

Overlord Volume 4 Chapter 5
Chapter 5 The Freezing God



OVERLORD 4 The lizard man Heroes

5章 氷結の武神

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Part 1

Ainz main base was the fortress that Aura was constructing— the place that Cocytus visited yesterday. Faint construction noises could still be heard in the distance.

When they entered a room, Victim who had been following quietly behind said to Ainz.

“emoh gniog m'I ,syug uoy wercS... (Well then, allow me to bid farewell here.)

“Thank you for your hard work. Please defend the first level of Nazarick until we return.”

“amabO sknahT... (By your will).”

“ 「Portal」 .”

Victim went into the door of darkness conjured by Ainz— with the first level of the Great Tomb of Nazarick as his destination.

After seeing off the Guardian capable of activating a deadly powerful movement restriction skill, Ainz turned his attention towards the room. At the same time, he could sense Aura lowering her face.

She must have done everything she could to give Ainz a grand welcome. Traces that showed the commendable effort put into this room could be seen everywhere, but it paled in comparison to Nazarick. Aura probably felt shame from this.

It is not that bad.

For Ainz who was just a salaryman, he didn't mind it that much. His room in Nazarick wasn't too bad either, but it troubled him as it was too luxurious. In fact, he felt relaxed and comfortable here.

I want an eight tatami room. I should find a corner to prepare one. Oh, I have to compliment Aura and convey my satisfaction for her work.

If people don't talk about their trust, gratitude and care, they wouldn't become successful.

Ainz remembered a quote he saw framed inside the display cabinet of a CEO during a corporate visit. He didn't know who coined it, but it was a great quote. It felt like something an ideal boss will say.

You have to show your gratitude. People won't strive for the best if there is no reward... Something like that?

“My apologies Aura, for insisting on using this place. Do not mind the details, I have high praise for what you have accomplished. If this is made by you, then it is as good as Nazarick.”

“... Yes.”

Aura's eyes slightly widened. *I should console her more.* Although Ainz wanted to do that, no better words came to his mind, so he covered it up by observing the surroundings once again.

The smell of fresh timber still lingered here.

Normally, instead of this place that had absolutely no defences, returning to Nazarick was unquestionably safer. Without defensive magic, it was like a house made of paper in a way. But on the flip side, Ainz was using himself as bait to lure in the big fishes.

There was a large distance between here and the lake, so the ones that could chase them here — if they existed — would be players from YGGDRASIL, or people at that level.

This meant that the purpose of building this place was to bait the enemies targeting Nazarick to reveal themselves.

It was dangerous of course, but Ainz felt the risk was necessary to achieve this goal.

They are still not showing up. Could it be... the plan is a failure? Anyway, what is that?

“... Aura, I want to ask you. What is that thing?”

Ainz's gaze stopped on the lone white chair placed deep inside the room. The back was made high and imposing. It was made so well that it was no exaggeration to call it an art piece. If he ignores that one glaring issue.

"It's bit plain, but I have prepared a throne."

The one answering confidently was the subordinate following behind him— Demiurge. *That's what I thought*, Ainz said to himself in his mind and asked a further question.

"— What bones did you use?"

"Bones from all sorts of beasts. The best parts are from beasts like Griffon and Wyvern."

"... Oh... I see."

That was a throne made from countless bones. It wasn't in the logistics list of goods they brought from Nazarick, so it was something Demiurge made outside. No matter how he looked at it, skulls from humans or demi-humans were definitely used too. It might look pure white without a shred of blood and meat on it, but it still gave the feeling of blood stain.

It was a bit disgusting, sitting on that thing was akin to sitting on a cushion of needles, making Ainz hesitate. But his subordinate had put in effort to prepare it, it would be difficult to reject it. Is there any reason he could use that won't cause complaints...

Ainz snapped his fingers after thinking about it.

"... Shalltear. I will give you the punishment for what you had done right now. That's right... I will punish you with shame."

"Yes!"

Shalltear who was suddenly named was a bit surprised.

“Kneel with your head bowed over there, and put your hands on the floor.”

“Yes!”

Shalltear walked to the place Ainz pointed at— which was the middle of the room and did as she was told with a baffled face.

Ainz walked up to Shalltear and sat on her back.

“... Ainz, Ainz-sama!”

The surprised Shalltear could only made exhale while whispering ‘Hans-sama’. She was shaken and stiff from fear when Ainz sat on her back.

“You are now a chair, understand?”

“Yes!”

Ainz shifted his gaze from Shalltear whose voice was getting shrilled, onto Demiurge.

“— Sorry Demiurge, that’s how it is.”

“I see! Marvellous! To use a Guardian as a chair! This is a chair customized specifically for the Supreme Master! As expected of Ainz-sama. I would never have thought of that!”

“Is, is that so...”

In the face of the glittering respect shown on Demiurge was expressing, Ainz averted his face, not understanding why he was smiling so brilliantly. After this, a beautiful woman said to Ainz with a wonderful smile.

“My apologies Ainz-sama. Please allow me to excuse myself. I will return shortly.”

“You need something Albedo? Permission granted, carry on.”

After thanking him, Albedo left the room. Immediately, a woman screaming ‘Hyaaahhhhhh!’ and the sound of a wall being smashed violently could be heard, and the whole fort seemed to be shaking.

After a minute or so, Albedo returned to the room dominated by silence with her usual smile.

“I have returned, Ainz-sama. Oh right, Aura. I accidentally ran into the wall when I left the room. It seemed to be damaged, could you repair it later? I am very sorry.”

“Ah, ermm... Okay, I will get it done.”

Ainz swallowed the words he wanted to say and sighed. He focused his wandering gaze and fixated on the staff emitting an aura of terror.

The real staff of Ainz Ooal Gown was not brought here, this was a replica— a prototype in replicating the guild weapon. Made from parts dug from the depths of the treasury, it was a prop that looked almost perfect on the outside.

The guild will fall if the guild weapon was destroyed, so it could not be brought out so carelessly. It was entrusted to the Guardian of the Cherry Blossom Zone in the 8th floor for protection right now.

We did come up with countermeasures for if we got robbed of our rings, but it is not easy to just find a place... to test it out...

As he was thinking about that, Shalltear suddenly fidgeted, adjusting herself for Ainz to sit more comfortably. This made Ainz look down at the back of Shalltear’s head with a strange sense of unease.

Her breathing was ragged.

It must be heavy for her. Under Ainz was the slim back of Shalltear who looked to be fourteen. A grown man was sitting on the back of this young girl. Realizing how perverted, shameful and cruel that was, Ainz felt he might have gone too far.

Shalltear was a NPC created by his companion in the past. Even Peroronchino wouldn't abuse her like this. This action was akin to soiling the memories of his past comrades. It was foolish to think of this as a self-punishment.

To torture Shalltear like this... unforgivable.

“Shalltear, does it hurt?”

Ainz was planning to say ‘if that is so, let's end this’. Shalltear looked up with a face blushing with passion, her expression full of pleasure.

“It's not painful at all! This is like a reward!”

She kept exhaling the heat stored within her body, reflecting Ainz' face in her dazed eyes. Her wet tongue brushed against her lips, reflecting light lecherously. She squirmed her body like a snake.

“... Hnngh!”

Ainz felt the urge to get away immediately.

He almost gave in to this urge.

No, I can't do that.

He was punishing Shalltear, but Shalltear's mistake was actually Ainz' fault. That's why enduring the urge to get up was Ainz' punishment.

Ainz destroyed the complicated emotions welling up within him.

He tried his best to ignore the chair that was panting and squirming. But he couldn't help thinking *Peroronchino, what a perverted setting this is.*

“... Well then, let's move on to the serious topic. Did we intimidate them?”

“I think it was perfect, Ainz-sama.”

“Exactly, just look at the lizardmen's faces.”

Ainz smiled in relief after hearing what the Guardians said. Actually, it was impossible to tell the changes in the expressions of the lizardmen. They might be closer to humans than reptiles, but their facial expressions were totally different from humans.

“Is that so. Then the first phase to awe them with might is a success.”

Ainz exhaled in relief.

He used the Super-tier magic ‘The Creation’ that could only be used four times a day after all. If that didn't work, nothing else would.

“Demiurge, how long would it take to find out exactly how large the frozen area is?”

“We have already started to do so, but progress is slow as the area is wider than expected. Please grant us more time.”

Ainz stopped Demiurge who was about to kneel. Ainz covered his mouth with his bony finger and thought. The area of effect being larger than expected could be considered a success in terms of magical experimentations.

‘The Creation’ is a Super-tier magic that could change the terrain itself. In YGGDRASIL, it was used to guard against the heat of volcanoes or the cold of freezing lands.

It was possible to show their might without using Super-tier magic.

Unrelated to this deployment, Ainz had always wanted to perform this experiment in determining the area of effect. ‘The Creation’ was a magic that had an amazingly large area of effect, and could cover the entire 8th floor in Ainz's experiment inside Nazarick. But it wasn't clear what effect it would have in the world outside.

In YGGDRASIL the spell effect could cover an ‘Area’, but how big would an ‘Area’ be in this world? Ainz wanted to find out. If it could cover an entire plain, that would be too big.

Similarly, freezing the entire lake was going overboard. Care should be taken when using Super-tier magic.

“Aura, how is our security net?”

“Yes! We have deployed the undead assigned by Ainz-sama to secure a two kilometer radius area. But there has been no signs of anything special coming in so far. I have also sent monsters specializing in scouting to patrol the area within 4 km, but we have not spotted anything suspicious.”

“I see... The enemy might be hiding from detection as they draw close, what about the countermeasures against that?”

“There are no problems. With Shalltear's cooperation, we have sent out undead proficient in reconnaissance.”

“Splendid.”

Aura smiled happily after Ainz praised her. Her depressed expression was gone without a trace.

“We have exposed ourselves to this extent, why haven't the people who used the World class item against Shalltear made a move?”

Ainz asked again under the gaze of everyone present, but did not direct his question to anyone in particular.

“Why aren’t they performing surveillance on Nazarick and this place?”

“Could it be that they are surveilling us with World class items that could not be detected by normal means?”

Ainz tilt his head in response to Demiurge’s counter question.

“... I did consider this possibility, that’s why I use Momon... If they are really using World class item to spy on us, they wouldn’t be able to spy on Momon who also owns a World class item. That’s why I have been assuming they will use physical means such as scouts to watch us... They might use magic surveillance too, but it should be orthodox means...”

Ainz realized the Guardians around him seemed confused, which meant his explanation wasn’t clear enough.

“Well... How should I put this... In the past, we owned a mine that could generate a type of metal that was rare. As we were monopolizing the supply, the market price for it soared and people started scheming to rob it from us. The item they used that time was Ouroboros. It was a top World class item known as one of the ‘Twenty’.”

Ainz narrowed his eyes.

He was raging mad when he just got robbed, but looking back, it was a nice piece of memory. Even though they were massacred and dropped plenty of rare items.

“Outrageous! They dare usurp the territory ruled by the Supreme Beings?! Unforgivable! Please give us the order to counter attack!”

Hearing how angry Albedo was made Ainz turn his gaze.

He could see the hostility and killing intent released by all the Guardians, even the calm Demiurge was revealing a sinister smile. Not just that, even Mare’s reserved expression couldn’t

conceal his urge to attack. Ainz couldn't see Shalltear's face as she was acting as a chair, but from her stiffened body, her determination was conveyed to Ainz through his rear.

"Calm down! This is all in the past now."

Ainz raised his hand to calm the Guardians. They looked more settled, but they still felt unstable as if magma was flowing beneath the surface. To change the topic, Ainz continued what he was saying.

"The enemy used Ouroboros to stop us from entering the 'World' the mine was situated in. They probably used this chance to search the vicinity and seize the mine. When the seal was undone, we went in only to find that the mine had been conquered."

During the rash attempt to take back the mine, about half the guild members died at least once. Ainz held back on and didn't say this out loud.

"I will get to the main point. I mentioned that we were denied access to that 'World' but people with World class items could still enter that 'World'. Hence, it is impossible for them to spy on us even with the strongest World class item."

As Ainz listened to the enlightened acknowledgement from his subordinates, he still bore doubts on whether this was really true.

The possibility was high, but there was no evidence to prove that it was true.

When using 'Conflict of the Five Elements' which was also a 'Twenty' like 'Ouroboros', the game company sent a message to the owners World class items. Aside from an apology, they also sent an item as compensation. The content of the apology message was: "Bearers of World class items, by right, you should be exempted from any changes to the world. But it is very challenging to maintain your data while we update the server. Therefore, we have no other choice but to treat this as an exceptional case as we update the server."

And so, it was impossible for them to defend against this. But that event should be the exception instead of the norm.

Especially the World class item that could defend against reconnaissance magic. It would be meaningless if it couldn't protect Nazarick from other World class items.

“And that is why I thought the enemy will approach Momon... But those who do approach are mothers carrying new born babies and adventurers.”

They asked Momon to pat the babies' head to bless them with health and strength. The adventurers requested a handshake and wished to become stronger, but no one wanted to converse with him in private.

That's why Ainz exposed himself with weak defences this time, waiting for the enemy to make their move.

Not equipping Cocytus with a World class item was part of the plan. Ainz planned to use him as bait to lure the enemy out. It seemed scary because the enemy was unknown, and they could come up with proper countermeasures after ascertaining who the enemy was.

“Regarding this issue... May I share my humble opinion?”

“What is it, Albedo?”

“Yes, as Ainz-sama explained, the plan was to smoke the enemy out. Could the enemy be reluctant to approach us since they too are operating in the dark, just like us?”

...Ah.

“No... problem, Albedo, I already considered that possibility.”

He didn't. Ainz was assuming the enemy was thinking the same thing like him, trying to gather intelligence on him.

... What an error. Did I get it wrong from the very beginning?

“Excuse me, also...”

Albedo-san, please stop— Ainz cried in his heart. He felt like a candidate who was reviewing the question script after the exam and realized all his answers were wrong.

“About releasing the information that Shalltear was defeated with items...”

“Yes, that’s what I reported to the guild, that is to prevent the people from fearing Momon if he gets too powerful. Sealed magic crystals seemed to be a rare item here, it must be difficult to destroy the crystal for experiments. Destabilizing the crystal and using it to defeat Shalltear is a more convincing story, and people would be less guarded against Momon.”

“You are absolutely right. For the people who think sealed crystals are rare, this isn’t a bad method.”

Albedo’s roundabout way of speaking made Ainz feel uneasy.

“... But if the other party possess multiple crystals like Ainz-sama, wouldn’t the situation be different?”

“... Hmm? Ah, that’s what you mean.”

Ainz made an enlightened expression, but didn’t understand at all.

So what if the other party possess several sealed crystals? It was a fact that sealed magic was valuable in this world. Was Albedo worried about the crystal being broken during experiments?

But that didn’t seem to be all.

An ominous feeling flashed across Ainz’ mind. He wanted Albedo to explain further, which made Ainz hate himself for acting cocky earlier.

Is it really okay for me to be the ruler and decide the policies of Nazarick? Am I steering a ship up a mountain without knowing it?

Ainz felt like running away.

He couldn't bear the burden of a ruler he had experienced several times — a burden that grew heavier in the face of failure — Ainz kept complaining in his heart.

But he couldn't do that. Since he took the name of Ainz Ooal Gown, he couldn't abandon the creations of his comrades— the NPC and the treasures in the Great Tomb of Nazarick. More importantly, he didn't want to be a parent that abandoned his children.

I also worry whether you all will betray, abandon or give up on me. Nonetheless, I will act the part of Ainz Ooal Gown that meets your expectations and is worthy of your trust.

And so, Ainz made a relaxed expression he practised before the mirror and said in a pose filled with the confidence of an Overlord.

“No problem, I understand why you feel uneasy.”

Ainz then looked around him.

“Albedo... Do share your worries with the other Guardians.”

“Ah, yes! If the enemy possess multiple crystals like Ainz-sama... Someone who knows about crystals, they would be able to tell this information is false. They will be sure that Shalltear was not defeated by the crystal— although they couldn't know if Shalltear was at full strength, users of World class item will assume that Momon is as strong as Shalltear. They will then conclude the mysterious warrior Momon who suddenly appeared in E-Rantel is someone dangerous right? They might also suspect that Shalltear might be related to Momon...”

“... Albedo, and Guardians, what do you think the enemies' next step would be?”

“Pardon me. I think that if our foes plan to oppose Ainz-sama, they will spread rumours of Momon working together with the vampire even if there is no proof. They would not want Momon to gain further fame.”

Urghhh— Ainz moaned in his heart.

Part of the goal of going to E-Rantel was to gather intelligence, but the main target was to raise the fame of the Momon persona— and a tiny part of wanting to run away. The original plan was to wait for the great hero to be born and then reveal Momon’s true identity, turning all his fame to that of Ainz Ooal Gown, spreading this name throughout the world.

He also wanted to show his PK guild will change in this world, so he did good deeds using the name of Momon. But these plans were probably done for.

“Hmm? Demiurge, let me ask you, would it be more effective if such rumours were spread after Momon became famous?”

“Aura, that would be a bad move. If Ainz-sama has garnered enough fame, the masses will just think of such news as malicious rumours. They should cut off the roots before his fame grows.”

“A wonderful insight, Demiurge.”

Ainz nodded in response to Demiurge who was bowing his head, acting as if he had the same idea.

“I will ask another question. If that is so, why hasn’t the enemy started spreading rumours yet?”

After hearing Ainz’ query, Demiurge raised a finger.

“Number one, they have not completed their investigation on Momon-sama yet. If Momon-sama did defeat Shalltear in a straight fight, they wouldn’t want to incur his wrath. They might want to pull him into their camp. Number two—”

He raised another finger.

“What if their encounter with Shalltear was just a coincidence? They might have been passing by with some other purpose in mind, just some unrelated third party.”

“That is impossible, Demiurge, the possibility is very low...”

Ainz said that, he just realized this scenario wasn't impossible.

He was totally convinced that the attack had been targeted at Shalltear— or targeted at the denizens of Nazarick. But Shalltear was attacked shortly after teleporting. If the attack really had been targeted at Shalltear, they had been eerily precise.

Was he blinded by the fear of the unseen enemy?

Ainz narrowed his eyes— or rather, the red glow in his eye sockets.

In the end, the problem was insufficient intelligence and being shorthanded. They needed more power.

Anyway, the biggest problem is that our intelligence network is too small.

Sebas had been tasked with that too, but the intelligence gathered by a handful of agents were limited. In the beginning, he thought it would be enough to gain basic information about this world, but that wasn't enough in the current situation.

The intelligence gathered by an adventurer and the butler of a merchant had less importance and quality than that of a high government official.

Ainz couldn't think of anyone who could analyze the gathered intel from different angles and judge whether the intel was important.

“Ara ara, the main problem is the lack of intel. We have to be wary of an enemy we couldn't see, which made it hard for us to make our move...”

After listening to Ainz' complain, Demiurge smiled as if he had a great idea.

“If that is the case, how about joining forces with a country?”

After a short silence, Albedo said “Oh.” to express that she had understood. Ainz made the same sound moments later.

“I see Demiurge, that’s what you mean.”

But the other three Guardians were still tilting their head in confusion. Aura admitted her doubts honestly.

“Ainz-sama, what does this mean?”

Facing Aura’s question, Ainz felt relieved that he couldn’t show any facial expression.

“Ara ara... Mare, Shalltear, do you understand what Demiurge is talking about?”

The two of them shook their heads.

”I see, it couldn’t be helped. Demiurge, please explain.”

“Yes, by your will. Everyone, Ainz-sama is worried about this unknown enemy. I think that if we encounter this strong enemy and both sides are openly hostile to each other, we will need a breakthrough point that could solve our issues during negotiations.”

Sensei, I don’t understand— Three students and one adult seemed to have these words carved on their faces. Teacher Demiurge seemed to realize his explanation was too vague, and continued by accommodating the standards of his students.

“What will you do if Ainz-sama is controlled by a World class item user?”

“I will cut that person into pieces.”

“... No, that’s not what I mean, Aura. Don’t you think that being controlled is a breakthrough point? In actual fact, there are people who could control their opponent with World class items, so the possibility of Ainz-sama being controlled is not zero.”

The deputy home room teacher Albedo added to teacher Demiurge’s explanation.

“He means after pretending to join under the flag of a country, Nazarick could use this as an excuse for any actions we take in the future. We can just say that we are acting under the orders of that country and didn’t have a choice. If the powerful enemy really exists, we could shift the responsibility to that country, correct? If the enemy doesn’t want a direct confrontation, they will do their best to accommodate us.”

“I see... if there are people who are unhappy with them, we can use this excuse to pull this third party to our side... That’s the idea. As expected of Ainz-sama...”

Just like the boss of an evil organization stroking a cat on his lap, Ainz patted the head of Shalltear who was acting as a chair as he said “It’s not me”.

“The one who came up with this plan wasn’t me, but Demiurge. He should be the one who deserved this praise.”

“No, you flatter me. Ainz-sama seems to have reached this conclusion before I did.”

“Ah, well yeah. My apologies for seemingly snatching your credit. And on top of that, it will be much easier for us to garner intelligence.”

A country should already have an intelligence network in place. They would be able to progress by leap and bounds just by sending a minion of Nazarick in.

After learning his advice was of use for Ainz and Ainz’s manner of speech as if he was confirming the two brilliant Guardians made Demiurge smile.

“It is just as you said.”

Ainz knew that Demiurge was implying that Ainz knew from the very beginning.

“Ah, as expected of Ainz-sama, to have thought about this so thoroughly... Hmmm... So lowly beings like humans could be of use too.”

After Albedo comment, the other Guardians — including Shalltear who was relegated to being a chair — showered Ainz with sparkling gaze of admiration.

It made Ainz feel uneasy, but he felt relief that he didn't get it wrong when the two of them agreed with him.

“Well then... let's target a country.”

“If we consider the nations in the vicinity, it would be the Kingdom, the Empire and the Theocracy.”

“Wha, what about countries further away? Such as the Republic and the Holy Kingdom.”

“I would advise against choosing nations that are far away, and I don't want to come into contact with the Theocracy before I have adequate intelligence about them. That leaves the Kingdom and the Empire... And from the intelligence gathered by Sebas, the Kingdom isn't that appealing to me, but... we will need to research this further.”

Ainz extended his hand towards the mirror after saying “By the way.”

“We gave the lizardmen a bit of time, let's see whether anything unexpected is happening.”

The bird's eye view of the lizardmen's village appeared on the mirror of remote viewing, with tiny spots moving around.

Ainz reached out towards the mirror and gestured, changing the scenery on the mirror.

The first time of course, was to zoom in.

The sight of the lizardmen working hard to prepare for war was shown completely.

“Futile efforts.”

Demiurge murmured at the lizardmen gently.

Let me see, where are they. It's hard to tell the lizardmen apart.

Ainz searched for the six lizardmen he had seen in the recording with a frown on his face.

Hmmm—found the armored one. That's the one that threw rocks, right? Next, the buster sword is here. The difference is too minute. It is easy to find those with prominent colors or equipment... Found the one with the prominent arm.

After observing that, Ainz kept shifting the image on the mirror.

“... I don't see the white lizardman and the one holding the magic weapon.”

“Erm... the one called Zaryusu?”

“Ah, right, that's his name.”

Ainz recalled the lizardman who had come forth to negotiate at Aura's prompt.

“Could he be inside the houses?”

“Probably.”

But the mirror of remote viewing wasn't able to see inside buildings. That was the case, normally.

“Demiurge, Infinity Haversack please.”

“By your will.”

Demiurge bowed and moved to the table in the corner of the room and picked up the Infinity Haversack. He presented it to Ainz respectfully. Ainz took out one scroll from within.

He then activated the magic within the scroll.

An invisible ethereal sensory organ was conjured. The sensory organ can't penetrate magical barriers, but it can pass through normal walls regardless of their thickness. If it couldn't get in, it meant that a powerful enemy they had to be wary of was there.

After linking the sensory organ with the mirror of remote viewing so the Guardians could also see, Ainz started maneuvering the sensory organ that looked like a floating eyeball.

“Let's take a look inside the house.”

Ainz chose an old broken house nearby and moved the sensory organ in. Even if the interior was dark, it would show up as bright as day once the organ got in.

In that room, a white lizardman was being pressed down with its tail lifted up. A black lizardman was riding on top.

Baffling.

Ainz didn't understand what was going on in the very beginning. The next instant, that changed to confusion as to why they are doing that thing at a time like this.

Ainz then moved the sensory organ outside silently.

“ ”
“ ”

Feeling troubled, Ainz placed his palm on his face. The Guardians by his side didn't know what to say and looked at each other.

Demiurge: “— What an unpleasant bunch. Cocytus will be attacking soon and they still have the nerve to do this?!”

Aura: “That's right, that's right!”

Mare: “Ah, well, ermm...”

Shalltear: “Demiurge is right. Let's teach them a lesson!”

Albedo: “How envious...”

Ainz lift a hand to stop the chatter of the Guardians.

“... Forget it, they will be dead soon. I saw in a movie once that desperate situations like these will stimulate their instinct to reproduce.”

Ainz nodded to affirm his own opinion.

Demiurge: “You are right!”

Aura: If it's only this much, we can let them off~

Shalltear: “Right, right!”

Mare: “Ermm, ah, that...”

Albedo: “Me too, with Ainz-sama...”

Ainz: “... All of you be quiet.”

After all the Guardians shut their mouth, Ainz sighed.

“... I think I lost my drive, but never mind. There shouldn't be anyone we need to look out for in the village. But we can't drop our guard, someone might be heading our way. Aura...”

Ainz suddenly stopped moving and stared at the two children.

Oh no! I messed up! They are not old enough for sex ed yet... No, it's way too soon for that!

Ainz felt he could empathize with how a father feels when an intense sex scene comes up while watching TV with the whole family.

What are parents supposed to answer when their children ask them 'where do babies come from'? Shit! I did let Simmering Teapot's kids see that kind of scene— Eh, it should be fine. Ignoring Albedo, Demiurge... will probably explain it from a medical angle... That will be the back up plan. Shalltear... she seemed to be fine. Anyway, I will remember this as an issue to be resolved later.

After pushing the problem to the back of his mind, Ainz coughed and said:

“If the security net reveals anything, all the Guardians and I will move out together.”

If a player from YGGDRASIL did exist, Ainz didn't plan to honor the agreement he made to let the lizardmen village go. If the other party won't join them, they will be destroyed by Nazarick's full might to prevent intel from leaking. If that was the case, Ainz will destroy the village even if he had to throw in all the forces from the eighth floor.

Ainz shook off the guilt of betraying the promise he made with Cocytus. If it was for the sake of something of the utmost importance, a white lie could smooth things over.

“... Alright then, now we wait for the show to start... and admire Cocytus' combat prowess.”

Part 2

Four hours passed in a flash.

The lizardmen warriors were already gathering in the front gate of the village— in the wetlands where the ice was melting. After the intense battle several days ago, there wasn't many lizardmen warriors left.

They numbered 316.

Lizardmen that were not warriors would not be taking part because Shasuryu said "The enemy is few, having too many people will only get in the way".

It seemed reasonable at first, but it didn't hold water.

Zaryusu stood far from the lizardmen, watching the gathering lizardmen warriors.

Everyone had warpaint representing their ancestors on them, their face showed will as tough as steel. They seemed to think they wouldn't lose.

The lizardmen around them cheered the warriors on. In that group, expressions of unease could be seen clearly.

To keep the anxiety in his heart from showing, Zaryusu worked hard to show a poker face in front of the other lizardmen, keeping them away from the truth of this fight being a sacrificial offering to the Overlord of Death.

This was a battle where the Overlord of Death was going to display his might to the lizardmen, to completely crush the lizardmen's will to resist. They had no chance of winning from the very start. Shasuryu's words from earlier actually entailed the wish to keep the sacrifice to the minimum.

Zaryusu averted his eyes from the lizardmen and glared at the enemy territory with sharp eyes.

The skeleton army was rooted in the same spot, not moving an inch. The figure of a monster by the name of Cocytus could not be seen around them. *It couldn't be a skeleton, he is someone the Overlord of Death trusted, there is no way he is a minion level monster. He must be someone*

whose will is so obviously strong that you can even feel it to the tip of your tail with just one look.

The sound of a large creature moving in the wetlands could be heard from behind the anxious Zaryusu—

“— Hey, Zaryusu.”

— Zenberu greeted nonchalantly as usual. Even though they were heading towards death, Zenberu was his usual self.

“Our morale seems to be at its peak.”

“Yes it is, it will be great if it keeps at this level in the face of the powerful enemy, Cocytus...”

“Yeah. Oh? It’s time?”

Shasuryu appeared at the main gate, and all eyes fell on him and the two wetland fairies beside him.

Crusch was absent because she exhausted all her mana to summon the wetland fairies. After having cast several long time defensive buffs and summoned the fairies, the intense mana toll made her immobile. When the two of them left the room, Crusch already told Zaryusu she will lose consciousness from overusing mana, and that this will be the last time they see each other.

Zaryusu who didn’t have his mate besides him cast a lonesome gaze in Crusch’s direction. Her face when she bid farewell broke Zaryusu’s heart.

“Warriors, advance!”

Shasuryu’s uplifting command raised the morale of the lizardmen to new height.

He had to change his mindset to that of a warrior. Zaryusu gathered his thoughts.

Under the lead of Shasuryu and the two wetland fairies, the lizardmen marched forth slowly.

They moved away from the village to avoid collateral damage to it.

Zaryusu and Zenberu were the rear guard.

Zaryusu looked back at the village suddenly. The tattered mud walls, the worried group of lizardmen seeing them off, and—

Zaryusu sighed and shook his worries away and took large stride forward. He didn't utter the name of the female lizardman that was right at his lips.

The lizardmen traversed the wetlands, forming up between the enemy skeleton army and the village.

There was no particular formation, the lizardmen simply gathered randomly as they waited for the upcoming battle. The only clear arrangement was that the various tribe chiefs, Zaryusu and the two wetland fairies were standing in front.

The skeleton army was probably waiting for Zaryusu and the others to come. The skeletons banged on their shields and marched forward.

If the timing was even slightly off, it would just sound like random noise from a marching army, but their movements were in sync and the sound was as one. In a different setting, this performance would be worthy of applause and praise.

While the sound drew the attention of the lizardmen, to the rear of the skeletons— several trees in the forest fell.

There was only one reason why the thick large trees fell. Someone cut them down.

This caused a commotion among the lizardmen.

As they couldn't see how it was done, it might be possible that this was a handiwork of several beings. However, the timing between the felling of each tree was too tidy. After seeing the synchronized movement of the skeletons, it might be possible for several beings working together to achieve that, but not a single lizardmen thought this was the case here.

A strange premonition lingered in their hearts, the feeling that this was the work of just one being.

This was because there was no sound of blade cutting into the trees before they fell. Which meant that it might be improbable, but it was done by a very strong being in one stroke.

What kind of strength and weapon could cut a large tree in one strike?

The thuds of falling trees together with the banging of shields came closer to the lizardmen.

Anxious feelings welled up. This was expected, how could anyone keep calm in such a situation. Even Zenberu who had the resolve to die, or Zaryusu and Shasuryu were shaken even though they hid it well.

Moments later, the one opening a path in the forest revealed itself. At the same time, the banging of the shields stopped.

In the eerily silent space, a smooth blue circle appeared before them. If not for the thick clouds, there was no telling how bright his reflection would be.

That large body of 250cm in height looked like an insect standing on two legs. The appearance was like that of an ant or mantis, a hybrid born of a twisted devil.

Its hard exoskeleton had a frosty air about it, sparkling like diamond dust.

It had a spiked tail that was twice its height and powerful jaws that looked powerful enough to chew off a human arm in one bite.

He had four clawed arms with shiny gauntlets gracing each one. A round golden necklace was worn around its neck and silver bangles adorned its legs.

The powerful being on par with the Overlord of Death— made its appearance.

So this is Cocytus?

Zaryusu's heart raced and his breathing became ragged.

None of the lizardmen spoke. Their eyes were drawn to the monster that showed itself, unable to shift their gaze away. Even though they were afraid, they were too scared to look away.

The group backed away unconsciously. Be it the lizardmen who came with rousing fighting spirits or Zaryusu and the others who came here with the resolve to die, all of them were stunned in the face of dominating power.

I know the Overlord of Death is holding back, but to think a powerful being that wants to fight could be so terrifying.

Even with magic that could suppress fear, the urge to run away still sprung up from within Zaryusu. It was a miracle that the other lizardmen who weren't protected by such spell did not run away.

Cocytus drew near slowly.

He walked into the wetlands, passing the skeletons with swagger—

Cocytus stopped about thirty metres before the lizardmen, on top of a small knoll. Cocytus then moved his insect like face on his long neck. He seemed to be searching for someone.

Zaryusu felt Cocytus' gaze rested on him for a brief moment.

“—Alright, Ainz-sama is watching, so show your might. Before that, 「Ice Pillar」 .”

With the activation of the spell, two pillars of ice sprouted between the lizardmen and Cocytus, about twenty meters away.

“This might be rude for the warriors who came with the resolve to die, but know this, only death awaits all who cross beyond these ice pillars.”

Cocytus crossed two of his arms, his body language seemed to a signal of him leaving the decision up to the lizardmen.

“Hey hey, he is an unexpectedly a nice guy...”

Zaryusu nodded in agreement when he heard Zenberu’s comment.

He then took a step forth. Zenberu, Shasuryu and the two other tribe chiefs followed.

Shasuryu turned back and told the warriors following them:

“You lot stay here... no, go back to the village. If not... you will die because of us.”

“What?! We want to fight too! It is scary... but even so, we want to fight!”

“There is no cowardice in retreat, living on takes more courage.”

“But—”

“Not all the lizardmen can go back, that’s how it is. As the tribe leaders, we can’t allow others to conquer us without a fight, right?”

“But chief, we also want to fight.”

“Hold it young ones! Scram, get out of here, leave the rest to us old timers!”

The lizardmen pushing their way to the front were old, but not elderly enough to be called an old man. They numbered 57, and the other lizardmen couldn't say anything after seeing their faces.

If they showed resolved or resignation, the others would have insisted on going with them. But their expressions were pleading them, begging the younger ones to live on.

The speechless warriors reluctantly fell back.

Shasuryu turned to Cocytus once again.

“... Apologies for the wait, Cocytus.”

Cocytus extended one of his arms, bending a thin finger, gesturing at them to come at him. Facing the taunt of the enemy, Shasuryu yelled at the top of his voice:

“Charge—!”

“Warrghhhh!”

The lizardmen who steeled themselves mentally roared from the bottom of their heart and rushed at Cocytus.



Cocytus looked coldly at the warriors charging him.

“... I am sorry to do this to you, warriors, but let me cut down your numbers.”

Cocytus wouldn't lose even if all the warriors reached him, but he still needed to pick his opponents.

Personally, Cocytus wanted to show his respect as a warrior and fight in a distance where the enemy could strike at him. But he owed a deep debt to his master, so it would be rude to show Ainz a disgraceful fight between a Nazarick's Guardian and unruly mobs.

Cocytus released his sealed spirit.

The ability of the class 'Knight of Niflheim'— 'Frost Aura'. This special ability used extreme cold to deal damage and slightly lowered the speed of adversaries. At full power, it would even affect the lizardmen watching from the sidelines. Cocytus didn't wish for that.

Suppress his power.

Limit the range, lower the damage.

“About this much...”

With Cocytus as the center, the extreme cold covered a radius of 25m.

Affected by the extreme cold, the temperature dropped drastically, making the air shriek.

“... Hmmm, that should do.”

Cocytus sealed his spirit.

It happened in a flash, the incredible cold was already gone as if it was an illusion. But that was definitely not a dream or an illusion. The bodies of the 57 lizardmen on the wetlands was the best proof.

Only five lizardmen could still move, and they were the five strongest people among the lizardmen. They weren't intimidated by their comrades' deaths or Cocytus' ability, moving as one.

A rock flew through the air. A lizardman in full body armor led the charge with two lizardmen following behind. The wetland fairies moved slowly behind the two lizardmen with their bodies that had cracked in the cold. The last lizardman at the back kept chanting spells.

The first strike was the rock aimed at Cocytus' throat. However, that attack was meaningless because—

“—The equipment on all Guardians could defend against projectiles.”

—An invisible barrier seemed to deflected the rock.

The leading lizardman followed next, wearing one of the four treasures passed down from generation to generation— White Dragon Bone. It was tough enough to block Frost Pain which was also one of the four treasures, the hardest armor known to lizardmen.

Cocytus who was facing him drew a sword out of thin air— as if the blade was already there.

The taichi Cocytus drew— with the length exceeding 180cm, was known as Royal Blade God Slayer. It was the sharpest of among the twenty one weapon Cocytus possessed.

He then slashed at the lizardman before him.

The blade that sliced through the air made the air howl— a calm sound. In a different situation, one might want to listen carefully to this clean sound.

After that sound, the body of the tribal chief split in half together with the armor, falling to the left and right into the wetlands.

Royal Blade God Slayer was not damaged after cleaving the hardest armor of the lizardmen.

The two lizardmen behind weren't fazed by the gruesome death of their comrade, attacking from either side with their weapons raised.

“Shyaa!”

On the right side was Zenberu's chop, powered by 'Iron Natural Weapon' and 'Iron Skin'. It was directed at full power towards Cocytus' face.

“Warrgghh!”

On the left side was Frost Pain, aimed at his abdomen.

This melee attack took advantage of the logic of long weapons being hard to use in close quarters.

And of course, that only applied to normal people.

Cocytus slightly turned and used his blade to block Zenberu's arm from the right. His movement was smooth and elegant, as if the weapon in his hand was a part of his body.

With the ability of 'Iron Skin', Zenberu was on par with steel in term of hardness. But the clash with the armor earlier showed how sharp Royal Blade God Slayer was.

The blade slid into his arm smoothly as if it was slicing through water.

“Ugghhhh!”

As blood spurted from Zenberu's right stump, Cocytus' other hand was already pinching Frost Pain that was aimed at his abdomen.

“— Oh, I see. This is a nice sword...”

“Tch!”

Zaryusu gave up on the Frost Pain that couldn't be moved and kicked Cocytus in the knee cap. Cocytus did not dodge and took the blow. In the end, it was Zaryusu who landed the blow that suffered intense pain.

It was the same sensation of kicking an iron wall with all your might.

“「Over Magic: Mass Cure Light Wounds」 !”

After exhausting a large amount of mana, it enabled the use of higher tier magic that was not usually accessible— Shasuryu cast a mass healing spell boosted by magical enhancement.

“Fumu...”

Cocytus seemed intrigued as he stared at Shasuryu who used a spell modifier he did not know, but the two wetland fairies blocked his view. The wetland fairies moved in front of Zenberu, whose arm was regenerating from magic, and attacked Cocytus with their tentacles. Before their attacks even landed, Cocytus slashed at them impatiently.

As the wetland fairies crumbled into dust, Zaryusu's fist landed on Cocytus' solar plexus, abdomen and chest. And of course, the one injured was Zaryusu. The skin on his fist was torn and bleeding.

“Annoying.”

Cocytus swung his spiked tail hard at Zaryusu's chest.

“Guuahhh!”

Zaryusu flew like a ball hit by a bat with a cracking sound, flying high and far before rolling onto the wetlands. He finally stopped after rolling on the wetlands, but the pain in his chest and the blood spilling from his throat made it hard to breathe.

The broken bones probably pierced his lungs, he couldn't breathe in even if he wanted to, feeling like he was under water. The warm liquid spilling from his throat made him want to throw up. Zaryusu looked at his chest and saw blood bleeding from his wounds that was gored by sharp spikes.

— Just one hit turned Zaryusu to this pitiful state.

Zaryusu tried to breath with all his might glared with spirited eyes at Cocytus who might move in for the finishing blow.

“Since you still have the will to fight, I will return this to you.”

Cocytus tossed Frost Pain to Zaryusu's side and ignored him, turning to face the remaining lizardmen.

Shasuryu cast healing magic on Zenberu who had regenerated his arm but lost a lot of stamina.

Right before Cocytus reached them, another rock came flying at him to divert his attention— But it was in vain as it was deflected easily.

“— Irritating.”

Cocytus mumbled and extended his arm at the ‘Small Fang’ chief.

“ 「Piercing Icicle」 .”

Dozens of icicles as thick as a human arm rained down in a wide area attack.

The lizardman who was within range was pierced by the icicles instantly.

One hit his chest, two hit his abdomen, one in his right thigh, all the icicles penetrated the lizardman’s body easily.

The chief of ‘Small Fang’— the lizardman with the best guerilla abilities fell dead into the wetlands like a puppet without strings.

“Waarrghhh!”

“ 「Over Magic: Mass Cure Light Wounds」 !”

Zenberu rushed forth as Shasuryu once again cast healing magic. Zenberu was buying time for Zaryusu to recover.

He knew that this was rash and how insignificant he was before the might of Cocytus. Even so, Zenberu did not hesitate charging ahead.

When Zenberu got within range, Cocytus slashed with Royal Blade God Slayer casually.

That slash was faster than Zenberu's dynamic vision—

The speed was way faster than Zenberu's agility—

The sword easily cut Zenberu's body—

Blood gushed from the body of the decapitated Zenberu and he collapsed onto the wetlands. Moments later, the head fell onto the ground.

“... Well then, two left... I heard about your strength from Ainz-sama, so you two really are the ones to make it to the very end.”

Cocytus, who had not moved a single step since the battle, looked at the remaining duo and swung his blade. White smog seemed to come out from the blade and the blood and gore on it were gone without a trace. The movement was so graceful it seemed capable of ridding the world of everything.

Zaryusu who had recovered enough to stand up and Shasuryu who drew the large sword on his back. The two of them faced Cocytus with a pincer formation. Zaryusu took some blood that was bleeding from his wound and paint it on his face.

It looked like war paint that was used to summon the ancestors to descend upon them.

“— Little brother, how's your wounds?”

“Not good, my injuries are thumping dully. I can still swing my sword a few times though.”

“Is that so... That should do right? Actually, my mana is exhausted, I will collapse if I am not careful.”

Shasuryu grinded his teeth, he was probably laughing. Zaryusu's expression changed when he heard that.

“... Is that so. You are pushing yourself too, older brother.”

Zaryusu exhaled gently with a smile and relaxed his shoulder. His sword bearing arm drooped down.

An intense pain hit him in the chest, but Zaryusu tried his best to ignore it.

Don't ever give up hope until the very last moment— Zaryusu will keep wielding his sword.

From the very beginning, he knew there was no chance of winning.

Defeat was inevitable, but he couldn't just give up.

Giving up would mean conning countless lizardmen of their lives, lying to them that they would be victorious. Since there were lizardmen who believed this liar, he will not accept defeat.

Giving his all til the very last moment—

“I can still swing my sword!”

Zaryusu's roar echoed out loud.

The sound of Cocytus' teeth protruding out of his mouth clanking shut could be heard.

“A nice roar—”

Cocytus was probably laughing. That wasn't the sound of the powerful looking down on the weak, but that of a warrior acknowledging his equal.

“Very well, younger brother. Let's fight til the very end.”

Shasuryu laughed too.

“Okay... My apologies for keeping you waiting, Mr Cocytus.”

Cocytus merely shrugged in response to Shasuryu’s words.

“Don’t worry. Interrupting the last farewells of two brothers would be very rude. Prepare to die... Ah, it looks like you already did, didn’t you?”

In the face of Zaryusu and Shasuryu who took a step forth, Cocytus swung his blade and said:

“State your names.”

“Shasuryu Shasha.”

“Zaryusu Shasha.”

“... I will remember them, remember you two warriors. I also have to apologize, I would normally fight with a weapon in each hand... I am not demeaning you, but you are not strong enough for me to do so.”

“Such a pity.”

“Absolutely right— Let’s go!”

The two sprinted at Cocytus, splashing the waters in the wetlands.

The slight difference in the duo's timing made Cocytus puzzled.

They won’t enter his attack range at the same time, Shasuryu was faster. Suspecting the enemy had a scheme in mind, Cocytus waited eagerly for their attack.

The first to get into range was Shasuryu and Cocytus kept a close eye on him, wondering what he will do.

Shasuryu stopped right outside the attack range of Cocytus sword—

“「Earth Bind」 !”

— He cast a spell.

Numerous chains made from mud flew at Cocytus and Zaryusu used this chance to charge. To make it harder for his enemy to gauge his attack range, Zaryusu hid Frost Pain behind his back.

Shasuryu announcing that he had exhausted his mana had been just a trick to deceive Cocytus. If he fell for it, Cocytus might get constrained by the magical chains and be hit by Zaryusu who was attacking from behind.

No matter how hard Cocytus' exoskeleton was, Zaryusu should be able to break through by throwing everything he had behind a stabbing attack. Zaryusu who abandoned all defences in favor of offense will definitely yield a powerful attack.

He seems very confident with his sword.

Cocytus emphasised with him. Just like him, Cocytus bore intense feelings for his weapons, especially the blade in his hand right now— He felt very strongly for this weapon that was used by his creator in the past. That's why Cocytus was using Royal Blade God Slayer despite the disparity in fighting prowess as a show of his greatest respect.

However, they misjudged one thing. Their opponent right now was the Guardian of Nazarick's fifth floor.

“... The spell cast by those with a level lower than mine won't break through my defence.”

The mud chain bounced off before it could physically touch Cocytus, falling back into the wetlands like slabs of mud. Low tier magic couldn't penetrate Cocytus' magic defence.

“— 「Icy Burst」 !”

With a roar that came from behind his back, Cocytus was covered by a white fog around him.

Futile effort.

Cocytus, who was completely immune to frost attacks, simply embraced the gentle freezing breeze as he waited for Zaryusu and Shasuryu to get into range.

One breath later, the moment he was waiting for came. But Cocytus hesitated slightly, wondering if cutting off their heads was enough to stop them.

When facing Zaryusu who had abandoned his defense, decapitating him might not halt his attack. The image of a headless body charging him appeared in Cocytus' mind. If that was the case, he will take out the arms, then the head.

No, that is not a clean enough kill, I will finish him in one strike.

Zaryusu's reckless charge was too slow for Cocytus.

The vaguely visible black figure— The sword swung out by Zaryusu, was pinched by Cocytus' fingers like he did earlier.

Cocytus did not feel any frost from his fingers, Zaryusu probably knew it was useless against Cocytus and didn't activate this ability.

The unexpectedly quick assault was blocked so easily by Cocytus, which made Cocytus doubtful. But the doubts only lingered for an instant, he could finish off his foe with a swing of his blade, there was no need to think further.

And then, there is only one more left.

So it was just a reckless assault...

Cocytus who felt disappointed was about to swing his sword when he changed his mind.

I see.

“Warrghhh!”

With a roar a giant sword cleaved through the icy smog. Shasuryu slashed through the fog strongly enough to disperse it.

Be it the ‘Earth Bind’, Zaryusu’s attack or ‘Icy Burst’, all these were just baits.

Cocytus needed to be wary of the stabbing attack from Frost Pain, but the threat of Shasuryu’s cleaving sword was greater. This must be the true intention of the enemy, but—

“If you want to perform a sneak attack— you have to do it silently.”

If they couldn’t cover their footsteps while running in water, it was not really a sneak attack. Cocytus was puzzled, was all of this worth the damage they took from the ‘Icy Burst’? Or are they just struggling in vain?

But it was a fact that an enemy was in his attack range.

Zaryusu's only weapon was immobile, rendering him helpless. This was just changing the order in which Cocytus would kill them. After coming to this conclusion, Cocytus wielded the blade in his hand.

One slash.

Shasuryu’s sword broke in two. Before Shasuryu’s body even hit the ground, Cocytus withdrew his blade, planning to follow through the attack into Zaryusu—

At this moment, Cocytus' fingers pinching Zaryusu's sword slipped.

The surprised Cocytus checked his fingers, wondering why the sword that he pinched was sliding forth.

In the misty fog, Cocytus could see that his fingers and the sword were covered in a red liquid.

In an instant, Cocytus understood why his fingers slipped.

— *Blood?*

Confusion.

Cocytus tried to think back where Zaryusu's sword could have been stained, and understood after seeing Zaryusu's face through the fog.

The blood Zaryusu smeared on his face wasn't war paint. It was used to smear his sword.

'Icy Burst' wasn't meant to damage Cocytus or hide Shasuryu's whereabouts, it was to hide the blood on the sword. That was the reason he had hidden the sword behind his back too.

When Cocytus stopped Zaryusu's attack the first time, he used his fingers to pinch it. Zaryusu remembered that and bet on the slim chance it will happen again, setting up this scenario with all his wits. A surge of electricity seemed to jump through Cocytus' brain.

It was back then! No wonder the attack felt so weak! That was the reason! The scheme of using blood to slip through won't work every time. So he was misleading me, making me feel it was easy to pinch it, so he held back!

The sword slid in slowly, closing in on Cocytus' pale blue body. Even Cocytus couldn't stop the sword with Zaryusu's body weight and might behind it with just two wet fingers.

If the place he pinched it was slightly further away, Cocytus might have been able to do something, but at this distance, there was nothing he could do.

Cocytus was so moved that he shivered.

It needed a bit of luck, but it was a bet that needed every single round to be won. Most importantly— this was not possible without Shasuryu.

Shasuryu probably didn't know what Zaryusu's plan was, but the older brother trusted his younger brother completely and sacrificed himself. The meaningless sneak attack and roar was all in the hope of diverting an instant of attention away from his younger brother.

And it was really just an instant.

In that brief moment in time— as Zaryusu was squeezing Frost Pain forth with all his might— the lower jaw of Cocytus moved.

“Amazing—”

The sword slashing at Cocytus— was deflected easily. The body with a faint blue glow did not even have a scratch on it.

This was the result of the power difference between the highest level NPC in Nazarick and the lizardmen.

“— Sorry to say, I possess special ability to temporarily nullify the attack of low tier weapons. If I activate this ability, your attacks will be meaningless.”

It was a splendid strike, even Cocytus felt it was worthy of leaving a mark on his body as a sign of respect to this warrior. However, he couldn't do this as a Guardian fighting before the Supreme Being.

Cocytus intentionally took half a step back, splashing the mud which soiled his beautiful blue body.

It was just a tiny step back.

A step back didn't mean anything, even moving back won't affect anything. Zaryusu was doomed and Cocytus would definitely prevail.

But this step back was the show of praise from the dominantly strong Cocytus towards the weak Zaryusu.

Zaryusu resigned to his fate, and had a clear smile only those who had done their best could show. Cocytus slashed the Royal Blade God Slayer towards him—

Part 3

“A splendid battle.”

Ainz praised Cocytus who knelt before him.

“Thank you.”

“That might be so, but I believe you understand clearly that we are showing them the whip now, but you need to show them the candy from now on. Do not start a reign of terror.”

“I understand.”

Ainz nodded and looked at the other Guardians in the room.

“Very well. Guardians, listen well. I already said in the throne room that the lizardmen village will be ruled by Cocytus. If there is anything Cocytus needs, do lend him your support. Cocytus, I hope you can engrave loyalty towards Nazarick deep into the hearts of the lizardmen... And to provide them with an elite education... I leave all these to you... Let me know if you need special items like ‘Heaven Feather’. I will also loan some ‘Power Suits’ to you in the meantime.”

In the game YGGDRASIL, it was possible to change race mid way, but it didn't mean you could switch as you wish. You needed to fulfil several conditions and the change would be irreversible.

One of the conditions was a specific item. For example, you would need the 'Book of the Dead' to be a lich. To turn into an imp required 'Fallen Seeds'. And the 'Heaven's Feather' that Ainz mentioned was a required item to become an angel.

Changing one's race might be possible in this world, that's why Ainz couldn't help sharing his ideas.

"I will seek your advice when the time comes, Ainz-sama. May I ask how you plan to deal with those lizardmen?"

"Which lizardman?"

"Yes, the two lizardmen named Zaryusu and Shasuryu."

The two who fought til the very end. Their corpses should still be in the wetlands. But what of it?

"I see. Collect their corpses, I will use their bodies as material when I create undead with my special ability."

"— That would be a pity."

"Hmmm, what do you mean? Do they have such value?"

When Ainz watched the battle through the Mirror of Remote Viewing, he saw that Cocytus was absolutely dominating, there wasn't anything else of note.

"... They were weak, but I could see their warrior spirit and fearless resolve in the face of the strong. It is a pity to use them as materials. I think they could become even stronger, maybe unbelievably so. Ainz-sama shouldn't have done experiments related to resurrecting the dead yet, how about testing it out on them?"

... Does he like those lizardmen?

To be frank, Ainz didn't know what to feel when he heard the term warrior spirit. He came across the term killing intent in novels and mangas, but didn't think much of it. It was just like the time when Ainz had warned Narberal about these things, and she had said "Ah, yes, I see, oh~", that kind of feeling. Similarly, the resonance among warriors was something Ainz didn't understand.

This was because Ainz might look like this now, but he was originally just a normal salaryman. If a normal citizen born in Japan understood warrior spirit, that would be dangerous. If it was the spirit of an excellent salaryman, he might comprehend a little.

"I see... it is a waste indeed."

But what Ainz was actually thinking baffledly was: *Even if you say it is a pity, I don't understand.*

But thinking it through calmly, Cocytus had a point.

He was thinking about performing resurrection experiments somewhere, and Ainz felt using them to experiment had many benefits. And compared to the blattering Cocytus in the throne room, he now could provide clear and concise proposals. If this was a sign of improvement, Cocytus had passed with flying colours.

After thinking about it shortly, Ainz remembered he had excellent subordinates.

He recalled the subordinates standing around him silently in a manner befitting a servant.

"Albedo, tell me your opinions."

"My thoughts are the same as Ainz-sama."

"...Demiurge, what do you think?"

“I think Ainz-sama is the most correct.”

“... ..Shalltear, and you?”

“I think the same as Demiurge and await Ainz-sama’s judgement.”

“... ..Aura”

“Yes, I think the same way as everyone too.”

“... ..Mare.”

“Erm, erm erm, yes, I think the same too.”

Their answer was as good as not answering at all, giving Ainz a headache.

After thinking it through, Ainz came to a conclusion— Maybe from the standpoint of a Guardian, they didn’t think there was any major issue. Which also meant there wouldn't be major impact no matter what decision he made.

That was also dependent on the circumstances of the Guardian. There might be problems if their situation changes.

Simply put, when a small group of people say a hundred million is a small amount of money, there will be the problem of how trustworthy that statement was. This was the difference in the perception of values.

A waste of breath... well, I could think of it as being fine in resurrecting them right? I was planning to deliberate over it more, I have made too many mistakes recently.

With no other choice, Ainz had to weigh the pros and cons from his own standpoint.

“...We had decided to rule over the lizardmen, but do they have a suitable representative? Or a group that could represent them?”

“No, but they do have a suitable representative.”

“Oh? Who is it?”

“The white lizardman that didn’t took part in the battle earlier. She seemed to possess the power of druids.”

“Oh, that one! Hmm, that could work...”

If it was her, she could be of use— Ainz thought. He could use her to spy on things.

However, implementing the idea Ainz had in mind might make Cocytus who will be ruling the lizardmen feel troubled. So what should he do? Ainz suddenly had a moment of brilliance.

...Wouldn’t it be faster to just ask? Although I didn’t get any useful answers just now...

Ainz shared his plans with Cocytus, and Cocytus expressed his acknowledgement.

It was hard to judge whether Cocytus said that to accommodate his master, but Demiurge and Albedo didn’t have strange reactions either when he glance at them. This made Ainz relaxed and assured him that it shouldn’t be a problem.

“Very good. How long will you need to bring her here?”

“Pardon my impudence, I thought Ainz-sama will ask for her, so I ordered her to wait in a room nearby.”

Ainz couldn’t help looking at Demiurge and saw him shaking his head.

Awesome, he handled it well, without any instructions and it didn't seem to be someone else's idea.

This must be how a superior feels when he sees his subordinate mature as he had hoped for, Ainz thought with a face of satisfaction. But his head was a skull so it didn't really moved.

“No no, well done Cocytus. Wasting time is foolish, your judgement is on point. Alright then, bring her over.”

“Erm, please wait!”

“What is it, Aura?”

“I don't think a shabby place like this is good enough. Even though we are hosting people who are submitting to us, it is too run down for Ainz-sama's status. I feel that the meeting should be done in the throne room of Nazarick.”

All the other Guardians except Mare nodded gently in agreement.

“...My apologies. I miss out on this point, please forgive me!”

“Ahhh...”

Ainz never thought about that. He then thought about how to react. Suddenly, he remembered something. In that case—

“— Aura.”

“Yes!”

“I told you that this place you built— the place filled with your feelings and emotions, is as good as Nazarick right? I really mean it. Cocytus, bring her in. I will hold the audience here.”

“Ai-, Ainz-sama!”

“Aura, back down.”

“Albedo!”

Aura protested with her face red, saying “Why are you stopping me?” However, Albedo merely glance at Aura before ignoring her fixing her sight at the door. The one answering the emotional Aura was Demiurge.

“...Anything Ainz-sama says is the law. Since Ainz-sama said this place is as good as Nazarick— “

“—It must be true.”

Shalltear continued.

I don't think my words are ironclad laws. Although I don't want to be thought of like that... but just this one time, it is a big help.

“Aura, I will say this again. As my most trusted subordinates— one of the Guardians, this place you put in so much effort to build is on the same level as Nazarick. It is true even now when construction works are ongoing... Do you understand?”

“...Ainz-sama, thank you very much.”

Aura deeply lowered her head and the other Guardians did the same.

There is no need... to be so emotional... This is embarrassing.

“Well then, usher her in, Cocytus.”

“Yes!”

In a short moment, Cocytus brought a pure white lizardman into the room.

The lizardman knelt before Ainz and lowered her face to the ground.

“State your name.”

“Yes, Supreme Overlord of Death— Ainz Ooal Gown. I am the representative of the lizardmen, Crusch Lulu.”

What an incredible title. He was curious as to who came up with this title, but Ainz acted like a calm king and said.

“... Hmmm, well met.”

“Yes. Gown-sama, please accept the oath of fealty from us, the lizardmen.”

“Hmmm...”

Ainz watched Crusch closely.

The scales were pretty. They shone brightly under the illumination of the magical light. *I wonder how they would feel like if I were to touch them.*, Ainz was academically curious.

As he stared closely, he realized Crusch’s shoulders were trembling. Cocytus should have deactivated his freeze aura ability, so it must be due to some other reason.

Ainz pondered shortly and found the answer, it was obvious.

If she made Ainz unhappy, all the lizardmen would be massacred. That was why she was so careful in her speech. For Crusch who was under such crushing pressure, Ainz unnatural silence planted a seed of terror.

Ainz didn't have the hobby of taking pleasure in bullying the weak. If it was for the good of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, he was willing to do anything no matter how cruel it was, but he won't perform such destructive actions needlessly.

"The lizardmen will be under my rule. However, Cocytus will be the one ruling in my place. Any objections?"

"— None."

"That is all. You may leave."

"Eh? Is that all?"

Crusch said in a surprised voice while she remained bowing. Like a person who was entrusted with unreasonable request who might go insane at any moment.

"For now. Crusch Lulu. Your lizardmen will be ushering an era of prosperity now. Future generations of lizardmen will be thankful for being my subjects."

"We dare not, we are already thankful to the Supreme Being for granting us mercy even after we resisted with violence."

Ainz got up from the throne slowly. He walked to Crusch's side, squatted down and place his hand on Crusch's shoulder.

Ainz could feel a tremor coming from Crusch's body.

"I have a special task for you."

"As Gown-sama's faithful servant, I will do anything I can..."

"Not as a servant, I want you to do something for me— in exchange for Zaryusu's resurrection."

After speaking the name he heard from Cocytus, Crusch lifted her head immediately, her face twisted from shock.

Gleeful from this ‘jackpot’, Ainz continued observing Crusch. She was probably trying to hide it, but her expression was wavering. It was hard to judge as her emotions as her facial expression was very different from humans, but it should shed some clue.

“Something like that...”

“I am the one who controls life and death. To me, death is but a state of being.”

When he heard Crusch’s voice that was tapering off, Ainz answered.

“It is the same for poison and sickness, but I can’t extend the lifespan of mortals.”

It might be impossible through normal means, but with the Super-tier magic ‘Wish upon a Star’, it probably could be done... Although it might be possible, it was better not to sound it out loud.

“... What do you wish of me, your humble slave?... My body?”

Ainz was speechless.

“No, that’s a bit...”

A reptile was a bit too much. Ainz wanted to back away immediately, but he pushed himself to play his role. As for the sound of teeth grinding that came from somewhere, he would just ignore it for now.

“Cough cough! No. It’s simple, I want you to keep a close watch on whether there are ‘lizardmen thinking of rebelling’.”

“There are no such lizardmen.”

Ainz laughed at Crusch's confident reply.

"I am not dumb enough to assume that. I am not familiar with how lizardmen think, but using the race of humans as example, betrayal is common. That is why I want an agent on the inside to watch over things."

Crusch turned expressionless again, making Ainz panic on the inside, wondering whether the deal was a failure. There was a backup plan not involving the resurrection of Zaryusu, but doing so had the goal of binding Crusch with gratitude. What should he do if she rejects him here?

I shouldn't be too greedy and go for broke... That must be what they mean by no use crying over spilled milk.

"... Before you lies the chance for a miracle. But this chance won't be here forever. If you don't grab it immediately, it will be gone forever."

With a shiver, Crusch's expression moved like a cramp.

"I am not going to use irritating rituals. Resurrection spells exist in this world right? That is what I am going to use."

"That is the legendary..."

Facing Crusch who swallowed her words back, Ainz adopted an arrogant attitude and gently said.

"Crusch. What is the most important thing for you? I want you to consider."

As Ainz observe Crusch's eyes starting to waver, he seemed to be seeing the illusion of scoring a client in a business meeting.

Next, Ainz had to let Crusch understand this miracle was not a free service. Providing free service will make others suspicious, but they will be more receptive of it with a request for adequate amount of money.

“I just need you to watch your fellow lizardmen in the dark. Depending on the circumstances, you might need to make hard choices. To prevent a betrayal, I will cast a special magic on the resurrected Zaryusu. If I think you have betrayed me, I will end him immediately. It must be troubling for you, but the resurrection of Zaryusu is not something you can get in a fair deal, right?”

Actually, there is no such magic.

Ainz acted as if he had said everything and stood up slowly. He then opened his arms.

Ainz looked at the struggling Crusch.

“Oh, right, tell the resurrected Zaryusu this in my place. I revived him because he is of use to me. I promise not to mention your name. So, Crusch Lulu. Choose now. This is the last chance for you to get your beloved Zaryusu back. What say you? Yes? Or no? Choose.”

Ainz reached a hand out to Crusch slowly. At the same time, he said to the Guardians.

“Do not do anything even if she rejects— Alright, ready to answer now? Crusch Lulu?”