



OVERLORD [3] The bloody valkyrie

4章 死戦を前に

Part 1

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Upon teleporting to the Treasure Hall, what greeted Ainz' eyes was a brilliant light, as if all the stars in the sky were gathered together.

A ceiling so high that one would have to look up to even know that it was there, a wall so large that it was impossible to contain it in one's vision. That vast room was filled with dazzling treasure.

In the center were gold and jewels forming a mountain range throughout the room. It was enough to make one abandon the thought of counting just how much it all amounted to. Buried amongst the mountains of gold, luxury items of the finest craftsmanship could be seen scattered about.

With a single glance, there was a cup forged in gold, a scepter embedded with various jewels, a beast pelt radiating a silver light, tapestry meticulous woven with golden thread, a horn flute that shone like a pearl, a fan of seven colors, a crystal bottle, an elaborate ring giving off a faint glimmer of light, and a mask decorated with a black and a white jewel, crafted from the hide of some animal.

Needless to say, this was just the tip of the iceberg. In that mountain of gold, there were perhaps two or three hundred such items of that level. It was literally a mountain of treasure. Ainz heard a sigh of admiration from the people who were accompanying him. The ones who made that noise were two people.

So it was two out of three...

Ainz glanced at the three women standing behind him.

In a white dress instead of battle armour, Albedo was checking out her surroundings with a look of sincere admiration on her beautiful face. Yuri Alpha, who returned Ainz' ring after he returned to Nazarick, had the same expression.

One person however, was different from the other two. She did not sigh, but observed Ainz silently.

Although her face was very delicate, it looked as if it was artificially crafted by hand. Her one visible emerald eye glimmered with a cold light, like that of a precious jewel. The other eye was concealed by an eye-patch. Her reddish gold hair shone under the starlight from the ceiling.

She was of the Automaton race – CZ2128 Delta, also known as Shizu.

As a battlemaid, her attire was similar to that of Narberal and Yuri. However, her biggest difference from those two were her urban camouflage accessories and the cute sticker attached to a corner of her skirt with ‘1 yen’ written on it. The other significant difference was the white gun she had holstered on her waist like how one would wear a sword.

By the way, the magic gun, Automaton, and Shizu’s job ‘Gunner’ were all additional details added after the large update patch ‘Valkyrie’s Downfall’.

Yuri nudged her lens-less black-rimmed glasses. As if her sense of duty as a maid could not condone this disorderly mess, she asked:

“Ainz-sama, why are these treasures not well looked after? Even with protective magic applied, this cannot be considered a good state of preservation. Should you give the order, we will immediately get started with tidying up...”

“Take a closer look around.”

In the span of a single breath, Yuri surveyed her surroundings and apologised.

“I have been discourteous, please forgive my shallow observations.”

“Pay it no mind. Nonetheless, that is how it is – what’s buried inside this mountain of gold is of little value.”

Yuri followed Ainz’ line of sight which was rested on the reason why she had apologised. Placed all over the walls were numerous large cabinets tall enough to reach the ceiling. Inside these cabinets were treasures which sparkled even brighter than the gold mountain.

A wand embedded with a bloodstone, Scarletite gauntlet embedded with a garnets, lens made from black diamond embedded in the middle of silver rings, dog statue made from Obsidian, dagger crafted from purple amethyst, a small altar embedded with countless white pearls, glass lilies which looked as if they were releasing rainbow coloured light, delicate roses crafted from star rubies, tapestry patterned with the image of a soaring black dragon, a crown made of platinum adorned with a humongous diamond, golden incense bowl coated in precious gems, a pair of male and female lions made from sapphires and rubies, cufflinks inlaid with fire opals which looked as if it were in flames, beautifully carved rosewood cigar box, coat made from the hide of a golden beast, twelve plates made from Apoitakara, silver anklets embedded with four different colours of jewels, a magic book with a demantoid cover, life-sized statue of a large woman made from gold, belt with large pieces of imperial topaz stitched on, chess set with each piece made from a different

type of precious gem, fairy-figure carved from a single piece of emerald, a black cloak with innumerable small precious stones sewn on; cup carved from a unicorn's horn, golden table with an embedded crystal balls, and more.

This was just a small portion.

Other than these, there were many aquamarine mirrors, red crystals the size of adults, the giant and elaborate statue of a warrior radiating with silver-white light called the work of a Ghost Axe God, a stone pillar carved with characters of an unknown language, alexandrite so large that two outstretched arms would be needed to encircle it.

These countless treasures made the correct answer evident to Yuri, that there was simply no space to store them.

“Time to go.”

Two people spoke out in response to Ainz. Only Shizu remained silent, giving a nod instead to indicate her response.

After Ainz invoked the spell 「Mass Fly」, the four people unanimously flew up into the sky.

Only then was it apparent that there was a body of deadly gas, faint purple in colour, floating in the air.

Yuri looked around to find the source of the purple gas. However, neither the ceiling, walls, or corners had anything emitting that purple cloud.

As a look of confusion surfaced on Yuri's face, a monotone voice spoke up.

“.....Yuri-nee, there is toxic magic in the air.”

“What?”

Yuri felt a cold glance in her direction. The source was Shizu's calm green pupil; an eye which harboured no emotion.

A better way to put it would be that it induced others to believe it was incapable of feeling emotion. Shizu's facial features were delicate, but in another sense it was also like a mask.

Because she was created as an automaton, Shizu could not display emotions – such was her settings. “.....Blood of Jormungandr?”

After Shizu revealed the name of this tool capable of creating such a toxic zone, Ainz replied:

“Ah, correct answer. Although I have not informed you, this treasure renders the surrounding air highly toxic. If you did not possess any abilities or tools capable of countering this toxicity, you would have dropped dead within three steps.”

“So, is that why I ...apologies... is that why we three were selected?”

“Correct.”

Both the dullahan Yuri who was adjusting her glasses and the emotionless automaton Shizu were immune to toxins because of their racial traits.

Being of the demonic race, Albedo was not immune to toxins, but of course relied on another method to render it ineffective.

“Correct, that is the reason all of you were brought here, but... Shizu, it is not only that. It was also to confirm something.”

Thus Ainz and the others used 「Mass Fly」 to bypass the effort needed to cross the gold mountain, and arrived in front of a door on the other side.

No, could it really be called a door? It was in the shape of a door, but looked like a bottomless pit attached to the wall.

Arriving at this picturesque door, Ainz was deep in thought.

“This here is the armoury, what was the password again...?”

“Ainz-sama, if there is an armoury, does it mean that there are treasures concealed in other locations?”

... Huh? Albedo doesn't know all the relevant information about the contents of the Treasure Hall?

Ainz was puzzled over why Albedo would ask such a question. Nonetheless, even if she was unaware of such information, it still made sense. The treasures were not housed inside the Great Tomb of Nazarick. It was necessary to use a ring of Ainz Ooal Gown to be transported to that location. It was designed in such a way to make an invasion extremely difficult. It was normal for Albedo to be oblivious of this information, since she didn't have her own ring just ten days ago.

Although Ainz somewhat wondered just how much knowledge the NPCs possessed, he felt it was a trivial problem and replied to the earlier question.

“Ha ha. I had a comrade by the name of Genjiro. He took pleasure in keeping things neat and organised, and should have categorised objects according to their purpose.”

“Wasn't he the Supreme Being who created our companion Entoma?”

“Yes, Yuri you are correct. However, whether he actually relishes tidiness may be questioned. If he truly did, the treasures in that gold mountain would be managed more orderly, and he would not describe his own room as a mess. Speaking of which, he should have already separated the items into categories: armours, weapons, jewelry, auxiliary tools, consumables, manufacturing goods, etc. In addition, there is also the Nazarick maintenance room... yes, and also the crystal data storage room.”

During this rant, Ainz' finger was pointed towards the wall, where a two-dimensional shadow had appeared.

“However, in reality the inside is connected so it shouldn't matter which way we enter... Ah, sorry. I have talked too much.”

“Not at all, we are grateful towards Ainz-sama for answering our questions so passionately.”

Following Albedo's statement, the two battle maids simultaneously bowed to express their gratitude.

There is no time to spare; what am I doing. Everytime I brag about Nazarick, I can't stop myself...

Ainz shrugged, then turned again to face the shadow in front of him.

This door could only be opened by a predetermined password. Perhaps with magic or a skill from the rogue class, one could force this door open. But Ainz had never learnt such magic or skill, therefore, it was necessary to speak the password...

Ack... I forgot.

This is understandable.

As such mechanisms were plentiful in Nazarick, it was possible to remember passwords for the place one visits frequently, but there weren't many opportunities to visit the Treasure Hall, so it was impossible to remember the password for such a place.

Ainz only ever visited to withdraw funds to pay for the upkeep of Nazarick so it had already been many years since he last stepped foot here.

Failing to retrieve the password from his memories, Ainz said the universal password:

“ 「Glory to Ainz Ooal Gown.」 ”

The dark door responded to this phrase, and some text appeared like floating images in water. The words which appeared were: 「Ascendit a terra in coelum iterumque descendit in terram et recipit vim superiorum et inferiorum」

(TL: “With great sagacity it doth ascend gently from Earth to Heaven. Again it doth descend to Earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior.” ~Holmyard, *Alchemy*, p.95)

“...Tabula Smaragdina really was a perfectionist.”

Ainz couldn't help but let this slip, getting a vague reaction from Albedo.

His mind drifted to one of the people responsible for designing Ainz Ooal Gown's mechanisms.

Of all the small mechanisms in the Great Tomb of Nazarick, two were by his design. Abundantly sophisticated designs like this ate up a large amount of the given data quota in the Great Tomb of Nazarick, causing other players to become unable to design freely and hence caused them to protest. He took responsibility, paying for cash items to expand the amount of data.

Ainz paid serious attention to the words that surfaced. This must be a password hint, but what does it mean?

Ainz spent some time relentlessly searching for the answer hidden deeply in his mind.

Before long, Ainz finally found the door code from his deepest memories.

“It should be —— And so, thou monopolise the glory of the world, and the darkness shall flee before thee—— right?”

Ainz who spoke looked towards Shizu as if seeking confirmation.

Shizu nodded in response to Ainz.

Other than Tabula Smaragdina, the comrade who was also responsible for designing mechanisms was the creator of the NPC Shizu. Her character settings were set to be familiar with Nazarick’s mechanism unlocking methods. Because of this, Shizu should have easily been able to decipher the earlier password hint.

But despite knowing this, Ainz still did not ask for her assistance, simply for the sake of his stubbornness of wanting to open the door with his own efforts.

Coming to this world gave life to the Great Tomb of Nazarick. That is why he wanted to be the first to leave his footprint on this ground. Just like how a person wishes to step on fresh, undisturbed snow, Ainz wished to open the door himself.

As if in response to Ainz’ wishes, the black shadow was sucked away into a single point, and before long, the original shadow was gone as if it had never been there. Only a fist-sized black sphere floated in the air.

Because the shadow covering the door had disappeared, it was possible to peer inside the opened hole. There lay a well-managed and orderly world, totally different from the places before. If an analogy is desired, the most fitting description would be similar to a museum exhibition.

The dimly lit room was very long, stretching inwards continuously.

There was a space of about five meters between the floor and ceiling. It was not designed with human height in mind, but to allow entry for non-humans. The width of the room was approximately ten meters.

The floor was closely paved with slabs emitting black light, appearing like a single enormous piece of stone. It created an atmosphere of solemn tranquility.

Both sides of the room were lined with numerous weapons, which was quite a spectacle to behold.

“Get in.”

Without waiting for the response of the other three people, Ainz walked straight into the armoury.

Greeting the trio was a range of weapons, including broadswords, great swords, estocs, flamberges, scimitars, patas, shotels, kukris, claymores, short swords, swordbreakers...

Of course, the display consisted of more than just swords. There were also one-handed axes, two-handed axes, one-handed blunt weapons, one-handed spears, bows, cross-bows...

Even after classifying the weapons, one would still lose count.

Apart from those, there were also many flashy weapons which raised the question of whether they could still be classified as weapons. Some seemed impossible to fit inside their scabbards and focused only on its appearance, etc. These types of weapons made up the majority.

Almost none of these weapons were made from common metals like iron.

There were weapons with blades made from blue crystal, pure white blades with gold patterns, black blades with engraved purple runes, even a bow with strings seemingly made out of light.

Aside from these, there were weapons that were obviously dangerous with just a glance.

A double-handed axe with blood oozing out of its edge, a huge mace where faces of agony would occasionally flash across the black metal, a spear which looked as if it were formed from entwining human hands. Such weapons were also numerous.

Whilst it was easy to guess that these were mostly magic weapons, one couldn't even begin to guess at their effects. A sword with a blade swaying like flames was quite obvious, but the magical effect of a whip-like sword with the appearance of a squirming centipede was simply impossible to predict.

The group observed these weapons from the side and silently walked towards the centre of the armoury. After around one hundred meters in, approximately passing several thousand weapons on the way, they arrived at their destination – a rectangular shaped room.

Possibly used to receive guests, in this otherwise empty room there were only sofas and tables. Looking to the side, you could see an entryway similar to the one which Ainz and the others had come in from.

There was only one path that could be taken in the place opposite from the entrance direction, and there was a different atmosphere. If up until now it was a museum, from here onwards it was a tomb.

The height and width was about the same, but this even dimmer room stretched endlessly inwards. Although it was difficult to discern due to the bad viewing angle, it was still possible to spot the numerous large pits dug into the wall which seemed to have something placed inside.

Hearing the alarmed voices from behind, Ainz replied:

“Before us lies the Mausoleum.”

“The Mausoleum?”

“Hmm? Albedo... you don't know the name of the room past here?”

Though I chose the name myself...seeing as Albedo is like this, could it be that she does not know who the caretaker of the Treasure Hall is?

“Then, do you know Pandora's Actor?”

“Yes. As part of my management responsibilities, I know his name and appearance... Pandora’s Actor is the Treasure Hall’s Area Guardian, equal in strength to Demiurge and I. Apart from managing this place, he is also in charge of preparing the gold consumed when activating Nazarick’s protection net and other responsibilities. Simply put, he is the one in charge of finance.”

“That’s roughly it, but not quite right. That fellow——”

Ainz’ speech was interrupted —— before he could finish his sentence, the three NPC characters turned their heads to look at the path, at a figure which had suddenly appeared.

It had a bizarre appearance.

Although the body was that of a humanoid, its head was similar to that of a distorted octopus. On the right side of the head, at least half was covered by crooked text tattoos, similar to those which appeared on the door earlier.

The skin colour was like a corpse – deathly white with some purple mixed in, emitting a strange sheen as if covered in a layer of mucus. Each hand had four slender, webbed fingers.

Its garments were completely black and decorated with silver accessories that matched well with the glossy leather that clung tightly to its body. It wore several loosely-fitting belts and had a black cloak which looked as if it were about to be worn was folded and being held.

Simply put, it was truly of an alien race. Six squirming tentacles extended from the side of the mouth to near the thigh. Those two pupil-less and blue-white murky eyes turned to look at the group.

Albedo let out a surprised voice:

“Tabula Smaragdina-sama!”

This was one of the 41 Supreme Beings. In terms of pure destructive power, he was a stronger magic caster than Ainz.

“No, wrong!”

Albedo immediately exclaimed.

Following her reaction, the two battlemaids sprung into action.

Shizu took out her gun, resting the rifle butt against her shoulder and facing the muzzle towards the figure.

Yuri smashed her fists together in front of her chest; her metal gauntlets collided to release a loud bell-like sound.

Next, she slid to Albedo's side, in front of Ainz and Shizu. Ainz was a magic caster, Shizu was a gunner. This was the best position to protect those two who were unsuited for melee battles.

"Identify yourself!? Even if you disguise yourself as a Supreme Being, I am not foolish enough to fail in recognizing my own creator!"

Faced with Albedo's question, the person with the appearance of Tabula Smaragdina merely tilted his head in silence.

"—— is that so. Kill him."

As her cold voice rang out, the two battlemaids hesitated briefly. Even if they didn't know who this was, they still had reservations about attacking someone with the appearance of one of the creators.

Given the situation, the battlemaids were not wrong, Albedo was just that good in making calm and collected judgment without hesitation.

This course of action placed Ainz' protection as the utmost priority.

Albedo clicked her tongue at the two who didn't act, and was just about to charge forward when Ainz spoke:

"That's enough, Pandora's Actor. Show your true form."

Tabula Smaragdina's body contorted.

A moment later, in place of the fake Tabula Smaragdina there was still an alien, but a different person.

It had a fairly flat face, with the nose and other parts that would normally be protruding flattened. Instead of eyes and a mouth there were three empty holes instead - no eyeballs, teeth or tongue. Only three holes which looked like those drawn by a child with a pen.

The pink, egg-shaped head was smooth, without a single strand of hair on it.

This strange character was a Doppelganger, just like Narberal.

This was Pandora's Actor, a level 100 NPC designed by Ainz to guard the Treasure Hall. He specialised in transformation, capable of replicating 45 appearances, and their abilities—— but only at 80% of the original's power.

The badge on his head bore the emblem of Ainz Ooal Gown, but the clothes he wore were an uniform from the European Ecological Infrastructure War twenty years ago, which caused quite a stir for looking similar to the uniforms worn by the Neo-Nazi Schutzstaffel.

He forcefully brought his feet together with a click, and brought his right hand to his cap in a dramatic salute.

“Welcome, my creator Momonga-sama!”

“...You look very lively.”

“Affirmative, every day I am full of energy! Speaking of which, what brings you here today? You've even brought along the manager of the Guardians and maid ojou-sans.”

Seeing the Area Guardian's entrance, Yuri and Albedo retreated behind Ainz and back to their positions. The three each displayed a different emotion.

Yuri, who had her pride as battlemaid, nudged her glasses and appeared displeased upon being called an ojou-san.

Albedo, standing beside Ainz, became jealous after hearing how Pandora's Actor was Ainz' personal creation. She stood out of his sight and pursed her lips. Shizu showed no reaction, only holstered the weapon in her hand.

“To the innermost safe, in order to retrieve the World Class items.”

“What did you say! Has the time to use their power already arrived?”

Pandora's Actor exaggeratedly displayed an expression of shock. This attitude made Ainz furrow his non-existing brows.

The uniform as well, why did he set his reactions to be so exaggerated... No, Ainz knew the reason why.

Ainz was the creator of Pandora's actor, that was also to say that his every movement was what Ainz considered 'cool', and he was proud and happy back when he made these settings.

“.....Ugh, this is just...”

In the past, he thought that those who wore military uniform were cool. Since he was an actor, his actions should be more exaggerated. But watching him gain sentience and actually acting it out—
—

“Wow... so lame——”

A tiny bit, so soft that no one else could overhear him, Ainz could not help but let a whisper of his honest opinion leak out.

It was truly a black history.

A living relic of his dark past, Pandora's Actor.

If the other guild members of the Great Tomb of Nazarick were here right now, where NPCs came alive, this would definitely be the largest topic of laughter. That's how Ainz felt, he was not pointing out anyone specifically.

“.....Let it be, I need to pick myself up. The undead me does not have the time to suffer psychological trauma.”

Ainz quietly reminded himself, then gave a calm reply.

“.....Yes, you're right. I plan to retrieve 『Greed and no Desire』, 『The Cup of Hygieia』, 『Memory Blade』 and 『Painting of Life』.”

“.....and what about the remaining two?”

“Leave them be, since they can only be used once. Because they are so powerful, they must only be used at the right moment, or when we know how to re-obtain it after their use.”

“Indeed, those overpowered weapons are powerful enough to be called killer trump cards. They make the impossible possible, even possessing the power to destroy the world.”

“——Pandora’s Actor, I wish to test you. There are two hundred World Class items in total. How many do you know of?”

“My apologies Momonga-sama. I only know of eleven.”

Ainz nodded. That was the number of World Class items which Ainz Ooal Gown possessed. He did not know that there was one World Class item 『Atlas』 which had been taken from them in the past. There were parts he wasn't sure about, but the NPCs' knowledge was affected by their settings and if there were any contradictions they would simply ignore them.

About this type of NPC settings, Ainz realised certain things after a few days of observation. When there are no specific settings for some part of the NPC’s personality, they seemed to take after their creator. Even the relationship between the NPCs seemed to mirror that of their creators. In some respects, it was like reliving the times with his guild companions. Such as the relationship between Shalltear and Aura, between Demiurge and Sebastian.

Ainz’ expression did not change as he smiled.

Simply put, they are like everyone’s children.

Feeling the semblance of past comrades once again by his side, Ainz felt happy, but lonely at the same time.

Ainz shook his head to get rid of the sad emotions.

“Ah, this... Pandora’s Actor, I’ve asked you a pointless question.”

“Not at all, my knowledge is lacking, my sincere apologies.”

After this, he bowed, every movement exaggerated as if he were putting up an act.

“...Let it be. I need to head to the Mausoleum soon. Has anything happened here?”

“Nothing at all, because everything here belongs to Momonga-sama and the Supreme Beings. How could anything happen.”

He said in a dramatic tone, and pointed to his surroundings.

“However, I am somewhat regretful since Momonga-sama came, I thought that you had some task for me .”

Ainz stopped, and evaluated the alien.

Correct, Ainz thought about using him. Pandora’s Actor’s setting, whether it was intellect or strategic thinking, was of the top level in Nazarick. Although he would normally put this wisdom and tactical thinking to some obscure use, when in a pinch it would be difficult to forgo utilising his intellect.

Moreover, Pandora’s Actor’s ability had a wide range of applicability, and depending on the situation, could even prove to be useful as all of the Floor Guardians combined.

However the reason Ainz created him was neither for battle or for business. It was for the purpose of preserving the identity of 「Ainz Ooal Gown」, leaving behind the images of his companions.

“...You are our final trump card. I wouldn’t want to send you to do chores.”

“...Your words are too kind.”

An expression like he wanted to say something——probably——Pandora’s Actor exaggeratedly lowered his head in a bow.

“I hear and obey. So then, today onwards I shall continue to look after the Treasure Hall.”

“Ah, good work. Also, from now on call me Ainz; Ainz Ooal Gown.”

“Ah! Understood, my creator Ainz-sama!”

After Pandora’s Actor’s salute, Ainz, having finished speaking, turned around. At this moment, a voice spoke out from behind him.

“However, Ainz-sama, although this may be disrespectful, if a situation has arisen which merits the use of the World Class items, it would still be better to allow me to leave the Treasure Hall to operate on some other floor.”

“.....”

Indeed, he had a point.

Although Pandora's actor was a treasure, it would be foolish to let him sit around doing nothing if this resulted in losing an even more valuable treasure. This situation should rightly be viewed as an emergency and make use of his abilities. And the gold coins in Treasure Hall also needed to be moved to the Throne Room.

Having decided so, Ainz turned around just in time to see Pandora’s Actor place a hand on his chest in recommendation of himself.

Ainz also heard the expressionless Shizu softly let out a ‘uwah’ sound.

This sound deeply hurt Ainz—but he settled his spirit.

Pandora’s Actor’s movements were definitely too exaggerated, from the perspective as his creator, his posture and especially his behavior, they all seemed to radiate a ‘I am cool’ feeling.

If it was from a handsome man, that kind of mannerism might fit. However, since the person was an egghead, it was simply too incompatible. Furthermore, it made the witness Ainz feel embarrassed.

Ainz silently observed Pandora's Actor for a moment before he took a ring out of his Item Box and tossed it at him.

The ring drew an arc through the air, landing neatly in Pandora's Actor's hand.

“This is.....a ring of Ainz Ooal Gown, and the item's ability is.....”

As Pandora's Actor was about to continue his explanation, Ainz held up his hand and brought him to a halt. Although he had a sorrowful expression, this was not the time to be concerned about that.

“This is preparation. Albedo, first inform the battlemajids of Nazarick about Pandora's Actor's existence. Before that, Pandora's Actor, you may only travel between the Throne Hall and the Treasure Hall.

“I hear and obey.”

After the two spoke, Pandora's Actor placed his legs together so forcefully that it was almost audible. His fingers were also so straight that even his fingernail could not have stretched further. This earnest salute, if one were to put it in a negative way, was too showy.

Ainz gently shook his head as he watched the egghead.

He wasn't a bad person, in fact, his ability and efficiency were impressive, but the big shame is that——

“Uwah——.....”

Why did he have to be set to have such a personality. The past me certainly thought this was very cool. Well, I still think at least the uniform is a bit cool.....

If Ainz could blush, his face would be as red as a tomato right now.

“Hey, Pandora's Actor. Follow me.”

Ainz grabbed Pandora's Actor's shoulder and pulled him to one side. Of course, he had incidentally instructed Albedo and the battlemajids to stay in their positions.

“Let me ask you an important question. I am your creator, the person you are most loyal to, right?”

“Absolutely correct, Ainz-sama. I am your creation. Even if you ordered me to battle against the other Supreme Beings, I would not hesitate to give it my full effort!”

“Is that so.....well then, as a person.... no, as a man..... your master’s, whether it’s an order or a request, I don’t care. So please just stop it with the salutes. Okay?”

Pandora’s Actor’s empty eye-sockets stared straight at Ainz. His eyes spoke volumes to Ainz about his confusion.

“Ah. That, how should I put it... isn’t saluting strange? Let’s stop that. The military uniform..... looks fine so there is no need to change that, but you really don’t need to salute anymore. Seriously, stop.”

“Wenn es meines Gottes Wille ist.”
(TL-Note: German for “If that’s my God’s will.”)

“...Is that German? Stop that too. Actually, that’s fine, but please, not in front of me. Please.”

“O-okay.”

As if this was the first time he had been overpowered, Pandora’s Actor gave a faint reply. Before he knew it, the distance between their faces had become close enough to kiss. Ainz pulled his face away and pleaded weakly:

“Seriously, I’m begging you. I really didn’t think something like this would trigger my mind suppression. It’s even more embarrassing than riding a giant hamster..... what the heck. I’d like to have a more calm conversation with you, but this is an emergency situation so this will be it for now.”

“Well then, there is something that must be done before entering the Mausoleum. Albedo, leave the ring of Ainz Ooal Gown I gave you with Pandora’s Actor.

Ainz explained the reason for removing the ring to the puzzled-looking Albedo.

“This is the final trap set up there. The golems inside, the ‘Avatara’, are designed to attack all who wear the rings, even we are not exempt from this.”

“So that was the reason... invaders would have used the rings to get here. Then, the final trap would absolutely have been triggered.”

“Very sinister, no?”

“No, no such thing!”

Albedo reluctantly removed the ring from her left ring finger, wrapped it in a scarf then passed it to Pandora’s Actor. Ainz who witnessed this also took off his ring, and placed it inside a ring box which had appeared from thin air.

“Oh!”

Ainz exclaimed as if he had just recalled something. He took out a different ring of Ainz Ooal Gown that he kept in that space and placed it into the ring box.

Because even if the rings were deposited into the storage space, it would still be recognised as possessing the rings. Upon entering the Mausoleum they would be attacked by the Avataras.

“Albedo-sama..... could you please let go?”

Hearing this helpless voice made Ainz turn around yet again to face Albedo and Pandora’s Actor. What he saw was two people engaged in a tug-of-war over a scarf.

“My, my precious.....”

“Ainz-sama has already said it. Entering while wearing the ring will trigger the attack. It will only be a second until you’re back here to retrieve it.....”

“What are you saying! This is the ring Ainz-sama personally gave me! How could I ...woooooo—!”

“.....Albedo, time is tight. If you will not voluntarily deposit the ring, I will”

“Sorry, I’m ready!”

Albedo suddenly released her grip, making Pandora’s Actor lose his balance. He let out a surprised yell as he took a few steps backwards.

“Right... then let us head inside. Pandora’s Actor, send Yuri and Shizu to move some of the treasures to the Throne Room... Although it is a little troublesome, but considering Albedo’s mentality, don’t use her ring. Use the one I gave you just now instead.”

“I am extremely thankful to you, Ainz-sama! To think you would forbid others from using the ring that Ainz-sama have granted me. Of! Course! Since this is an emergency situation, I wasn’t truly against it. I only wished to convey to Ainz-sama how highly I value the ring which Ainz-sama gifted me, but even without me demonstrating this, Ainz-sama has already observed——”

“——Understood!.....Well then, who should stay behind here to receive Ainz-sama when he returns?”

Albedo, having had her self-appeal time cut short by Pandora’s Actor, showed an expression a graceful beauty should never show. Ainz removed Albedo from his line of sight, not wishing for his mental image of the beauty to be shattered.

“This should take some time. Afterwards, I will send you a 「Message」 . Rush back here then, because without the rings we are unable to leave this place.”

“Understood.”

As Pandora’s Actor and the two maids bowed, Ainz took Albedo into the Mausoleum.

This area which was only lit by dim lights was deathly silent - a suitable place for souls. Ainz felt a little guilt for disturbing the tranquility of this place, but still asked the person beside him:

“Right. Albedo, how much do you know about World Class items?”

“Yes. Of what I know, they are the highest class treasures which the Supreme Beings have collected. Because of love, one of these treasures is now owned by me.....that is about all that I know.”

“Is that so. Then another day I shall write down all of the items that I know on paper, since it is safer for more people to know this information. Before that, I shall first tell you about the dangerous items.”

Ainz spoke as he walked, telling Albedo about the World Class items generally.

World Class items.

These World Class items were highly relevant to the YGGDRASIL game world.

The YGGDRASIL World Tree was once covered with countless number of leaves, but one day a gigantic monster appeared and devoured these leaves. As such, the leaves were destroyed one by one, until only nine were left. These nine leaves became the world’s predecessors, called Asgard, Alfheim, Vanaheim, Nidavellir, Midgard, Jotunheim, Niflheim, Svartalfheim, and Muspelheim.

However, the monster which devoured the leaves of the World Tree relentlessly pursued these remaining nine leaves. This was the background story of the game: Players would step out into the unknown and face dangers in order to protect their own world.

What then, did these World Class items represent? They are equivalent to those leaves—that is to say, each World Class item equals one world. Therefore, it was set up so that each World Class item possessed an enormous amount of power. In fact, many World Class items had extremely abnormal amounts of power.

There were many player opinions on the topic of whether or not such items were too damaging to the game’s balance. However, the game development company issued the notice ‘The possibilities of the world are not that small’ and had no plans to update these Balance Breakers.

As if the game development company placed a lot of sentiment on the phrase ‘World’, whether it was a player class or an enemy, those with the word ‘World’ in the name would be set up to be much more powerful than normal.

The final boss of the official campaign, ‘Devourer of Nine Worlds’, a beast that gained tremendous power from consuming the leaves and became the designated ‘World Enemy.’ The class granted only to the winner of the tournament, ‘World Champion,’ the one chosen by the nine worlds.

Just as Ainz was explaining, the two people arrived at a place with neatly arranged armed statues placed in cavities on both the left and right sides.

This room had a similar atmosphere and magic as Lemegeton, the room before the Throne Room. However, golems in Lemegeton did not carry any weapons. In contrast, the statues here were all wearing super-powerful equipment, and their inherent strength was no less inferior than Ainz' main equipment.

“Ai...Ainz-sama.....are these statues a replica of the Supreme Beings.....”

“You’ve noticed. Correct, the Avatara are sculptures based on my past comrades. However..... just how did you recognise them? Their appearances are quite lacking. I don’t think I’ve managed to capture even ten percent of their charm..”

“There is no way that a creation of the Supreme Beings would fail to recognise them.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes, that is how it is. However Ainz-sama..... the name of this location, even these statues..... could it be that the other Supreme Beings have passed away?”

“That.....isn’t quite it.”

No, perhaps this really was the correct answer. Ainz stopped walking, silently gazing at these statues in contemplation.

Not knowing how to interpret Ainz’ silence, Albedo revealed an uneasy look.

Seeing a beauty like her displaying such a look of grief, no man would be left unshaken. Moreover, since it was the face of one of his past companion’s creations, even the undead Ainz would feel guilty and become anxious.

However, Ainz who neither had friends nor interacted with women in real society before, could not think of any words of consolation. Feeling lost, Ainz frantically looked around him, searching for something to talk about.

At this moment, having found something, Ainz spoke without giving much thought:

“L-Look over there. Do you see those four vacant spots?”

Confirming that Albedo had turned to look in that direction, Ainz began a simplified explanation of why those places did not have statues.

“One of those four is where I intend to place my Avatara.”

That was not true.

The one who created and placed these Avatara here was none other than Ainz himself. Because of this, if Ainz retired from the game, the fact that no other guild members remained meant that there would be nobody to place Ainz’ Avatara here.

His guild members said “It’s for you,” and transferred their own equipment and cash items to Ainz before retiring from the game. In memory of his retired comrades, and so that their gear may be worn once more, Ainz used cash items to create golems that were capable of donning equipment.

This is also the story behind why the Avatara looked so ugly.

The information regarding the external appearances of the guild members was still saved within Pandora’s Actor. However, by himself, Ainz did not have the ability nor skill to use this information to create decent-looking golems.

Hence, he purchased the external appearance data and forcibly installed it on to the golems. The end result was that the limbs either grew fatter, or became shortened. The heads grew massive and clown-like, like monsters from nightmares.

However, this lack of cohesive unity in their appearances exuded a kind of strange atmosphere which gave people a strong sense of unease. Because of this, if Ainz kept in mind that they were meant to act as the final gatekeepers, he should consider it an unexpected stroke of luck.

How should I put this? The feeling is like looking at dolls made during childhood. It is rather embarrassing.....

Apart from the embarrassment, Ainz felt another intense emotion.

That was loneliness.

When his comrades retired from the game one after the other, Ainz decided to create the Avatara to be the caretakers of their equipment. When questioned by the guild members who had yet to retire, this was his reply.

Perhaps it was for them to be the final caretakers.

But in reality, the reason that Ainz continued to create the Avatara while the member count diminished was simply because he was lonely. The members whom he played with all this time were disappearing.

To show that the comrades in the Great Tomb of Nazarick and himself were together in life and in death, and to become their compensation, he built these Avatara.

It is the same story for why this place was named the Mausoleum. Its original name was the Secret Chamber of the Treasure Hall, but Ainz renamed it, in memory of the companions who departed from —— or rather vanished from the YGGDRASIL game. Hence this became their place of slumber.

—— Even so, my heart still wishes to believe that my comrades were also sent to an unknown alien world, and they might still be in some corner of this world.....

Just as Ainz was being so pensive, a grieved shout penetrated through the entire passage.

“Please don’t——Please don’t say such a thing!”

With the earlier feeling of solitude immediately blown away, Ainz hurriedly looked at Albedo. And was so surprised that he drew back. Albedo’s eyes were filled with glistening tears, prepared to fall at even the slightest wink.

“.....Ainz-sama. Compassionate Ainz-sama who remained until the end, to whom we devote our complete loyalty, please do not say such a thing! We sincerely hope that you can stay with us forever as our master!”

Albedo kneeled before Ainz and lowered her face.

Mixed with a choked voice, continuously repeating “Please.....please.....” in a hoarse murmur, it sounded like a prayer, and at the same time, like a wail of grief and agony.

In his entire life, Ainz had never seen someone pleading so desperately.

He never considered that such a casual joke would make Albedo so emotionally stricken. This filled Ainz with guilt, and he bent his knee and helped Albedo stand.

“Forgive me.”

Had he not considered that he was abandoned by his past comrades before?

When he was all alone in the Great Tomb of Nazarick, or every day that he felt disheartened because everybody was not around.

Did he not feel anger because of his loneliness?

Knowing this bitter feeling himself, why was he unable to understand Albedo’s feelings, why did he allow Albedo to feel the same pain?

Albedo who got up and had cried herself into a mess long ago still had tears trickling down her cheeks.

Ainz took out a handkerchief, and wiped away Albedo’s tears clumsily and tenderly.

“.....”

Although he wanted to apologise once more, he kept silent because he could not find the appropriate words to say.

Because of his lack of skill with interpersonal relationships, he did not know what comforting words to say to stop her tears.

Sobbing endlessly, Albedo made a request to the overwhelmed Ainz:

“Ai- Ainz-sama, please agree to me, promise to me that you will never abandon us and leave this place!”

“.....I apologise, however.....”

After ‘however’ , Ainz did not continue speaking. He had a particular reason for it, but Albedo assumed that his silence was due to something else.

“Why! Why can you not make that promise? Did you have thoughts about abandoning us already? Why! Is there something which makes you unhappy? If you would just explain, I will immediately remedy it! If you think of me as a hindrance, I shall immediately take my own life!”

“No!”

Ainz shouted loudly. Taken by surprise, Albedo’s shoulders jumped.

“Hear me out. First, right now for example.....there is no method which can save Shalltear. Shalltear’s mind control is the effect of a World Class item. That alone is absolute. The only way one would be able to resist the effects of a World Class item is to either possess one yourself, or to have a special class.”

While having her tears wiped like a child by Ainz, Albedo asked:

“That’s... that’s why, you came here... came here to take... take the World Class items, right?”

“Correct, in order to allow the Guardians to hold these World Class item. Theoretically, using a similar type of World Class item should make it possible to free Shalltear from her mind-control. However, I am hesitant about using the World Class items inside here... truly I am a worthless master, because I place more importance on mere items than on my loyal subjects.”

“No, no such thing! The collected World Class items are the results of the Supreme Beings’ hard efforts, therefore they are more valuable than us!”

“... is that so?”

If it were a game, Ainz would think so as well. Now, however, he was conflicted about this way of thinking.

But then, facing this kind of situation, it was also true that Ainz had no method of using these trump cards.

Among all of the balance-breaking World Class items there were some called the 「Twenty」. These twenty were items unrivalled in terms of power.

Of the 「Twenty」, there was one particularly famous item named 「Longinus」, capable of complete deletion of the target, but the price to pay for its use was the complete deletion of the user.

After having the data deleted by this World Class item, unless another World Class item was used for revival, there was no coming back. This was regardless of using cash items or having revival magic. If, for example, someone were to use such an item on an NPC of Nazarick, they would justify its use based on the NPC's level. This would remove the largest advantage of the base—the NPC's collective level amount.

Several similar insane items came to Ainz' mind.

「Ahura Mazda」, capable of inflicting massively powerful effects on targets with a negative sense of justice across an entire world.

「Five Elemental Restriction」, which could request the YGGDRASIL developer company to change part of the Magic system.

「Ouroboros」, which had an even greater scope than 「Five Elemental Restriction」, was able to request the Game Developer Company to change a part of the game itself.

And finally, the most powerful World Class item 「World Savior」. Normally it had the strength of an ordinary club, but it had an unlimited growth potential. Thus even during the time the Great Tomb of Nazarick had been at its peak, with all guild members present, it would take just a single enemy with this item to defeat the entire place.

These items called the 「Twenty」 were so powerful that they could only be used once before disappearing. As such, it would be regrettable to consume their use even if they were trump cards.

Ainz Ooal Gown took pride in being the owner of two of the 「Twenty」, thus they could only be used against an opponent which used an item of the same class, because only an item of the same class would be worthy of its use.

Therefore if it vanished, it would be well spent.

But what if after it vanished, it fell to the possession of someone else, and furthermore an enemy of Nazarick? What then?

Nazarick was protected by these World Class weapons, therefore internally it would not be affected. But if this was not managed well, perhaps opponents would invade the entrance.

Therefore these World Class items could not be used. It was necessary to find another method to rescue Shalltear.

“Albedo, thank you for what you have just said. Let me tell you why I fell silent earlier.”

With past human emotions still lingering inside him, Ainz took a deep breath like he would were he still living, because he knew that the following statement would be of utmost importance.

“I plan to fight Shalltear alone. As such... I do not know if I may return alive...”

“——I understand that it is necessary to fight Shalltear, because leaving her as she is would be a bad idea!”

Ainz had the same thoughts in mind.

It was not known why the enemy had not given orders to Shalltear. If however the opponent were to give such a command, things would soon become difficult, because everything about Nazarick could be exposed to the whole world.

“But then, why must it be a solo fight? Can we not win with numbers? Are we incapable of helping you with this?”

Once again wiping off Albedo's welling tears, Ainz replied:

"That is untrue, Albedo. I trust you deeply. The only thing is...this, there are three reasons. Firstly, I have doubts whether I am the most suitable to be the master."

"Ainz-sama, how could you say this?"

Ainz raised his hand to interrupt Albedo.

".....Thinking over it calmly, accounting for the possibility that players exist in this world, it is only right to also consider that there is the possibility that World Class items also exist. Therefore someone who only caught on so slowly like me, isn't it questionable whether I am worthy of being a ruler? Isn't it questionable whether I am qualified to lead everybody?"

"Ainz-sama has value simply by being here! Even if there is something lacking, we will all fully support you!"

"Thank you, but I am still the one who should bear the full responsibility for this incident."

If this world really did have something like Longinus, using a villager to completely delete a Guardian was a very real possibility. Although Shalltear being mind controlled was not a pleasant turn of events, from a different perspective, it was perhaps fortunate, considering that the situation could have been much more dangerous.

"You mean to say that your solo fight with Shalltear is your way of repenting? ... Just who could possibly punish you Ainz-sama, the Supreme Ruler of Nazarick!?"

"That is not the only issue. The second reason... Shalltear was all alone in that place. It is very likely that it will be a trap—and a deadly one at that."

Seeing Albedo confused, Ainz continue to explain:

"When we, Ainz Ooal Gown, were PKing, our methods and Shalltear's current situation are very similar. We also allow guild members to become the bait, and hunt the baited hunter. Of course

the possibility of the bait being killed is very high, but we always guarantee that the enemy who attacked was eliminated.”

“In that case, Ainz-sama...!”

“One moment, I am not done explaining. Do you know what we feared the most in our traps?”

Not waiting for a response, Ainz took the initiative to reveal the answer:

“That was if the number of attackers were less than the number of bait. If the baited number was few, we had to be wary of whether the opponent had also set up an ambush. We needed to ascertain if setting up this trap was within the opponent’s calculations.”

Seeing comprehension dawn on Albedo’s face, Ainz still took in a breath despite being physically incapable of doing so.

“And the final reason, is because I will kill Shalltear.”

“In that case then allow me! I who have received a World Class item is the most suitable for this task.”

“... Do you have a chance of winning? Do not lie to me and tell me what the best odds for your victory are .”

Seeing the calm look in Ainz’ stare, Albedo unwillingly bit her lip.

“Albedo... your way of thinking isn’t wrong. Shalltear is very powerful.”

Shalltear Bloodfallen

She is the strongest Guardian in the Great Tomb of Nazarick. Even Albedo... no, even the other level 100 NPCs are not her equal.

“Because of this... I am the one who shall go. The only person who is able to fight Shalltear and win is me.”

“T-This... if it is Ainz-sama’s equipment, perhaps it is sufficient to defeat her, but then...”

Ainz who was fully clothed in Divine Class equipment and was even using cash items, against Shalltear who only had her one Divine Class equipment, Spuit Lance. From the perspective of equipment, Ainz had an absolute advantage. However, Ainz left out telling Albedo that there was also a reason why his victory chances were not high.

Ainz was well aware of that reason.

That was because Shalltear Bloodfallen was Ainz Ooal Gown’s absolute nemesis.

The character Ainz was roleplaying as was an ‘Undead Magician’, with a build specialising in necromancy.

This class build was also purely for entertainment.

Shalltear’s job build was, however, rigorously specialised. Not only that, Shalltear’s faith based magic caster class had several skills which could be used against undead magic, and was also proficient in melee fights.

In light of this, there was already a large gap between the two, not to mention that Ainz’ forte in necromancy was ineffective against the undead Shalltear.

Ainz was proficient in areas which were ineffective against Shalltear, who specialised in dealing with the undead.

Additionally, about Ainz’ equipment, if a situation arose in which all of his equipment was taken away, Ainz’ chances of winning in a confrontation between the two of them would be slim. No, there would be absolutely no chance of victory.

“Are you trying to say that the situation is not favourable to me?”

Albedo lowered her head as Ainz hit the mark.

That is perhaps so, even Ainz was in agreement. He should not be able to defeat Shalltear.

However——

——just to let you understand, as the one who you refer to as the Supreme Ruler of Nazarick, my title isn't just for show.

“——your way of thinking is quite right, but flawed as well. What you all possess is merely indoctrinated knowledge.”

“Eh? What do you mean?”

“Do you have experience?”

“What? Experience?”

Albedo blushed.

“Yes, battle experience.”

“Ah! That's what you meant! Yes, I am able to put all of the powers conferred to me by the Supreme Beings into good use. Therefore, it should be seen as being pretty experienced.”

Ainz shook his head in disagreement with Albedo's answer. When he fought against the woman called Clementine, he had received a lot of inspiration.

“Incorrect. Being able to utilise power to its fullest and being experienced are two different issues. Do you remember that time in the past when Nazarick was being invaded by a large number of enemies, that scene where Shalltear was fighting against the opponents?”

“Although I did not pay my utmost attention when listening to the details, but she seemed to have said that she vaguely remembered dying.”

“.....And anything else?”

Albedo shook her head to indicate no.

“Against solo invaders, it was usually us who went to deal with them...having such a stingy character has been a great help this day. Well then, it is still me who will handle this, I who have the highest chance of winning shall do the confrontation.”

Ainz grinned. Of course, his face did not move at all.

However, Albedo seemed to have sensed the Supreme Ruler’s smile, and had flushed cheeks like a young maiden who caught sight of her admired man.

Ainz declared war on someone not present.

“I am the one known as the Guildmaster of Ainz Ooal Gown. When engaging in PVP, the actual chance of victory is high..... invincible against even those with flawless builds. How can I lose to the type of person who solely relies on their attribute. Furthermore, the most important fact is the strong bond I have with Peroroncino. Know that this battle was over even before it had begun... Shalltear.”

“.....Ainz-sama, I will no longer stop you. However, promise me that you will return safely.”

Ainz silently watched Albedo, then nodded slowly.

“I promise you, I shall defeat Shalltear and return.”



Part 2

Arriving in a world of green, Ainz surveyed his surroundings. He then smiled at the fact that checking for people in the vicinity was the first thing he did after the transfer. If there was actually someone whom Ainz should be alert of, he would have long been under attack and there would be no way he could take his time like this.

The transfer destination was at least two kilometers away from Shalltear's position, just as a precaution.

Although it was already checked through the use of magic, there was no way of being certain that the person who had used a World Class item to subject Shalltear to mind-control was not nearby. However this concern was unfounded. Ainz lowered his shoulders and turned to look at the two persons who were following from behind.

"Let us split up here."

He instructed Aura and Mare.

Considering the fierce battle to come, Ainz only permitted these two to accompany him.

He had already rescinded his previous commands, allowing the majority of those operating outside to return to Nazarick. Apart from Aura and Mare, Sebastian and Solution were the only members of Nazarick who were currently outside.

The main reason for choosing these two people was to psychologically take advantage of the enemy's emotional weakness in battle. Because Aura and Mare's humanoid race was different from Demiurge's and Cocytus' heteromorphic race, perhaps the opponent would stay their hand and be unable to bear killing such adorable humanoid children.

Of course, the opponent could also be a cold-blooded killer. Regardless, in order to prepare for the unexpected, he wanted someone to be placed nearby.

Although it may also be an unhelpful bad chess move instead.

Ainz looked at the two dual-coloured, differently shaped metal gloves that Mare wore. The metal glove on the right hand looked like an angel's hand, smooth and releasing a silver-white brilliance. The metal glove on the left hand however, was like that of a demon's, covered with spikes and hooked claws and emitting a red glow from lava-like cracks.

Following this, Ainz turned to Aura, looking at the scroll hanging at her waist.

"..... If the enemy matches our number or outnumbers us, immediately retreat to Nazarick."

".....Understood."

Aura wore a stiff expression as she nodded in response, while Mare followed suit and quickly bowed his head.

"Listen well. It is absolutely crucial that you retreat, because that's part of my plan as well.. Also, what I have given to you are Nazarick's secret treasures and you cannot allow them to be

snatched away under any circumstances. Depending on the situation, you must consider them to be more important than your own lives. Understood?”

Ainz cautioned them like this. He felt a bit uncomfortable about Aura, who hesitated before responding, because it could become a fatal problem if her loyalty caused her to disobey her order.

Hearing the two people’s response ——an energetic and a timid one—— Ainz harboured some doubts.

To be honest to myself, which is more important to me?

Planning to save Shalltear, yet refusing to use World Class items to do so. From this perspective, it could be said that the items were more important.

But the reason for refusing to use World Class items was what he told Albedo in the Treasure Hall. They were the final trump card and had the power to change defeat into victory in any situation.

It’s another matter if there was no other way to save Shalltear, but since there was still a way, it was the wiser decision not to use it.

Leaving that aside: the faithful servants, who had been created by his companions and became sentient and loyal NPCs, or the World Class Items who were the very symbol of adventuring and had elevated Ainz Ooal Gown’s standing in the game YGGDRASIL; which one was more important?

Unable to find the answer despite giving it much thought, Ainz was troubled.

If it were before coming to this world, he could decisively give an answer, but now he was perplexed.

The guild members shed a lot of blood, sweat, and tears during the design process, carefully crafting what would eventually become these NPCs that showed emotion.

Because I currently plan to kill thisthis NPC who is like our child.....planning to kill Peroronchino’s daughter.

Ainz was troubled.

It could also be described as a sense of guilt.

However——

Ainz stared sharply in the direction of Shalltear’s probable position.

“To break the control of a World Class item, this is the only way.”

These words were blurted to convince himself

Seeing the worried look in Aura and Mare’s eyes, Ainz felt that letting these two continue to worry was not helpful and changed the subject.

“Well then, you two go cooperate with them and do a good job scouting the surroundings.”

Ainz’ finger was pointed at four masses of flesh floating in front.

They were about two metres in diameter and the body was pink in colour. These monsters also had countless murky eyes which looked like they were haphazardly sewn together using eyes removed from the carcasses of many different types of creatures.

They were undead created using the spell 「Create high-tier Undead」, known as Eyeball Corpses.

Ainz used his maximum number of summons per day to create these Eyeball Corpses because they had a hidden ability —— the nemesis of magic and special ability users.

Those cloudy eyes were not mere decoration, but had excellent visual capability, perhaps matching or even exceeding that of Aura’s vision as a ranger. Although their offensive power was low, their value this time was in their surveillance rather than combat, with the purpose of assisting Aura.

“Understood! However, will they obediently listen to my commands?”

“Not a problem. I can assure you on this point. In addition, I will use magic to help telepathically link you together. This way you can be at the centre of command and patrol safely.”

“Yes! Although it will be faster if I act personally, we do not know what kind of forces the opponent has! I understand now! Then after Mare uses magic to increase our stealth, we shall prepare the ambush in this area.”

“No problems then, I leave it in your care.”

Ainz silently revealed an invisible smile



Demiurge, who was the last to enter the room, quickly walked inside and went straight to a vacant seat to sit down. Normally, he was never one to display such rough behavior, his mood was already fully conveyed without the need for explanation.

“So, care to explain yourself?”

Demiurge closed his eyes and fiercely asked Albedo, who was one of the people seated around the same table.

“Why would you agree to this?”

Although his voice was steady, it was thinly veiled, everyone was able to hear the sharp undertone.

People would feel more agitated when a normally calm person showed strong emotions because the dichotomy was substantial. However this was not the case this time because Demiurge’s expression was extremely anxious, and even his companions had never seen him so worked up before.

However, blatantly facing this hostility and question filled with murderous intent, Albedo remained as her usual self.

“Wasn't that Ainz-sama's decision? How could we subordinates defy.....”

“—— Why?”

A question as sharp as a knife interrupted Albedo’s speech.

“Why? When Ainz-sama headed towards the human city, you were the one who vehemently insisted that a Guardian accompany him. Why would you agree to the matter this time? At that moment you should have also been concerned about Ainz-sama’s safety.”

Albedo nodded in reply, and Demiurge’s expression contorted.

“Well then, I will ask again! Why did you agree to this?”

It was almost as if the room was vibrating in anger. This was completely unlike an emotion that Demiurge would show.

Cocytus slowly turned his head and gazed worriedly at the two people.

“.....Furthermore, shouldn’t you have known that Ainz-sama was lying?”

Demiurge asked in a low tone suppressed with anger.

After Albedo nodded once again, Cocytus mouth moved with a metallic sound. Both persons knew that this crisp and high-pitched noise was often made when Cocytus had questions. Albedo explained:

“..... A short time ago, I told you what Ainz-sama told me, the reason why he went ahead by himself. Didn't you find this strange? From Ainz-sama's reasoning, wouldn't it be safer to attack in waves? Wouldn't it be safer if we were to attack one by one and slowly reduce Shalltear's stamina and magic?”

“.....It is as she says, Cocytus. A tactic that we can easily come up with, there is no way that Ainz-sama overlooked this. In other words, Ainz-sama has deliberately lied to hide a greater reason.”

“What. is. this. reason?”

“I don't know..... which is why I ask, Albedo. If you already knew this, why did you still allow Ainz-sama to go forth alone?”

“Because the Ainz-sama a few days ago and the Ainz-sama right now are like two completely different people.”

Demiurge who was squinting and now slightly opened his eyes had a thoroughly confused expression, telling Albedo to continue explaining.

“Back then, Ainz-sama didn't have an expression like a man, but... how should I put it although I know it comes across as disrespectful, but at that moment his expression was like a child who wished to run away.”

“I didn't sense that? Could it be that you were mistaken?”

Demiurge looked slightly away and towards the direction of the 「Crystal Screen」. It showed the clear image of their master walking through the woods.

“You think so? I don't think that I would misread the expression on the man I love.....”

Albedo's eyes also turned towards the 「Crystal Screen」, and she had the expression of an intoxicated woman. This expression irritated the anxious Demiurge.

“Then! What is his expression now?”

“The current Ainz-sama has a determined look on his face. As a woman —— perhaps this way of thinking is disrespectful, but knowing that my beloved master wishes to carry out that determination, I will not get in his way. Furthermore, Ainz-sama has already promised to me that he will definitely return safely.”

Seeing that Albedo was not planning to say anything further, Demiurge asked disdainfully and with a displeased look:

“This is still too irrational, naive; a purely emotional judgment. Ainz-sama is the last Supreme Being who remains here. Knowing that he faces a situation where his life may be in peril, it is our responsibility to come up with a plan to remove that danger. Even if we will be blamed afterwards, even if we will have to sacrifice our lives, we ought to step forward and act, right?”

With a loud bumping noise, Demiurge stood up.

“Where do you think you’re going?”

The voice that called out to Demiurge’s turned back was eerily calm.

“You’re still asking something so obvious? Of course to send out my subordinates——”

Noticing the sharp sound of metal closing in, Demiurge turned his head and saw an unsheathed blade——it was Cocytus’ Divine Class item.

“..... I see..... calling me back and at the same time commanding me to be here, was it for this, Albedo?”

“Correct Demiurge..... the seventh floor is already in lockdown under both Ainz-sama and my authority, and all of your subordinates are in our grasp. You or Ainz-sama, it doesn’t need to be said whose orders they will obey, no?”

“..... Truly a fool. If Ainz-sama meets his death because of this, how do you plan to take responsibility! Ainz-sama is our last object of loyalty!”

“Ainz-sama will definitely return.”

“What proof do you have for your assurance?!”

Demiurge glared. That pair of eyes lacked eyeballs. In fact it was completely without pupil or iris, but were shining jewels with numerous small cuts.

“To believe in our masters, this is also part of our obligation as their creations.”

Demiurge repeatedly opened and closed his mouth. And eventually, tightly closed his eyes shut.

Because he also reckoned that—— that too is correct.

All of the Nazarick NPCs, who were absolutely loyal to the 41 Supreme Beings, had subtle differences in the way they demonstrated their obedience. On the issue of loyalty, of course Demiurge and Albedo had different approaches.

However, Albedo's concept of loyalty gave Demiurge a huge shock.

But even so, he was still worried and his restlessness would not disappear. It was why, in the past, they spoke of a descendant to carry on his will.

If Ainz-sama were to disappear like the other Supreme Beings, to whom should they be loyal to from that day onwards?

For us who were created to be loyal to them, after this value was lost then what would be the meaning of existence?

As if to hide his own emotions, Demiurge rudely sat on the chair again, not one bit like his usual self.

"If... anything should happen to Ainz-sama, you must discard your position as Overseer of the Guardians."

"..... Demiurge. you. dare. telling. Albedo. to. step. down. from. a. position. bestowed. upon. her. by. the. Supreme. Beings? Such. insolence!"

Albedo smiled at the shocked Cocytus.

"No problem. However, Demiurge, if Ainz-sama returns safely, you will have to obediently follow my commands should any similar situation arise in the future."

"Of course."

"Well then, Cocytus, what do you think are Ainz-sama's chances of winning?"

Cocytus reluctantly told the other two his personal judgment.

"Thirty to seventy. Ainz-sama is thirty."

Demiurge's shoulders could not help but give a jump. For Cocytus, the strongest warrior amongst them, to say something so ominous, there was no way Demiurge could ignore this. However Albedo had a different reaction. Upon hearing this statement, she revealed a beaming smile as she fully grasped the situation with ease.

"Is that so. Then let's wait and see how Ainz-sama turns the tables to obtain victory."



After splitting up with the two people, Ainz walked towards Shalltear's position. Thanks to his own special abilities, he was able to differentiate between north, south, east and west, and stuck to a straight line through the woods when heading towards Shalltear.

Passing through the trees, Ainz caught sight of Shalltear. It saddened him to see that Shalltear looked just the same as before, like a doll. At the same time he felt anger towards himself, but an even greater anger at the World Class item user.

"Damn."

He cursed softly, but his voice was filled with strong emotions. Even the undead Ainz who was capable of suppressing emotional turbulence was unable to repress this.

"In order to find my companions, I have to spread the name and fame of Ainz Ooal Gown through any means, no matter how unscrupulous. But I still maintained discretion in order to avoid such meaningless battles. How did something like this happen?"

Who was it? Just what kind of power was used? Why use a World Class item against Shalltear? He did not have the slightest clue.

".....No matter who the opponent is, if they managed to extract information from Shalltear I will have to be kill them without fail."

Within Ainz, intense dark emotions surfaced. From within him gushed out such fierce hostility and murderous intent, such that even a skull which ought to be incapable of movement looked significantly distorted.

"I will definitely make you deeply regret your own foolishness. Do not think you can get away so easily when you anger us, Ainz Ooal Gown."

After speaking out his inner fury, Ainz gradually reverted back to his usual composure.

The real battle was about to start. It was crucial that he kept calm.

"I am still stupid, there are better methods at hand."

Ainz revealed a self-deprecating smile.

"..... Is it guilt? Or do I not willingly face..... only wishing to avoid confronting..."

Although Shalltear was the strongest Guardian, the difference was minimal. If the other Guardians took turns to attack, victory was certain.

However Ainz did not choose this method for a single reason.

That was because he did not wish to personally witness his beloved children mutually killing each other.

If the opponent had voluntarily betrayed Ainz Ooal Gown, Ainz would frankly accept the fact of her rebellion and use all means at disposal to extinguish her. If that was the NPC's own volition, as Nazarick's ruler, treating her with severity was only appropriate.

If the betrayal were because of the setting, he would find the most compromising method.

However, Shalltear this time was different. She had been mind controlled, and the person in the wrong was Ainz for not considering this situation. That is why only he could shoulder this responsibility.

He wished to personally handle this.

Ainz took off a ring, a cash item that allowed revival for several times without any cost. Removing this item represented Ainz' steadfast resolve, because if he were able to revive, he would be less focused.

It's not a sign of him giving up. Determined, Ainz looked up at the sky.

"Up until now the enemy has still chosen not to attack. Right now, I can only sense the surveillance magic from Nazarick..... is the enemy not watching?"

Normally, Ainz would use a large variety of defensive magic. The counterintelligence magic activated in Carne Village was one such type.

In YGGDRASIL, because friendly fire was rendered ineffective, his companions could use intelligence magic on Ainz and locate him with ease. However this world was different. If Albedo and the others wished to observe Ainz, he would automatically counter with magic.

Thus, the counter magic would be an attack to Nazarick's security net. If he was careless, Ainz could face the retaliation from the security net and suffer unnecessary damage.

Therefore Ainz disabled the automatic countering magic, only leaving behind that which could detect the source of the intelligence magic. From that information, he gathered that aside from Nazarick, there were no others who were using magic to watch Ainz at this moment.

Ainz tilted his head quizzically.

Could it be that Shalltear being abandoned here was really a coincidence?

"Furthermore..... didn't Albedo see through my lies? Oh dear, oh dear. Setting that aside do you not feel that this is quite a gamble, Shalltear?"

Needless to say, the expressionless Shalltear did not respond.

Ainz looked at Shalltear and readied himself for battle, but a tiny part of himself wished to escape this situation.

Even if he had just intoned his determination, when standing here and facing the reality of the situation, he still felt a tremendous amount of pressure.

Even if he had mentally prepared to heroically put his life on the line... no, because he had the determination to die, the cowardly spirit left behind by the man, Satoru Suzuki, would feel fear.

The battle that would ensue was not going to be slash-and-kill like in the YGGDRASIL game— but a genuine fight to the death.

The battles he had fought ever since first arriving in this world, this would not be like his fights against Nigan and Clementine, where an overwhelming difference in power guaranteed his victory. This time it would be life or death, and furthermore a battle under an absolute disadvantage.

If he was not an undead, and——

“If I wasn’t the ruler of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, and also not the representative of the Guild, perhaps I would not be able to even raise my fist.”

Ainz laughed out loud, and like this, pushed aside all of his negative emotions.

The fear of death had already vanished without a trace. Even the anxiety of defeat had disappeared.

Recalling pride and glory endowed Ainz with strength.

“I am Ainz Ooal Gown. With that name at stake, there can be no defeat.”

Being able to prove that he was the master of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, this position was not merely an empty title.

Ainz’ sharp eyes looked towards the unprepared Shalltear.

“..... Well then..... let us begin!”

Ainz shouted loudly, activating his magic. From his large collection of spells, he carefully selected—— the tenth ranked defensive magic to be activated.

「Body of Effulgent Beryl」

Ainz’ white skeletal body began to emit a green glow. Following this——

“Ha ha ha!”

—During the activation of his magic, Ainz laughed out loudly while not taking his eye off Shalltear. Because in addition to the satisfaction felt from his predictions proving to be accurate, he had also won a large gamble.

“So I was right! Unless my actions are seen as completely hostile, then the NPC will not ready itself for battle! It is exactly the same as in the game!”

Her behaviour mirrored that of mind controlled monsters in YGGDRASIL. The game logic also applied to this world, which slightly eased this absolutely unfavourable situation.

“Since it’s like this, Shalltear, I hope you will not mind but before the battle I shall kindly request that you remain still and wait a while longer.”

Ainz continued to activate different magic.

— 「Flight」 , 「Magic Caster’s Blessing」 , 「Infinity Wall」 , 「Magic Ward: Holy」 , 「Life Essence」 , 「Greater Full Potential」 , 「Freedom」 , 「False Data: Life」 , 「See Through」 , 「Paranormal Intuition」 , 「Greater Resistance」 , 「Mantle of Chaos」 , 「Indomitability」 , 「Sensory Boost」 , 「Greater Luck」 , 「Magic Boost」 , 「Draconic Power」 , 「Greater Hardening」 , 「Heavenly Aura」 , 「Absorption」 , 「Penetration Boost」 , 「Greater Magic Shield」 , 「Mana Essence」 , 「Triple Maximize Magic: Explosive Mine」 , 「Triple Maximise Magic: Greater Magic Seal」 , 「Triple Maximize Magic: Magic Arrow」 — like this, an almost endless amount of magic surrounded Ainz’ body.

“Now, here I come!”

Upon finishing his preparations, those words were thrown at both Shalltear and himself.

The first magic which Ainz selected was an ultimate move, a spell surpassing the tenth rank.

It was called Super-level magic—

In terms of magic rank, it was a magic already beyond the ranking system. It could be considered as both magic and not magic. Firstly, there is no MP used when it is activated. However there was a limit on the number of times that it could be activated per day.

When it was first learnt, it could only be used once a day. However beyond level seventy, it could be used one more time per day for every additional ten levels.

The number you could learn is one for each level.

Rather than magic, it could be more appropriate to consider it a special skill.

That was also to say that the average player who reached level 100 could only use Super-level magic four times. So then you may wonder, wouldn't Shalltear be defeated through the continuous use of Super-level magic? Indeed, the destructive power between Super-level magic and tenth-ranked magic was not comparable. If only it were possible to continuously use Super-level magic, even in terms of a simple calculation of aggregate damage, only a handful of level 100 players could survive. This would not include Shalltear, thus she would be defeated.

However it was not so simple.

Because Super-level magic could not be activated consecutively.

Firstly, every Super-level magic has a set activation period. Although it was possible to use cash items to remove this activation period, there was another penalty which prevented Super-level magic from being cast continuously.

When members of a small group activated Super-level magic, all of the members would be affected by this penalty—— there would be a period of time during which it was impossible to re-cast Super-level magic, called the cooldown time.

This kind of penalty setting was designed for Guild wars, so that during wars, one side could not obtain victory by continuously activating Super-level magic. In addition, neither cash items nor special abilities were able to remove this cooldown.

As such, in PVPs, any person who activated Super-level magic off the bat was often recognised as an idiot.

Because using the only trump card without fully understanding the opponent's ins and outs often spelt defeat. In fact during PVPs, obtaining victory by using Super-level magic at the start of battle was rare.

However, Ainz' first move was Super-level magic.

There was no anxiety or confusion on that face, only a calm light in those empty eye sockets.

A huge three-dimensional, dome shaped magic about ten metres in radius was activated with Ainz at the centre.

The magic emitted a white light, and texts or marks of translucent patterns floated into existence. These patterns were continuously shifting and dazzling to look at, changing shape every second.

If cash items were used, the Super-level magic could be activated instantaneously, yet Ainz did not do so. His eyesight moved away from Shalltear and turned to survey the surroundings.

“No ambush? Or are they still standing by the sidelines? Surely this moment should be the best opportunity for them to attack?”

A magic casters' defensive abilities would drop when activating Super-level magic. Furthermore all the caster has to suffer is a certain amount of damage for the magic to be automatically cancelled.

As such, basically every time Super-level magic was activated, there would be several companions to protect the caster. That also meant that now was the perfect time to attack the unprotected Ainz.

However, there was no change in the surroundings.

“Could it be that I was overcautious?”

Ainz smiled then shrugged.

Although it had only been a hunch, by now Ainz was certain that Shalltear hadn't been placed there as bait, she had truly been discarded.

“Seriously, what happened here. Hey, I'm not omniscient, of course I do not possess the power to see through everything. If I did, then the situation wouldn't have become like this.”

After muttering to himself, Ainz put on an act of twisting his shoulders.

When activating Super-level magic, it was also impossible to move freely, only to stand like a wooden statue waiting for time to pass.

In order to make use of the time, Ainz took out a curved metal plate from thin air. It fixated firmly to his arm after he put it there. The metal plate had a row of numbers which changed with every passing second.

Without the need for further explanation, it was a wristwatch.

Ainz put his thumb on the metal plate, touching the text on the display.

『Momonga-oniichan! I'm setting the time!』

A voice pretending to be a naive girl penetrated the surroundings. This kind of voice would seriously make people nearby raise their eyebrows.

“..... Why can't this watch's voice be turned off.....”

Ainz voiced out a complaint, but this was merely postulation. The voice could be turned off in the settings, but Ainz had never turned it off.

The watch's voice was from the creator of Aura and Mare, the Guild member Simmering Teapot.

If he turned off her voice, this item would be no different from an ordinary watch.

The reason why she would put her efforts into making such a voice which would make others raise eyebrows, was mainly to make fun of Ainz.

The creator of Shalltear Bloodfallen, Peroronchino, was her younger brother, who was on good terms with Ainz. As such, Simmering Teapot saw Ainz as her younger brother's friend, leading to this result.

However, it might not be a prank either.

She would often perform voice acting for the role of loli characters in H Games. The weird voice just now was also that of a loli. Therefore she may only be using her work-related voice inside.

Realising that he might come across his sister's voice when he set out to purchase H Games, his desire to go through with the purchase declined rapidly. Remembering his companion's complaints on this issue in the past, Ainz smiled.

“..... I agree. If I heard Simmering Teapot's voice when browsing the internet, I would be shocked too.”

After his demonstration of affection towards his absent Guild friends, he proceeded to pull out several flat sticks approximately fifteen centimetres long each from thin air. Each plank had carved words, inscribed with 「Tsukuyomi」, 「Bow of Houyi」, 「Earth Recovery」, 「The Female Sensei's Iron Fist of Wrath」.

On his waist there were several slots for holding scrolls. He silently memorised the order of these compartments, then carefully and slowly placed the sticks inside.

These preparations took a while, and by the time they were complete the magic's blue light was even stronger. It was at the state where it could be launched.

“Then, let us begin.”

Having prepared himself, Ainz revealed a look of determination——

“Super-level magic—— 「Heaven's Downfall」 ”