weird armor."

"When you say armor do you mean Soul Breaker?"

"No, it was called Executioner or something like that. It had a big sword."

"Oh, the stronger one. It's not something you want to meet alone, is it."

Anyway, Begaritto Continent's sandworms are big.

Just the part that came above ground was already 5 meters long.

If you include the part underground, in total it might come close to 10 meters.

It was at a size where it could swallow a human whole.

Something like that was lying in wait underground waiting to "bakun" if something passed by.

It's a kind of instant death trap.

Although, if you dodge the first attack putting an end to it is not hard.

If you put the sandworm underground in a "mixer" with earth magic, they will instantly die without even a death shriek.

The bodily fluids collect into a puddle above ground.

It's a bit gross.

"I wonder how magnificent of a butterfly would be born from a caterpillar this big."

"It might unexpectedly turn into a succubus you know? The butterfly of the night, or something."

"Oh oh then Elinalise-san must have been born from a caterpillar."

"Fufu, I did have a caterpillar-like period once."

She won't deny being part succubus either.

Anyway, I wonder what a caterpillar-like Elinalise was like.

Maybe a girl with glasses sitting in the library.

Or maybe wearing overalls doing farmwork in the fields.

If you showed Cliff a video of those days he would probably get aroused.

The gap^[24] is a splendid thing after all.

The last thing we encountered was an ant.

We discovered it after climbing over a sand dune, and the instant Elinalise discovered it she immediately pushed me down.

After finally climbing to the top, we rolled halfway down.

"What is this suddenly?"

"It's a swarm of Phalanx Ants!"

Phalanx Ant.

Even if you say that, I have no idea what it is.

For now, imitating Elinalise, I slowly crawl up the hill.

In front of me was Elinalise's ass packed in hide trousers.

As usual Elinalise has a nice ass.

Sylphy might have something like this as well when she's about 20.

Right now it's a small ass, but it's still plenty attractive.

"Move quietly so we don't provoke them."

We arrived at the peak of the dune.

Hiding behind the slope, we tried observing the swarm of Phalanx Ants.

There, a swarm of bright red ants moved in files of troops.

If I were to estimate the size, they're about 30 centimeters to 1 meter big.

There are both big ones and small ones.

Their forms vary as well, there are some with wings and some with an upper body like a human.

While making noise those ants were marching along heading towards a single point.

Simply said, it's an army of ants.

The army of ants looked like a red river.

The length was from the horizon to the other side.

It was a line of terrifying length.

"With that size and amount, they can easily be classified as S class."

"Wow, S class is it. For reference please give me an explanation."

"The Phalanx Ant is one type of the strongest monsters which consume everything on their path.

There are some in the Great Forest as well, but this size must be a characteristic native to the Begaritto continent."

Phalanx Ants are a variant of army ants.

Even though they're ants, without making a nest they earnestly travel while consuming everything on their path.

Although there are several natural enemies, if it's an opponent walking on the earth, even if it's a stray dragon, it will be consumed.

And then, when a certain season comes around, they make a nest and switch with the next generation.

Up to this point they're like normal army ants.

However, perhaps due to being a monster, their intelligence and aggressiveness are apparently higher than normal army ants.

For example, if we made a grand appearance from behind the dune, even if we took no hostile action, they would change direction to come attack us, it seems.

"They're not that strong one on one. From what I can tell, the small ones are E class and the large ones are from D to C class."

"But still they are C class at most?"

From what I can tell, there are a lot more than one or two thousand of them.
The number of monsters in the swarm is taken into account in the monster ranking system in this world.
Even if they're D or C class, if 10000 small fries come together it's easily S class.

In a certain game in my previous life, ants three times as large as humans came out in large quantities.

But it's not necessary to be that big.
The monsters in this world are awfully good at moving around.

"Oh, that one is the queen."

Elinalise pointed at a certain point in the swarm.
There was an especially large individual.
The ant was more than 2 meters long, with a woman's body growing from it's upper body.
It gave off the feeling of the Hive Queen^[25].
I'd say Stun must be it's weak point.

In my previous world, the queens of army ants were at most 50 millimeters big. Taking that into account, that Phalanx Ant is 50 times the size of it.
It's a threat.

This world has awfully many monsters that group together.
For some reason they are also good at group tactics.
That's why I don't want to fight those ants.

I'm sure the instant I try to meddle with them they will rush at me in a beautiful roman circle formation.
There might even be ants that use magic or launch long range attacks at me.

There might be a chance of victory if I used a large scale magic attack that could wipe them out.
No, if I used something like that we would take damage as well.

"Hey Rudeus! Why are you making a face like you're ready to fight?"

"Fight? I wouldn't do something like that."

"You were making a face like you were planning on how to attack the ants if we fought."

I wouldn't make a belligerent face like that.

Which combat race would I belong to.

I'm not getting excited.

"Nah, I was just thinking about how to escape if they noticed us."

"Then it's fine. We are going to wait until the swarm has passed through."

"Understood."

I agreed with Elinalise's plan.

It's not like my experience points would go up even if I dispersed them.

Even if I grabbed materials to sell them for gold I wouldn't be able to carry those red and hot-looking shells in this damn heat.

Let's avoid danger.

Our objective right now is to arrive in Lapan after all.

Not to raise my achievements.

It wouldn't be good if something like reconnaissance became the duty of our mission.

After about an hour, the ants disappeared.

Part 4

The evening in the desert is red.

The ground is dyed deep red and the contrast in the patterns on the ground is seen clearly. As red and black produce stripe patterns on the surface, an illusion like scene stretches out.

It's another world.

There must have been such a scene in the previous world as well.

"The temperature is falling. It seems like at this rate we can gain a lot more distance during the night."

"That's right, let's keep going."

"Understo...huh?"

As we were talking, I noticed something was flying around in the air.

Looking closer, it was a large bat around 50cm.

Big.

They started circling around us while making noise flapping their wings.

It doesn't come out during the day, maybe it preys on normal insects and lizards.

"It's a big bat isn't it."

"Oh, is it a monster?"

"Whether it's a monster or not is hard to tell, but we should be careful since there are so many of them."

It seems this bat is called a Giant Bat.

Its rank is F.

Because there are many of them, it might be around E class.

It lacks attack power and is not much of an opponent.

It doesn't attack humans either.

It only makes annoying flapping sounds, it seems.

"W-what? What are they doing?"

For some reason they were swarming around Elinalise.
They weren't particularly attacking, just flying around her.
Are they male?

"Hey, Rudeus! Don't just look and do something!"
"Okay."

Not even Elinalise can handle being swarmed around this much.
Should I make a tornado to scatter them?
I was thinking such carefree thoughts.

"Hmm?"

Within the swarm of bats.
A conspicuous large silhouette was mixed in.
With the wings of a large bat, it was bewitchingly skipping closer.
At the same time, a sweet scent was tickling my nose.
It's a Succubus.

"Uoooh! [Rock Bullet Stone Cannon]!"

From my hand a thick and hard bullet shoots out driving itself into the succubus like a body blow.

While making an anguished face, the succubus takes a back step.
Without stopping it runs away while holding it's stomach.

Whoops.

I unconsciously lowered the strength.
Somehow it seems if the opponent has a human face it's no good.
I don't have such a thing as the resolve to kill.

I am weak to the monster called succubus.

I'll admit it.

Since I won't kill it, the moment I sniff the scent, pheromones I'll lose my reason.

On the day I approach one to fight it, I will probably be captured before I know it.

Although, as long as there's distance between us, I can defeat it with a single rock bullet.

I won't be defeated.

The combat strength of a succubus is around E class, but it is classified as C class.

It's a powerful monster.

If I was still a virgin, no, if I hadn't experienced the sweet nights with Sylphy, I probably couldn't have won.

The being called succubus itself was something I loved during my previous life after all.

The succubus of this world is a bit ugly without makeup, but as long as you show your naked body in front of a man there's nothing to be done about it.

Once you understand it's something like that, it's easy to accept it.

That's why it can't be helped.

After the Giant Bats had been taken care of, coming from behind Elinalise and embracing her.

This is something that can't be helped.

It's an abnormal status.

"Hey, Rudeus! Pull yourself together! Use detoxification quickly! Stop pushing on me!"

"Just a bit, it will only be for a bit! Just the tip! It will be fine if I do it from behind, from behind it doesn't count as an affair!"

"Stop messing around!"

"Guho!"

As I was embracing her, Elinalise struck me with a sturdy buckler.

If this was an eroge, Elinalise would be called a violent type heroine.

It's not unreasonable.

In any case, after coming to my senses a bit from the pain, I used detoxification.

"Haa... haa... You trouble me."

"It can't be helped... It's that kind of monster after all."

Uu, the place where I was hit is throbbing with pain.

A shield is a blunt weapon after all.

"Fuu... Seriously, I want succubuses to leave us alone already! Ahh, really, I'm starting to feel the itch coming on."

Elinalise was slapping her reddened cheeks while shaking her head.

In my courting behavior it seems she felt something from the irregular movements.

It was completely the Succubus' pheromones fault, it's not like I actually wanted to succumb to lust or anything.

Well, it's fine.

By hitting me she is withstanding it as well.

It couldn't be helped.

This is something that just couldn't be helped.

"Those bats must have been the underlings of the succubus, right?"

"It seems so."

In the central continent as well, there are monsters that make weaker monsters obey them.

If I remember correctly, the first monster I saw in this world was like that as well.

I wonder what its name was.

I seem to have forgotten because I only saw it once.

It was some kind of wild boar walking on two legs.

The succubus was using Giant Bats as its subordinates.

If they happen to see a traveling couple, it sends the bats after the woman, then attracts the man and kidnaps him.

The succubus then takes the man to its nest to eat him in a sexual way, after which it literally eats him.

We can handle them since I can defeat them in a single long range attack.
But I'm sure it must be difficult for swordsmen and warrior types.
At any rate, you can't fight with close range attacks without sniffing that scent.
The longer the fight lasts, the more disadvantageous it becomes.
Any noble knight as well will just collapse without a fight.
You must be at least gay to win against a succubus.

"What is it this time?"

After the battle with the succubus.
A velociraptor-like bipedal lizard appeared from behind a sand dune.
One after another they are coming at us.
Although they're not big, there are many of them.
Some of them started eating the fallen bats on the ground.

"Haven't seen these before."

Elinalise readies her battle stance without letting her guard down.
I monitor the situation as well while holding my staff.

"There are monsters that even Elinalise-san doesn't know about?"
"It's not like I'm some monster professor you know."

Elinalise didn't know the names of these lizards either.
Must be a species native to Begaritto.

After looking at us for a moment, the raptors came in menacingly to attack us.
Maybe they thought we would steal their prey.
No, since we were the ones who defeated the bats it is they who are stealing our prey.

Although they're not that strong, they do have sharp teeth and fast feet.
Well, they're nothing special.

We defeated 7 of them.

There are about 10 left.

They became alert and took some distance from us.

Hmm, should I just take all of them out with some advanced magic?

As I was thinking that, the next moment:

"Rudeus! Be careful! A big one is coming!"

As we were fighting the raptors, an especially large one came out.

Said simply, it's a giant chicken.

A giant, 5 meter chicken.

It's already a dinosaur.

The bright red crest hurts my eyes.

It seems to be the natural enemy of velociraptors.

They group up as five or six to assault and trash them in no time at all.

The fleeing raptors are being eaten by chickens.

"It's one type of Garuda^[26] isn't it."

Garuda are C class monsters.

In the current flock they are about B class apparently.

Well, at this size they might even be A class.

Because of gaining a bit of distance from us due to the combat with the raptors, the chickens were only intimidating us without moving closer.

The raptors were miserably running around trying to escape, but I wonder how long they can last.

Once they've all been eaten we will probably be attacked next.

Not that they're anything we can't defeat...

"Rudeus, we're running away. Why are you just standing around?"

However, thanks to Elinalise's sharp senses, they could feel the presence of a large carnivore at the back of the chickens.

"Understood."

While we were retreating, Elinalise shrewdly snatched one of the raptor corpses. They look tastier than the bats.

In a place away from the battle with the raptors, we made a shelter. We're going to spend the night here.

The raptor corpse was our dinner for that day. It's not like the food supplies we brought were dwindling, but being self-sufficient along the way is a basic thing for adventurers.

Anyway, the night in the desert is a lot different from the day.

Monsters come out one after another.

If we had continued fighting the chickens, another monster would probably have come out. According to Elinalise, the pheromones from the succubus from before attract monsters as well.

To males it's a sweet scent.

To females it's an unpleasant stench.

Although other monsters don't care about the smell, the place where the smell is coming from is likely to have prey, so they drop a visit.

And so the succubus makes a human male its prey.

The places humans walk through are likely to gather stray monsters.

When we defeated the first succubus there weren't any bats or other monsters, maybe because the place was protected by a barrier.

We had bad luck with a succubus that had slipped into the barrier.

...Don't tell me that succubus was Orsted's acquaintance or something.

N...No-no.

If it was, it wouldn't have suddenly started alluring me.

They should have thought we are related to Orsted as well.

Wait a second.

If there's a difference of cultures, that might have been just a greeting from a succubus.

They have a thing called "naked communion" in Japan as well.

A cultural thing that foreigners can't understand.

With that intent in mind the succubus might have only intended to make me feel good.

If it's like that I'm in trouble.

I may have drawn my bow at Orsted without knowing anything.

Should I go back and make a grave or something?

Although I don't know what exactly happened, if I did a proper burial I might be able to get rid of my sour stomach.

No.

If there was someone like that in those ruins, I should have heard at least something about it from Nanahoshi.

That's right, isn't Orsted hated by humans because of the curse?

It might be that it not only works on humans, but monsters as well.

Yes, that's why that succubus must be unrelated.

"Phew... Begaritto Continent is a lot different from what I heard."

Whether she noticed my uneasiness or not, Elinalise said that while yawning in the shelter.

That's pretty carefree.

People who don't know Orsted are like this after all.

Anyway, these thoughts of mine are probably just needless anxiety.

[Oh, this monster might be someone's acquaintance.]

If I think like that, I'll have to start questioning all the monsters on the way to our destination.

The other side comes wanting to prey on me.

I will repel them.

That's all it is.

"That's right. There are a lot more monsters than I thought."

I responded to Elinalise while shaking off my own thoughts.

Honestly, the density of monsters is worse than on the Demon Continent.

It better not be something like, actually we've teleported to Heaven Continent.

"Well, for the time being we can somehow make do with them so it seems to be fine for now."

"But, letting your guard down is forbidden."

"You don't need to say it. But if we use the same tactics as we've used until now we should be able to repel most of the monsters."

"In case I get done in by a succubus again as well, I'm counting on you to strike me."

"Please be a bit more careful on that end."

While we were talking as such, the first day had passed.

It was an especially long day.

Rather, it's only been a day.

The future is long.

Chapter 5

Desert Journey

Part 1

The second day since we started our trek in the desert.

We continued north.

On the second day as well, we made our resolve to fight the monsters.

This desert has a lot of monsters.

We especially have to be careful of sandworms.

There's no problems if we are cautious with the worms while walking.

However, there are times where we can't pay attention to our feet.

For example, in the middle of battle.

Once, while fighting a Twin Death Scorpion, a sandworm appeared.

It swallowed me whole, and seemed like it was about to drag me into the ground.

I panicked a little, and immediately cast intermediate-level [Wind Slice] and sliced his body to bits.

With earth magic I escaped to the surface.

Elinalise got poisoned by the Twin Death Scorpion.

She was shaken up when she saw me get done in by the sandworm.

Elinalise's knees crumbled and her face was purple.

I immediately killed the Twin Death Scorpion.

Then I saved Elinalise with intermediate-level detoxification.

It wasn't anybody's fault.

It was merely bad timing.

"That way of killing it, as expected of the Quagmire. You've saved me."

Elinalise didn't blame me for her almost dying.

Even though from one's point of view, it was from my negligence.

What an amazing person.

"Don't make such a face. Even if you concentrate as much as you could, there are times when it's just not enough. This was just one of those times. That's all there is."

We were very close to being annihilated.

She understood that quite well.

It was only that time when we felt such dread.

Right now we're moving along smoothly.

On the way, we saw an enormous monster.

It was walking clumsily from far away.

Just by walking, clouds of dust were stirring, but we knew from afar.

Maybe it's about 100 meters?

It's a creature that's hard to describe.

It's like a blue whale that has multiple elephant-like feet attached to it.

"That's a Behemoth."

"You know what that is, Elinalise?"

"Oh, would you finally stop addressing me so formally?"

"No, never. I always show my respect to elders."

"Zanoba is older than you, though?"

"That's because he's a big child."

It seems Behemoths are a well known creature that live in the Begaritto continent.

Their lengths range from 100 meters to 1000 meters.
What they eat is unknown. They're found in the desert.
Their personality is quite gentle for a monster.
As long they're not attacked, they're pretty docile.

In the past, according to stories from people that defeated Behemoths, was that they carry a lot of magic stones in their stomachs.

When people heard that, they made plans on getting rich quick.
But taking down a Behemoth was difficult.
The skin was extremely firm and hard, with a tough body that doesn't flinch when facing ordinary attacks.
Although there are ways to attack, just having that giant body rampaging is enough to be a threat.

One would think, "Why not use long range attacks?"
However, when a Behemoth feels he's in danger, it escapes by diving deep underground.
Therefore, there aren't many people that have claimed to kill one.

Also, it's been said that nobody can find a corpse of that, despite its giant body.
Thus, there were rumors that there exists a grave for Behemoths.
It seems there are a large amount of Behemoth bones and magic stones there.
An imagery of that kind of grave, I am a little excited.
I wonder if a reason for that is that they eat demons?

"If it's Rudeus, you could do pretty well, no?"
"I have no intention of attacking innocent herbivores."

But, if I ever run into money troubles, maybe I'll amuse myself with a long range fight.

Part 2

The third day, we encountered a sandstorm.

No, it might be strange to say that we 'encountered' it.

While we were walking, we saw something that looked like a wall from far away.

When we got closer, it was a sandstorm.

Although I consulted with Elinalise that we should wait until it dies off, it seems that this sandstorm seems to be fixed on one spot.

There were no signs of it ceasing.

Since we needed to hurry on our journey, I stopped the sandstorm with my magic and broke through.

I've been told it's best not to mess with the weather too much, but it can't be helped.

After walking for about an hour, I suddenly turned back.

A sandstorm reformed in that same place again.

Perhaps that was another type of magical barrier.

Like a natural barrier to block off the path to the teleport ruins Orsted used.

Nanahoshi didn't say anything like that, though.

It seems she didn't have the luxury of checking her surroundings.

There may be some things she doesn't remember.

Her information may not be entirely accurate.

Part 3

Fourth day.

The number of monsters decreased significantly.

That sandstorm must've done its duty by acting as a barrier.

The ecosystems were totally different before and after passing through the sandstorm.

Not a single sign of a scorpion tail, and there were no herds of ants.

Even the sandworms were only about as big as Elinalise's body.

Around evening time, we sometimes saw raptors.

However, the herds were few, and their bodies were small.

While there were a lot of Garuda, I couldn't find a shadow or shape of them now.

At night, succubus no longer attacked us.

Should I be happy or sad about this?

No, I am not sad at all.

Part 4

Fifth day.

We walked across the desert.

A sea of sand as far as the eye can see.

A landscape that stretches endlessly.

When a person walks without landmarks, even though he intends to walk straight, he'll instead walk in a big circle and come back to the same place.

It seems it's because the pace between the right and left leg differs.

I don't think it's like that for Elinalise.

However, speaking of which, that sand dune, I feel like I've seen it before.

When I thought about that for a moment, a seed of doubt began to grow.

Don't tell me, Elinalise is lost?

Well, let it grow.

As long as I don't speak out it's fine.

If I speak out, Elinalise would feel bad.

If she feels bad, our teamwork will crumble.

Crumbling teamwork means death.

All I can do, is forgive.

When Elinalise makes a mistake, I can only forgive with a smile.

I must not condemn her.

Yeah.

"...Hmm, Rudeus. I can see something."

It seems that determination was for naught.

Elinalise pointed ahead, and I could see something swaying in the heat haze.

"Let me confirm."

I used earth magic to create a stone pillar.

From the top, I confirmed from afar.

There was something over there.

However, I still don't know what it is using my eyes.

It may be a mirage.

We are heading straight over there.

While being careful of monsters.

We headed there in earnest.

Come to think of it, we had not encountered a single monster today.

There may not be any monsters in this area.

No, we mustn't let our guard down.

While thinking that, we saw it clearly.

It's a huge rock that resembles that of Ayers Rock. ^[27]

It was about 50 meters high.

The word "rock ledge" comes to mind.

Although it's not directly perpendicular to the ground, it's a formation that one would have hard time climbing.

This seemed to stretch beyond the horizon.

There was no end in sight.

"Shall we take a detour?"

"No, let's go up. I'll use magic."

I used earth magic to create a stone pillar.

Elinalise held onto me, and aimed towards the top with my make-shift elevator.

However, suddenly my body felt uneasy.

I felt a strange sensation of something rubbing my butt.

"Um, Elinalise-san?"

"What is it?"

"Your hand movements are a bit lewd."

"Just a habit, don't mind me."

For the few minutes till we reached the top of the ledge,
Me and Elinalise's body clung together.

...

Perhaps it's the effects of the curse.

I poured magic into the magical tool.

However, I am merely extending its limit.

It's been about 10 days since she did it with Cliff.

While it's thanks to this magic tool that she's still hanging on, in the end it's only a prototype.

I must be careful.

I want to get to a place with people fast.

If the time comes, I have no choice but to be her partner.

But, that's definitely having an affair.

You can even say it's adultery.

No matter how much of a fault the curse is.

On this trip, I will not do it with Elinalise.

Haven't I decided that before starting this journey?

If there's a place in the bazaar that deals with male prostitution, that would be good.

It would be best if we recognize it as relieving one's sexual urges.

It's for both of our sakes.

"Elinalise, we've arrived at the top of the ledge."

"Yes, it seems so."

Elinalise didn't separate from me.

She was feverishly gazing around my shoulders.

"...Please let go."

"Sorry."

Elinalise pushed away.

But her gaze was focused at my bottom half.

I felt my chastity was in danger.

Maybe going up here while being hugged was a bad idea.

There might have been a better way.

In retrospect, I could have avoided making physical contact with her.

Though again, I might have messed up our balance.

Oh no, I must get to a Bazaar fast.

"Let's go."

"Ok."

At Elinalise's urging, we started walking.

In the next moment, a shadow was cast at our foot.

"Rudeus! Get down!"

A sudden scream.

Before I confirm what was above me I hugged the ground.

At that moment there was something that flew over my head.

I felt a sense of dread run down my back.

Immediately getting up, I confirmed its identity.

A sand-colored monster, with hands and feet of a lion, and had a head of an eagle.

Flapping its enormous wings, it landed somewhere close by.

"It's a griffon!"

Elinalise's scream.
It's an enemy. My mind instantly switched gears.
I turned around facing the griffon and held my staff.

Our position was bad.
Elinalise was more or less behind me.
We were put unexpectedly into a 'back attack' position.^[28]

No, even in this situation Elinalise can move pretty well.
She can easily switch with me and return back to the front line.

"Rudeus, we're pairing up! I'll leave that side to you."

It's not as I had first thought.
Behind me, I could hear the sound of flapping.
There were two griffons.
We were caught in a pincer.

I have to take down griffon A that's in front of me.
If I dodged and griffon A is aiming for Elinalise, her back will become vulnerable to attack.
...No, it's better that way.
Elinalise will fight against those two, and I'll bring them down one by one.
That was the pattern of how we did things up till now.
No, this time it's different.
She said she'll leave that side to me.
If I don't take it down, Elinalise can't support me.
Alright.

The griffon leaned forward, half-opened its beak, and glared at me.

It's close.
The griffon looks pretty smart. It seems like it would dodge my rock bullet.
Or possibly, it will just take the bullet head on.

I want to bring it down for certain.

Let's not use the rock bullet.

That guy has wings, I don't know how long he can keep flying.

But it seems the effects of a quagmire would be very little.

In that case, let's use wind.

The griffon's hind-legs were gathering strength.

It's coming.

The griffon's back legs gave off a sharp tap sound.

Like a tiger it spread its fore legs and pounced.

I crouched down, and used magic on the ground.

Upper-level Earth Magic <Earth Hedgehog>.

The length was 3 meters.

From my surroundings it expanded in a circle.

"Kyuea!"

The griffon immediately moved with the wings behind his back.

<It's controlling its trajectory in the air, and will promptly turn around and leave.>

I can see it.

I can see it with my demon eye.

I used wind magic with my left hand.

I generated a small tornado, and stole the griffon's control.

The griffon hung in mid-air.

However, even so it twisted like a cat and tried to land.

Without a moment's delay, I let loose a rock bullet at its landing point.

The rock bullet flew with an earsplitting sound.

Impact.

The body of the griffon had a black hole opened up.

In the next moment, the echo of a gunshot.



The griffon staggers for a bit without making a sound, then fell with a thud.
I immediately finished it off with fire magic.

I immediately turned around.
Is Elinalise alright?

She was fine.
She took on the griffon's attack with her shield, and used her estoc.
The griffon's front legs were dyed red.
Elinalise was attacking at that spot.
Focusing her attacks in one place, she was sapping the enemy's strength.

"Elinalise! [Stone Cannon]!"
"!"

I shouted from behind her, and let loose a rock cannonball.
Elinalise sidestepped away.
The griffon didn't chase after Elinalise.
It was aware of me, and attempted to dodge my rock bullet.

However, Elinalise promptly lunged with her estoc.
She shallowly struck at the griffon's forelegs that were still on the ground.

The griffon fell with a jerk.
It was unable to evade my rock bullet.
Impact.
A hole opened at the back of its neck.
The rock cannonball tore apart the griffon's innards as it passed right through.
It broke its spinal cord, and went through the other side.

The griffon, along with its neck, fell to the ground
The body of the griffon was twitching and convulsing.
Elinalise finished it off with a blow to the head with the estoc.
After that, I burned the griffon up with fire magic.

We beat them.

Afterwards, we became vigilant for any pursuers.

After a while, we exhaled in relief.

"Phew, I apologize, I let down my guard a bit."

"No, I also must take responsibility for not confirming what was above us."

We apologized to each other for our failures, then we looked straight ahead.

While there's some sand on this rock ledge, it is solid rock.

There doesn't seem to be a need to be cautious of what's beneath us.

"From this point on, let's pay attention to the skies."

"You're right."

After doing a minimal checkup, Elinalise and I started to walk again.

Part 5

The sixth day.

The rock ledge was a griffon's nest.

We were attacked by them on a regular basis.

At seemingly regular intervals.

Griffons are B-class monsters.

They do not use any sort of magic.

However, they have high physical abilities, and also the ability to fly.

Being able to maneuver in three dimensions, it is quite a formidable enemy.

While they're normally seen alone, when they make babies, they make two to five at a time.

They possess high intelligence, and together in a flock they can hunt with advanced coordination.

Thus, when they gather together it's said they're equal to A-rank.

That being said, they're no match for us.

Being able to say that, I must be quite strong.

It became nighttime.

There was no presence of succubi.

It probably won't enter a griffon's turf.

Then again, griffon's are acutely aware of each other's territory.

At least for today, it doesn't seem like we'll get attacked by griffons from far away.

In other words, we're safe here.

For the first time in a while, we used an open fire and barbequed griffon meat.

The last griffons we defeated were carrying their young, so we ate those.

Whatever creatures they are, the meat of the young is soft and delicious.

This is something like veal steak from a calf.

As a person that's about to have a child, I felt a little sorry for them.

However, this is life.

Man is a living creature with ego.

I have a little bit of knowledge with regards to cooking the meat of monsters.

That's why I had brought along some seasoning.

Unfortunately, the meat of a raptor doesn't taste good, but if it's mammal-like or bird-like like the griffon, I can definitely make it taste delicious.

I had already started mixing the seasonings together.

With Kokuri fruit, seeds of Awazu, and dried leaves of Abi, I mixed them with a 1:2:2 ratio, and pounded them into a powder.

Licking some off my fingers, I felt a tingling spicy sensation.

I sprinkled it evenly across the meat, and mixed it in.

Then I sprinkled it with salt, then grilled it.

Once the meat's surface has browned, I put it a bit away from the fire, then grilled it some more.

When the surface was sizzling with drops of fat dripping down, it's done.

Being careful not to burn myself, I bite into it.

The meat of a young griffon was soft and juicy.

It had somewhat of a strange taste, but the spicy taste from the seasoning erases it.

Ahh, of course, with this way of grilling, the heat won't get to the center of the meat.

But that's not a problem.

Once I see an undercooked portion after eating the surface, I just have to sprinkle more seasoning on it and grill it again.

"This is quite nostalgic. Gisu always hid this kind of seasoning."

"It seems people in the thief-class carry things like this."

It's been a few years since Eris broke up with me.

I've come a long way as an adventurer.

I've mixed in with various parties.

There would always be at least one person in the party that would produce this seasoning.

A lot of the thief-class did this.

They look at trees and shrubs here and there, plucking off fruits and leaves, then saving it for later.

They didn't use them just for cooking.

There are monsters that don't like the strong smell of herbs and fruits.

In case of emergencies, they can be used like insect repellent.

When made into a powder, it can be used to blind them as well.

"I like your particular way of seasoning."

"Well, thanks."

Elinalise was having poor manners, licking the fat off her fingers.

That way of eating is something one absolutely doesn't do in town.

When Elinalise licks her fingers, it's for something different.

Like when she wants to seduce a man.

"Elinalise, you're not behaving."

"Oh, so you speak just like Zenith."

"...My mother says these things?"

"[You're a girl, so you should be more careful] and other lines like that, with a bright red face."

Elinalise was imitating someone's tone of expression.

The image of Zenith was a bit different.

But it's probably her.

She too had a period where I didn't know her.

And that Zenith is right now...

No, let's stop there. It's better not to think things that'll make me anxious.

Even if I become anxious along the way, nothing happy will be gained from it.

"So, Elinalise was quite a bitch at that time after all?"

"Bitch, huh... well, that's not entirely wrong.

Although, in those days, everybody was naked or in their underwear, you know?

Even Ghyslaine didn't know about the existence of brassieres.

And Paul would ogle at her with his eyes..."

That Ghyslaine was shameless.

No, if it's that Ghyslaine it might have been possible.

And they seemed pretty distant.

And damn that Paul...

Well, it's not like I don't understand.

Everybody from the beast race had ripe big melons.

"Ahh, come to think of it, when I first met Zenith, she was around your age..."

"About 16 years old?"

"Yeah, a little girl that didn't know her right from left, Paul picked her up and took her away."

Elinalise narrowed her eyes filled with nostalgia.

Come to think of it, Gisu and Ghyslaine occasionally had those same eyes when talking about a person.

They must be remembering back in their days.

"It felt like Father wanted to apologize to you, may I ask what happened?"

"...It's better if you don't ask."

Elinalise frowned.

It seemed she doesn't want to say.

"I am sure you don't want to hear the love entanglements your father got into, yes?"

"Yeah, I don't want to hear about it."

Actually, I wanted to hear.

But, if she doesn't want to talk about it, it's better not to ask.

That's what reading the situation is about.

But still, it seems like it's love entanglements after all.

It seems he had sexual relationships with Ghyslaine,

So perhaps he also had a sexual relationship with Elinalise as well?

Then, the party got dissolved with Zenith's pregnancy.

I can imagine what kind of love-hate drama took place.

"When we reach Lapan, he'll definitely prostrate himself."

"...I won't forgive him no matter what he says."

Elinalise was frowning.

Maybe a lot of things had happened.

Paul.

That guy is a good-for-nothing.

Because he's a good-for-nothing, I have to rescue him.

As a good-for-nothing comrade, I have to go rescue him.

If push comes to shove, I will also bow my head towards Elinalise for her to forgive him.

Part 6

Seventh day.

We continued to fight against Griffons while moving north.

The rock ledge was wide.

Though I described it as a ledge, it's more like a mountain.

Although the ledge was flat, visibility was poor.

That's because huge rocks were scattered about.

When walking in such a place, we sometimes see an open area.

Usually, griffons attack us there.

We repel them, then continue onward.

"Oh."

And, at some point the ledge stopped.

"Seems we're finally here."

Below the cliff.

It wasn't a desert.

There were even some trees growing.

There was some grass spread out like a savannah.

Just a bit further away, I could see something vague.

It's a large lake.

And surrounding it, white-clothed roofs.

It's the bazaar.

Chapter 6

Bazaar

Part 1

Eighth day.

We got down from the ledge and headed towards the bazaar.

Looking from above, the bazaar was like a donut.

The tents surrounding the lake were like frosting.

And surrounding those were bits of green.

I haven't eaten such a pastry in a long time.

"We finally arrived."

"You're right, even though it's only been ten days, it felt like such a long time."

"Probably because of all the monsters."

The ground was not a desert.

The earth was reddish-brown, with fist-sized rocks spread about.

The ground may be similar to that of the Magic Continent.

Thanks to that, it was fairly easy to walk.

The temperature also dropped considerably.

From the ledge to here, there was a great difference.

By the time we reached the bazaar it was evening.

Bats were flying around over the reddish earth.

Thinking there was a succubus, I put myself on guard.

But, the bats did nothing but fly.

They neither dove for an attack, nor was there a succubus in their midst.

These were just bats.

However, even though we're close to the bazaar, there may be monsters.

We moved while being alert.

Kiee-...

When we got close to the bazaar, a cry of a griffon could be heard.

We became even more wary.

"What was that?"

"They must be fighting."

Elinalize said that while looking ahead.

I still couldn't see where.

"Who?"

"Dunno."

I got a blunt reply when I asked that.

We got closer to the bazaar.

Then, we saw several people and griffons.

Four humans.

Five griffons.

No, to be exact, it wasn't four people.

It was six.

2 people were on the ground.

In addition, 1 person was crouching while holding his head.

The rest were in the middle of battle with the griffons.

3 vs. 5.

The remaining three were coordinating well with swinging their broadswords.

However, I could grasp that they were quite fatigued.

"Shall we assist?"

When I asked Elinalize, she shrugged her shoulders.

So which is it?

"I'll leave that to you."

Leaving them to die would make me feel guilty.

Why not help them out?

"Let's save them."

"Understood. Cover me!"

"Roger!"

Elinalize broke into a run.

At the same time, I shot out magic at the griffon that was in the air.

Bullseye.

It probably wasn't paying attention to me.

However, it seems it took evasive action at the last minute.

It avoided instant death.

With its feathers scattered, the griffon fell.

There, as if Elinalize was dancing, she stabbed it in the neck.

I continued to fire off rock bullets one after another.

I took down the second one with a single blow.

The third one avoided it.

The griffons noticed my presence.

However, in front of them were armed men.

And there was also Elinalize who is skilled in defense beside me.

That being the case, I could shoot out magic all I want.

We won't be losing now.

We steadily beat them down.

"Kyuiiiii!"

The last remaining one was trying to run away.

I shot out a rock bullet at its back and finished it off.

I can't afford to let a wounded beast get away.

The battle was over.

I went together with Elinalize towards the group.

"Is, is it finished!?"

The man who was crouched while holding his head looked up.

He looked around restlessly, then let out a sigh of relief.

The group of warriors fighting the griffons approached us.

"What are you doing! Hurry up and look!"

Amongst the men, a warrior was giving out instructions.

The person who received them ran off somewhere at full speed.

"Seriously... what a disaster, why are griffons here..."

The man giving out orders carried the remaining two, and looked at us.

"You've saved us. I'm grateful."

The man giving out orders wore something like a yellow gown on top of a red robe.

He had a red dot marked on his forehead.

He really looks the part of a merchant of the desert.

He had a long and skinny moustache.

However it wasn't majestic.

It gave off a feeling like its an accessory.

I felt a bit relieved.

"Not at all, it's times like these that we have to help each other."

"Normally you'd just abandon us."

Since he thanked me in Fighting God language, I replied back in the same.

It looks like they can understand, and it got through to them.

Seems like we'll be fine.

"May you be graced with the blessing of the winds."

Saying only that, he turned back.

And walked towards the place where the comrades had fallen.

"..."

The remaining two were clad in red armor.

Their bottom half had something like a skirt with thick loincloth hanging down.

They were more heavily armed compared to warriors on the Central Continent.

Hanging from their waist was a big curved sword.

It was thick and wide.

It easily surpassed the length of a meter.

I often saw swords like this when I was on the Magic Continent.

They were probably effective against large monsters.

Their swords were big, and their armor was thick.

I wonder if that was why they couldn't match up against the quick and nimble griffons.

"A magician, huh, that's unusual."

A big man murmured.

A large tattoo on his face.
An eyepatch on his left eye.
His height was close to 2 meters.
He seems to be about 40.
His behavior seemed as if he had tons of experience.

"Bro. This person, maybe she's a succubus?"

There was a girl on their side.
She said that while staring at Elinalize.

Dark skinned, wearing chest armor and loincloth-like skirt.
While I couldn't see underneath her clothes, she seems like she has a lot of muscle.
She seems to be in her early twenties.

<What are you saying?>

Elinalize didn't understand their words, and looked puzzled.
She doesn't understand Fighting God language.

<<'Is she a succubus', you say?>>
<<Well, it's not uncommon that she would get mistaken for one.>>
<<Shall I confirm it?>>
<<But, she isn't giving off a stinky smell.>>
<<Well, to men, it's a smell of pleasure.>>

The big man hit the girl on the head.

"Fool! Like there's a succubus that'll accompany a man! For someone that saved you, what's with that way of speaking!"

"But, bro, when the bats were flying, when you saw her, you said you thought she's a succubus!"

The girl being hit was crying out in a pathetic voice.

It was hard to understand her words.

Maybe she's got a strong accent.

While I could pick up a few words here and there, I felt a bit uneasy.

"Geez, that's why you get called a blockhead!"

The tone of the man facing her was normal.

'Clear'...not sure if that's a good way to describe it, but for me, I could easily listen to his Fighting God language.

"Phew."

The big man sighed.

Then he looked down at Elinalize and apologized.

"I'm sorry, please don't take offense. This person...she's Karumerita, but she's a moron."

Elinalize looked at me with a troubled face.

She couldn't understand what he was saying.

<...What did he say? Is he courting me or something?>

<The girl beside him called you a succubus, and he's apologizing.>

<Ah, I see. I forgive him.>

With a smile that could charm a man, Elinalize smiled at the big man.

I could tell that face of the big man turned red.

"It seems she's not worried about it."

"I, I see. Does that woman not understand our words?"

"Yes. I'm an interpreter."

The big man looks at Elinalize bluntly.

I could more or less get what he was thinking.

Probably something like, 'that's a nice girl.'

Or perhaps, 'She's got no breasts.'

Elinalize probably didn't mind this at all, as she's used to being gazed like that.

She even had a boastful atmosphere.

The man broke off his gaze from Elinalize, and looked at me.

"...I'm Baribadom. Let me thank you again."

"I'm Rudeus Greyrat. This is Elinalize."

"I see, if anything happens..."

"Hey, what are you guys standing about for!"

Someone was shouting at Baribadom.

It was the man from before.

"Hurry up and look for the cargo!"

"Pardon me. I'll thank you later for sure."

Baribadom and Karumerita went to the side of the man.

Those three were discussing things briefly,

But they quickly split into two groups and went off.

All in the blink of an eye.

"Oh, how frank. Even though they could at least say thanks."

Elinalize was grumbling.

It's not like she wanted a reward or anything.

"The wounded are left here, huh..."

I looked at the people who were on the ground.

If they need treatment, I could use healing magic if necessary.

When I was thinking of that,

"Are they dead?"

To begin with, they didn't even show the attitude of wanting to be treated.
Was it that obvious?

"These people are quite young."

One was a young girl.
She must be about eighteen years old.
Her head must have been smashed by the griffon's beak.
There was a large hole on her forehead.
It was instant death.

"On this continent, I wonder if it's a custom to leave the dead behind."
"That doesn't seem to be the attitude of adventurers."
"They didn't look like adventurers, though."

While conversing, I burnt them with magic and buried them.
To not give their comrades a burial, how heartless.

The warrior from before, I think he was named Baribadom.
He said he would thank us later.
But, we hadn't even asked the name of that moustached master.
Without telling us his contact info, how is he supposed to thank us?

Don't tell me, is he going to look for us?
Is he going to track us down, then tell us to come get our reward?
Is it that kind of culture?

...Well, it's fine.
He probably didn't want to give us thanks from the beginning.
I'm just a good-hearted person.

"Well then, let's go."
"Yeah."

Thus, we arrived at the bazaar.

Part 2

We entered the bazaar.

By that time night had fallen.

But our surroundings were quite bright.

Like a temple festival, there were bonfires lit here and there.

Around these bonfires were rug-like cloths being spread out.

On top of them, were men and women eating and having a good time.

It felt like some kind of flower viewing. ^[29]

Everybody was wearing turbans.

While their clothing colors and patterns vary, the colors of each race was well defined.

Me and Elinalize felt out of place.

Although this sense of being out of place is nothing new to us.

"I'm getting hungry."

"Yeah, me too."

Seeing people eating made me hungry.

That doesn't change no matter which world you're in.

That being said, we need to find a place to sleep first.

When I was thinking that, a man called out to us.

"Hey, you two, wanna eat? I'll treat you to a meal for just 3 Shinsa!"

It seems that he was selling leftover food.

Whether or not he was calling to one or both of us, we accepted his invitation.

We can't think of a good plan when we're hungry, after all.

When we sat on the rug, the advertiser held out his hand with his palms up.

"Please pay in advance, I'll get some food for you."

I took out 3 copper coins from my pocket and gave it to him.

When he took them, he made a puzzled expression.

"What is this?"

"They're copper coins from the country of Ranoa."

"What country is that? I can't use these."

As expected, in these parts, money from the country of Ranoa can't be used.

It was obvious.

We were planning on going somewhere to exchange currency, so we don't have any on hand right now.

"Is this fine?"

When I was thinking of what to do, Elinalize slipped something in the advertiser's hand.

It was a metal ring.

The advertiser took it, then brought his face close to it and took a good, long look at it.

Afterwards, being satisfied, he said 'Thanks', then went to seek other customers.

"In times like these, bartering things is better."

Yeah. This must be the wisdom of the elders.

Her judgement was quick.

"Elinalize, you are really quite reliable."

"Nothing will come from flattering me."

I sat on the rug.

For some reason, there was a strange nostalgic feeling.

I wonder if it's because I haven't sat on floors for some time now?

It felt like sitting on carpets in Japanese households.

"Here ya go!"

We didn't order anything, but food came out.

It was white mushy soup, which seemed to have beans, meat, and potatoes cooked together.

And the steaming meat was giving off a spicy smell.

There was also some kind of sour fruit from the southern countries that had sweet sauce on top of it.

Sweet soup, spicy meat, and sweet and spicy fruit.

It's a combination that makes one yearn for carbohydrates.

Or, so I thought, but it was unexpectedly pretty good.

The soup was especially good.

At first glance it seemed like white meat and potato stew, but the dripping part was actually cooked rice.

In other words, it was some kind of porridge.

I didn't think I would be eating rice here.

Since there were no paddy fields, I wonder if it would be decent.

I had heard that you could harvest rice even in the tropical regions.

Yeah. This rice is good.

I finished it in the blink of an eye.

I felt that even if I didn't want to eat the rice by itself I'd end up just finishing it regardless.

I was in really good spirits.

I wonder if it's possible to cultivate this type of rice in the north also.

If Aisha can study this type of agriculture, it might be possible.

No, I shouldn't raise her to become a farmer just for my own convenience.

"Oh, for someone who complains about the taste, you sure are quiet today, Rudeus."

"That's because this is much more delicious than I thought."

I even ordered seconds.

I don't mean to find fault with Sylphy's cooking.

But, this is different.

Rice is another story.

If there were eggs and soy sauce, even better.

I see.

Perhaps there may be soy sauce on this continent.

For eggs, I can use something other than Garuda.

A bird will produce eggs.

There is rice, and there are eggs.

In that case, there's only one thing left.

Soy sauce.

"Alright then, let's find an inn."

However, we're not here to sightsee.

Once we rescue Paul, I can spend time to find it.

I'll postpone looking for now.

I'm not here to play around.

"It seems it'll be good to find a guide tomorrow morning."

Looking around, the surrounding shops were starting to close up.

With lights being extinguished, it seems that was also a concept of bedtime here.

It seems to be pretty early to sleep.

Now doesn't seem to be the time to hire someone.

Since the advertiser from earlier was still here, I decided to ask.

"Excuse me. Is there an inn around here?"

"Inn? We've got no such thing here, just sleep wherever you like."

We got that answer in reply.

There were no such thing as an inn at the bazaar.

It seems that it's natural for travellers without a roof to just sleep outdoors.

In our case, I could just make a shelter.

"How will we be sleeping?"

"It seems it's popular to sleep near the waterside."

"Then, let's go somewhere further away."

We consulted then decided on a spot.

We decided to set up a place to sleep between two tents.

If the tents are big, there must also be many guards.

There won't be many people that want to steal from a place near here.

This is what you call 'looking for a big tree when you want shelter.'^[30]

I made a big bedroom.

While it took some time to make it, it was wider than a shelter.

It was a good size enough to spend at least one night.

Then again, it'd be very hot inside when the sun is up.

This is only useful at night.

"Phew, anyway, thanks for everything so far."

"Yes, same to you."

We placed down our luggage, and breathed a sigh of relief.

"Let's at least be on half alert."

"We'll do stuff tomorrow. We'll prepare what we need, and then look for a guide."

We easily confirm what needs to be done tomorrow.

Resupplying of food.

Securing our money.

Confirming our road to Lapan.

Searching for a guide.

That should be all for now.

We conducted maintenance on our equipment.

We polished our sword and shield, then confirmed there were no scratches on our armor and robes.

This has already become our everyday routine.

Our equipment inspection ended.

We made a bed using a blanket.

All that's left is to sleep.

At this point, Elinalize got up.

"Now then, time to head off."

To the convenience store?

As if to say that, I turned my head at her in puzzlement.

"Where to?"

Elinalize answered with a bitter smile.

"Searching for men."

She said something bold, but to put it simply, it's to fulfill her curse.

"You should be fine still during this period, yeah?"

Elinalize's curse typically requires sex once every two weeks.

With the magic tool, that's extended to 2-3 times.

So she can hold it in for at least a month.

The last time she did it with Cliff was nearly two weeks ago.

Seems like a good time to 'replenish'.

"Yeah. But, I want to do it at least once here."

"I see..."

This is a round-trip that will take about 3 months.

And to account for unknown factors, it may possibly be 4 months.

Even if the curse can be suppressed for 3 months at the most, she must do it at least once.

Either way, it's something we cannot avoid.

"I understand, please take care."

"Yes, see you later. I don't mind if you go to sleep first."

"Then I'll take you up on that offer...Ah, would you know what they are saying?"

"Won't be necessary. Things like this are pretty much the same anywhere."

Elinalize said that as she headed out of the shelter.

Part 3

The next morning.

I was crying "Ants!" as I woke up.

It was an attack of phalanx ants!^[31]

...Though nothing like that happened.

I was able to get a full night's sleep for the first time in a long while.

The dreams were good.

I dreamt of Aisha and Norn insistently asking for a ride on my shoulders.

When Norn got on my shoulders, Aisha pouted.

When Aisha got on my shoulders, Norn cried.

Finally, Sylphy came along, and like a bully got on my shoulders.

When I chided with 'hey now, take turns on the swing',

Sylphy would go 'No no, this is mine!' and such, and made Norn and Aisha cry.

When she appeared, Sylphy was fully grown, but when she rode on my shoulders she was as small as when she was seven.

It was a good dream.

When I woke up, I unconsciously broke into a grin.

Thanks to that, I felt quite refreshed.

When I looked beside me, Elinalize was unusually bright, sleeping with a satisfied face.

It seems she enjoyed a lot last night.

I felt sorry for Cliff.

Part 4

When it was morning, the bazaar completely changed.

The quiet atmosphere at night went away, and a lively scenery appeared.

Goods were lined up in front of tents, and people were raising their voices.

"Big melons here! Will be disposed of tomorrow!"

"Claw of a griffon! Right now only 30 Shinsa!"

"Is there anybody selling Naniia cloth? I wish to trade them with fruit from Tokotsu!"

The merchants were shouting their goods and prices in a loud voice, and those who were buying raised their voices more.

One could exchange with currency, or conduct bartering.

This scenery of crowds of people full of commotion was stretched out.

"Here's a glass bottle from Vega! It can't be found any further east! Is there anybody who wants it?"

What attracted me was the glass.

It seems that glass bottles are a specialty product in this region.

Pretty square patterns were neatly lined up on the glass bottle.

With regards to glass, the people of Begaritto had a high aptitude for handling it.

The Central Continent also had glass.

But the glass was thin and rough, and was low in transparency.

Of course, even Begaritto was at a level far from modern day Japan.

But, there were many interesting shapes that gave off a hand-made feel.

Maybe I should buy one as a souvenir before heading back.

"Rudeus, we're not here to sightsee."

"I know."

In the midst of this scenery overflowing with liveliness, we began to set out to do what we planned before.

First is money.

This region's currency is called Shinsa.

Ever since coming to this world, this is the first time I heard of this currency.

It felt like a fresh reminder.

In the Central Continent there were things like gold and silver coins.

Though, the shape doesn't change.

It was just a round metal plate that had a clumsy pattern engraved on it.

When I was with Eris and the others at East Port, I remembered seeing those at least once.

Selling a little of what I had, I obtained a bit of this currency.

Although bartering seems mainstream here, having money gives for a peace of mind.

I sold things from the northern part of the Central Continent at a high price.

To my surprise, I sold them with the price three times that of cheap dried meat.

If I tried harder, I could have sold it even higher.

If I brought this glass over to Ranoa, I could probably make a killing off of it.

Though it seems like it'll attract attention, so I probably won't do it.

For the time being, I presently have about 5000 Shinsa on hand.

While I am not sure how much we will need to suffice, yesterday's meal was 3 Shinsa.

If I have 5000, this should be plenty.

After getting enough money, I gathered information about the labyrinth city Lapan.

I easily gathered information about Lapan, apparently it's a big city.

It seems that Lapan is about a month's trip north from here.

It's exactly what Nanahoshi's info said.

Once, I tried listening in on the path to get there.

"While it's a popular route to take a detour around the desert by going through the way of Ngotsu, there have been many robbers recently so it's dangerous. If you're a smart merchant, you'd cross the Ucho desert. From a landmark in the east, you'll arrive at an oasis if you head north, then from there head west along that path, then when you see the Kara mountain range, head north while facing the left mountain side and you'll reach another oasis. Once you cross that, then once you come out from the east, if you head northwest from there, you'll intersect with the original route."

It's all gibberish to me.

There were many proper nouns, with landmarks, mountains, and deserts everywhere. For now, I understand there are 2 routes, but unless you're accustomed to travelling on the Begaritto Continent, you can easily get lost.

"You don't sell maps here?"

Once, I tried asking that.

With a map, it'll be reliable.

It's reassuring to at least get a rough position of where I am.

However, the answer I got was bad.

"Map? Who would make something like that?"

As I was told.

There wasn't an Inou Tadaka around here.^[32]

Thus, like our original plan, I decided to hire a guide.

"Then, is there a place where people gather that would guide us as far as Lapan?"

I asked that, just like a shot in the dark.

However, that too proved to bear no result.

"While there are people that know the roads, I doubt you'll find one looking for someone to go to a place like that."

"Is that so?"

"Well, normally you'd look for places for trade, right?"

"I see."

It's obvious once you think about it.

I wonder why I didn't realize this while we were coming here?

Elinalize casually said to hire a guide.

As a rule of thumb for her, if you don't know the land you're travelling in, you'd hire a guide at the starting town.

Using a teleportation circle, the idea of starting the journey at the midpoint never crossed my mind.

There may have been some warped logic there.

It wasn't going as planned.

However, one should not be impatient.

Things don't go according to plan all the time.

It hasn't even been two weeks since we started on our trip.

Once you think about how it normally takes about 1 year to get to this point, we've progressed far too well.

"In times like these, what would you do, Elinalize?"

"I'd just break through with my own strength. But, to be honest, I'd rather not go through another desert."

"Of course."

"So, what are you going to do?"

"...Let's see. How about looking for someone that is planning on heading towards Lapan?"

"That seems good, let's do that."

Aisha clung onto caravans and was able to travel really quickly.

I'll follow her example.

Then again, it's not like we're traveling quickly, more like getting directions from place to place.

"Do you have an idea of where merchants heading towards Lapan would be?"

Just like guides, there wasn't anybody recruiting for guards either.

But, Elinalize is an S-class adventurer, and I am a Saint-class water magician.

Thinking that, I continued investigating.

It seems not many merchants here want to go to Lapan from here.

They seem to normally head towards the city in the east named Kinkara.

However, it's not like there wasn't anybody.

Lapan was called a labyrinth city, and there are countless maze dungeons surrounding it.

It's a place full of magical items.

People stock up on magical items there, then head to another city to sell them at a high price.

There were merchants that did that type of trade.

Those merchants carry a magic stone or magic crystal from the southwest, passing by here, then heading towards Lapan.

"But, I don't know how long it'll be to get there.

I mean, I'll definitely pass by there within a few months or so..."

Hearing that, I felt a little uneasy.

If that's the case, it'd be better to stick with other merchants heading east.

If it's a trade hub, we can hire a guide there.

Thinking that, we continued to look around.

While there were many merchants heading to Kinkara, not a single one was going to Lapan.

Maybe it's best to go out of our way to Kinkara after all.

When I was starting to think that, we got a result.

"If you want to go there, you should seek out master Garuban. If I remember, he should be around the tents on the west side of the lake. Go look for him."

We searched for this man called Garuban.

The merchant named Garuban was a person that made his fortune peddling from Lapan to Tenorio.

He carries magic stones to Lapan, then from there he carries away magical items.

Possessing six camels, he seems to have made quite a living from this.

Once we knew the name, we found him immediately.

It wasn't as big of a tent as was described.

Six camels were tied up outside.

Just like the info had said.

When we got close to the tent, a dark-skinned girl came out.

She was wearing chest armor and a loincloth-like skirt.

While I couldn't tell from underneath her clothes, she seems to have a lot of physical strength.

Wait a sec, it's the face I saw yesterday.

It was the female warrior Karumerita.

"Hey, you were from yesterday!"

She was surprised as she pointed at me.

It seems like she remembered me.

It seems the man with a small group that we saved yesterday was Garuban.

Saving people creates good opportunities.

Part 5

Garuban gladly welcomed us.

"When we returned yesterday, we didn't see you guys around, so we were surprised."

We were told they went looking for their cargo, their fleeing camel.

When they returned after recovering the camel,

We had already disappeared.

Seeing that his comrades were properly cremated and buried,

He couldn't find us even though he wanted to say thank you.

It seems he went around for a while looking for us.

I really wanted to ask for an explanation.

But, it could be perhaps that's the common sense of how things are around here.

First priority is cargo.

Everything else comes after.

"This must be fate, would you become my guards?"

Garuban wanted to replenish his guards.

Well, two of them did die yesterday.

"How about 600 Shinsa including meals until we reach Lapan? Hmm?"

It seems like something he had thought of before.

Using flattering words, that we did a great job at defeating those griffons, or something like that.

Even though you were crouching in fear and didn't see it at all.

However, this is what we had wished for.

"We'll go ahead and take on escorting you to Lapan."

"Ooh, is that so! I appreciate it!

If that's so, I don't mind hiring you with an exclusive contract.

I haven't seen any magician quite like you. Let's give you a bonus.

One year is 10000 Shinsa...well, Baribadom would complain. How does 8000 Shinsa sound?"

"We also have our own objectives, so let's leave that for another time."

Since it seems the talk of this was getting bigger and bigger, I stopped it then and there.

And so, we got ourselves a guide to Lapan.

Just a little more now.

Chapter 7

The Desert Warriors

Part 1

We aim towards Lapan while escorting Garuban.

The members are:

Merchant Garuban.

Escort Captain Baribadomu "Hawk-Eyes".

Escort Karumerita the "Bone Crusher".

Escort Tonto the "Big Blade". ^[33]

These four, and if you include me, Rudeus of the "Quagmire", and Elinalise of the "Dragon Road", that makes six of us.

Furthermore, there's six camels, as well.

I thought about attaching names to the camels as well, but it seems that if you run out of food in the desert, you eat the camels, so I decided not to do it.

The first time I taste camel meat, I want to eat it deliciously without a sense of guilt after all.

We decided to go with a formation that we arranged beforehand.

Fundamentally, its center is Garuban, Baribadomu is the head, and the sides are covered by Karumerita and Tonto.

Elinalise and I are stationed in the back.

It's become a shape where the five of us surround Garuban and the camels.

No matter what direction an attack comes from, we're positioned to follow up and prevent any damage from reaching Garuban.

It's the Imperial Cross. ^[34]

I thought Karumerita or Tonto would be better for the rear guard, but they're taking into consideration that I'm a magician, and it ended up becoming a shape where I work in coordination with Elinalise who is familiar with me.

"Then, let's depart."

First we leave the Bazaar heading east.

After moving to the east, it seems you arrive at a route almost like a main road.

I don't really remember the name of the region very well, but if my memories are correct then it's a route which thieves come out.

For the time being, in regards to that matter, I seek counsel with Baribadomu in charge of security.

"The route for crossing the desert there are no known roads. Besides, we're escorting for that sake. Unexpectedly, if we're caught they might try to charge something like a passage fee after all."

Passage fee. I wonder if there's that kind of thing as well.

When in trouble solve it with money.

It's nice and easy to understand.

That's right, even thieves are humans trying to live their lives.

If you just hand over the things they want, they won't request any more than that.

Handing over money to guys who don't work and aren't relatives or anything is a bit of a disgustingly bad story in my opinion.

However, this time it's not like my pockets will suffer after all, so it's no problem.

Although, even thieves are people.

They might want things other than money or goods.

For example, since Elinalise is erotic they'll take her as well.

If it comes down to that, it's a troubling story.

The relationship between Garuban and us isn't all that strong.

Even though it could be said that we saved his life, there's no way he would exchange his own life for ours.

There's the possibility that we might be cut off as well.

It might end up with just Elinalise and I fighting alone.

"Rudeus, you're making an uneasy face, but if we have a magician of your level, then thieves aren't all that frightening."

"Is that how it is?"

"If it comes down to it, I'll manage to do something using seduction."

"And then, after being taken to the hideout of the thieves, tied up with chains and one after another taking their turn..."

"It's surprisingly gentle you know."

"You have experience with this?"

"The result of my youth."

It seems like Elinalise is full of composure.

Even though I say that, the past is the past, now is now, if something were to happen to her, I wouldn't be able to face Cliff.

Well, if it's just several tens or so of opponents, then I think we can manage somehow or other.

Part 2

We started walking east through the desert.

We were attacked by monsters many times.

The herd that came charging at us, "Begaritto Buffalo".

The one that came rustling along the ground, "Great Tarantula".

The one that comes using wind magic from the sky, "Air Force Eagle".

The ones we had already identified, "Gyro Raptor" and "Cactus Treant".

Etc...

But, thanks to Baribadomu discovering them at an early stage, it never turned into a large scale battle.

Baribadomu is a warrior possessing a Demon Eye.

It seems that's why he's called Baribadomu "Hawk-Eyes".

Close to two meters tall, a brawny and muscular warrior.

His age would be around 40 years old I guess.

The wrinkles on the corners of his eyes stand out making his expression look somewhat cunning.

His hairstyle has a peculiarity, the sides and back of his head go up to the top of it. ^[35]

He closely resembles some place's high school basketball club captain.

It's a hairstyle that would match well if he started shouting, "It's fine so do the taping."

His Demon Eye is the same as Ghyslaine, the "Magic Power Eye".

It's an eye that can see the flow of magic power.

That is generally used to search for enemies.

"It's a monster, everyone prepare for battle."

He predicts attacks from monsters and changes in the weather quite accurately.

Almost like Ruijerd.

His accuracy isn't as good as Ruijerd though, but maybe because it's something learned through experience, the speed at which he discovered enemies was relatively fast.

"How nostalgic. Ghyslaine used to use her eye and nose to find enemies like that."

Elinalise narrowed her eyes and said that.

After all, if you have an ally that can search out enemies there's a vast difference in security.

If the enemy is found then I can attack from long range.

At first I was using rock bullet, but since it started to become a pain trying to aim, I changed to the course of using wind magic to lift them and drop them to their deaths.

It's nice since this way is easy.

"Using such large magic like that, will your magic power last?"

Probably because I'm just using whatever works to defeat them, Baribadomu asked something like that.

"If it's only one day's worth then it'll be fine."

"I see, I get it now, you're a great sorcerer huh."

"What's that, great sorcerer you say?"

"It holds the meaning of magician who has mastered a great path."

"No, it's not really something as amazing as that."

"In any case, a magician that doesn't put up a pretense of slacking off is rare."

Within those known as magicians, there are guys who make the decision to only use half of their entire magic power during a single day.

There were many magicians like that in the northern part of the Central Continent as well. For a magician who has low physical ability, when the time comes down to it the only thing they can rely on is magic power after all.

Naturally.

Although, I haven't even been using half of it you know.

Keeping magic power in reserve is common sense among magicians.

However, it seems among the warriors of the desert who don't know magicians well it just appears lazy.

It might be something related to his age, but it seems Baribadomu understands the meaning to why magicians preserve their magic power.

After seeing how he wasn't surprised over the chantless casting though it doesn't seem like he's all that knowledgeable about magic itself.

"It's good that you're not slacking off, but please think about preserving your magic power for the time when we need it. Since there's five of us after all. Just stick with monsters that are designated as out of range, alright?"

"Understood."

There's no real necessity to hide that fact that I have a large quantity of aggregate magic power though...

There's no necessity to say it either.

Even I myself don't really understand well where my limit is after all.

Using it all I want and getting ahead of myself then making a mistake is something I don't want to do.

Part 3

During the night the five of us keep lookout in rotation.

Garuban puts up a tent and sleeps there.

Alone.

All of the escorts are outside.

Well, we are on sides of the employer and the employed after all, I guess it's only natural.

I made the suggestion of creating a shelter and sleeping there, but it seems Baribadomu and the other's sense for night attacks would be dulled so it was rejected.

It seems there's a proper reason for sleeping outside as well.

If they're going to say something like that, then I find it difficult to sleep inside a shelter as well.

However, Elinalise said it.

"There's no need to let it bother you, we have our own way of doing things. Trying to get some rest is the important part."

She makes a good point with her words.

I decided to sleep in the shelter as well.

Since I feel more rested that way after all.

Well then, lookout is done in pairs of two.

I thought it would be fine alone, but it seems having five people doing it in pairs is safer.

Fundamentally the rotation changes based on the day.

On the first day the ones keeping lookout were Karumerita and I.

"Please take good care of me."

"Yeah, don't sleep."

"Of course."

Even though it's called lookout, it's boring just silently doing nothing in a place with nothing.

Which is why, I started to chat with Karumerita about stories of the world at large.

"The other day, you saved us."

"No, that goes for both of us."

"You're strong, that woman as well, strong."

Karumerita is a woman warrior.

It seems in terms of age she's 20 years old this year.

Karumerita the "Bone Crusher".

Following along with that name, it seems she prefers tactics that push with power using a broadsword that's over one meter long.

The warriors around this area all seem to prefer and use broadswords.

Baribadomu and Tonto as well have similar looking, massive and long swords hanging at their waist.

It seems because there's many large monsters with hard outer shells, they must have developed using ones that won't simply break.

No matter how much ability you have, with just a trifling matter, that seems to be the case after all. ^[36]

It seems like the style is an original as well.

"Your woman's sword is too thin. You can't defeat anything with that." ^[37]

"That isn't the case, that's a magic item imbued with magic power after all. She even managed to tear things like Griffons to pieces. Also, that person, isn't my woman. It's not that sort of relationship."

"But, if a Succubus comes you'll embrace her, wrong?"

"No, since I can use detoxification magic..."

"When a Succubus comes, men serve, embrace women, it's providence of this desert."

"Oh?"

Karumerita triumphantly told me about the ecology of the warriors in the desert and the relationship between female warriors and Succubus on Begaritto Continent.

There are Succubus inhabiting Begaritto Continent. ^[38]

It seems Succubus were originally a minority monster that inhabited the southwest region of Demon Continent.

But in the war 400 years ago, Laplace mass produced them. ^[39]

In order to bring ruin to the warriors of Begaritto that were continuing their intense opposition, it seems he sent them in.

Succubus are absurdly strong against men.

Those pheromones can lay any man bare.

Honestly, if one of those suddenly appeared in front of my eyes or two appear at once even I don't feel like I can win.

Men who have been poisoned by the pheromones become the servants of the Succubus.

The primary objective of the servant is to become a meal for the Succubus, but even for a Succubus taking back several tens of people to their nest seems to be impossible, so they just take several people and neglect the rest there.

And then the remaining men left behind start killing each other on the spot.

It seems after being poisoned by the pheromones surrounding men start to look like enemies.

Exactly: "Abnormal Status: Charmed" I'd say.

In order to cure the charmed state, you either need to use detoxification greater than intermediate or else embrace a woman, otherwise it can't be cured.

Back then, 400 years ago in Begaritto Continent, there were almost no people who could use detoxification magic.

As a result of that, the vast majority of male warriors were driven to extinction by the hands of the Succubi.

If you have no partner you can embrace, then it can't be helped.

It's a cruel world.

At least in the end, even a Succubus is fine, I can imagine some thoughts along those lines.

I understand, I understand those feelings very well.

400 years after that.

If you were to ask if the warriors of Begaritto had been destroyed, that didn't become the case.

As a counter-measure against the Succubi, it became that the warriors would always bring along several women when they move around.

Those women could be slaves or Magic Race prisoners, there were a variety of them it seems.

However, for the warriors, those who can't fight were just a hindrance.

They have no choice other than to protect them after all. They have low physical strength as well.

The warriors thought about it.

Straining their lacking brains.

And then they came up with it.

That it would be fine if they just bring female warriors.

It's certainly a logical way of thinking about it. ^[40]

Even though I say that, just like this, the "Female Warrior" system of Begaritto was created.

In the current escorting parties, there's always at least one female warrior with them.

Female warriors who fight during the times when the Succubi come out and after fighting they are embraced by the men.

Depending on the situation, the more women you have the better as well.

In that way, during the times when Succubi appear, it's safer after all.

On the Begaritto Continent, women are living things that fight.

Karumerita as well is one among those female warriors.

During the time when a Succubus appears, she will become the partner for her male allies.

Of course, if she keeps doing something like that, then she'll quickly get pregnant.

However, for the female warriors that's an honor and then it seems they return to their village while pregnant.

After they give birth they leave the child to their village and then start marching around the Continent as warriors again.

It seems Karumerita has already given birth to one child as well.

All of the children born are raised together in the village.

Without relation to who gave birth to the child or whose child they belong to.

Among them it seems there're even children of different races mixed together, but there's no discrimination.

Without exception, they receive training as warriors. Around the time when men are skilled and the women have their first menstruation, they perform the ceremony of adulthood and leave for the outside.

And then they travel as warriors outside of the village, after their bodies start to decline around thirty years old, it seems they obtain the right to return to the village and devote themselves to raising the children.

Just, it seems there are those like Baribadomu who decide to never return to their village and live until they die as warriors as well.

Naturally as it is, there's no such system as marriage.

I'm sure there're no special feelings held towards any specific individual when they're embraced as well.

I'm experiencing a bit of culture shock.

In my previous world as well, I had heard stories of similar tribes.

However, when they're actually in front of your eyes, how do I put it, it goes beyond just being erotic and gives off a moving impression.

And while I was thinking that,

"You, feel grateful towards, but hate magicians, if Succubus comes out, ask white woman."

And I was turned down.

No, well, since I can use detoxification I wouldn't be asking though.

Part 4

Tonto the "Big Blade" is a silent man.

Tonto has a large beard, he's a man of about thirty years old.

Underneath his dark skin he has burly muscles built up.

He's shorter than Baribadomu, but he has similar looks.

If it weren't for the difference in how he wears his beard from Baribadomu, unexpectedly you might not be able to make the distinction between them.

People of a different race are hard to make distinctions between.

During the time we were keeping lookout I did talk to him a bit, but it seems he's fundamentally the type to not speak on his own.

It's quite the contrast from Karumerita who talks without even being asked.

It's fine since there's nothing in particular I really want to talk about though.

However, I casually start conversation.

"Tonto the "Long Sword" is cool, isn't it?" [41]

"Baba-sama gave it to me."

"Oh~. So it's not like you just naturally started to get called that."

"All of the names of warriors of the desert are given by Baba-sama."

It seems that the village chief gives the warriors of the desert their second name at the time when they leave for their journey.

One like Karumerita who has excellent physical strength, gets a name like "Mighty Strength" or "Bone Crusher", those who have good eyes like Baribadomu get names like "Hawk-Eyes" or "Eagle-Eyes".

It seems to be based on their state, in order to understand what their strong points are supposedly.

Just, because of that method of deciding, it seems they've suffered unexpectedly.

Supposedly there are people who can do nothing but boast of their physical strength.

Tonto is called "Big Blade", but it's not like he emphasizes use of a huge sword. This is of the physical strength type as well.

I'm sure without a doubt there's a name like, "Two Swords Unnecessary" as well. ^[42]

"I started to get naturally called that while I was fighting. Since I used nothing but quagmires to fight."

"A bog of mud, I've never seen it once yet."

"It has bad affinity with the monsters around here."

If it's against opponents that crawl across the ground then the quagmire has a tremendous effect, but if it's like a Griffin or Succubus, which can fly through the sky, then the effect is reduced by half.

For the insect like ones which are slow but have hard outer shells as well, even if you can stop their legs doesn't mean it will go well.

In the first place, recently it hasn't even been able to slow them down.

"Your magic is showy and amusing, I want to see your specialty as well."

"Quagmires are plain though. If there's opportunity I'll show you."

After that, Tonto remained silent.

It was like we talked about everything that was necessary.

Part 5

While we were moving east, there was gradually more green coming out.

Even more moving towards the east and there was a town called Kinkara and it seems spreading out even further to the east from there is a dense forest area. ^[43]

For a dense forest area to be right next to the desert, what a strange continent.

Although, the Garuban party wasn't planning to move towards there.

On the way, we encountered something like a large rock standing vertical as the landmark and then changed course to the north.

Around the time three days had passed since we changed courses, we ran into the main road.

Even if we were to call it a main road, it's not like there's any particular maintenance done to it.

It's a path that became a path because a lot of people walked along it.

If I were to compare it to the sand like ground until now and it's a lot more solid to step on, it truly gives off a feeling of stability.

As I thought, it's better for the ground to be solid.

"Sir. From here on out, the thieves come out. I think we can do something about it, but if the time comes down it..."

"I'm paying you money, make sure you protect at least the luggage!"

"...Will do."

Baribadomu was probably trying to say that if the time came to it, we should throw away the cargo and run.

However, in regards to Garuban, it seems the cargo is more important than his life. Sense of values are various among people.

"Ani? Is it alright?"

"Bon kura, it's fine for you not to worry about anything."

Karumerita is called "bon kura" by Baribadomu and Tonto.

Since she's Bone Crusher it's bon kura. ^[44]

It's truly an easy to understand nickname.

No, insult maybe?

If I were to say it, it seems like I'd be hit.

"Quagmire and Dragon Road. You two remain by Garuban-san's side without getting separated. Tonto, you look after the camels. Don't let even one escape. The rear guard is you, bon kura. I'll proceed forward while scouting things out. If something happens, I'll shout out. Don't miss the signal."

"Eh? Ani?"

"Eh?"

"Understood."

After each of us had been signaled we created the formation and carefully advanced. Even if we were to call them thieves, fundamentally they're the ambushing type, if you discover them ahead of time and take a detour you can avoid them.

Part 6

As a result of Baribadomu's reconnaissance, we caught onto the fact that thieves were waiting to ambush us.

Somehow, it seems difficult to discover a group of people using demon eyes from a distance, so there's a necessity to properly scout things out.

We made a large detour around the ambush.

If a pile of shit was waiting in the middle of the road, there are few guys who would walk right over it.

In order to avoid the chance of stepping in it, they walk a bit separated from it.

It's only natural.

However, I wonder what went wrong.

It could be that Baribadomu was discovered when he went to scout and then he was followed back.

Or maybe it could be that the ones Baribadomu found was an advance party for the thieves and the main body of the thieves was on standby on the detour route.

We were attacked.

Part 7

Taking the detour route and just around the time we were letting out a sigh of relief.

Hyu!!

Suddenly, we heard the sound of something cutting through the wind.

In the next instant, an arrow was stuck in Tonto's chest.

Tonto crumbled down to his knees.

I didn't have any idea what was happening, I was about to rush over and use healing magic in a panic.

However, in the next instant Elinalise grabbed onto the nape of my neck.

Simultaneously, the camel on the side of Tonto suddenly had an arrow fly into it.

"Run! It's an attack! They're coming from the west!"

Baribadomu's shout.

With that I understood it.

It's an enemy attack, it won't be good if we can't run away.

Elinalise released me.

Garuban and the camels had already started to run away.

Following along with that I started to run as well.

From above the hill on my left side a horse-rider came running out.

Horse-rider.

Right, it's a horse.

Men on top of horses wearing sand colored turbans came towards us.

"Sir! Abandon the camels! If you throw away the cargo they might overlook us!"

"No way!"

"Do you want to die!"

"It's you all's job to protect the cargo!"

"There's way too many opponents!"

Baribadomu and Garuban's shouting.

In front of my eyes the camel that just got struck by an arrow had its legs get tangled up.

After looking, I noticed bubbles coming from its mouth.

After a few more steps to the side, it fell over.

I shuddered.

There's poison on the arrows.

"Cheh... They're behind us as well."

From behind us there were horse-riders coming at us as well.

The troops with bows were on top of the hills.

They have arrows fixed to the bows.

Most of them aren't reaching, but it seems several of them are shooting in abandonment.

Bit by bit they're reaching up until here.

Horse-riders and bows.

Just from what I can see, there's a tremendous number.

100, no, there's probably 200.

I was being deceived by my preconceived notion from hearing the word thieves.

This is already the size of an army.

"..."

While listening to the sound of my heart beat, I was trying to determine the situation.

The enemy is launching a surprise attack from the rear and side.

At least there are no enemies in the direction we're advancing.

If we're going to run then it's that way.

"Rudeus!"

"Yes. I'm going to use [Quagmire] and [Dense Fog]."

"...I understand, I'll leave it to you!"

While I turned around I launched quagmire.

As large as I possibly could make it.

The depth should be plenty as long as the horses legs get trapped in it.

"Baribadomu-san! I'm going to create a cover! Please run straight ahead!"

"Cover!? I understand!"

"[Deep Mist]!"

I made an outbreak of water vapor appear in mid-air and created a thick fog.

[Puff puff] almost like smoke the surroundings turned pure white.

In no time at all the surroundings had become pure white and nothing could be seen at all.

Alright, with this the bow troops shouldn't be able to aim at us.

[Thunk]...

In the instant accompanying a sound, an arrow was stabbed into the ground at my feet.

"Uooh!!"

"??!"

Just as I was about to fall backwards in panic, Elinalise supported me.

"It's alright, there was one skilled among them, but they can't aim anymore!"

I ruminated over those words.

Tonto and the camel were killed by a single person's hands I guess.

However, since I released the fog...

He can't see anymore.

"Start running!"

I was told and start running.

After that, it wasn't like we weren't aimed for.

I know. They can't aim.

They can't hit, they can't hit. I'm a war hero.

Ah, shit, it would have been good if I gotten some sort of amulet from Sylphy!

No- if I had brought that which is in the holy shrine, from my first time with Sylphy.

"No good, they're going to catch up! Karumerita! Draw your sword!"

I shuddered after hearing Baribadomu's words.

If I listen closely, I could hear the sound of horses running from behind.

It seems there are horse-riders who took a detour around the quagmire.

Even though it's inside of the fog, if they just run straight ahead it's no problem.

The opponents are horses.

Know your own disadvantages, there are such words out there as well, but there are the words that speed decides the battle as well.

It seems there are a considerable number of horse-riders making use of speed and momentum.

Just from what I can see, there's over 100.

How many managed to pass it. Fifty, sixty?

There's no way we can fight that from the front.

"I'm going to slow them down! Please keep running! [Earth wall]!"

I made a 20 meter long thick earth wall appear behind us while continuing to run.

You can't make sudden stops on horses.

If it's inside of this fog, then the wall should become a hindrance.

If they know there's a wall, their speed should slacken.

"Haa... Haa..."

The arrows have already stopped.

I just continue to run.

While sometimes creating walls behind us, running.

Suddenly, I remembered about Tonto who had an arrow stuck in his chest.

I wonder if we just left him behind.

No, there was already no saving him.

The arrow was near his heart.

It had poison on it as well.

Even with advanced healing, if it's a poison arrow in the heart I don't know if we would be able to save him.

In the first place, at this point there's already nothing we can do about it.

We continue to run on at full speed while inside of the fog.

Part 8

I wonder how far we've been running.

I feel like we've been running for over two hours.

After Baribadomu confirmed things behind us and said, "It seems we've lost them", everyone came to a stop.

"Haa... Haa..."

As expected, I'm tired.

I'm soaked in sweat.

But, the results from continuing to run have showed up.

If I were told to run again, I can still run.

Even though I say that, the three warrior types were making refreshed faces.

Is it because of the Touki?

How unfair.

"Zehaa... Zehaa... Gwe..."

Garuban collapsed with a pale face.

No matter how much you say he's a merchant used to travelling, if he has to run it will tire him out.

He was relieved.

The damage was one camel and one escort.

Tonto.

I feel like if I had immediately pulled the arrow out and used healing magic then detoxification he might have been saved.

It could be that that he skillfully avoided letting it hit a vital spot.

In reality, if Elinalise hadn't pulled on the nape of my neck, I'm sure that I would have tried to do that.

However, if I had done that, I might have been late to run away.

Elinalise has more experience with things like this than me it seems.

Most likely, if I had spent time there treating him, I probably would have been in danger.

".."

After suddenly looking and Karumerita was glaring at me.

I wonder what it is.

Did I do something wrong I wonder.

Karumerita was behind me, she was in charge of the rear guard.

In the case that she's wounded, I'm sure it would be better to treat it.

It doesn't seem like she got hit by an arrow though...

Karumerita determinedly walked up to my side.

Suddenly she grabbed onto my collar.

"You! If you can use such large magic like that, then you could have done in something like thieves right!!"

"Huh?"

Done in?

Those numbers?

After being told it I realized.

That's right. There was the option to kill them as well.

"Stop it bon kura!"

"Ani? You saw it as well right! The horses sunk into a bog, they ran into a wall as well, it became that pure white!"

"Think about it more properly! That's why you're a bon kura!"

"Shut up! This guy, if he had used magic, we might have been able to save Tonto!"

"There's no way we could have defeated those numbers! That was, most likely, the Harimafu Thief Group. Without a doubt there were more lying in wait, you know!"

"But... ah!!"

Elinalise cut into the space between Karumerita and I.

She pressed against Karumerita with her buckler and put her hand on the estoc at her waist.

"Do you have any complaints with our methods?"

"What's going on...?"

Elinalise let out a single "Hmph" with her nose and glared at Karumerita.

"Rudeus was properly making judgement based on the situation. Without knowing how many opponents there are, the number was many. Not to mention the enemies were using poisoned arrows. Slowing them down with a quagmire, sealing off the bows with fog, and creating walls to obstruct them. And thanks to that we were able to escape. One person was killed, but all of the camels except one are safe. What are you dissatisfied with? Fighting like an idiot, did you want to fight losing both your life and your luggage?"

Elinalise defended me like that.

Her words weren't being understood.

However, it seems Elinalise realized what Karumerita wanted to say.

Unusual for Elinalise, she used a provocative way of saying it.

There were a large number of enemies.

100 or 200 maybe.

According to what Baribadomu said, there might have been more waiting as rear guard.

If you were to ask if I could defeat that.

I don't know.

Only if I were to use saint class magic.

Then it should be possible.

I have the magic power. Most likely I wouldn't run out.

While stopping their feet with a quagmire, using magic to do away with the bow troops at a distance, using a squall to blow away the horse-riders from below, using fire to burn them to death.

I could have done something like that.

In theory that is.

In reality I don't know what would have happened.

There was the possibility that the bow troops that I failed to kill might have shot me with a poisoned arrow, or the horse-riders that I couldn't completely stop could have trampled me as well.

Among the opponents' attack methods as well, there might have been some assumption for if anything ever happens with magicians.

Also, if it had become a melee, I couldn't use large scale magic since my allies would have gotten dragged into it.

And then, I'm sure Elinalise understood that as well.

That's why she's my ally.

"In the first place, we aren't mercenaries you know? We have no obligation to fight against that kind of large military force."

".."

"What is it, those eyes? Do you want to go at it with me? You sure are a hot-blooded young girl, aren't you? I'll take you on."

Elinalise took out her estoc.

Seeing that, Karumerita panicked and took out the broadsword from her waist.

And, there Baribadomu cut in between them.

"Hey bon kura, stop. Elinalise, you as well, Quagmire as well. It was unfortunate about Tonto, but there was nothing wrong with Quagmire's decision. The only one thinking about something idiotic like fighting in that place is you, bon kura. That's exactly why you're always going to be a bon kura."

"...It's already fine."

Karumerita withdrew while making a "Hmph" with her rough breathing.
And then, she went over to the side of one of the camels sitting down and sat down burying her face into her knees.
Seeing that state of hers Baribadomu let out a sigh.

"Sorry about that, both of you."

"No..."

"You know Karumerita, she gave birth to a child from Tonto before."

"Huh?"

"Therefore well, try to understand. For her, it's just striking out."

She gave birth to his child.
That's why she got that angry I guess.

I thought that the female warriors of the desert would by no means hold any sort of special feelings personally towards a man.
But I guess that isn't the case.
After all, if it's a partner who you've given birth to their child, they're special.

After receiving a bit of a shock Elinalise rested her estoc in the sheath and approached me.

"Rudeus. There's no need to feel down about it."

"...Haa"

"Among the adventurers as well, it's rare but there are people who can't kill others. Not to mention you're a person that is soon to be a father. I can understand why you would hesitate to kill as well."

There was a bit of a gap from what she said.
It's because she can't understand the conversation.

Honestly, I wasn't hesitating.
Even in that kind of situation where we were cornered, the option of words like kill never even floated through my mind.

Although, inside of that deep fog, there were most likely thieves who ran straight into the walls I created and died I'm sure.

I don't really feel any particular kind of guilt in regards to that though.

If it comes down to using magic and directly killing people somehow I can't help but feeling strangely sick to my stomach.

...I am nothing but a small fry and I feel a bit deplorable.

"Thank you very much."

I honestly lowered my head towards Elinalise who was trying to comfort me.

Thinking about it, in the middle of running away, she was always running besides me.

When I almost fell over she supported me as well, I get the feeling she was in a position to shield me from arrows.

She was always supporting me.

It could be that she had intended to be "my" escort.

"Geez, there's no need for thanks. It's only natural to protect my grandchildren."

Elinalise patted my shoulder with a [Pon Pon].

Grandchild huh...

By the time we're able to return I wonder if Sylphy's stomach will be large enough to stand out.

It's my child and Elinalise's great-grandchild.

In her regards, during the birth of her great-grandchild she probably doesn't want to receive the blame from Sylphy, "Why didn't you protect Rudi!?"

Together with Sylphy and together with me.

She should want to celebrate the birth of a new life with a smile.

"...Umm, Elinalise-san."

"What is it?"

"Thank you very much."

I said my thanks once more.

This time with my heart in it.

Elinalise as well, patted my shoulder once more.



Part 9

With just a bit of awkwardness continuing.

The journey continued.

Even though one of his allies had died, Baribadomu was calm.

He remade the formation like nothing happened at all.

Baribadomu didn't say anything in regards to Tonto.

Without lamenting over his death, he just indifferently continued the job as an escort.

Baribadomu never once even put the name of Tonto into words.

It's heartless, there's such a part that I feel as well.

But, I'm sure that this is that sort of place.

And then they are that sort of family.

Living next door to death, where any misstep can kill you.

Thinking about it, I have the feeling it was kind of like that on Magic Continent as well.

The sense of valuing life is just a bit too different for me.

Several days later, we arrived at an Oasis that works as a relay point.

Just like the Bazaar we saw at first, it was almost like a market had been made surrounded by a lake.

The first time I saw I didn't stop to consider it, but all of the groups wearing warrior-like outfits certainly have at least one woman with them.

I wonder if all of them are warriors of the desert as well.

Garuban and the others opened up a tent in a certain section.

During the time you're in the Oasis, it seems the escorts are allowed to sleep inside the tent as well.

"Baribadomu, is there a necessity to hire additional escorts?"

"No, I'm sure there's no need. Those two are more useful than the average warrior. Going until Lapan with these numbers and hiring more there would be more profitable I'm sure. Since there's no more thieves as well after all."

"I see, then let's go with that. Nevertheless, losing a camel is painful."^[45]

"It can't be helped. It's good fortune to get out of that situation losing just one camel."

Baribadomu and Garuban's conversation was friendly.

Almost to the point where you wouldn't think they have an employment relationship.

"What is it, Rudeus? Is there something on my face?"

While I was looking at Garuban and I was asked something like that.

"No, I was just thinking that you and Baribadomu-san are considerably close."

"I've been close to that guy since the time when I was still a beginner. He's the only companion that I can trust."

I see now.

Unexpectedly, Baribadomu as well, rather than the same warrior of the desert Tonto, he might feel a stronger sense of camaraderie with the merchant Garuban.

In regards to the Escort Captain Baribadomu, his own subordinates are people that he can replace...

Maybe he's started to think that way after witnessing so many subordinates die.^[46]

Part 10

After replenishing our supplies at the bazaar, we continue even further north.

After that, Karumerita never charged at me.

She as well, might have just gotten lost in that moment.

Although there was never any need for us to get along together.

Thereafter we never held any conversations during our guard shifts.

Well our relationship is only up until Lapan, so I won't be bothered over it.

If the father of the child you gave birth to died, of course it's heart-breaking.

Thinking about it from my standpoint.

If Sylphy were to die.

Well, naturally it would be heart-breaking.

Not just because she's carrying my child, I love her too.

If it were down to her dying, that is... heart-breaking.

"...Regret, huh?"

It seems if I come to Begaritto Continent I'll regret it.

Not much time has passed since I decided to journey with Elinalise to Begaritto Continent and learned about the teleport ruins from Nanahoshi.

In terms of time it's not all that different.

Therefore, I think that regret should still be the same thing.

If I were to assume that it's the same thing, it's hard to think that something will happen to those remaining at the school.

If I ignored the previous advice and I started to go towards Begaritto Continent first, I wouldn't have met with Sylphy and wouldn't have become acquaintances with the other guys as well.

I couldn't have regretted what I didn't know.

However, it could be that it's a different regret this time.

It may not be something that is going to happen on Paul's side, but something back home. For example, if the condition of Sylphy's pregnancy gets bad...

"Rudeus, did something happen?"

"No..."

It's needless anxiety.

Something like a source of regret can be found anywhere.

For a careless guy like me, no matter what I do I'll have at least one regret.

From here on out...

I don't know what might happen.

It's the first time I've opposed the Hitogami's advice head on.

Up until now, it always turned into a good result if I obeyed them.

Then, this time, no matter what I do I wonder if it will be no good.

No.

That shouldn't be the case.

If I know that something bad is going to happen, it should be possible to avoid that.

Even though I say that, it's not limited to something happening to someone nearby like Tonto.

I can't let my guard down.

I need to think like that.

And then.

If at that time the one who is trying to harm my family is a person then...

This time I will...

...No, I'll stop there.

After all, it's just talk.

I can't kill a person.

If it comes down to it, at least I'll protect my family in exchange for my own body.

Let's go with that.

Two weeks after that.

We arrived at the Labyrinth City Lapan.

Chapter 8

Arrival

Part 1

Labyrinth City Lapan.

That city is built within a mysterious cage-like material you can't find anywhere else.

Within the vast desert, there's an enormous white cage.

Just as you're thinking [What is it?] and approach that cage to look, of all things it is bone.

It's the bones of an enormous Behemoth.

Lapan is a city that was built within an enormous rib cage which could easily contain an average sized city.

This place that was once nothing but a small oasis was altered by the remains of that Behemoth.

An astonishingly large number of labyrinths appeared and a great number of adventurers became fascinated by that land.

Adventurers from throughout the world visit this land in order to get rich quick in Lapan, giving birth to a great number of deeply moving dramas and tragedies.

In such a whirlpool of chaos, this city is now the prominent metropolis of Begaritto.

Adventurer Bloody Count, Excerpt from book "Walking the World".

Part 2

A vague recollection of my knowledge from "Walking the World".

Lapan is a large city.

Within the center of those characteristic-like 12 white pillars an earth-colored townscape was spreading out.

The buildings are made of earth and materials harvested from monsters.

Townscapes with this kind of ambiance I often saw on the Magic Continent.

Since there's an insufficient amount of wood after all.

Nevertheless, unexpectedly there's a lot of green as well.

I wonder if it's because of the oasis next to the bone pillars.

Even from a distance, I could see trees like Palm trees standing there.

The atmosphere is peculiar.

How do I put it, the scent of sweat or the scent of vulgarity?

It's a scent of people similar to the slave market.

"Are you surprised? Those pillars are the rib cage of a Behemoth."

While observing as we walked, Garuban triumphantly started to tell the story.

It's a problem of formation and recently here Garuban has started up conversations often.

Garuban really likes to boast about stories.

Whether lie or truth "I'm amazing" stories are stories that you can enjoy just listening to like that.

"Once at the time when that great hero North God Kaaruman the Second visited this land, together with his allies he exterminated a Great Behemoth that was raging about in this desert. The Behemoth's meat was eaten or rotted, and now it's all gone without a trace, but just the bones continued to remain until now without rotting like that."

"Oh~"

I wonder if this is a land related to North God Kaaruman.

I know of several legends of that North God, but it's my first time hearing one about defeating a Behemoth.

On our journey, I saw a Behemoth once, but trying to defeat something like that isn't something a sane person would try.

I wonder how he managed to defeat it.

Well, it seems the North God managed to defeat things like the Immortal Demon King and an enormous Dragon. It might have been his hobby to defeat those kinds of monsters with high HP.

"The reason there's a large number of labyrinths is because mixed in among the monsters that ate the Behemoth there were ant types. If you eat the flesh of a powerful monster, then a powerful monster will be born. The new variation of ants dug up a large number of nest holes and all of those ended up changing into labyrinths."

"I see now."

The Behemoth died.

There the insects ate.

The insects then multiplied and created nests.

After a long period of time passed the insects died, their nests changed, it's that sort of cause.

Incidentally, if you eat the flesh of a strong monster a strong monster will be born.

That is folklore.

It has about as much credibility as gaining immortality from eating the flesh of a mermaid.

If a strong monster could be born like that, then it wouldn't be strange for the people of the Magic Continent who eat the meat of monsters on a daily basis to be stronger.

It doesn't seem to be an ability of monsters to change after eating the meat of monsters either after all.^[47]

No wait just a second.

How about the theory that it raises the probability of those like Badigadi and Kishirika to be born.

It seems in the first place monsters are a mutation of normal living things, it wouldn't be strange for mutations to occur among people as well.

This is bad.

I've eaten a considerable amount of meat from monsters after all.

What should I do, if the moment Sylphy and my child is born it suddenly shouts something like, "This one is Demon World Great Emperor!"

I might end up feeling like a shrike entrusted with the eggs of a cuckoo. ^[48]

"Adventurers and merchants throughout the world come to gather in this land."

The magic items were found one after another.

The equipment and magic tools flew off the shelves.

Magic stones. No matter how many you have, it's never enough.

Just by bringing goods, you can reliably sell them off at a high price.

In regards to merchants, it seems to be that kind of land of dreams.

Although, in order to come here, you need the knowledge and some other stuff to walk across the desert.

Therefore it's a business where only skilled merchants can succeed, supposedly.

If you go to Central Continent, I'm sure you would be able to find any number of safer and more profitable businesses.

The frog inside of the well.

The grain of rice in the rice bowl.

Even though I say that, since Garuban is drunk on himself, I don't intend to pour water over that.

It's because there are merchants like these that the economy actually moves.

Part 3

We arrived in Lapan and separated from Garuban and the others.

It seems they planned to setup a tent at the edge of the town.

It was a short time, but I feel like I was taught various things by them.

"Thank you very much."

"It goes for both of us. If anything happens again, feel free to call for us."

Our separation went all too quickly.

It was a short period, but we ended up being of assistance I guess.

I was going to bow to Baribadomu and Karumerita, but I stopped.

It's a bit awkward, but I don't want to leave anything lingering in the background.

Now then, it won't be good if we don't search for Gisu.

Or else Paul I guess.

I'll be running around looking for them without any clues though. ^[49]

They're here right?

We still have time before the sun sets.

Normally finding an inn would be the first thing, but should we put priority on searching?

"What should we do?"

"That's right. In a city of this size then there should be an adventurers guild as well, let's try going there."

"I understand."

I wanted to leave behind our baggage first though.

Well it's fine.

If possible, I'd like to stay at the same inn as Gisu or Paul after all.

We asked a person walking down the road the location of the adventurer's guild.
It seems to be in the vicinity of the center of the city.
Those guilds are generally in the center.

The people walking down the road were mostly merchants.

The merchants were generally wearing the same outfits as Garuban.

A turban, a gown that seems to completely conceal the body excluding the head. A scruffy beard.

Guys with that sort of appearance are walking around leading camels or stallholders standing under tents on the roadside.

There's many people who properly keep their skin concealed around here.

Just, among them there are guys with an appearance like Aladdin as well.

It's almost like you'd expect a general store, metallic lamp, or pots with strange patterns and such to be sold.

It's exactly an Arabian kind of feeling.

Most likely if you blow into a recorder, a red snake will come on in the shape of a Kamon.

[50]

The closer we got to the adventurers guild, the more we saw the familiar forms of adventurers.

I wonder if there are many people originally from Central Continent around here.

Just, all of them have the faces of veterans.

Most likely they all specialize in labyrinth exploration and are S rank.

There are many guys lightly dressed.

It seems it's dangerous if you stay outside in the strong sunlight without wearing thick clothes, but since they aren't spending a long period outside it's no problem.

Part 4

The adventurers guild was something constructed out of a single large rock.
Most likely, it's something created with magic.
Since I can make something similar to it, I quickly understood.

Although the workmanship was better than the ones I make.
The entrance had an elaborate relief carved into it, when you go inside the ventilation is good, it was pleasantly cool and refreshing.

The atmosphere inside of the adventurer's guild is generally the same everywhere.
However, because of this location, the figures of newbies can't be seen.
Everyone looks strong.

The guys with wounds on their faces or bodies stand out.
I'm sure, there are many who have wounds on their legs.
It's not like the only difference is that I was sponging off my parents. ^[51]

"Well then, let's try asking around about Paul or Gisu."

"That's right. I'm sure if we ask we'll know."

"Gisu gets his information from these sorts of places as well. After we just say his name, I'm sure he'll locate us from his side... and, it seems there's no necessity for that."

Elinalise's words.

After following her gaze, in the corner of the adventurer's guild, there was a man with a monkey face.

It seems he was talking about something with a Beast race swordsman.

"Hey, I'm begging you. You were helped out a good bit by that guy as well right."

"Impossible things are impossible."

"Compromise on that point, can't you do something? Every moment counts."

"It's already been a month right? They're dead."

"No, they're definitely not dead. Even then we need people to confirm if there's a corpse. Hey, I'm begging. I'm begging based on the anticipation of seeing your skill with the sword. If you want, we can even give double the reward as well."

It was a considerably frantic expression.

Gisu, you can make that sort of face, can't you?

"Sorry, but ask someone else, I don't want to die yet."

It seems like for a short while Gisu was trying to request something of the Beast Race swordsman, but soon the beast race swordsman shook his head and Gisu clicked his tongue loud enough that we could hear it over here.

"Cheh... You damn coward! It's amazing you managed to get along as an adventurer like that!"

"...Hmph, say whatever you want."

The Beast Race man didn't even turn around for Gisu's insults and left the building.

How unusual for Gisu to use that kind of abusive language.

No, it's not like I know all that much about Gisu either.

The Gisu in my heart gives off more an aloof feeling.

"Gisu, he seems to be considerably desperate doesn't he."

"Oh, Gisu is generally like that."

"Is that so? My image of him is more like..."

"I'm sure, in front of Rudeus he's putting on a good face, right...? Gisu!"

Gisu was restlessly looking around his surroundings.

After he found us, Gisu opened his eyes wide.

He walked over to where we were unsteadily.

"O... Oh! If it isn't Elinalise!"

"We're late, aren't we?"

After Elinalise said that, Gisu laughed nihilistically.

"There's no~ way... that's the case... rather, to the point, that it's way too fast."

Gisu's face turned into a smile and he patted Elinalise's shoulder with a [Bashibashi].

"Rather, hey~, how fast were you coming, huh... the time I sent the letter out was still only half a year ago, you know? Ah, could it be? You haven't seen the letter? Did you pass by and miss it?"

"We'll talk about that later. What happened on this side with Zenith?"

After Elinalise asked, Gisu's face turned into a frown.

"It's not good. We thought it would become a long fight and sent the letter out to you guys as well but...Honestly... you know. Well, this side as well, we can talk about it in detail later."

It seems the situation is bad.

However, that is something we predicted.

By the time we arrive, it would already be resolved; such an optimistic thought has disappeared.

"For the time being, please guide us to where dad is."

After Gisu took a look at me his eyes went round.

And then he scratched the area below his nose.

"O... Oh... What's this, it's senpai, right? You've gotten considerably big."

"It doesn't seem like Gisu-san has changed."

"Heh...Stop that, it's ticklish. Newbie is fine I said."

Ah, how nostalgic, this exchange.

"Oh my, you seem to have a considerably good relationship."

Elinalise said it as if she was amused.

After hearing that, Gisu smiled with a broad grin.

"Well yeah, it's a relationship where we entered the same prison together after all, right senpai?"

"That's right, how nostalgic."

Thrown into prison nude in the Dorudia race village.

Really, how nostalgic.

"Ah, here's no good. I'll guide you to Paul's place."

While saying that, Gisu nihilistically laughed and left the adventurer's guild.

Part 5

The place Paul and the others were staying at was an inn in a certain corner of the city.

It was constructed of earth and stone.

If I were to go by the standard of Magic Continent, it would be aimed at about B rank adventurers.

It's not good or bad.

After we made it up to the entrance, Gisu said it.

"Listen, Paul is considerably exhausted. Elinalise, you, I'm sure there are things you want to say, but this time try to hold yourself back a bit."

"...I can't make any promises."

Elinalise said that while shaking her head.

Gisu made a bitter smile and shrugged his shoulders.

Nothing more than that was said.

Well, if it's Elinalise, then it's not like she'll suddenly become belligerent.

"Senpai, you as well. Please don't get into a fight like last time. I'm sure you have lots of things to say along the way, but don't blame him too much."

If he's going to the point of saying something like that ahead of time, it seems Paul is in a dangerous state.

Although, I've already seen a weakened and lost Paul once before as well.

It won't be good if I don't prepare myself.

Yeah I can see it, Paul is the type who is considerably weak emotionally.

If anything happens, he quickly gets depressed.

It's not quite to the level of mental illness, but he's the type that hasn't gone through any kind of major setbacks in the past.

If we could just find Zenith, then I thought he would return to the Paul full of confidence from Buina Village though...

Well, this time. I'll go with guts.

Let's go with tolerance.

Let's go with the level of being called Rudeus the Buddha.

"Then, let's go in."

Gisu said that and went inside the inn.

There's no door.

There was a cloth almost like a curtain separating as we entered inside.

Inns that are aimed at adventurers, generally, were all made to look the same no matter where you go.

It's a place for the sake of eating.

Only the materials of the tables and the positioning are different, there's no large difference.

I recognized Paul at a glance.

The man who has fallen prostrated on top of the table.

"...Ah."

There was a person who let out a small voice.

The person standing right beside Paul.

Even in this kind of place, she's wearing maid clothes.

It's Lilia.

She had a clear yet slightly tired expression and her hair was somewhat frayed.

However, after she met eyes with me, that face became somewhat cheerful.

She did a single bow towards me.

After that, she soon shook Paul's back.

The woman sitting in front of Paul stood up as well.

After seeing my face, she took several steps back and lowered her head after making a taken aback face.

It's a female in a robe figure.

Was that Vera or Shera again?

If I remember correctly, it was Shera.

The management person.

She was making a tired face as well.

Everyone is making tired faces.

I sat down in the seat she was sitting right in front of Paul.

"Husband, Rudeus-sama has come to visit."

"Nn..."

After Paul was shaken by Lilia, he slowly raised his face.

What a terrible face.

He didn't have a scruffy beard and his hair was reasonably in order.

There's no scent of alcohol from a certain time as well.

However, there's bags under his eyes, it feels like he's lost weight and worn out as a whole.

Same as always, he's being driven into the corner.

I'm glad I came.

If Paul is in this kind of condition, then even with just this, there is meaning in my coming here.

"Rudi..."

"Dad. It's been a while."

Paul looked at my face in a daze.

It's almost like he's just woken up.

No, I wonder if he was asleep.

With his face down on the table.

And dozing away.

"Ah... How strange. I can see Rudi...wa ha... Yo Rudi, it's been a while. You look energetic. Are Norn and Aisha doing well?"

Paul said that with glazed eyes and a dull face.

Honestly, it was a reaction outside of my assumptions.

I thought a Paul who was lost in alcohol would come out like some time ago.

And then, I thought he would come out shouting at me with an alcohol bottle in one hand.

"No... Norn and Aisha, I've taken care of. Now they're living with me in the Magic City Sharia. For the time being, I've left them in the care of some reliable people, so it's alright."

"I see, I see, as expected of Rudi. I can rely on you. Yeah, how have you been, have you been healthy?"

"I guess so... Well, I've been healthy."

Paul was smiling with a fluffy expression.

It was a smile like his soul was missing not suitable for this situation.

You could even call it eerie.

"I see, that sure is great, it's number one that you've been healthy."

Paul's eyes were dead.

Could it be, I wonder if his spirit has died and he's become an invalid?

After looking at Gisu with an uneasy face, he nodded with a serious face.

...Seriously?

Paul, you've really ended up becoming like this...

"Rudi..."

Paul unsteadily stood up and made his way around the table to me.

And then, he tightly embraced me.



"Dad, you know, he's a failure..."

I just silently returned the embrace from Paul.

Paul might be no good.

He already might never return to normal.

Even though he'll soon have grandchildren born.

He's ended up becoming like this...

However, now that I've come here, it's alright.

I'll somehow do something.

I came for that reason.

"I couldn't save your mother, I couldn't protect the things I decided myself either. I wasn't able to do anything for you as a parent as well. I'm a no good guy."

"Please rest easy. Now that I've come here it's already alright."

"Wu...Rudi, you, have really gotten big."

Paul tightened his grip on my shoulders.

It hurts a bit.

However, I'll endure it.

"I've grown bigger. Soon, my child will be born as well. So, afterwards rest easy and leave things to me, please take a good rest."

"...Hn?! Child!?"

And there Paul suddenly let out a strange voice.

Simultaneous with that, the light rapidly returned to his eyes.

"O... O... Oh?"

He was touching my face with his own face like he was tricked by a fox.

"...Could it be, you're real?"

"I'm real."

"You're not a dream?"

"A good man like it's a dream, right?"

"...Ah, he's real."

Paul blinked his eyes and looked at his surroundings.

He met eyes with Lilia.

"Good morning, Husband."

"Yeah, Lilia. How long was I asleep?"

"Since Talhand-sama went out shopping, so... just about one hour."

"I see, it seems I was half asleep."

Paul shook his head and stretched a bit.

Hmmm, after all, it seems he was just half asleep.

It seems he hasn't become an invalid.

That's great.

I thought I was going to have to nurse an old person already at this age.

Paul sat back down on the chair and faced me.

And then, with a feeling once again, started to ask.

"...Rudi, why... are you here?"

"I said it just now as well, but I've come to help you."

"No, not with that sort of meaning?"

I shook my head.

It was a question within my assumptions.

Previously, these sorts of differences in contact developed into a fight.

However, this time, it will be fine.

I already saw the letter and sheltered Norn and Aisha as well.

"It's alright, Norn and Aisha as well, they've safely been taken care of."

I repeated what I said earlier.

"Right, I see."

Paul looked like he was confused as he patted my body.
Almost like he was trying to make sure if I was really here.

"No, but, after all... isn't that too fast?"

"We came using a somewhat special means of transport. I thought about talking about it on the way home."

"Special means... Well, if it's you, then I guess those kinds of things are possible..."

Paul was making a dumbfounded face and drooped his shoulders.
With the same absent-minded face.

"For the time being, could you tell us what happened after you sent out the letter?"

"No, wait just a second, I'm confused."

"That's right, please drink some water and calm down."

I made a cup with earth magic and filled it with water using water magic then handed it to Paul.

Paul honestly took that.

And quickly gulped it down.

And then, "Fu..." took a deep breath.

"Sorry. I'm a bit surprised. Though I knew that Gisu sent out a letter at his own convenience, I thought it would be a bit longer before you come."

"We came here in a hurry after all."

After saying that, Paul made a bitter smile.

"Even for hurrying, that's way too fast though."

One and a half months.

If you were to expect it from Paul's side, it would be a bit over half a year.

Even then, that would still be fast.

I'm sure it's fast.

Normally, it would be another year from there.

Paul as well, probably thought it would be another ten months I'm sure.

And, there Paul put his hand at his chin and made a face like he was thinking about something.

And then, with a somewhat tensed face asked me.

That voice was using a tone that was slowly trying to ascertain something.

"Come to think of it, earlier, did you say something about having a child?"

Come to think of it, I did say it.

Though I didn't have any intention to hide it.

After all, I wonder if he'll get angry.

That even though I'm going through this much difficulty, just you are making these good experiences.

I responded while selecting my words.

"That is. Actually, while I was attending school at the Magic University, I got married."

"...Married?"

Paul's face turned into a frown.

"With whom...? Ah, was it Eris?"

"No, with Sylphy. We were able to reunite at the Magic University."

"Sylphy? The one from Buina Village?? She was alive?"

"Yeah, though it seems like she had a terrible time in her own way."

Paul was brushing his chin while making a surprised face.

Somehow, I did send out a letter, but it really doesn't seem to have arrived.

"The story up until we got married, do you want to hear?"

"...Ah, Yeah. That's right I guess. For the time being, tell me."

I started to tell Paul about what happened after I sent the letter to him.

I entered the Magic University, the story up until I got married.

I carefully told the contents.

Honestly, my memories from school life were nothing but fun memories.

Certainly there were a few bad things as well, but it wouldn't be an exaggeration to even say they were rose colored.

I made friends as well and made a lover as well.

During every event, we had a party as well.

I cautiously told it while trying to remain as objective as possible as I said it.

I didn't keep anything secret.

Since there's no mistake that I enjoyed it.

"I see... a child... grandchild, huh..."

I was prepared to be reprimanded.

The fact that I've made a child would mean, in other words, that I did things capable of making a child.

During the time when I know Paul is desperately trying to save Zenith for our family.

Normally, I'm sure you would get angry.

It's something that accompanies pleasure after all.

It seems Paul has been living a lifestyle of abstinence as well after all.

In front of me with that kind of thinking, Paul lowered his head.

"I'm sorry about that. Because of my worthlessness, I called you who is about to become a father to this kind of place."

He apologized.

That Paul did.

"No, that is, I feel very sorry about that. Even though mother still hasn't been found, only I have.."

"No, I can't blame you for that. Once with Lilia, I as well embraced her after all."

Lilia is your wife as well, isn't that fine I wonder.

And where I think up to though.

"I thought I could last until we saved Zenith, really, it's pathetic..."

Paul hung his head down in shame, he looks like he's going to cry again.

Fragile.

Almost like he's made of glass. ^[52]

And there Lilia interposed with her words.

"We were attacked by a Succubus, it couldn't be helped."

"Even with that.., you, like that...Ah, damn it..."

Paul seemed like he remembered something and held his head.

I see, a Succubus huh.

It can't be helped if it was a Succubus.

I encountered one as well, but those aren't something you can fight against.

The things that people are hiding in their hearts, it has a feeling like it can lay them bare.

But, I think there should be healing magicians in Paul's party.

And I flash a glance at Shera.

She caught my glance and went into an obvious panic.

"I...I'm very sorry. That is, I was afraid, of the leader, and I wasn't able to do anything..."

"Rudi, please don't blame her. It's my fault."

Most likely, after Paul went into heat, he started to attack the women surrounding them.

If this man were to seriously go into heat, I'm sure that would be scary.

Even more so, in Paul's party, Paul should be the core of their combat ability.

You can't invoke detoxification magic unless you're touching the other side with your hand.

Trying to hold down Paul while using detoxification, that's no different from impossible.

There Lilia must have offered her body to somehow do something I'm sure.

"I understand the fear of Succubus very well. It's an opponent that it can't be helped against."

"But you know, even though Talhand was completely fine, just I..."

Come to think of it, this party has a man called Talhand as well, doesn't it?

He was alright, I guess?

I wonder what that means.

There was a man who could resist that?

Could it be that it doesn't affect Dwarves, or something like that?

While I was thinking that, Paul's gaze locked onto me.

"What is it?"

After asking that, Paul scratched underneath his nose while answering.

"No, you, it seems you've become able to refer to yourself as Ore now." [53]

"Huh..."

After it was pointed out, I realized that my first person had changed.

Come to think of it, at some unknown point, I've started to be able to put "Ore" into words.

Though it was something I had intended to do.

Maybe because I was talking together with Zanoba and the others, it seems it gradually mixed together.

"Ah, excuse me. To think I would do that." [54]

"No, it's fine. Using "ore" is manlier after all."

Paul smiled

He smiled, however.

Tears started to build up in the edges of his eyes.

Tears started to fall down.

By the time one grain had fallen, many were falling down.

Without end they were falling.

"...Rudi, you, really grew up a lot, didn't you...?"

After receiving those words, I felt like I was going to cry as well.

Even though we're family.

We don't even know how the other side has changed.

"Dad is sorry for being this kind of no good father..."

".."

I silently put my arm around Paul's shoulder.

It wasn't even necessary to stretch myself, my hand could reach around to the other shoulder.

In the time I hadn't realized, I had grown to the same height as Paul.

Just like that, the two of us cried.

Part 6

After a short while I separated from Paul.

The reunion has ended.

It won't be good if we don't change directions.

And then, there's still one problem remaining.

"...Hmph."

Elinalise was sitting in a chair nearby and looking over here with a face like she wasn't amused at all.

Paul slowly looked over there.

Their two gazes entangled.

Paul narrowed his eyes.

Elinalise lowered her eyebrows.

No good.

"Umm, dad. Elinalise-san has come to help. She's come all the way here from Magic City Sharia after hearing our family is in a pinch. Even on top of the fact that she didn't want to see dad's face. She came to help."

".."

Paul slowly stood up.

He faced Elinalise and slowly started to walk.

She caught onto that and stood up while tightly gripping her fist.

"She's worried as well. I'm sure various things happened in the past though. In order to save my face here, can't you let things be water under the bridge?"

Paul ignored me and stood directly in front of Elinalise.

Elinalise was glaring at a high place one head above her own.
An electrifying presence was being transmitted.
It can't be, this is blood thirst.

Critical situation.
That word floated to mind.
Could it be, they're going to start a fist fight?
No, it might become a fight to the death.
No good.
I never thought their relationship was that bad.

"...Gisu."

I exchanged a look with Gisu.
Then, he shrugged his shoulders in jest and an irritating smile floated onto his face.
This guy is useless.

"Elinalise."
"What do you want?"

Paul took a fleeting glance at me.
He sent a look at Lilia and Shera as well.
I wonder what it is.
It's a gaze that has implication.

".."

Paul got onto his knees there.
And then rubbed his head into the ground.
He's prostrating himself! ^[55]

"For that time, I'm very sorry!"

Elinalise wasn't looking at Paul.

She responded while looking away.

While making a displeased face, she said it completely unamused.

"...About that time, I feel that I was in the wrong as well."

...Huh?

I feel like I heard some unexpected words.

Paul was still in the form of a frog as he continued.

"It seems like you've helped me out in various ways since the teleport, I am truly sorry."

"It's fine. I had a person I was searching for as well, it was in addition."

"Thank you, Elinalise."

"You're welcome, Paul."

With that it was over.

It was something done quickly.

In between the two a small smile floated.

It seemed like something that existed between Paul and Elinalise disappeared.

Even though she said she wouldn't forgive Paul that much.

So easily.

"Fu..."

Paul took a deep breath and stopped his prostration then stood up.

He brushed his knees with a [Pan Pan].

And then looked at Elinalise.

Elinalise as well looked at Paul with a soft gaze.

"Paul, you've grown old haven't you."

"You're just as beautiful as always."

"Oh my, I'll tell on you to Zenith."

"Then I can see a Zenith burning from jealousy again."

"It's something to look forward to, isn't it?"

The two suddenly laughed.

How nice.

A beautiful elf and an exhausted middle aged swordsman.

Somehow it seems like it could become a painting.

I don't know the reason for their discord.

It might have just been Elinalise being stubborn and maybe it wasn't anything significant

I wonder.

Or else, maybe it was the so-called [Time solves everything.] I wonder...

In any case, it's beautiful that everything ends well, I guess.

"Ah... But, you, I'm amazed you could endure it. From the northern regions until here, I'm sure it was considerably tough right?"

"Yeah, it was considerably tough."

"What's going on with your curse? Could it be, you didn't do it with Rudeus did you?"

"Never. I somehow managed to endure thanks to the magic tool Cliff made."

Paul tilted his head after hearing Elinalise's words.

"Who is Cliff?"

"My husband."

"Ha?!?"

Paul opened his eyes wide.

And then, let out a loud surprised voice.

"You have a husband, you really mean there's such an odd person out there! What kind of joke is that? Could it be that you're just saying that on your own! Hey Rudi, is it someone you know as well? That one called Cliff."

Paul looked at me while laughing.

I nodded with a serious face.

It's because Elinalise was making a scary face.

"Dad. That's saying too much. Certainly I feel that Cliff is an odd person, but he's a man I respect."

Cliff.

He has a bit of places where he can't read the mood, but he's straight forward, and a man who can directly say he loves a person.

He's an amazing guy.

"Seriously. For you to say you respect him, how amazing is he...?"

Paul received a shock, but soon wore a face like he was wrong and lowered his head.

"I see. Sorry about that, introduce him to me next time."

"Yeah, he's a much greater man than you."

Paul made a bitter smile at those words and lowered his head once again.

"In any case.... Elinalise. Rudeus. I'm grateful. It's great of you to come."

"Save the thanks for after this."

"If we're family, then it's only natural."

Well then.

It's about time we get to the main topic.

"Dad. Please explain the situation."

Part 7

First Paul started telling us the details on how he got to here.

Generally, it was a story I already knew.

The fact that they met with Roxy and Talhand in Milishion.

After getting their hands on that information, they crossed over to Begaritto Continent.

Thanks to the somewhat complete state of their party, that they managed to somehow or other make it up to Lapan.

And there they reunited with Gisu, and found a lead on the whereabouts of Zenith.

"According to the information from Gisu it seems your mother, Zenith, is trapped in a labyrinth, one day north of here."

"..."

She's trapped.

Does that mean someone is trapping her?

The fact that it's in a labyrinth makes it vague.

I wonder if there are labyrinths that capture people.

"For all six years?"

"I don't know."

Paul shook his head.

I continued the questions.

"The condition of her life?"

"I don't know. Just, we heard that several years ago it seems a party that entered that labyrinth saw a person who looked like Zenith. And then, that party lost track of her in the labyrinth as well..." [56]

Lost contact with them...

Isn't that hopeless then?

The fact that she's being trapped, in other words doesn't that mean you just want to believe that?

However, according to the story from Roxy, at the very least at the time they heard the story from Kishirika, it seems Zenith was still alive.

And then according to the information from Gisu, it seems the time when they lost sight of her was prior to when Roxy heard the story from Kishirika.

The time Roxy heard the information from Kishirika was two years ago.

The information Gisu heard was four years ago.

In other words, that would mean Zenith has remained missing for at least two years yet continued to remain alive.

If it comes to that, I feel like even now the probability that Zenith is alive is high.

For the time being, it seems there's a ray of hope as they continue searching for Zenith.

Even if for example she had already died, just confirming that she's died is important as well.

Naturally, I hope she's still alive but...

However, if I hear that she's died and something deep within my chest falls down.

It seems somewhere inside of me I already feel that it's too late.

It's been six years since the teleport after all...

And there Gisu interposed with words.

"The actual situation is all based on rumors we don't know. It could be that she's already dead. She might have been possessed by a monster or something and wandering around. Just, there's the story that she was seen inside the labyrinth as well."

Paul supplemented that.

"That labyrinth is an ancient and troublesome labyrinth. During this last year we've attacked it a number of times, but it never goes well. We even had a gathering of four pros at exploring labyrinths, but we couldn't even clear half of it. It's a pathetic story."

Four people.

Paul, Gisu, Talhand, and Roxy huh.

It seems like there were three others as well, but those girls were not pros at exploring labyrinths.

Come to think of it, I wonder where the remaining three went.

"Mu... Do we have guests?"

Just as I was thinking about it light shined in from the entrance.

Someone came inside.

"Oh! It seems like we've missed out a deeply moving meeting here!"

It was a short man.

However, the only thing small was his height.

He was a wide man about the same size as his height.

I recognized at a glance that he was a dwarf.

His long beard was shaking and in his hands was a large linen bag.

Most likely, he would be Talhand I guess.

Behind him was a female in the outfit of a swordsman and after all she had the same linen bag as well.

It's not Bikini Armor, but it's a face I remember.

If I remember correctly her name was Vera.

After she did a single bow to me she trotted to nearby Shera's side.

While swinging his heavy looking body the man came over in front of me.

He looked over me while scrutinizing everything from the top of my head to my feet.

"You are Paul's son huh?"

"Ah, yes. It's nice to meet you, I'm Rudeus."

"I'm Talhand. Just as I heard, you're a man who seems intelligent. Hmmm."

Talhand put the linen bag on top of the table.

"Rudeus, you mustn't approach that man. You'll have your important things as a man stolen away."

The one who said that was Elinalise.

The thing important to a man, I wonder what.

Like pride?

"Oh~, just as I was thinking it stank of a woman..."

There Talhand looked at Elinalise.

It was completely an expression like only just now he just realized it.

"What's this, you came along as well."

"Oh my, am I not allowed to come?"

"No good no good. Just having you join along causes troublesome things to happen after all."

Talhand took a glass bottle with an amber looking liquid inside out of the linen bag.

And then after popping the cork off the bottle he started to gulp it down like that.

"Bu... ha... the alcohol around here really hits the spot."

The scent of alcohol started to float around.

It seems like considerably strong alcohol.

The dwarves like alcohol after all.

"Here."

Talhand handed the alcohol bottle over to Elinalise.

She silently received it.

And then just like that took a sip from the alcohol bottle.

She didn't drink as much as Talhand, but even then I still saw her white throat move twice.

"Gefu... what vulgar alcohol."

"Vulgar then it suits you right."

After Talhand put the cork back on the alcohol bottle, he put it back in the bag.

What was with that exchange just now?

Some kind of cultural greeting for the dwarves?

No one said anything about that behavior.

What is this?

"Now that everyone is gathered I'm going to continue to the story, is that fine?"

After hearing Paul's words I returned to myself.

Since Talhand's impact was strong I forgot we were in the middle of talking.

Hn?

Everyone...

"Please wait just a minute, what happened to Roxy-sensei?"

After asking that, a shadow appeared on Paul's face.

No, it wasn't just Paul.

It was on everyone's face other than Elinalise.

When the beautiful elf realized that as well her eyes opened wide.

"Eh? You're lying right?"

Hearing those words.

In my mind as well, a certain word rose to the surface.

The worst words.

In other words, "Death".

"Roxy, a month ago, got caught in a trap in the labyrinth..."

I felt the throbbing get violent.

I don't want to hear it.

That blue haired girl is.

It can't be.

I don't want to listen.

But, she had the ability to conquer a labyrinth alone.

She couldn't use chantless magic, but she succeeded at shortening the incantation.

She was a Water King-class Magician.

And my savior.

I don't want to hear it.

"Di... Did, she die?"

But, I heard it.

Timidly.

Unaware, Elinalise stood up and put her hands on my shoulder from behind.

"No, she stepped into a teleport magic circle and just went missing. It's not decided that she's dead yet, the probability that she's still alive in the labyrinth should be high."

With those words I felt relieved in an instant, but after hearing Gisu's words next my face stiffened again.

"Hey, Paul. That's impossible. Even if it was Roxy, it's not something a single magician can do anything about. There is the possibility that she's alive, but that probability is..."

There, Talhand interposed with his words.

"No, Roxy is outside of the normal standard for magicians. There's plenty of possibility that she's alive."

"Even so, we haven't found her in a month already! We've gone searching five times and been unable to find her five times!"

"Gisu, it's not a talk about when or where!"

Paul, Gisu, and Talhand were each quarreling their sides.

That aloof Gisu is getting into a dispute with an irritated expression.

As I thought they must be driven to a corner.

In any case, she stepped into a teleport magic circle trap.

Even if she looks like that, Roxy has her clumsy parts after all.

If you were to say, "It's like her," it is, I guess.

Well, if it's not like she's died, then I'll think about it as if she hasn't died.

I can't imagine that Roxy Migurdia would die so simply.

I want to think that.

I'll think about it like that.

Ah, more than the time when I heard that Zenith might be dead, I feel like I received a greater shock.

"Excuse me. We've derailed the conversation a bit, haven't we? And then, what kind of place is that labyrinth?"

After I said that the three of them exchanged looks.

They were exchanging looks to decide who would say it.

Paul opened his mouth.

"What kind, it's an S rank. It's one of the worst labyrinths around here."

Paul slowly said it.

"The Teleport Labyrinth."

The moment I heard those words, I felt like I heard the sound from the book in my luggage shifting.

Translator's Notes and References

1. I feel like this is incorrect, mostly because I know there're other meanings to 心中 but I'm not sure what he's referring to with "ikura" how much or how many... how deeply he truly feels towards Elinalize maybe?
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gekokuj%C5%8D> left it that way because it sounds better.
3. okakeru su not sure what was going for, lunge at, hang, gamble/risk? the characters might be incorrect on my end as well, maybe I should just leave "then, I'll ***** Sylphy,"
4. I don't think this was intend to be actual words just Rudeus like "o ha??"
5. hetare te ita. へたれるているた, I don't even know what was intended here.
6. se ni hara wa kaerare nai, guessing this is some kind of expression? can't change/reverse the spine with the stomach
7. Melty Blood Characters
8. Or maybe this is literally Furou Junia the other name is Furozu Suta
9. Linel/Lionel Kaiser/Kaizer Alt?
10. gurechawa グレるちゃう not sure? Gurecha wa?
11. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ban'ei>
12. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lumen_\(anatomy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lumen_(anatomy)) *pats Author on back* I'm starting to wonder when he comes up with names for this stuff he just hits the Random button on wikipedia and picks a word that sounds appropriate.
13. danjon Engrish.
14. Lumberjack Guild fighting for the safety of the world against the Evil Treant Empire since BC -10,000

15. Going with this just because it fits: http://ddowiki.com/page/Detect_Secret_Doors
16. Triforce?
17. FPS de kuria ringu, not sure if it's referring to something specific or literally "checking to make sure something is clear in an FPS"
18. bo?njanpu seems to be censored, some kind of jump reference, this?:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonk's_Revenge or it might be this from Nadesico
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higgs_boson_in_fiction
19. Pose of surrender. Dogeza is prostrating oneself. I think this fits.
20. he uses atsui for both of these lines one is 暑い the other is 熱い, since it doesn't make much sense in English I translated one as warm and the other as HOT.
21. Is this comparison srs? カモシカ
22. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=bonkyubon>
23. Gingiragin: eye-catching, attractive; decked out (n.b.: used to describe attractive men or women, or even highly decorated trucks with elaborate lights).
24. Gap moe refers to the juxtaposition of two seemingly contradictory character traits in order to increase a character's attractiveness. Example: Poplar from the anime Working!! is 4'6" but has a triple-D cup.
25. Hive Queen from Romancing SaGa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMp8y-R2Qfg>
26. A large mythical bird, bird-like creature, or humanoid bird that appears in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garuda>
27. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uluru_Ayer's_Rock
28. In many JRPGs, there's a front line and back line. When an enemy ambushes you from behind, character positions are reversed. This is called a 'back attack'.
29. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanami_Hanami

30. A Japanese idiom. "If you need protection, find an influential man," or that "Big places are the safest."
31. Romancing Saga 2/Nico Nico reference. The game is infamous for the amount of ants you have to exterminate. A lot of the "Let's play" videos on Nico Nico Douga featuring this game have comments saying "Ants!" when the player encounters them.
32. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In%C5%8D_Tadataka Japanese surveyor/cartographer.
33. AKA Big Bird. (For some reason the guy is called "tonto", which is spanish for "dumb"?? St.)
34. Romancing Saga 2 Imperial Cross formation:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvsv3A2j4tI>, was surprisingly difficult to find a reference for that, though a lot of stuff in volume 12 seems to be pointing to Romancing Saga 2
35. TLC on this line would be good, I can't get the mental image. Some have suggested Slam Dunk.
36. TLC ED: "No matter how much ability you have and despite it seeming to be a trifling matter, that seems to be the case."
37. Just noting this but Karumerita speaks like a Barbarian, "You, come, house, kill, eat!" her lines are very simple though it's hard to translate that accurately
38. Shocking Truth!: <http://i.imgur.com/eBKhfQQ.gif>
39. First it was Red Dragons and then Succubus how much of a bad ass is this guy.
40. I think there's a joke play on words here but I can't describe it, no suji no kangae so na koto de aru.
41. the way his second name tachi no tonto is spelled has two forms, "Long Sword" and "Big Blade" both holding the same meaning.SLOT note: however it sounds significantly less cool if you know spanish :)
42. This reference is lost on me, Without Two Swords, or Second Sword Needless I can think up some stuff from Musashi relation but none in specific

43. the town is either called Kin or Kinkara, or it's referring to money/gold in regards to it kind of hard to tell though it's clearly not a very important point...
44. The way Baribadomu refers to Karumerita is bon kura, which has a double meaning of both dumbass/fool and is a short hand for how Bone Crusher is spelled, he often uses it as a joke "That's why you're a Bone Crusher/dumbass"
45. SLOT. But losing a comrade isn't?? Poor dumb, you shall be forgotten (tonto:dumb).
46. This line is rough, could use TLC.
47. There was food, the ants' population grew unsustainably, they starved to death when it ran out and left a large number of nests behind which became labyrinths.
48. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brood_parasite
49. WAT... TLC おっとり刀で駆けつけるてはみるものの
50. Kamon double joke on "Come on" and a Japanese crest?
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamon_\(crest\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamon_(crest))
51. TLC/Editing might be good here, but it was a play on words Sune and Sunekajiri not sure how to word it.
52. garasu no "ju dai"? decades?
53. As I'm sure you all know the difference between Boku(boy) and Ore(man), as a side note Sylphy uses Boku though she may or may not have switched to Watashi(feminine/general) at some point, hard to remember as a translator.
54. He switched back to Boku here.
55. Dogeza da! For the Japanese in us all.
56. the last line of this could use a TLC.

