

The Two Adventurers



OVERLORD [2] The dark warrior

1章 二人の冒険者

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Part 1

The Kingdom's city of Re-Lantier was situated at the border between the Baharuth Empire and the Silian Theocracy. Since it was protected by 3 layers of city walls, it was known as the Fortress City due to its appearance. The zones between each layer had their own unique characteristics.

The outermost walls were used by the Kingdom's military and had all the necessary military armaments.

The innermost wall housed the administrative zone. This zone has its own warehouses for food, and was heavily protected by soldiers.

The zone in between these two areas was the residential area for civilians. When you hear the word city, this was the zone that matched it.

Of the several plazas within this zone, the biggest one was called the central plaza. Lots of people set up shop there, laying out all sorts of vegetables, spices and other sorts of merchandise.

In the lively crowd, a shop owner shouted loudly in an attempt to attract customers. Elderly housewives and merchants haggled over the price of fresh ingredients, youths are being enticed by the fragrance of juicy, barbecued meat kebabs.

This plaza was incredibly lively in the day, the noisy and crowded atmosphere would carry on till sunset. But two figures leaving a five-story building put an end to the rowdy atmosphere.

Every eye in the plaza was drawn to the duo as they stood motionlessly.

One of them was a female between fifteen and twenty years old. The corners of her eyes were sharp and shone with the brilliance of obsidian. Her thick, shiny black hair was tied up in a ponytail and her snow-white skin glittered in the sun like pearls.

Her most prominent part was her elegant air and her exotic beauty that would make anybody look twice. The brown cloak she wore was plain, but on her it looked like a lavish gown.

Her partner was of an indeterminable gender, since there were simply no visible signs to determine it.

Some people in the plaza mumbled: "Dark warrior."

That's right, that person was wearing an elegant full body armor decorated with purple and golden markings. The face couldn't be seen through the thin slit in the helmet. Under the red cape on his back, two large swords could be seen, complementing the style of dressing.

The two of them looked around and the armored figure took the first steps.

The crowd started to murmur as they watched the back of the two figures fade into the distance. They were surprised by the rare sight they just saw and felt no fear or wariness towards the armed duo.

The reason for that was that the duo exited from the building known as the 'Adventurer's Guild', an association for experts who hunted monsters. Other armed people also left the building as well after the two left. The observant people had also noticed small copper medals hanging on their necks.

The duo only attracted attention because of the lady's beauty and the strikingly cool armor.

They walked silently on the narrow road.

The water pooled in the tracks of carriages reflected the sun. The road itself was made from sand and mud, thus meaning that it was not as good as those paved with stone and was hard to walk on. It was easy to slip and fall, but the pair's balance was excellent and their walking speed was almost the same as if they were walking on a stone paved road.

The fleet-footed lady confirmed nobody was around and said to fully armored person next to her: "Ainz-sa——"

"——No, my name is Momon. And you are not the battle maid Narberal from the Great Tomb of Nazarick, but Momon's adventuring partner Nabel."

The fully armored person——Ainz——interrupted the girl named Narberal and she responded: "Ah! My humble apologies, Momon-sama."

"Don't address me as -sama. We are normal adventurers and comrades. It would be weird for you to add -sama."

"B-but! How could I be so impudent towards you, the supreme ruler?"

Ainz stopped the agitated sounding Narberal with a hand gesture, signaling her to lower her voice. Then he replied with a hint of resignation and helplessness:

"I've repeated this many times already: Here, I am the Dark Warrior Momon... No, just your partner Momon, so don't address me as -sama. That's an order."

After a moment of silence, Narberal answered reluctantly:

"Understood Momon-sa——san."

"Never mind, this will have to do, there is no need to add honorifics though. If you add honorifics when addressing comrades... how should I put this... others will think we aren't close."

"But... that would be too disrespectful..."

Ainz shrugged at the stammering Narberal:

"We can't reveal our real identities. You do understand that part, right?"

"You are absolutely right."

"... Your tone... well, never mind. Anyway... what I want to say is that you must be careful in everything you say or do."

"... Understood, Momon-sa——san. But is it really fine for me to accompany you? Wouldn't someone as beautiful and gentle like Albedo-sama be more suitable?"

"Albedo, huh..."

Ainz's following words were full of complicated feelings.

"She needs to manage Nazarick while I am away."

"Pardon my impudence, but you can leave the management of Nazarick to Cocytus-sama. All the guardians feels the same... Taking your safety into consideration, wouldn't the best Guardian, Albedo-sama, be the best choice?"

Ainz smiles awkwardly at Narberal's query.

When he expressed his wish to head for Re-Lantier, Albedo was the one who objected the most.

After all, she knew she wouldn't be able to tag along.

Shortly after he was transported into this world, Ainz went outside while leaving his escorts behind and Albedo blamed herself for being incompetent. Therefore, Ainz was unable to strongly oppose her opinion. But this time was different since it was done after a lot of careful planning, so he wouldn't back down.

His opposition consisted of guardians who'd obediently listened to 'orders', even if it went against their will. But Ainz didn't think that was a good thing. He felt guilty forcefully imposing his will on the guardians created by his guild mates.

Ainz who tried to convince them and Albedo who was adamantly opposing. They had no middle grounds and were fated to never reach a consensus. But Demiurge whispered something into Albedo's ears, and she suddenly stopped her resistance. She even bid Ainz farewell with a smile of approval.

Ainz still didn't know what Demiurge said to her and he felt uneasy at how Albedo changed her stance so drastically.

"... I didn't bring her along because there was no one I trust more than her. I can leave Nazarick without worries because she is there."

"Just as I thought! This means that Albedo-sama is the one closest to Momon-sa——san right?"

Although he did not acknowledge it verbally, but Ainz nodded in answer to Narberal's question.

"I am aware of the danger."

Ainz lifted his right gauntlet and indicated his ring finger:

"But I need to do this personally. Just giving commands from within Nazarick will lead to making mistakes in this unknown world. There is a need to go outside and experience this world myself... maybe there are better methods to accomplish this, but I feel uneasy with so many unknowns."

He answered solemnly through the gap in his helmet. As Naberal answered "I get it now." and made an enlightened expression, Ainz asked her with a bit of uneasiness:

"I have a question for you... do you believe humans are low-class creatures?"

"That's right, humans are worthless scum.", answered Narberal from the bottom of her heart without the slightest hesitation. Ainz mumbled softly "Ah, so you feel the same way.", but since his volume was too low Narberal didn't hear him. He continued to rant: "That's what her personality is like, that's why I didn't want to enter a human city. I should understand the character of my subordinates first."

That was one of the reasons he didn't took Albedo along. She was absolutely convinced humans were low-class creatures. If Ainz brought someone like her into a city full of people, it could only end in a blood bath if he slipped up; it was nothing to joke about. Another reason was Albedo's inability to disguise herself, she was unable to hide her horns and wings. And then there was the main reason, which he couldn't say out loud.

A mere salary man like Ainz didn't have the confidence to run an organization just by reading the reports of others. That was why he dumped the heavy responsibility of running Nazarick to the talented Albedo. If a subordinate was excellent, giving to the said subordinate free reign would be the best decision. Inept supervisors who butted in needlessly would only cause a tragedy.

And Albedo was bound tightly with the dual locks of 'loyalty' and 'love'. That was the reason Ainz could leave the Great Tomb of Nazarick in her hands.

Love, huh...

Whenever Ainz saw Albedo or heard her express her love for him, Ainz would be reminded of how he carelessly edited Albedo's setting. When the server was about to shut down, Ainz

modified Albedo's 'character setting' to be deeply in love with Momonga—who was Ainz. Back then he didn't know he would be transported into this unknown, alternate world, he only intended to pull a little joke at the very end.

A person like him.

Thinking deeper about it—even if Albedo didn't mind——what would his friend Tabula Smaragdina think if he knew what Ainz had done?

And how would he feel about this? To have the NPC he created rewritten by a friend...

He was taking advantage of that, using the fact that Albedo wouldn't betray him. He hated himself for this.

Ainz shook his head to get rid of his negative thoughts. All of his strong emotions became suppressed after he turned into an undead, but he could feel emotions of this level as if he was still a human. If his mind really became that of an undead, he wouldn't have to feel such a sense of guilt anymore.

Distracted by such thoughts, Ainz turned his helmet towards Narberal:

"... Nabel, I won't ask you to stop thinking like that, but you have to suppress it. This is a human city and we have no idea what kind of powerful people we might meet, so don't attract unnecessary attention from the enemy with such thoughts."

Narberal bowed deeply to express her fealty towards Ainz, but he reached out to her, lifted her face and warned:

"One more thing, I am not sure if humans will feel threatened... by our killing intent when we want to fight or are in the midst of battle. But it appears that we do emit such an aura. So don't act recklessly without my permission, understand?"

"Understood Momon-sa——san."

"Very good... the tavern that was scouted beforehand should be in the vicinity."

Ainz looked around him.

There were several shops open for business, with a handful of visiting customers. To the side were a few workmen in work aprons carrying goods.

They searched for the tavern in this shop-populated zone by matching the pattern of the drawing in Ainz's hand with the pattern of the signboard. Since Ainz and Narberal couldn't read the language of this country they had to resort to this.

Shortly after, they found the target 'pattern'. Ainz sped up unconsciously and Narberal followed.

Dusting the dirt off his armored boots, Ainz walked up 2 steps, opened the double doors with both hands and entered.

Almost all the windows were closed, giving the indoors dim lighting. Those who were used to the bright light outside wouldn't be able to adjust immediately. But for Ainz, who had nightvision, this amount of light was more than enough.

The interior was spacious; the first floor was the dining area with a counter. Two cabinets were placed behind the counter, with a few dozen wine bottles on it. The door next to the counter probably led into the kitchen.

At the corner of the dining area was a right angled stairway leading to the 2nd floor. According to the counter lady, the 2nd and 3rd floor were guestrooms. A handful of patrons were scattered around some of the round dining tables. Most of them were men and the atmosphere felt hostile.

Everyone was looking at Ainz and they seemed to be taking his measure. The only one who ignored Ainz was a woman sitting in a corner who was staring at a bottle on her table.

This scene in the tavern caused Ainz to raise his nonexistent brows under his helmet. He had mentally prepared himself for this, but it was still filthier than he thought.

In YGGDRASIL, there were many dirty and disgusting places and even the Great Tomb of Nazarick had one of them. Examples would be the hall of the Lord of Terror or the giant cavern of poison worms. But this filth was different.

There were scraps of food all over the floor and unknown liquids; weird stains on the wall; a mysterious cube-shaped item moulding in a corner...

Ainz sighed in his heart and looked around the tavern.

There was a man with a dirty scarf around his neck, with his sleeved rolled up to show off two muscular arms. There were several scars that were either from a beast's claw or a blade wound.

His looks were somewhere between a brute and a beast, scars could clearly be seen on his face and his head was shaved.

He looked more like a bouncer than the owner, holding a rag while observing Ainz openly.

"Looking for a room? How many nights?", he asked from across the room with a voice that sounded like a broken bell.

"We want to stay for one night."

The boss answered crudely:

"...Copper medal. Communal hall will be 5 copper coins per night. Oatmeal with vegetables will be complementary, one more copper if you want meat. The oatmeal might be replaced with bread several days old."

"If possible, I would like a double room."

The owner snorted:

"...There are 3 taverns used exclusively by adventurers and mine is the worst of the lot... Do you know why the people at the guild introduce this place to you?"

"I don't know, please enlighten me."

In response to Ainz's query, the owner raised his brow and showed his intimidating side:

"Use your brain! Or is the inside of this flashy helmet empty?"

Even after hearing the impatient and loud voice of the owner, Ainz remained unmoved. He calmly dismissed it and treated it like a children's tantrum because of the battle several days ago.

After that battle, and the intelligence he got from the prisoners, Ainz understood just how powerful he was. That was why he didn't get agitated after being shouted at.

The owner was a bit surprised by Ainz's reaction:

"... You have guts... Most of the adventurers staying here have copper or iron medals. Even if you meet someone for the first time, you can form an adventuring party if your abilities are around the same level. That's why my place is best suited for you to find teammates matching your current abilities..."

The owner's eyes flashed for a moment:

"You can sleep in a room if you want, but you won't get teammates without using the common grounds. If you can't form a balanced party, you will be dead if you fight monsters. Rookies without comrades will advertise themselves in a crowded place like this. I will ask for the last time, you want the communal hall or a double room?"

"Double room. I will pass on the meal."

"Tch, brushing off my good will... Or do you think you are something special and your flashy full body armor isn't just for show? Never mind, one night will be 7 copper coins. Payment in advance, of course."

The owner promptly held out his hand.

Under everyone's judging eyes, Ainz started walking towards him with Narberal following behind—when suddenly a foot was stuck out to block Ainz's path.

Ainz stopped, only moving his gaze to the man who was sticking his foot out.

The man showed an annoying smirk. The other men at the table did the same, staring at either Ainz or Narberal.

The owner and the other customers kept quiet and didn't interfere.

Everyone appeared to be indifferent, but they were actually expecting to see a good show, with some of them watching the whole scene closely.

Well, well...

Ainz sighed softly in irritation and gently kicked the foot away.

The man seemed to be waiting for this action and stood up. Because he wasn't wearing armor, the bulging muscles under his shirt were easily visible. A necklace hung around his neck, swaying with his every move. It was similar to the one Ainz wore, but this one was made of iron instead of copper..

"Hey hey, that hurts."

The man threatened Ainz with a sharp voice and approached him slowly. He was wearing his gauntlets when he stood up and the metal parts squeaked as he clenched his fist.

The man was just as big as Ainz and they stood a bit too close for a brawl as they glared at each other. Ainz flamed the fight on:

"I see. My field of vision is rather bad because of my helmet, so I didn't see your leg in front of me. Or maybe I didn't notice your leg because it was too short... That's my reason, would you forgive me please?"

"... Bastard."

Ainz's taunt made the man glare dangerously, but when he turned his gaze to look at Narberal who was standing behind Ainz, his gaze stuck onto her:

"You are an annoying fellow... but I am a generous man. I'll forgive you if you lend me that woman for one night."

"Ke, kekeke."

Ainz laughed coldly, holding back Narberal who wanted to confront the man.

"...What are you laughing at?"

"Nothing, it's just that you said a classic line befitting a mob villain, which made me laugh, don't worry about it."

"Huh?"

The man's face turned red from anger.

"Oh, before we start I wanted to ask: Are you stronger than Gazef Strolonoff?"

"Huh? What are you talking about?"

"I see, I can tell from your reaction. I don't even need to use my strength to play with you --- fly."

Ainz grabbed the man's chest and lifted him up in an instant.

The man couldn't dodge or resist, shouting 'Whoa!' in surprise. The men watching the scene got rowdy. Just how powerful was his arm strength if he could lift a full grown man? Everyone present could imagine how powerful he had to be in order to do that.

The man's legs kicked vainly as a wave of shouts and gasps came from the crowd. Ainz gently tossed him away.

But 'gently' was relative when it came to Ainz.

The man nearly hit the ceiling as he flew in an arc and heavily hit the ground.

The sound of bodies colliding, something on the table shattering, wood cracking and the man's painful howl reverberated within the hall. The tavern was silent as if they were shocked by the moans. But—

“Hya———!”

——The woman seated at the table screamed a beat too slow. It was a scream as if a catastrophe fell from the sky.

No, it was normal to scream like that if a man suddenly fell from the sky, but something other than surprise was mixed in that scream.

“...So, what do you guys want to do? Can you come at me together to save me some trouble? Wasting time on this is stupid.”

Ainz taunted the men who shared table with the troublemaker, and his companions understood the meaning behind these words and lowered their heads:

“Ah? Ehh! Our friend has offended you! We are very sorry about that!”

“...Okay, I'll forgive you. It didn't trouble me too much, but make sure to compensate the owner for the table.”

“Definitely. We will compensate the full sum.”

When Ainz felt this matter was settled and was planning to leave, someone stopped him;

“Hey, hey, hey!”

He turned and saw the woman who had screamed miserably approaching him unceremoniously. She was about 20 years old or younger, her messy hair trimmed short for easy movement. No matter how you put it, her hair was untidy. Frankly speaking, it looked like a bird-nest.

Her features weren't bad, her eyes were sharp, she didn't wear makeup and her skin was wheat colored after long exposure to the sun. Her arms had solid muscles and her hand was full of calluses from wielding a sword. The first impression that came to mind wasn't 'woman' but 'warrior'.

A necklace with a iron medal hung above her chest, swaying violently as she walked.

“Look at what you have done!”

“What is the matter?”

“Huh? You don’t even know what you did?”

The woman pointed to the broken table.

“Because you threw that man there, my potion, my precious potion broke!”

“It is just a potion...”

“...I didn’t even eat in order to save the money for it. I just bought that potion today, but you broke it! No matter how dangerous an adventure is, that potion would’ve kept me safe. But you have shattered this pious hope of mine and still show me such an attitude? This is infuriating.”

The woman took another step closer to Ainz.

Standing before him was a raging bull, glaring at him with bloodshot eyes.

Ainz held back his sigh. It was his fault for tossing the man without thinking about where he would land, but Ainz had his reasons as well, so he wouldn’t compensate her so easily:

“...How about getting your money from that man? If he didn’t stretch out his short leg, this tragedy wouldn’t have happened, isn’t that right?”

Ainz glared at that man’s companion through his slit visor.

“Ah, that’s true...”

“But...”

“Never mind, it doesn’t matter who, just compensate me for the potion... the price was 1 gold and 10 silver coins.”

The men lowered their heads; it didn’t look like they were able to pay the money. Thus the woman looked at Ainz again:

“As expected. Of course they won’t have any money, considering the way they’re drinking. With such a flashy armor, you must have some potions, right?”

Ainz understood why the woman was asking him for compensation. This was a rather difficult case.

After thinking for a while, Ainz braced himself and asked:

“I do have some... but that was recovery potion correct?”

“That’s right. I worked for every drop—“

“—Yes, yes, you don’t need to say it. I’ll compensate you with a potion and settle the issue.”

Ainz took out a low grade potion and gave it to the woman. The woman looked at the potion with a strange expression and received it reluctantly.

“... Are we even now?”

“Yeah, everything is good.”

The woman sounded like she had something to say, but Ainz ignored the doubt in his heart. More importantly, he was worried about Narberal starting a big ruckus.

Even with Ainz warning her, Narberal eyes still looked sharp. A few people felt uneasy after sensing her murderous looks.

“Let’s go.”

Ainz told Narberal with a tone signaling restraint and went to the tavern owner. He took out a leather purse, picked up a silver coin and placed it in the owner’s rough hand.

The owner silently put the silver into his pocket and grabbed a few copper coins.

“Here are 6 copper coins as change.”

He put the copper coins in Ainz gauntlet wearing hand and placed a small key on the counter:

“The first room on the right, up the stairs, you can store your luggage in the chest behind the bed. You don’t need me to remind you not to approach the rooms of others carelessly. It would be troublesome if a misunderstanding occurs, but that’s not a bad way to get others to know you. You look like you can handle any situation, just don’t give me any trouble.”

The owner glanced at the man moaning on the floor.

“I understand. Please prepare the minimum necessary equipment for adventurers. We lost our stuff and the Guild told us you would prepare them for your customers if we asked.”

The owner looked at Ainz and Narberal’s dressing and stared at Ainz’s leather purse:

“Yeah, got it. I will prepare it before dinner. You need to ready your money too.”

“Sure. Nabel, we are leaving.”

Ainz climbed up the old, creaking staircase with Narberal and headed towards his room.

After Ainz’s figure disappeared onto the second floor, the companions of the man thrown by Ainz hastily cast a healing spell on him. Their action was like lighting a fuse, and the tavern became rowdy again.

“...Seems he is as tough as he looks.”

“Definitely. That arm strength is too powerful, how did he train to reach that level?”

“No weapons other than the two big swords on his back, he must be confident.”

“Why did this have to happen again... now there’s another person who’ll surpass us immediately!”

The conversations were filled with sighs, surprise and fear.

Everyone knew from the beginning Ainz wasn’t a normal adventurer.

The first clue was his flashy equipment. Full body armor wasn’t cheap, only those who kept adventuring and had plenty of experience could afford them. Only those who had advanced to silver medal rank could accumulate such wealth with the remunerations of their missions. But there were still some who inherited or picked it up from the battlefield or dungeons.

That was the reason they wanted to know his actual power.

Everyone was a companion and a competitor at the same time. They all wanted to know the capability of the newcomers, so the process just now kept on repeating.

All who were present went through the same ritual. But no one had passed through the rites so easily. That meant the duo wearing the copper medal...

Be it companions or competitors, they were definitely powerful, that was evident to anyone who watched them.

“How should we deal with these two?” “We can’t flirt with that beauty anymore.” “But if there are only two of them, they can join our team.” “You got it wrong; we should be the ones asking them to join their party.” “I wonder what he looks like under that helmet.” “I will eavesdrop from the neighboring room of that guy tonight.” “He mentioned Gazef Strolonoff, the strongest warrior among the neighboring nations just now right? Could he be the disciple of the knight captain?” “That is possible. Let me take on this heavy responsibility with my good hearing (thief ears)”.

As the crowd noisily discussed the mysterious duo in high spirit, the tavern owner walked towards one adventurer:

It was the woman who got the potion from Ainz.

The woman – Verita shifted her gaze from the red potion she was staring at intensely and looked at the owner with a dull expression.

“What potion is that?”

“Who knows?”

“... Hey, you don’t even know? Didn’t you accept his compensation immediately because you knew the price of this potion?”

“That’s impossible, I’ve never seen such a potion before. Didn’t you come here to take a look as well because you haven’t seen this before, old man?”

Verita guessed right.

“Can this potion really compensate you? Your potion breaking is a fact, right? This one might be cheaper than the one you bought.”

“That might be... this is a gamble, but I am confident I’ll come out ahead. This was given to me by a guy in flashy armor after hearing the value of my potion.”

“I see...”

“... I have never seen a recovery potion with such a strange color; it might be a rare item. If I hesitated back then and asked to be paid with money instead, it would be the same as leaving the tiger’s den empty-handed. I’ll get it appraised tomorrow and find out how much it is worth.”

“Oh, I will foot the appraisal fee. Not just that, I will even recommend a good place for you.”

“Old man?”

Verita frowned. The tavern owner wasn't a bad guy, but he was definitely not a charitable man. There must be a catch.

"Hey, don't give me that look. I just want you to tell me the effects of your potion."

"Is that what you were planning?"

"It's a great deal right? And with my connections, I can introduce you to the best pharmacist, that Lizzie Boreal."

Verita was shocked.

Many mercenaries and adventurers congregated in Re-Lantier, so vendors specializing in weapons and equipment were able to earn a lot of money, with the recovery potion trade being the most profitable. That's why Re-Lantier had more pharmacists than other cities.

But even in the face of so much competition, Lizzie Boreal held on to her title as the best pharmacist. Among all the pharmacists in the city, she could concoct the greatest amount of complicated potions. Since the owner mentioned Lizzie Boreal, Verita couldn't refuse.



ナーベラル・ガンマ

Heteromorphic
Race

Narberal Gamma (Γ)

INFLEXIBLE BATTLE MAID

Job	Great Tomb of Nazarick
	Battle Maid
Residence	One of the servant's room in basement 9
Alignment	Great Evil
	Sense of Justice: -400
Racial Level	Doppelganger
	1 lv
Job Level	Warrior
	1 lv
	Battle mage
	10 lv
	Elemental Mage
	10 lv
	Armored Mage
	10 lv
	Others



status	0	50	100
A C	HP		
B H	MP		
I A	PHY. ATK		
L R	PHY. DEF		
I T	AGILITY		
T	MAG. ATK		
Y	MAG. DEF		
	RESIST		
	SPECIAL		

Part 2

The wooden door closed with a creaking sound.

Aside from a small table and two single wooden beds with attached chests, there was no other furniture. Sun and fresh air were available by opening the blinds.

Ainz looked around the room and was disappointed. He didn't expect a tavern from the countryside to have the facilities and cleanliness of Nazarick, but he was still put off by this. "How dare they assign such quarters to Momon-sama."

"Don't say that Nabel. Our objective in this city is to become adventurers and get famous. Before that, it will be a good experience to live in a way that befits our current status."

He didn't mention the displeasure in his heart as he consoled Naberal while closing the blinds. The sunlight leaking through the gaps of the blinds wasn't enough to illuminate the whole room. Ainz and Naberal were fine since the both of them had night vision, but for normal people this room was too dark.

"Being an adventurer... this job isn't as fantastic as I imagined."

Adventurers.

Ainz had some fantasies about them.

People who sought out the unknown, venturing around the world. Ainz had certain expectations of this career that embodied the right way of playing the game YGGDRASIL. But after listening to the explanation of the counter lady, he learned that adventuring was a practical and dull career.

In short, adventurers were 'mercenaries who deal with monsters'.

Some parts were similar to Ainz's idealized version of adventurers. They do explore the ruins of countries destroyed by demon gods, and do seek unknown treasures in secret realms; but they are basically monster hunters.

All monsters had unique abilities, so there was a need for people with a wide variety of skills to handle them.

Thinking about it from this angle, there really might be heroes that were needed by the people, who showed up as if they were clichés in a game.

But reality was different.

The governing organizations disliked the existence of armed groups outside their control. Even setting financial concerns aside, the social status of adventurers was still low.

There were other reasons why countries didn't take in adventurers en masse. Instead of hiring permanent staff with high salaries, it was better to outsource the work to local adventurer guilds, which made more sense as a business. For companies that can operate without the adventurers guild or a nation that can clear monsters with their military, the status of adventurers were even lower.

According to the complaints of the counter lady, there were no adventurers in the Silian Theocracy. The status of adventurers in the Baharuth Empire became even worse after the current emperor ascended the throne.

Ainz purged the slight feelings of disappointment from his heart. Getting the job you wanted and realizing reality was different from your imagination was a common occurrence.

As Ainz waved his hand gently, his dark full body armor and the 2 giant swords on his back disappeared without a trace, revealing his skeletal body under the magic equipment. A red reticule flickered on top of his gray goggles. His headpiece was covered in thorns and decorated with amethysts. He was wearing a silky, black, long-sleeved shirt and baggy pants. The belt around the pants waist was a simple, black band.

After removing his plain steel gauntlets, a ring could be seen on every single bony finger, except for the ring fingers on both hands. His brown leather boots with rough exterior were adorned with gold embroidery. Hanging on his neck was a silver disc with a drawing of a lion. A red cape was draped over his shoulders.

The equipment of YGGDRASIL was normally installed using an external crystal drive, so it was hard to standardize the looks of equipment. But since a lot of players hated wearing mixed pieces of equipment, it was resolved in one of the version updates. It added the option to standardize the appearance of equipment without affecting its stats. The black armor that covered Ainz's whole body had several requirements and possessing the ability [High-Level Item Creation] was one of them.

Right now, Ainz was equipped with [Sure Hit Glasses], [Crown of mental Barriers], [Clothes of the Black Widow], [Black Belt], [Metallic Gauntlets], [Nemean Lion] and [Boots of Speed].

Item trading in YGGDRASIL was usually done via computer crystal data transfer, but for the sake of creating more powerful equipment, there were people who bought second hand items. A problem might arise if an item was created by another person—— and the name of the item included words that were banned on a server or insulted specific persons. The mods might request the name to be amended, but the items were usually named as the creator pleased.

A weird name wouldn't be popular when you attempt to sell it. The fee for renaming wasn't expensive, but few people would want to purchase an item and rename it later. So every player gave their all in naming their equipment. The name might originate from mythology or the English language. And of course, there were exceptions too.

It was a hassle to name rings, so calling them [ring1], [ring2], [ring3] wasn't too bad. Ainz even saw people naming [thumb ring], [index finger ring] and [middle finger ring].

Ainz's friend Takemikazuchi used two Tachi if the situation warranted it. He named the 8th generation of one of the Taichi as 'Takemikazuchi Mk 8'. It was the same for naming this red cape. Because he copied the dark hero of an American comic, it was named [Spawn Cape].

These were all relic level equipment. Compared to Ainz's main gear it was 2 ranks lower, but bringing equipment that was too powerful might cause problems, so he decided to bring only equipment of this level.

As Ainz stretched his shoulder to enjoy the feeling of liberty after taking the armor off, Narberal choose this moment to ask:

"Speaking of which, how should we dispose of that annoying wench?"

"Ahh, you mean the woman whose potion was smashed? No need to bother with her. If something important to me was broken by others, I might've lost my cool as well..."

Since his mentality changed after turning into this body, Ainz stopped momentarily and continued:

"...probably. Criticizing me for being careless is only natural."

"But the only one to blame is that stupid human who sought trouble with the supreme ruler, if it weren't for him, nothing would've happened."

"That might be so, but since I was the one who tossed him, I will generously forgive her this time. And what we are trying to achieve in this city is to become part of this world and raise the fame of Momon and Nabel. It would tarnish our names if others learned we couldn't even pay for a bottle of potion."

Although she looked unsatisfied, Narberal still nodded her understanding.

"And since they're our seniors, juniors like us need to let her save face.",
Ainz said while he toyed with the chain on his neck, trying to avoid touching the [Nemean Lion].

...If only it was possible to create a forgery of this medal... but it might cause trouble with the adventurer's guild.

Attached to the chain was a bronze medal which served as his identification plate. This plate could be used to judge an adventurer's ability.

Copper, Iron, Silver, Platinum, Mithril, Orichalcum and Adamantium.

These metals are used to rank adventurers, with copper being the lowest and adamantium the highest ranking metal. Higher ranking adventurers can choose harder jobs which offer greater rewards. This system was established to prevent adventurers from losing their life in vain.

Since he recently registered as an adventurer, Ainz only has a bronze medal that are assigned to beginners, while that woman had an iron medal. Showing respect for seniors was a trick for smooth sailing in society.

"But Ainz-sama, I don't believe a soft metal like Adamantium suits you. Maybe Soul Emeralds, Gold Rubies or one of the other Rainbow-Metals would be more suitable. These plebeians can't appreciate greatness."

Narberal casually mentioned the highest class of metals in YGGDRASIL. Ainz looked at her sharply and reminded her:

"Narberal, to be safe, address me as Momon in this city."

"By your command! Momon-sama!"

"Do you want me to repeat my warning? Call me Momon."

"I, I am very sorry! Momon-sa——san."

"...Momon-sasan sounds a bit silly, doesn't it? Nevermind, if addressing me as Momon is too hard, at least call me Momon-san. Understand?"

"Understood, Momon-san."

Narberal bowed deeply once again as Ainz facepalms himself.

She still doesn't get why I want her to address me as Momon-san. A useless fellow... Forget it, there was no other choice. Just let it go.

"I will explain the plan henceforth."

"Yes!"

Narberal went down on one knee and lowered her head, it was the posture of a servant awaiting her master's command.

Ainz was troubled about what to do. It should fine since they closed the door entering the room, but people would surely gossip if they saw such a scene.

Just... why can't she understand the reason I insist on her addressing me as Momon? I explained it to her before we arrived at the tavern...

Ainz explained half-resigned:

"We are going to disguise ourselves as adventurers in this city. One reason is to collect intelligence on the adventurers of this world, among which should be powerful people, with emphasis on YGGDRASIL players like me. If we can obtain high-ranking identification medals, we can take on official jobs and the intelligence we can get will be more helpful and reliable. So our first step is to become successful adventurers."

After Narberal expressed her understanding, Ainz briefed her on the task at hand.

"But there's a problem."

Ainz took out the leather purse and opened it, pouring its contents onto his hand. Only a few coins appeared and they were definitely not shiny.

"We have no money."

During the dispute earlier, Ainz had several reasons for recompensating her with a potion, and one of them was his lack of confidence in resolving the issue with money. It would've been awkward if he claimed to have no money back then.

Ainz explained to the baffled Narberal:

"No, we do have money, but the only currency I own are the gold coins of YGGDRASIL and I want to use these gold coins only as a last resort."

"Why is that? Didn't we confirm YGGDRASIL coins have monetary value here?"

"Indeed, at Carne village we learned that one YGGDRASIL gold coin... er, the gold used for trading is known as common gold, and one YGGDRASIL coin is worth two common gold coins. But if we use YGGDRASIL gold coins in this city, we won't know where it might end up. We could alert any number of people and if there are any YGGDRASIL players out there, it would be like announcing our presence. This has to be avoided until we fully understand this world."

"Players... people on the same level as Ainz-sama, the villains that attacked Nazarick in the past."

Ainz frowned at the way she addressed him, but he didn't say anything because of the same reason as before.

"That's right, they are people we can't take lightly."

He——Ainz Ooal Gown——reached level 100, the level cap in YGGDRASIL. It wasn't uncommon for players to reach the level cap. Or rather, most of the players were level 100.

Among these players, Ainz thought himself to be in the middle of the upper tier. This was because in game, Ainz focused on grinding jobs that fit the undead and magic chanters, neglecting to improve his fighting prowess. Taking his divine level equipment and pay-to-win items into account, he should be in the mid-upper tier, but he shouldn't forget there were always stronger people out there.

He had to avoid detection by other players. There were many opponents Ainz couldn't beat in a fight.

Players were originally human, so most of them will help the humans in this world. If these kinds of players faced off against Albedo and the others who considered humans as lowly scum, the Great Tomb of Nazarick and everyone in Ainz Ooal Gown would become the enemy of humanity. That was the reason he thought bringing Albedo along was dangerous.

But I had no idea Narberal thought the same way.

Even though Ainz wasn't hostile towards humans, he wouldn't hesitate to kill them if it allowed him to reach his goal, but he would rather avoid clashing with other players

"Looking at it this way, it was a pity."

"What is a pity?"

"Losing that man called Nigan so easily. He could've been a treasure trove of information, but I ended him casually after asking a few simple questions."

A few dozen members of the Sunlight Scripture were captured at Carne village. Some of them died during the process of questioning them and were used as material for Ainz's special ability to summon Undead.

Recalling the intelligence they got from the interrogation, Ainz couldn't help mocking himself: "Normal players... will likely support the Silian Theocracy."

The Silian Theocracy was a religious nation, worshipping the six great gods that descended six centuries ago.

According to the Sunlight Scripture, the Silian Theocracy existed in order to enable the weak human race to defeat the other, stronger races, which would allow humanity to grow strong and prosper. Any players who retained their humanity would definitely agree with the teachings of Silian Theocracy, a nation that worked hard towards this goal.

In contrast to the real world where humanity reigned supreme, they were considered as one of the weakest races in this one.

Humans built grand cities on the plains, but just living there highlighted how fragile humanity was.

The open plains were a dangerous terrain. Their enemies were able to easily spot them due to the lack of places to hide in. The reason they had to settle for such a place was their lack of night vision, leg strength and stamina. Since humans were a weak race, they would've never been able to build their own society/civilization had they chosen to live in another place

Lots of races were stronger or had a more advanced civilization than humans, but these races didn't dominate the land. They fought against the 8 Kings who attempted to rule over the world, allowing humanity to survive the war. If it wasn't for this, humanity would have already been eliminated.

It was normal wanting to help humanity in such a world, and that was the reason Ainz didn't want anything to do with the Silian Theocracy, remaining wary of players.

"About the money, I plan to sell the swords of the Silian soldiers who disguised themselves as knights... but before that, we need to find work."

"Understood. So we are going back to the guild tomorrow."

"That's right. I wanted to tour the city and learn more about it, but that can wait until we earned some money."

"Understood. As one of the battle maids, I will offer my full support."

"I see. I will be relying on you, Narberal."

Ainz was pleased with Narberal, who bowed deeply. He activated his magic, casting his illusion and armor again.

"I will scout the surroundings, remain on standby here."

"Allow me to escort you!"

"No need, I am just looking around the near vicinity. If possible, I want to visit the rumored vast cemetery... I'm leaving you here to prevent others from trespassing. Don't let down your guard and stay alert. We shouldn't have made any mistakes, but this is enemy territory, so be vigilant."

"By your command."

"I will leave the periodic report to you."

Narberal let out a deep sigh after Ainz left the room.

She then massaged the corner of her eyes, her sharp eyes drooping down weakly, she looked exhausted. Even her pony tail looked flaccid and lifeless.

But she still remembered the orders of her esteemed master.

Narberal concentrated intensely, trying to learn more about the situation outside, but as a magic chanter she lacked the craftiness of thieves. To make up for it, she used one of the skills she was proficient in.

"「Rabbit Ears」."

With the activation of the spell, a pair of cute rabbit ears sprouted from the top of Narberal's head. The ears trembled as they listened to the sounds around her.

This was one of the three rabbit spells, which were dubbed 'rabbit magic' by YGGDRASIL players. The others spells were called 「Rabbit's Foot」, which increased the luck stat, and 「Rabbit Tail」, which slightly decreased enemy aggression towards the caster. The appearance of female characters would change if all three were activated at the same time, making this magic very popular. But since there was no need for the other two spells, Narberal didn't use them.

Most of Narberal's magic belonged to the combat variation, but this was one of the few exceptions.

After listening to her surroundings and making sure it was safe, she activated the

「Message」 spell. Immediately, a sweet, female voice could be heard in Narberal's head. It was as if her call had been expected.

"Narberal Gamma, you have something to report to me?"

"Yes, it's the periodic report."

Right now, Narberal was talking to the Overseer of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, Albedo.

After reporting everything, Narberal finally talked about things the other party wanted to hear.

"Ainz-sama mentioned Albedo-sama, saying that 'other than her, there was no one else he trusted this much'."

"Fuhu——!"

A weird scream of excitement ringed in Narberal's mind.

"Very good~ very good~ Narberal is a good girl! Carry on advertising for me like this! This is an order from the Nazarick's overseer!"

Question marks appeared on top of Narberal's head, who thought "Is something like this worth issuing an order?". Thinking about it calmly, this was a contest that would determine who would serve the Overlord. That way, an order like this was completely natural.

While Narberal was pondering this, Albedo's excited voice could be heard again:

"With Shalltear out on a mission, I will use this chance to leisurely bridge the distance between me and Ainz-sama! It might be a difficult fort to conquer, but by attacking in waves it will eventually fall after taking a beachhead! When that glorious day comes, Shalltear will shed tears of regret!"

Albedo's gleeful shouting made Narberal frown. Even Narberal was getting annoyed listening to such agitated noises.

With a cheerful voice and skipping steps, Albedo droned on about what she planned to do next time and how things should be. She suddenly asked calmly:

"Why are all of you helping me? What is the reason you chose me over Shalltear? Is there something you want?"

"This is a simple question. If you ask me who is more suited to be seated next to Ainz-sama, Shalltear-sama or Albedo-sama, I will definitely answer Albedo-sama."

"Fuhu——! Fantastic. I didn't expect you to be someone who thinks about the future of Nazarick, impressive."

"And Yuri-nee is not good in dealing with Shalltear-sama."

"Oh, Yuri Alpha. I see... that's true. Are the others on my team too?"

Not just vice-captain Yuri Alpha, the rest of her comrades popped into Narberal's mind as well:

"That's uncertain. Lupus Raytina is on Albedo-sama's team, but Solution is on Shalltear's side. Insect Queen and Shizu are unknown, probably sitting on the fence."

"Is there any way to recruit Solution?"

"That would be very difficult, since her interests are similar to Shalltear-sama's."

"Oh I see... What a low class hobby."

Narberal agreed with Albedo, unable to understand Solution Epsilon's interests and tilted her head.

Except for one man, all humans were lowly scum, but she didn't take joy in bullying them. But she would kill them if they got in her way, and would go out of her way to finish the job. But she wouldn't kill humans intentionally.

"There's no choice. Let's hurry and pull the other girls into my camp. First will be Insect Queen and Shizu."

That shouldn't be a problem. Solution and Insect Queen like to treat humans as food. If we get Insect Queen to join Albedo-sama's side, Solution might become our ally as well."

"You are right.... I get it. Let's change the topic... What else did my beloved Ainz-sama do, can you tell me in detail?"

"Yes, as you bid."

The periodic contact with Albedo was very lively —— when Albedo learned that Ainz and Narberal were sleeping in the same room, she let out a weird, noisy scream —— it deteriorated to the extent that they had to recast the [Message] spell four times. It irritated Ainz when he came back, but that was another story.

Part 3

It felt as if the air had been dyed with color, as Verita sniffed a few times like a dog. She wasn't mistaken about the air having a faint smell of greenery. This smell was caused by the grounding of unknown medicines and herbs. This smell also told Verita she had reached her destination.

Verita continued to move ahead into the area where the smell was even stronger. After cautiously looking around, she arrived in front of the biggest building. This building's design was different from the others, which had a store at the front and a workplace in the back. The entire structure was designed to serve as a workshop, without having a storefront like the other buildings.

According to the words on the wooden plate that hung on the door and the signs outside, this was the place.

The bell hanging on the door chimed frighteningly loud when she pushed the door open. She entered a hall that seemed to be meant for receiving guests, with two benches facing each other in the middle. Bookcases were placed on the walls and decorative plants were placed in the corners.

Verita was greeted by someone the moment she entered the hall:

"Welcome!"

It was a male voice, but it sounded too young for a man.

She looked around and found a youth dressed in ragged work clothes that were stained with plant sap, which also spread a strong smell.

His face was half-covered by his long, blond hair, making it hard to judge his age. But judging by his height and voice, he should still be growing.

He might've been just a youth, but Verita could still guess his name. Apart from his grandmother, he was also one of the few famous people of Re-Lantier because of his talents.

"...Mister Enfrea Boreal?"

"Yes, that's me."

The young man —— Enfrea nodded and asked:

"How may I help you?"

"Ah, right. Please wait a moment."

Verita took out the folded piece of paper the tavern owner gave her and handed it to the youth approaching her.

Enfrea immediately opened it to read its contents.

"I see... so that's it. Would you please show me the potion?"

Enfrea received the potion from Verita and lifted it to eye level, even though his eyes were covered by his hair.

The atmosphere changed.

When Enfrea brushed his hair aside, it was revealed that his features were very pleasant. Many women would be enamoured by him in the future.

But despite his sharp eyes, the childish air still lingered on his face. Considering the way he spoke, it was hard to imagine his eyes would be this sharp, as they sparkled with intense excitement. Enfrea shook the potion several times and nodded:

"Sorry, but it is not convenient to speak here, can we change the place?"

Verita agreed and followed Enfrea's into a messy room. But she only thought so because she was lacking professional knowledge.

On the table were flasks, test tubes, distillers, mortars, beakers, alcohol lamps, scales, eerie pots and other things. The shelves on the wall were filled with numerous herbs and minerals.

A unique, pungent smell lingered in the room, giving it the impression of being harmful to the body.

The person in the room stared at the two sudden intruders.

It was an elderly lady with totally white, shoulder-length hair, whose hands and face were full of wrinkles. Her overalls had more green stains than Enfrea's, giving it a strong smell of grass.

Enfrea addressed the old lady when he entered:

"Granny!"

"What is it, no need to be so loud, I can hear you. My ears are still fine."

Enfrea only had a paternal grandmother, who was also the best pharmacist in the city, Lizzie Boreal.

"Quick, take a look."

Taking the potion Enfrea gave her, Lizzie's intense gaze gave Verita shivers, as if she was facing a powerful veteran.

That was no illusion. Pharmacists had to use magic while creating medicine, the more famous the pharmacist, the higher grade spells they could use. That was why Lizzie, the best pharmacist of Re-Lantier, was stronger than Verita.

"This potion... did you bring this here... the legendary potion? No, could it be... the Blood of God? Hey, what potion is this?"

"Eh?"

Verita stared wide eyed with her mouth open. *That was what I wanted to ask*, she thought.

"Impossible... for a potion like this to exist. Where did you get it from? Some ruins?"

"Eh? Erm, no, that is..."

"What a slow girl. Just answer my question, where did you get this! Did you steal it? Hmmm?"

Verita's shoulders trembled in shock. She didn't do anything wrong, but still felt as if she was getting lectured.

"... Granny, stop scaring her."

"...What are you talking about Enfrea. I am not frightening her... right?"

No, you are. Enfrea wanted to say, but gulped and spilled the story of how she got this potion:

"Ah, erm, this was given to me as compensation by someone."

"...Huh?" Lizzie's eyes turned serious. "It is so valuable..."

"Wait a minute, granny. If I may I ask, Miss Verita, who gave it to you? Why?"

Verita who was aided by Enfrea simply explained she got the potion from a mysterious person in full body armor. Lizzie's wrinkled deepened after hearing it:

"...Did you know that there are three types of potions?"

Without giving Verita a chance to reply, Lizzie continued:

"The first is made using only herbs. This type is showing its effects only slowly and it will only strengthen a human's base ability. Its effects are minimal but it's cheap. The second is made from herbs and magic. This kind of potion shows its effects more quickly than the first one, but it still needs some time. If there is time after a battle, most adventurers will use this type of recovery potion. The last type are potions created with nothing but magic. It is made by injecting mana into alchemic liquid. The effects of this kind of potion are immediate, but they are very expensive. Now, which type is the potion you brought? I can't see any herb residue, so it should be a potion made with magic. But——"

Lizzie took out a bottle filled with blue liquid and move it before Verita:

"This is a basic recovery potion. Notice the color difference? During their creation recovery potions will always turn blue, but yours is red. That means the production process of your potion is different from normal recovery potions. Simply put, this potion is extremely rare and could revolutionize potion brewing techniques... maybe it's a little difficult for you to understand what this means."

After Lizzie was done with her explanation, she activated her magic:

"「Item Identification」, 「Detect Magic Enchantment」."

Lizzie used two spells and her expression turned into shock and rage.

"Kukuku... Fu hahaha!"

...Maniacal laughter erupted in the tiny room. Lizzie slowly lifted her head, revealing a crazed and terrifying smile. Verita was shocked by Lizzie's sudden change and was speechless, she wasn't even able to move a finger.

"Kukuku! Just as I thought! Look carefully at this potion, Enfrea! This is the ultimate form of potions. Right here! We pharmacists, alchemists and everyone related to potion creation were unable to reach this ideal stage even after a long period of research!"

Lizzie's cheek was blushing from over-excitement and her breathing became haggard as she panted nonstop. Refusing to let go, she moved the potion in front of Enfrea's face:

"Potions will deteriorate. Isn't that right?"

"Yes, of course."

Compared to Lizzie's excitement, Enfrea's tone was very calm but Verita noticed his expression showed hints of excitement.

She doesn't know why the two of them were so excited, but she felt she had been dragged into a major event. The potion she brought along made the strongest pharmacist so excited.

"Potions made by using only magic are created with alchemic fluids. These fluids are made using minerals as a base before they're changed via alchemy, so it is natural for them to deteriorate with time! That's why we need to cast 「Preserve」."

At this moment, Lizzie paused and concludes. "That's how it was before this moment."

Verita slightly understood Lizzie's words and stared at the red liquid in shock.

This bottle! This potion! This red potion! Not deteriorating even without preservation magic, this was the perfect potion! No one had done this before! According to legends, the real recovery potion was the blood of gods."

Lizzie shook the potion in her hand, the bright red liquid swirling inside.

"Of course, that's just a legend. There is a inside joke among pharmacists that the blood of god was blue."

A moment later, Lizzie looked at the potion that was shaking in her excitedly trembling hand:

"This might be the real blood of god!"

The panting Lizzie, Enfreia who kept patting her back, the dumbstruck Verita. The silence of these three was finally broken by Lizzie:

"...You came to find out the effects of this potion, right? It's equivalent to 2nd tier recovery magic. Ignoring the rarity and the intangible values, it's price is 8 gold coins. By the way, if you add the intangible values, the potion's price would be high enough to kill for."

Verita's whole body trembled.

Just the value and its effect was very high for the iron medal adventurer Verita. The problem was the intangible value that even made Lizzie look like she was watching with her sharp eyes for the opportunity to steal it.

But there were still doubts in her heart. Why did the man in the full body armor offer her this potion so easily? Who was the person under that armor?

As countless question arose in her heart, Lizzie asked:

"Do you want to sell it to us? I will give you a good price, how about 32 gold coins?"

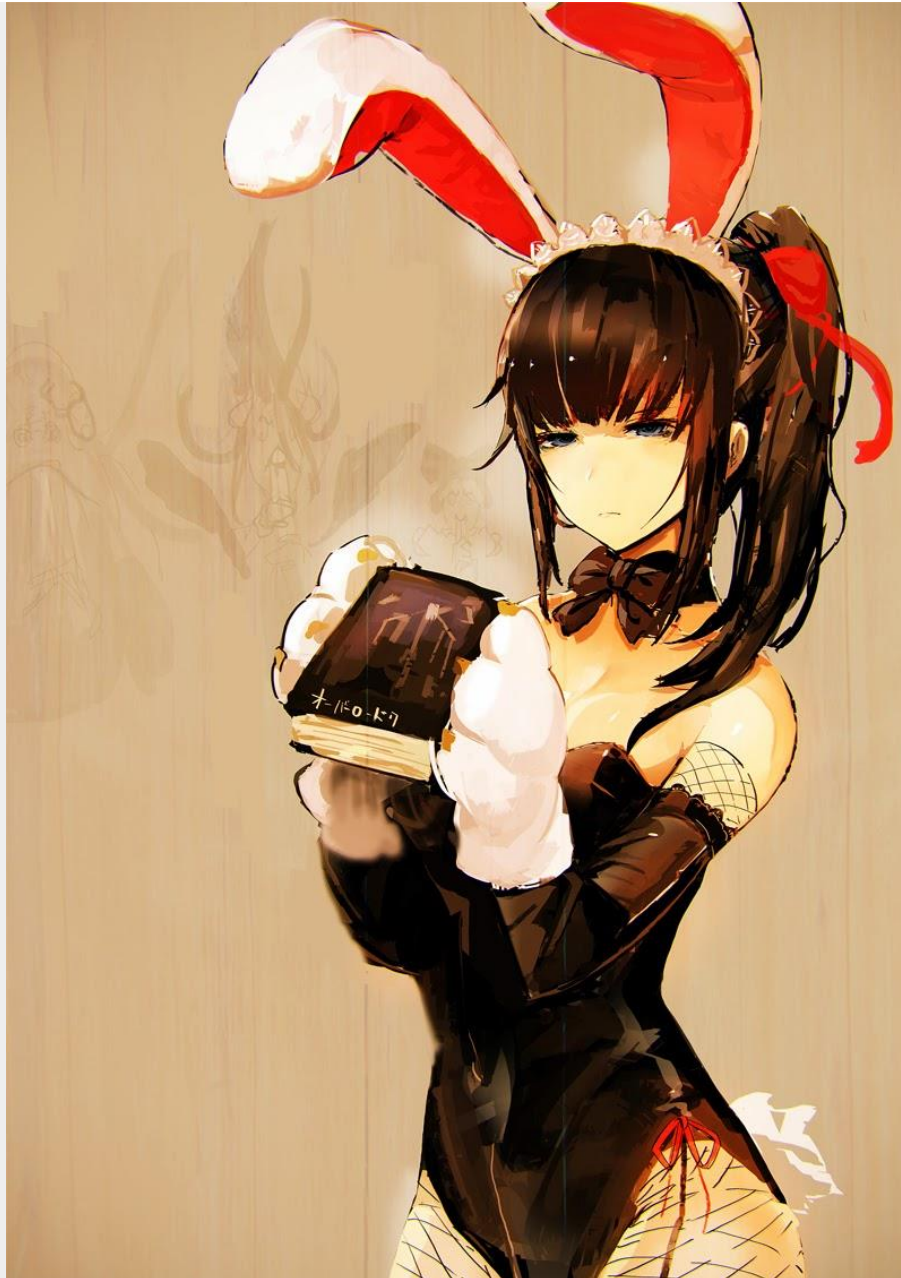
Verita's eyes became even wider.

The offered price was an amazing amount for Verita. As long as one didn't splurge, this amount of money would be able to feed 3 families for 3 years.

Verita hesitated, she knew this potion had incredible value, but was it the right choice to sell it right now for 32 gold coins? The chances of getting another potion like this were slim.

But will she live to return if she rejects?

Watching the hesitating Verita, Lizzie shook her head and proposed another plan--



Part 4

The next morning, Ainz, who was calling himself Momon now, opened the guild's door. After entering the building, he saw the counter where three ladies received adventurers with smiles. There were warriors in full body armor, agile looking people with a bow and dressed in light armor, people in priestly attire accessorized with religious symbols... and magic chanters with long robes and staves.

There was a large door to the left and a notice board to the right. He didn't see them yesterday, but there were several parchments pasted on it and groups of adventurers were talking in front of them.

Feeling annoyed by the scene and the parchments, Ainz approached the counter.

Many looked at the bronze medal on Ainz's neck and he could feel them gawking at his entire body, similar to the atmosphere at the tavern yesterday.

Ainz observed these adventurers from the corner of his eyes. The medal on their necks were made of silver and gold, there were no copper medals. Feeling a bit out of place, Ainz walked up to the counter.

A group of adventurer just departed, leaving one of the female receptionists free. After reaching her he asked:

"Sorry, but I am looking for a job."

"In that case please choose one of the parchments over there and bring it over."

Ainz nodded to express comprehension, all the while feeling as if his sweat glands were working again. He went to the front of the notice board with the parchments. Ainz browsed through them and nodded strongly.

Yup, I can't read.

One of this world's rules was that verbal communication would be translated, but apparently this didn't apply to written words.

The last time he visited the guild, he was helped by one of the women working as receptionists and he naively assumed it would be the same this time. He felt like sighing or rolling on the floor, but was able to pull himself together. Grateful for the changes after getting this body, Ainz racked his brains.

The literacy rate here wasn't high, but it would still be awkward if others found out he couldn't read, they might even look down on him.

Ainz had given all his word-deciphering tools to Sebastian and didn't learn any such magic at all during his time in YGGDRASIL. He used scrolls in place of this seemingly useless magic.

Not making any preparations even though he couldn't read the language of this world, that was stupid, but now it was too late for that and regretting it wouldn't help.

Narberal couldn't read either, so there was no other way.

Although his mind was filled with negative thoughts, as the supreme ruler of Nazarick he should avoid any shameful behavior.

After making up his mind, Ainz tore off one sheet of parchment and headed to the counter:

"I want to take this job."

The receptionist looked puzzled by the parchment shoved before her and smiled awkwardly:

"I am sorry, this job can only be undertaken by mithril ranked adventurers..."

“I know, that’s why I took it.”

Hearing Ainz’s calm and determined manner of speech, the receptionist showed a look of surprise.

“Uh, that...”

“I wish to take this job.”

“Huh? But even if you request it, the rules and conditions...”

“The rules are stupid. I’m not willing to repeatedly do these mindless tasks before I am eligible for promotion.”

“But if the job ends in failure, many people will lose their lives.”

The receptionist’s firm voice was backed by the guild’s evaluation system and by extension the combined effort of many adventurers.

“Hmmpf.”

After hearing Ainz contemptuous voice, the adventurers and receptionists turned noticeably unfriendly. This newbie was simply making fun of their adherence to the rules. Ainz thought that them showing such attitude was only natural.

Ainz’s body, being that of an undead, was incapable of feeling itchiness or pain, however the vestiges of Suzuki Satoru made Ainz want to profusely bow and apologize.

Suzuki Satoru hated people who “despite having no ideas of their own, still completely refused the suggestions of others”, “people without common sense”.

Now that Ainz behaved like the latter, he really wanted someone to beat him up.

But Ainz couldn't back off just yet. Despite thinking he should relent, he still had to achieve a more favorable outcome for himself, so Ainz resorted to his killer move.

“The person behind me is my companion. She's a magician of the 3rd tier.”

Despite the tense air, everyone looked at Narberal with surprise in their eyes. In this world, magic chanters who reached the third tier were considered as having reached the stage of a master.

Is this true? Everyone’s eyes were all over Ainz and his regal set of armour, doubting the truth behind his words.

An adventurer’s equipment and abilities were tied: the more capable an adventurer was, the better his equipment became. With his female companion and his regal set of armour, Ainz was very persuasive.

Noticing the change in the way they looked at him, Ainz cheered in his heart and decided to strike while the iron was still hot.

“As for me, I am a warrior that matches Nabel’s strength. I can affirm that this level of jobs is a walk in the park for us.”

Compared to just now, the surprise of the receptionist and the adventurers around him were smaller. Ainz felt the eyes watching him changing.

“We didn’t become adventurers just to perform simple tasks and earn some copper coins. I want to challenge higher grade missions. If you want to see our skills, we can show them to you. Could you let us take this job?”

The hostility from before gradually thinned out, replaced by an atmosphere of ‘he’s right’ and ‘I see’. Adventurers who place emphasis on strength understood Ainz’s words.

But the receptionist was different:

“... I am very sorry, I can’t let you take this job because of the regulations.”

The figure of the receptionist bowing in apology made Ainz strike a victory pose in his heart. “It can’t be helped then... I was being too forceful, sorry.” Ainz lowered his head slightly and apologized.

“Please help me find the most difficult copper medal job. Are there any others apart from those on the board?”

“Ah, I understand. There are other jobs available.”

The receptionist got up and just as Ainz was in tears over his complete victory, the voice of a man reached his ears:

“How about helping us with our job?”

“Huh?”

He couldn’t help growling menacingly. When Ainz turned around, trying to smooth things over, he saw a group of 4 adventurers with silver medals sparkling on their necks.

Ainz complained in his heart — *Just when I finally got my way...* — and turned around to face them:

“The job... Is it a worthwhile job...?”

“Yeah—— we think it is worthwhile.”

The man who looked like the leader answered. He wore a chainmail armor — numerous chains of rings forming a mesh, which was worn on top of leather armor or chainmail shirt — a man looking like a warrior.

Should he join this man’s team and work together with them? He should decide after hearing their offer, but there was no way for him to tell if the receptionist would still be willing to help him decide which job to accept.

On the other hand, taking on their job would allow him to build a relationship with them and get Ainz the information he was after.

Ainz nodded slowly:

“Since I am seeking worthwhile jobs, let’s work hard together. But I still have to ask what kind of job it is.”

After hearing his response, the man asked the receptionist to prepare a room for them.

It was similar to a conference room, a wooden table in the center with chairs placed around it. The men sat next to each other on the chairs inside.

“Well, please take a seat.”

Ainz sat as requested and Narberal quietly settled down beside him.

The men were young, they didn’t even look 20, but there was nothing childlike about them; they had a sense of maturity beyond their age.

They might’ve appeared to be sitting casually, but their positions allowed them to take up their weapons immediately.

It might’ve been an unconscious act, or a force of habit after countless experiences with death.

“Before talking about the job, let’s do a simple introduction.”

The man who looked like a warrior said on everyone’s behalf.

His appearance consisted of blond hair and blue eyes, both of which were common in the kingdom, while his unremarkable face had smooth features.

“Nice to meet you, I am the leader of ‘the Swords of Darkness’, Peter Mork. This is our team’s Ranger, Lukeluther Bolbu.”

The blond haired man with leather armor nodded in acknowledgement. His brown, squinted eyes were cheerful and his long, skinny limbs gave him the impression of a spider. But his thin body was the result of eliminating all fat.

“Next is our magic chanter, the strategist of the team. Ninya —— a ‘Mage’.

“Please take care of me.”

He was the youngest of the bunch. The man nodding was already of age, he had brown hair and blue eyes, but the smile on his face still looked childish.

Unlike the tanned skin of his other team members, his skin was pale and he had the best looking face of the group. Not the manly sort of handsome, but the metrosexual kind. Compared to the other men, his voice had a higher pitch.

But the smile on his face looked like a mask, no different from a fake smile.

As for his clothes, while his teammates were clad in armor, he was only wearing leather clothes.

If one were to look under the table, a myriad of strange items could be seen hanging from his belt, including weirdly shaped bottles and strange wooden things.

Considering the title of ‘mage’, he should be similar to Ainz, a power type magic chanter.

“... Peter, could you please not use my shameful nickname during the introductions?”

“Eh? But it’s cool.”

“You have a nickname?”

Ainz asked as he wasn’t sure what was happening and Lukeluther explained:

“He was born with an innate talent, the famous ‘genius magic chanter’.”

“Oh——”

Ainz was impressed and sighed; 'Innate Talent' was an information he got after torturing 3 members of the Sunlight Scripture to death, and he was excited to have a real life example in front of him.

Narberal only made a 'Hmmp' noise in contempt, but luckily the other party didn't hear that and Ainz relaxed. During a negotiation, an inept subordinate's weird actions would affect the boss' mood, and Ainz was a bit angered by it. But it would be bad to start a fight right now, so Ainz kept his composure.

"Nothing impressive. It's just a coincidence that my innate talent belonged to that system."
"Ohh."

Now Ainz was even more interested. He leaned forward and listened carefully.

'Innate talents' were similar to martial arts, they were special skills unique to this world and didn't exist in YGGDRASIL. About 1 in 200 possessed this special ability. An innate talent wasn't rare, but the special skills differs widely. There were strong and weak types, with plenty of variations.

Like predicting tomorrow's weather with 70% accuracy, strengthening summoned creatures, the ability to harvest plants a few days earlier, using the magic of dragons which existed in the past and so on.

Since this power was determined from birth, there was no way to choose or change it. There were many cases of people unable to harness its full power. For example, the innate talent to increase the destructive power of magic, if the person was unable to use magic, then the innate talent would be wasted.

Only the lucky few are able to use their innate talent to its full extent. Aside from people with powerful innate talent, innate talents that could decide the entire life of a person were rare.

A warrior like Gazef Strolonoff didn't have innate talent, proving this point.

Those with a combat oriented innate talent tended to choose adventuring as a career. That's why you could find many people with innate talents among them. The innate talent possessor before him just happened to be one of the lucky ones who could make full use of his.

"I think your innate talent 'Magic Talent' allows you to learn a spell that would normally take eight years in just four years? I'm not a magic chanter, so I'm not sure how great that is."

Since Ainz had a magic related class, he was curious and desired to collect this information. Getting abilities not available to the Great Tomb of Nazarick would be useful for his guild. If there was a way to steal this ability, it would be worth the risk even if he had to make enemies.

The ability to shorten learning time should be a type of level surpassing magic, 「Wish upon a Star」.

The two of them continue to converse, unaware of Ainz's menacing look under his helmet:

"... I am lucky to possess this ability from birth, it allows me to take the first step for my dream. If it wasn't for this ability, I would be just a commoner spending his whole life busily."

The low voice contained gloom and heaviness. Peter tried to change the mood and spoke in a different tone:

“No matter what, you are a famous innate talent possessor in this city.”

“But there is someone more famous than me.”

“The leader of 'Blue Rose'?”

“That person is famous too, but I am talking about this city.”

“You mean Bareal!”

This name was loudly exclaimed by the last man who hadn't been introduced yet. Ainz was interested about this name and asked:

“... What innate talent does this person have?”

The four of them looked surprised, it appeared that this was an obvious matter.

Ainz slipped up because of his curiosity and his desire to obtain this ability and strengthen Nazarick. He regretted his mistake, telling himself he can recover from a mistake of this level. But before Ainz could explain, the other party came to their own conclusion:

“I see, wearing such flashy armor and bringing such a beauty with you. No wonder we know nothing about you, it's because you're not from here, right?”

This helpful response caused Ainz to nod:

“That's it, you are right. We just arrived here yesterday.”

“Oh, so you don't know? He's a famous person in this city, but it looks like his name didn't spread to the other cities yet, right?”

“Yes, I've never heard of him. Would you mind telling me?”

“His name is Enfreá Barea, he's the grandson of a famous pharmacist. His innate talent is the ability to use any magic item. Not just scrolls from a different magical system, but also items restricted to races other than humans. Items that are restricted to royalty should be fine as well.”

“... Oh.”

Ainz tries to suppress the alarm in his voice and sigh.

He could use his innate talent to that extent? The [Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown]——barring rare conditions, it was an item only the guildmaster could use, and a legendary item as well. Could this person use all of them? Or was there a limit?

This was a person he should be wary of, but his value as a pawn was also high.

Narberal felt the same. She moved her mouth close to where his ear would be under the helmet, and said in a wary tone:

“I think that man is dangerous.”

“... I know. Coming to this city was the right choice.”

“Momon-san, what is it?”

“Oh, it's nothing, don't mind me. By the way, can you introduce your last friend to me?”

“Alright. He is a druid —— Dine Woodwonder. He can use healing spells, nature manipulation magic and he's also knowledgeable about herbs. Please tell him immediately if you feel unwell, he has medicine that's useful against stomach pains.”

“Please take care of me!”

The man greeting him had a huge beard covering his mouth and coupled with his bulky body he looked like a barbarian. But he still looked younger than Ainz.

He had the faint smell of grass on him, which seemingly came from the pouches on his waist.

“Next will be us. This is Nabel and I’m Momon. Pleased to meet you.”

“Pleased to meet you.”

“Alright, pleased to meet you both. Momon-san, you can just address us by name. Sorry for getting to the topic so fast, but let’s talk about the job. Actually, what we want to ask of you is not really a job.

“Then...”

Hearing Ainz’s baffled voice, Peter lifted his hand to stop him, wanting Ainz to ask his question later.

“The job is to hunt the monsters around the city.”

“Monster extermination...?”

Then it was a job. Or was there some adventurer regulation that made it not a job? Ainz wanted to ask, but if that was common sense, it would be troubling if the others thought he lacked knowledge, so he asked something harmless.

“What kind of monster are we exterminating?”

“Ah, it’s not really about exterminating monsters. We’re hunting monsters and depending on their strength, the city will pay a suitable reward through the guild. What is this kind of activity called in Momon-san’s country?”

So that’s it.

Ainz finally understood why Peter said this wasn't really a job: according to YGGDRASIL game knowledge this activity would be called 'farming monsters':

“This is something we have to do to earn a livelihood.”

The druid -- Dine interrupted with a low voice. Lukeluther joined in:

“It’s not just a livelihood for us, it reduces the danger to the people around us, ensures the safety of traveling merchants and secures the nation’s tax collection. No one will lose out from our actions.”

“Most guild and nations do this, but it was unheard of 5 years ago, isn’t that surprising?”

Everyone on the team nodded in agreement with Ninya’s words. They discussed among themselves, giving Ainz no chance to join in. It would be too strange to know nothing about this country, so Ainz decided to shut up and listen.

“All of this is thanks to the Golden Queen’s wisdom.”

“It wasn’t put into place, but she wanted to execute this policy even if she had to exempt taxes of the adventurers.”

“Oh—— she regarded adventurers so highly.”

“That’s right. An armed organization that doesn’t swear fealty towards a country, and might even be seen as an enemy. Even the Empire wasn’t so magnanimous.”

“That queen was rather wise, proposing many virtuous policies... it’s just that most of them were rejected.”

“I want to marry a beauty like that--”

“Then work hard and become a noble?”

“Ah-- impossible, I can’t accept such a restrictive lifestyle.”

“I think being a noble isn’t bad. The laws of the Kingdom allow the aristocrats to oppress the citizens, letting them do as they wish.”

There was strong sarcasm under Ninya’s smile. Ainz raised his nonexistent eyebrow under his helmet while Narberal remained unmoved. Lukeluther intentionally used a light tone and said:

“Wah—— your tongue is vicious like usual. You really hate nobles——”

“I know some of the aristocrats are honorable men, but because of that pig who snatched my elder sister away, I can’t help hating them.”

“...We are going too far off-topic! These aren’t things we should be saying in front of Momon-san and Nabel-san who will be fighting alongside us.”

Attempting to get back to the main topic, Peter faked a cough and said:

“That’s all, we will explore the surrounding areas. Because it’s near the newly developed region, there might be no monsters that are too strong. Will Momon-san be unsatisfied with this?”

Peter took out a parchment and laid it on the table, it appeared to be a map of the nearby region. Information about villages, forests and streams were marked simply on it.

“Basically, we are exploring the southern parts.”

From the center of the parchment he dragged his finger to the forest in the south.

“We are mainly hunting monsters in the forest near the borders to the Silian Theocracy. The only monsters who can use ranged weapons to attack from the rear will be goblins.”

“But the rewards for disposing such a weak monster isn’t high.”

Ainz was suspicious of the group’s easy-going attitude.

As far as Ainz knew, YGGDRASIL’s goblin had all sorts of names and ranged from level 1 to 50. Their differences in strength varied widely, you couldn’t just lump all goblins together. It could be disastrous if you weren’t careful.

Was their relaxed attitude due to their conviction that high level goblins won’t turn up, or were the goblin in this world only that powerful?

“...Won’t powerful goblins show up?”

“There are powerful goblins, but they won’t show up at the forest we are heading to. The strong goblins are usually tribal leaders, they won’t activate the whole tribe.”

“The Goblins also know the human’s area of influence, so they understand attacking en masse would be disastrous. Especially the powerful goblins that are intelligent.”

“Nabel-san can use rank 3 spells, so there are no problems even if we do encounter them, right?”

"I see. But I have to remind you, there are goblins that can use rank 3 spells as well. Can you tell me what kind of monsters we might encounter for reference?"

The Sword of Darkness members turned to Ninya. Understanding their intentions, he assumed a teacher's expression and started to explain:

"We are likely to meet goblins and their wolves. As for other monsters, there are no records of strong enemies showing up in the region. The most dangerous monsters in the plains are probably ogres."

"We won't enter the forest?"

"Yes, because the forest is dangerous. Jumping leeches and jumping bugs are still manageable. But Execution Spiders that shoot webs from treetops and forest snakes that attack from below with gaping mouths are hard to handle."

So that was the reason.

Ainz nodded in comprehension. They were hunting monsters that wandered from the forest into the plains.

"That's the plan Momon-san. What do you think? Willing to lend us a hand?"

"... Yes, please take care of me then... but before that, can I confirm the wages?"

"Ah, that's right, wages are important. In principle, Momon-san's team will be cooperating with our team, so we will split the earnings."

"Considering the number of members, this arrangement seems very generous."

"But Momon-san's team will need to handle half the monsters we encounter. We can only use spells up to rank 2. Taking this into consideration, it's a fair arrangement."

Ainz pretended to consider for a moment before nodding in agreement:

"This arrangement is fine, let's fight together. Since we will be working alongside each other, I will let everyone see my face."

Ainz took off his helmet after finishing, surprising the four of them with his looks.

"Black hair and eyes just like Nabel-san, you don't seem to be from around here. I heard people like Momon-san are common in the south, do you hail from there?"

"Yes, we came from a land faraway."

"He is older than expected, old enough to be called 'uncle'." "That's rude, a warrior on the level of a 3rd tier magician like Nabel should be about this age." "Nabel-san is great."

Not only was Ainz's hearing good enough to hear Peter, he was also able to hear everything the other three men were whispering to each other"

Ainz felt uncomfortable being referred to as an old man, but that would be normal in the eyes of these youngsters. If sixteen was old enough to be considered as an adult, then Ainz was indeed an uncle.

"Now that you've seen what I look like, I'll continue to hide my face. We might get into unnecessary trouble if others learn I'm a foreigner."

Ainz said as he put his helmet back on again.

A gleeful smile surfaced under the helmet. To be on the safe side, Ainz casted an illusion spell earlier. Although it was a low-grade spell that was broken by any physical contact.

"Since we will be hunting together, it would be best if we sort out any issues. Do you have any questions for us?"

"Me!"

Hearing Ainz's question, Lukeluther's shot up strongly:

After confirming no one other than him had any queries, Lukeluther asked Narberal in a clear voice:

"Please tell me what's the relationship between you two!"

The place turned silent.

Ainz didn't know the intent behind this question, while Peter's team knew exactly what Lukeluther was after.

"...We are companions."

After Ainz answered, Lukeluther's next question caused an uproar.

"I have fallen for you! It's love at first sight! Please go out with me!"

Everyone looked at Lukeluther, knowing he wasn't trying to deepen their relationship with a joke. Ainz shifted his gaze onto Narberal, who was now the focus of attention, as she took a deep breath and said:

"Shut up, you lower life form (slug). Learn your place, or do you want me to rip out your tongue the next time you open your mouth?"

The silence became even deeper.

"Ah, no..."

Ainz wants to soften the mood, but Lukeluther spoke first: "Thank you for your firm rejection! Let us start as friends!"

"Die, lower life form. How can I be friends with you (maggot)? Want me to scoop out your eyes with a spoon?"

As everyone looked away from the bickering couple, Peter and Ainz bowed towards each other and apologized.

"... My teammate caused trouble for you."

"No, I should be the one apologizing."

"Let's just assume there aren't any problems, will that be alright?"

Peter said while looking at everyone, ignoring the gleeful Lukeluther and the cold Narberal.

"Momon-san, let's move out when you are ready. We are already prepared."

When Momon heard the term 'prepare', Ainz suddenly remembered.

He had bought only the minimum necessities from the tavern owner. Although Ainz and Narberal didn't want to waste space with food and beverages they wouldn't need, it would be suspicious if they never ate anything, therefore they should prepare some.

"Okay. We can move out as soon as the preparations for the food supply are done."

“You just need food? If you don’t have any specific shop you want to patronize, want to buy some dry rations over the counter? They will prepare it for you immediately.”

“Is that so? That’s fine with me, we can complete the preparations now.”

“Then let’s go.”

Everyone got up and left the room.

After returning to the guild, they found the number of adventurers inside had increased. Several groups could be seen loitering near the parchments, but almost all of them were focused on one young man.

The blond, young man was talking to a receptionist and the other two were also listening carefully. If business was great when Ainz came just now, the situation had taken a 180 degree turn.

The receptionist’s face—— no, her mouth was in the shape of an O. It was an expression of shock and she was looking right at Ainz.

What’s happening?

Just when Ainz was feeling baffled, the receptionist got up, walked over and said:

“There is a job request asking for you by name.”

Her words changed the atmosphere drastically and Ainz could feel curious eyes staring at him unreservedly.

The Sword of Darkness members were all surprised.

Seeing the strange twist in atmosphere, Narberal moved slightly. That was preparation for battle in case of emergencies.

Ainz became anxious.

Not good, Narberal’s action were not good. From Narberal’s perspective, she might believe the change in their surroundings to be abnormal and take actions to protect Ainz. But that was too obvious in this scene. Judging from common sense, you would normally not take such actions.

Defending should be the first priority, but this was too thoughtless.

This fool. Albedo is the same, just what are they thinking. No... They’re definitely not using their brains. Just because they discriminate against humans they think it’s fine to squash them like bugs.

Since all members of ‘Ainz Ooal Gown’ were from heteromorphic races, it was unavoidable for them to have such an attitude, but they still needed to be mindful of the right time and place.

The troubled Ainz wanted to ask his past guild mates “Why make this sort of NPC?” While the character setting doesn’t matter, but they should have at least some basic ability to deal with others, and know how to act according to the time, place and situation by reading the mood.

There was no time to lecture here in this situation. If the others noticed that Narberal was preparing for battle, there was no telling how big a mess it would make.

Ainz immediately used his hand to chop Narberal on the head. He didn’t use his full strength, but the strike from the metallic arm seemed to cause some pain. When the confused and surprised Narberal looked at Ainz with teary eyes, he ignored her and asked the receptionist:

“Who made the request?”

Ainz rebuked himself after asking, it was obviously the young man before him.

“Yes. It’s Enfrea Bareal-san.”

He heard this name just now—just as he was thinking that, the youth came over:

“Hello. I am the requester.”

The young man nodded as he greeted Ainz, who also nodded in reply.

“As for the request—”

Ainz interrupted with his hand raised before the young man finished:

“My apologies, but I have already signed a contract for another job, so I can’t take yours.”

The tension in the place increased, and the members of the ‘Sword of Darkness’ were exceptionally excited.

“Momon-san! This is a request by name.”

Peter’s reaction made Ainz doubtful, was a request by name so surprising? But—

“That might be the case, but I should carry out the job I was assigned before that, right?”

Ainz judgement was sound and the adventurers around them also nodded in agreement. A suggestion out of goodwill was raised at this moment:

“B-but... our job is not really a request, we can’t even pay you any reward if we don’t encounter any monsters...”

Peter stuttered as he uncertainly informed Ainz.

A job request from the youth who had a famous grandmother and was renowned himself, was a huge step up compared to wandering around hunting monsters for bounties. That’s why Peter had such a reserved attitude.

Ainz who made this conclusion said gently:

"... How about this, Peter-san. Bareal-san had not discussed with me the contract details, remuneration and timeline, I will decide after hearing his piece."

"I'm fine with that. I want to start soon of course, but it can wait a day or two."

"How about letting our friends from Sword of Darkness listen in to our discussion. If we make a deal... No, if we can't make a deal, please allow me to take on the job I had promised them."

"Eh? Momon-san, will it be fine for us to attend too?"

"Yes. I wish for your opinion as one of the party involved."

Receiving consent from the Sword of Darkness, Ainz and the others returned to the room they were in moments ago.

Things felt rushed.

Ainz smile sheepishly again, sitting in his original seat. Narberal was besides him, the youth left a one seat gap between him and Ainz. The sword of darkness team sat in their original seats like Ainz.

Among this group, the first to speak up was the youth:

"The receptionist already mentioned this, but allow me to reintroduce myself. I am Enfreá Barea, working as a pharmacist in this city. As for the content of the job, I planned to journey to the nearby forest. As everyone knows, the forest is very dangerous, and that's why I wish for you to be my escort and help with gathering herbs if possible.

"Bodyguard. I see."

Ainz nodded calmly, thinking about the difficulties of this job.

Ainz knew he was strong and together with Narberal he would be able to wipe out any attacking monsters. Since Ainz and Narberal were both magic chanters, they didn't have any shield-like abilities or skills to protect others, so he wasn't confident in being an escort.

"The remunerations will be higher——"

"——Please wait a moment. Being an escort would be better suited for you guys, Peter-san. Would you like to be under my employ instead?"

"Eh?"

"For escort and herb gathering tasks, having the Ranger Lukeluther-san and Druid Dine-san assistance would be more efficient."

"Oh! Momon-san has great foresight. Druids can fully utilise their powers in the forest and will be more powerful than rangers like Lukeluther."

Dine's deep voice was full of arrogance, while Lukeluther looked displeased.

"What a thing to say, Dine."

"Taking the abilities of a Druid into consideration, it's an undeniable fact! And don't forget I have also dabbled in the arts of medicine!"

"Hmmm—— Peter, I'm fine with it. I will show you how strong I am compared to Druid-san."

"This means everyone is in. We will hunt any monsters we encounter and turn them over to the city for extra money. How about splitting Barea-san equally between the 6 of us, Peter-san?"

"If Momon-san thinks it's okay, we have no objections."

"Barea-san, sorry for the wait. Will it be convenient for everyone present to take on your job?"

"I see, I'm okay with it. I will be relying on you all. Ah, please just call me Barea."

Ainz's group started introducing themselves. Narberal gave him a dirty look, but still finished her introduction.

"As for the plan, we will head for Carne village to set up a base and afterwards head into the forest, that's our usual practice. The number of days we will spend gathering herbs will depend on our harvest. But it will be at most three days, the average in the past was two."

"How do we get there?"

"There's a horse carriage, but it will be filled with containers for the gathered herbs, so there won't be any space for you to sit in."

"Can we resupply our food stock in Carne village?"

"Water will be fine, but food will be a bit hard. Carne isn't a large village."

The members of the Sword of Darkness started to discuss the necessary preparations and asked Barea various questions. Seeing this, Ainz enquired:

"May I ask a few questions?"

Seeing the youth nod with a smile, Ainz stated his first query:

“Why me? I only came to this city by stagecoach recently, so I don’t know anyone here and I’m not famous. But you asked for me despite that and since you mentioned ‘the usual practice’ just now, that means you hired other adventurers before correct? What happened to them?”

Ainz’s gaze under the helmet became sharp.

He didn’t know why the youth asked for him. If his cover was blown, he would need a new disguise and method of approach.

Observing carefully——since half of the young man’s face was covered by his bangs, he couldn’t see his eyes clearly——he still couldn’t see through the youth’s real motive.

Was he just thinking too deeply——just as Ainz was feeling doubtful, Enfrea answered:

“Ah, the adventurers I used to hire seem to have left Re-Lantier for other cities. That’s why I am looking for new adventurers. Also... I heard about the incident at the tavern from the customers visiting my place.

“Tavern incident?”

“Yes, I heard that someone easily threw an adventurer one grade higher than him.”

“I see...”

He wanted to display his strength and raise his fame back then. Did the youth take the bait? As Ainz was feeling relieved, the young man pointed at the copper medal on Ainz’s chest and added jokingly:

“And copper medal adventurers are cheaper, right? We might be able to work together for a longer term.”

“Haha, indeed.”

Hiring a fresh recruit, Ainz understood that feeling. He felt his wariness easing, but there was still something that worried him. If that was really the case——

While Ainz was thinking, the others asked several questions and Enfrea answered them one at a time. After making sure no one else had any questions, Enfrea said:

“Let’s hit the road after the preparations are done!”

Part 5

It was the middle of the night when a dark figure floated across Re-Lantier’s great cemetery. Dressed in a black, hooded cape, it advanced in a unique, ghostly fashion without moving its shoulders or waist.

The figure nimbly evaded the magic light of the cemetery, entering the inner parts.

After the shadow reached a shrine, it removed its hood.

It was a young woman around twenty years old, at the peak of her youth.

Her features were delicate, giving her a cat-like beauty. She might’ve looked cute, but hidden underneath her expression was the ferocity of a carnivorous beast that might lash out at any moment.

"Finally here."

The woman said in a joking tone, brushing her short blond bangs as she pushed the stone door of the shrine open. The sound of metal creaking against metal came from under her cloak, just like a chain armor.

Inside the shrine, the stone platform where dead bodies would be placed were empty. All the offerings for those who passed on had been removed.

The stone seemed to have absorbed large quantities of perfume; the sweet smell irritated the woman's nose.

She frowned slightly and moved towards the stone platform.

"Hmmm-hmm-hmm~ he~"

The woman hummed as she pressed a unremarkable marking below the seat.

When the marking was depressed, a clicking sound was heard, indicating that a gear had snapped into place. A heartbeat later, cracking sounds could be heard as the seat moved slowly, revealing stairs leading underground.

"Coming in~"

The woman dragged the ending of her words in a carefree manner and walked down the stairs.

Turning around the corner in the middle, she arrived in a vast space.

The mud in the walls and floor were exposed, but it had been processed by craftsmen and wouldn't collapse easily. The air wasn't stale; it was rather fresh from a ventilation somewhere.

This place wasn't part of the cemetery, but somewhere more sinister.

Strange tapestries hung from the walls, with red candles made from blood below it, emitting a faint glow and the smell of charred blood.

The flickering candle flame cast countless shadows. There were several caves within this space, and all of them were rank with the unique smell of low-level undead.

The woman surveyed her surroundings until her eyes lingered on one spot.

"Hey~ The person hiding over there, a guest is here~"

The man who was hiding in a dark corner and spying on her shuddered.

"Hello~ I am here to meet Kaji-chan, is he here~?"

The man was at a loss on what to do, and started trembling when the sound of her footsteps approached him.

"It's fine. You are dismissed."

These words were spoken by another man who suddenly stepped out into the open, addressing the man hiding in the shadows.

He was a skinny man.

His eyes were sunken in, and his complexion was completely different from a healthy person. He didn't have any hair on his body. Not only was he bald, he didn't even have any eyebrows or - lashes.

His appearance made it hard to judge his age, but he couldn't be too old since his skin wasn't wrinkled.

This man was dressed in a dark red robe and around his neck was a chain made from the bones of small animals. His hands were just bones covered with skin and in one of his hands, which had yellowish nails, he held a black staff. He looked more like an undead monster than a human. “Hi~ Kaji-chan.”

The woman’s casual tone made the man frown.

“Can you not call me that? It tarnishes the name of Zuranon.”

Zuranon.

A powerful, evil, and secret organization with a notorious leader. Made up of veteran magic chanters, they were the masterminds behind several tragedies and were treated with hostility by surrounding nations.

“Is that so...?”

The woman seemed to be ignoring the man’s request to change her way of addressing him, causing his frown to deepen.

“... So? Why are you here? You knew I was injecting energy into the Pearl of Death here. If you plan to make trouble, I have my ways of dealing with you.”

The man squinted, gripping his staff tightly.

“How mean~ Kaji-chan. I came to bring you this~”

The woman showed a cute smile while she searched for something under her cape. After finding the item, she happily held it out in her hand.

It was a crown.

Countless small jewels decorated the gold threads, like droplets on a spider web. It was a delicate artwork. The center of the crown——where the forehead should be——was a large jewel which looked like a black crystal.

“This is!”

The man was tongue tied.

He was looking at it from a distance, but he was very sure this was the crown he saw a long time ago.

“The symbol of the Miko Princess, the 「Crown of Wisdom」 ! Isn’t this one of the greatest treasures of the Silian Theocracy?”

“That’s correct~ I saw a cute girl wearing this strange crown, but since it didn’t suit her I took it~ But then I got a shock! She immediately went berserk~ letting her bowels go~”

The woman kept laughing.

If one snatched 「Crown of Wisdom」 away, its current bearer——which was a central figure of the Silian Theocracy’s magic ceremonies, the Miko Princess——would end up in a terrible state. There was no way that this woman, who was a former member of the Black Scripture, didn’t know exactly what would happen if she did so.

After all, it was the task of the Black Scripture to send the mad Miko Princess to the gods after the crown was removed, in order to allow the next Miko Princess to ascend.

“But it can’t be helped. It was the only way to obtain this~ it wasn’t my fault, it was the fault of the crown’s creator~.”

There was no way to safely remove the crown, except for destroying it.

The crown sealed the wearer’s self, turning the human itself into a high-level magic item, there shouldn’t be anyone who’d be so wasteful and destroy someone like that.

But there was this unhinged person.

“Hmmpf, the thing I had to steal at the expense of betraying the Black Scripture is trash. I should have taken the divine artifact left behind by the Six Gods.”

“Calling it trash is a bit——”

The man called out the woman who was posing and puffing her cheek out:

“But it is trash, right? Only one in 10,000 women can wear this item. It will be hard to find someone suitable outside a nation like the Silian Theocracy.”

The Silian Theocracy was the only nation in the region with a population register. Using the register, they were able to easily find somebody suitable to wear the crown——a sacrifice. If it wasn’t for this, it would be hard to find suitable candidates even with Zuranon’s influence. “It’s impossible to steal that divine artifact anyway~ It’s protected by the strongest monster in the Black Scripture who went beyond the physical limits of humans. The blood of the 6 Gods runs in its veins, an atavistic bastard~”

"Demigods... Are those guys that strong? I’ve only heard about them from you."

"Those guys are beyond the realm of being strong. You didn't know because the information is classified~ if those who knew were interrogated using mind control, it would be disastrous. It was said that if news leaked out, it would start a war with the remaining forces of the true Dragon King. The Theocracy will be affected and might even be destroyed, so I hope you can pretend you didn't hear anything~"

"Sounds unbelievable."

"You only think so because you haven’t witnessed that power~ back on topic: Kajit-Dale Badantel, as one of the 12 core members, will you be willing to lend me a hand?"

The woman finally changed her tone.

"Oh, showing your true colors in the end? The body double of the Empress of Tears... and don't call me Dale, I don't use that name anymore."

"...Don't call me the body double of the Empress of Tears either okay? Call me Clementine."

"... Clementine, what do you want me to help you with?"

"Isn't there an outstanding person with an innate talent in this city? That guy might be able to wear this item~"

"... I see, it’s that rumored guy. But can't you kidnap one human by yourself?"

"Yes, you are right, but I want to create *havoc* when I take action too~"

"I see... And escape in the chaos..."

"I can help you with the ritual, what do you think? It's a great deal right~?"

The man——Kajit squinted his eyes, smiling sinisterly:

"That's wonderful, Clementine. If you are willing to assist, the festival of death will be finished ahead of schedule. No problem, I will do everything I can to aid you."

