

Overlord Volume 3 Chapter 5

Volume 3 – The Bloody Valkyrie
Chapter 5 – PVN



Part 1

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—A noise could be heard, a sound like sticking a burning torch into a pool of water.

The magic that transcends level— it was as if the sun had manifested on the earth's surface, dyeing the surroundings in white.

The deadly heat born from the tremendous temperature expanded in an instant and greedily devoured everything within its area of effect.

This scene of certain death probably lasted around five seconds. However, it felt dozens of times longer.

Before long, traces of the white world disappeared. After the heat dissipated, the effect had drawn a circle that completely changed the surrounding scenery.

Outside the area of effect, everything was left untouched. The trees remained the same and the land teemed with life, thanks to the nearby forest. It was the unchanged— the normal world.

On the other hand— everything inside the circle had been charred black, a surreal land of death.

The immense heat had obliterated all the plants in the area, and only smoldering tree trunks remained. Amongst the blackened surface, there were spots where the land had turned vitreous. Even now, pillars of smoke were scattered about.

Ainz stood just barely outside the area that permitted no survivors. From within that area, he felt a ghastly presence pierce through his body.

The source was just one person.

Who else could survive temperatures that eradicated all life?

“Kaka— ahahaha—.”

A strange voice mixed with a grinding noise, an unimaginable sound that made one clench their teeth, flowed into Ainz’ ears.

The sound had come from the crimson spot in the world of black.

With smoke rising from her body, as if to say that this wasn’t enough to kill her, Shalltear Bloodfallen laughed. Her scarlet eyes were filled with killing intent as she glared directly at Ainz.

“Ainz-sa—ma—! That was pretty painful—!”

Shalltear slowly placed one foot forward, forming a crack along the charred earth.

She closed her distance to Ainz by a step, then another, and swung the Spuit Lance she held in one hand. The sound as it cut through the air was a testament of the fact that she could still fight.

A magic caster displayed his true strength in a long range battle. For Ainz, who was not strong in close combat, narrowing the distance would only put him at a disadvantage. However, instead of quickly retreating, he spoke to Shalltear with an imposing attitude, like a champion waiting for his challenger.

“It was a boring gift, but how did you like it Shalltear?”

“Ahahahahaha!”

From the bottom of her heart, Shalltear laughed happily.

“It was amazing! I can’t believe I have to kill someone with such tremendous power, Ainz-sama!”

“.... ’sama’ you say.... Shalltear, why do you still address me with honorifics? Who is your current master?”

“You say some strange things. It’s obvious that I would call you Ainz-sama, the Supreme Ruler. And my master right now is....”

Shalltear wore a large frown. It was a look of confusion.

“...Why am I fighting with Ainz-sama? No, that’s not it? Because I was attacked? But why did Ainz-sama attack me?Because I was attacked, I have to use my full strength and kill? Why?”

Before long, as if Shalltear had come to some conclusion, the smile from before returned to her face.

“I don’t really understand, but since Ainz-sama attacked me, I have to kill you!”

“.... I see. I understand your condition now....”

“Ara? What’s wrong, Ainz-sama? You seem tired. Do you think you can win against me like that?”

“Hmph. You seem to be misunderstanding something. Do you truly believe that I – Ainz Ooal Gown, will lose to the likes of you? There is no defeat for 『Ainz Ooal Gown』. Shalltear, you will be the one to kneel before me.”

“Ahahahahaha! How scary—!”

With a speed that would make even the wind seem slow in comparison, Shalltear closed in, filled with bloodlust. Every step caused the charred earth beneath her to explode. Clementine had been fast, but Shalltear was at a different level altogether. Ainz was thankful for his body that did not need to blink. If he had blinked even once, he would have lost track of her.

With the sound of laughter trailing behind her, Shalltear’s lance flew in his direction. Originally, a Lance Charge had the weight and speed of a knight on horseback behind it. However, with her strength and speed that was in a different league and left others agape, Shalltear easily surpassed the power of such an attack.

Even calling it an ultimate skill did not do it justice. Such an attack was heading straight for Ainz’ chest.

Even as the point of the lance flew towards him, Ainz did not budge.

Rather, he opened his mouth and said gently:

“It will be dangerous for you.”

A voice overflowing with concern, as if he was worried on Shalltear’s behalf; a word of warning was his response against her attack.

The moment Shalltear brought down her foot, the spell that had been prepared beforehand, 「Triple Maximize Magic: Explosive Land Mines」 was activated. Three large explosions roared out and Shalltear was blown back.

Once again, Ainz spoke in a gentle voice:

“Forgive me for being late with the warning, Shalltear. In truth, I’ve laid some mines there— 「Maximize Magic: Gravity Maelstrom」 .”

Aiming at Shalltear who had been blown away, Ainz launched a sphere that drew a black spiral. It was a spinning ball of super gravity that could deal significant damage even to beings like Shalltear. She immediately recovered her balance and raised her free hand.

“ 「Wall of Stone」 .”

A huge stone wall sprouted from the ground and surrounded Shalltear. It collided with Ainz’ ball of super gravity. The stone bent and shattered and was destroyed along with the gravity spiral.

“Hmph! 「Maximize Magic: Rib Bind」 !”

Another attack. A large ribcage sprouted from the earth and, like a tiger trap, seized Shalltear. The pointed ends of the pale bone pierced deeply through her flesh.

“Ugh!”

Although the spell was supposed to keep the target constricted after the initial damage, Shalltear easily slipped away, thanks to her complete immunity to movement impairing effects.

“...Shalltear, it looks like I’ve forgotten to mention that I laid traps in the surrounding area. Wouldn’t it be a better idea for you to attack me from the air?”

“.....Ainz-sama, I won’t fall for that. You probably have traps in the air as well, no?”

“Was it obvious?”

“Yes, very.”

The two shared a light laugh, and the intensity of Ainz’ red eyes dulled slightly.

There was no way that was true. Ainz did not have any more landmine magic prepared. He also didn’t set up any traps in the air either. This wasn’t a battle where he could carelessly use his MP. He couldn’t afford the luxury of spending his MP on spells that might prove ineffective.

That’s why his claim of having set up traps in the ground was a bluff to restrict Shalltear’s movements. His eyes had changed slightly because she walked right into it. Even so, Ainz did not show any sign of relief.

In this battle, Ainz was the challenger. It was an uphill struggle, like walking on an incredibly thin rope with the possibility that he would slip and fall extremely high. Knowing this, Ainz did not celebrate such a small victory.

“But as expected of Ainz-sama. A simple charge like that won’t even let me close the distance.”

An endless stream of compliments could be felt from Shalltear’s eyes and voice. At the same time, accompanied by the feeling that she was going to be serious.

The real battle starts now.

If Ainz could sweat, it would probably be pouring down his back like a waterfall.

My only option is to damage her consistently, before my MP runs out....

Otherwise, his defeat was certain.



Shalltear fixed her grip on her Spuit Lance and glared at the magic caster in front of her. Her master, Ainz Ooal Gown.

Although it was unclear to her why she had to fight her master, the being who deserved her worship, her brain dismissed it as a trivial problem. She could take her time thinking about it after killing him.

Having thought as much, Shalltear stared at the lone undead while imagining the overwhelming advantage that she held in this battle. The thought twisted her lips into a smile.

A magic caster held incredible power, but that power depended entirely on his MP. If they were to run out, his combat potential would vanish as well. On the other hand, although Shalltear was a faith based magic caster, she was also proficient in close combat. Her enormous physical ability allowed her to fight as long as her HP remained, even if her MP was depleted.

That's why, instead of chipping away at his HP, victory in this battle will be all but certain if she can manage to completely drain her opponent's MP. Regardless, Ainz didn't have any effective healing spells at his disposal.

So tremble as you watch your HP and MP slowly being chipped away. Ahaha. Just imagining Ainz-sama's terrified face is making my heart race!

Then what was the best method to fight? A battle of endurance.

Having decided her strategy for the upcoming battle, Shalltear gripped her Divine Class item, Spuit Lance.

This weapon had a special ability that returned a portion of the damage dealt to heal the wielder. No, it could be said that the weapon was specialized for that effect. That was why Ainz, who normally fought from the back, did not call his summons to protect him at the front. He knew very well that sending out a weak monster would only serve to give the Spuit Lance more health.

Ahh, poor Ainz-sama. To think he can't use his summons and has to fight all alone!

Shalltear held back a sadistic smile and used her skill, 「Analyze Mana」 .

Having temporarily gained the ability to detect mana, Ainz' remaining MP showed up in her vision.

Such an incredible amount.... just how did he get that much mana?

The amount of MP he possessed was vast, at least 1.5 times greater than Shalltear. Even if you searched all of Nazarick, you would not be able to find someone who could match him.

Truly fitting for a Supreme Being, Overspec Undead..... Super Undead..... No, Godlike Undead?

Even so— she did not think for a minute that she would lose. Although it may be different if it were another Floor Guardian, against Shalltear, an opponent who specialized in death magic could not pose a threat to her.

With that said, he still isn't an opponent I can get complacent against. Why isn't he wearing his Divine Class items, I wonder?

The robe Ainz was wearing seemed somewhat shabby. It contained none of the dangerous aura that his usual raven colored robe exuded.

Some sort of a measure against me? The possibility is quite high. But the battle won't end at this rate if we just stare at each other. I'll prepare for the long haul and heal myself.....

“ 「Regeneration」 .”

Using a spell that was effective even on undead, Shalltear slowly began to heal the damage from the super magic. Against this Shalltear, Ainz finally started his attack. He cast the super gravity magic he had used previously.

“ 「Maximize Magic: Gravity Maelstrom」 .”

As the black sphere flew towards her at high speed, she thought that she should put up a stone wall like before passed through her head. However, with that method, she couldn't pressure her opponent. She had to go on the offensive in order to force him to use up more of his MP.

Shalltear's decision was—

“— 「Greater Teleportation」 .”

Teleport to close the distance and aim for a melee battle.

Her field of vision warped, the change in surroundings that was supposed to occur immediately— felt slower.

Che!

Shalltear realized it was the effect from the spell that inhibited spatial transference, 「Delay Teleportation」 .

The spot she was expecting to teleport to was where she would be able to reach Ainz with her Spuit Lance. However, she found that his figure was still a good distance away. Instead, in front of her eyes were three blinking photospheres— 「Drifting Master Mine」 .

As the mines detected Shalltear and were about to detonate, she transformed into her Mist Form. This skill turned her body into mist and was well suited for a vampire. Despite describing it as such, she did not become a mist in the physical sense. It was more like the absence of a physical body, transforming into an Astral Body. This allowed her to completely avoid any attacks from the physical world— like the imminent three explosions.

“Not good enough!”

With a roar, Ainz cast 「Maximize Magic: Astral Smite」 .

Her resistances slightly lowered by her transformation, the magic that was effective against ethereal bodies enveloped Shalltear.

With pain wracking her body, she released her Mist Form. Shalltear's lips tore into a smile as she felt a string of sleek fluid trail down her body.

“Incredible! As expected of Ainz-sama!”

Her sincere admiration did not receive a response, only a look of suspicion.

“You don't believe me? But I honestly thought that you are indeed the person deserving of my loyalty.”

As expected, a person skilled in magic combat.

However— the smile did not leave Shalltear's lips. His magic had depleted considerably. Of course, Shalltear's health had also taken a hit. But her own loss was still within her calculations while Ainz' MP loss exceeded it. Her profits had pulled plenty ahead. In other words, Shalltear was now that much closer to victory.

Now, how's this?

Shalltear made her next move.

“「Force Sanctuary」.”

A white light enveloped Shalltear's surroundings. A barrier created from holy energy. Although she herself could not attack, it was an absolute barrier that completely blocked the opponent's attack.

On the other side of the light, the appearance of Ainz hastily preparing to launch his magic could be seen.

“That's right. It'll get dangerous for you if you don't cast your magic quickly.”

At first glance, the battle up to that point would have seemed to be progressing in Ainz' favor. Shalltear already understood the reason.

Ability— wrong.

Equipment— wrong.

Preparation— correct.

That's right. This advantage was due to the many defensive spells Ainz had prepared beforehand. A magic caster's strength varied greatly depending on how much he prepared before the battle. Of course, Shalltear was the same. That was why Ainz had immediately destroyed the defenses she had cast on her body. Like what she was doing now, he couldn't afford to give Shalltear time to prepare her defenses.

In truth, Shalltear didn't have the slightest intention of casting defensive magic. She wasn't very good at them, after all. She merely wanted Ainz to waste more of his MP. That was why the scene of Ainz nervously preparing his spells made her laugh.

Arara, aren't you playing too favorably in my hand, Ainz-sama? Anyway, why aren't you using your scrolls, or your staff, or your wands? Are you trying to save them? Or maybe you're panicking, or perhaps you know that they won't work against me? Hmm~?

Ainz' magic resistance was capable of completely nullifying all low and intermediate level magic, regardless of how strong of a magic caster his opponent was. On the other hand, Shalltear's magic resistance depended on the strength or level of her opponent. A weak magic caster's attack would be completely ineffective, even if it was a 10th level spell. However, against an incredibly powerful magic caster— in this case, Ainz— 1st level spells would be her limit.

Although the power of magic contained in items like scrolls varied to an extent based on the creator, they were normally adjusted to the lowest level. For this reason, there was a high chance that spells cast using a scroll would not be able to pierce through Shalltear's magic resistance. It was the reason why Ainz was not using them.

As Shalltear calmly analyzed the situation, Ainz cast his magic.

“ 「Maximize Magic: Thousand Bone Lance」 .”

Piercing through a wide area of earth with Ainz at its center, one thousand, two thousand—no, an uncountable number of bone spears exploded forth. The white spears scattered and crashed

repeatedly into the magic barrier. And with the sound of breaking glass, Shalltear's barrier began to shatter. The rubble that was scattering to the surroundings melted into thin air.

“Che!”

The barrier she had created using a big chunk of her mana was destroyed in a single attack. This was completely outside of her predictions. While feeling annoyed from this development, another attack flew at her.

“It isn't over yet! 「Maximize Magic: Thousand Bone Lance」 !”

“— 「Greater Teleportation」 .”

She chose a location in the air, outside the effective range of 「Delay Teleportation」 .

“Did you think I will let you escape— 「Maximize Magic: Gravity Maelstrom」 !”

Somehow, Ainz was able to predict Shalltear's teleportation. As if he had grasped the timing of her reappearance, Ainz' magic flew in her direction.

From his skillful battle, Shalltear almost felt like she was falling for him. The way he fought was impossible without a certain degree of experience.

“You still seem relaxed.”

Ainz, the one Shalltear had to kill for some reason, spoke quietly:

“How is it that you seem so relaxed with me as your opponent? There is no difference in our levels, equipment wise I have the edge, and my only disadvantage is that I cannot use the spells I am specialized in. But Shalltear, I sense from you the conviction that you have the upper hand, the confidence that you can win, no matter the circumstances.”

Towards her master, who was asking her why, Shalltear felt a sense of superiority.

“Ahahaha. Then I'll show you just one of the reasons why I'm confident. Did you know I had a skill like this?”

Shalltear wore a smile allowed only to the victor and activated her 「Unholy Shield」. A dark red shockwave that was reminiscent of blood spilled forth around her. It easily blew away the gravity sphere that was close to impact.

It was one of Shalltear's skills that combined both offense and defense.

“Tsk!”

The sound of Ainz clicking his tongue could be heard. If the reason that Shalltear clicked her tongue just previously was because of events that extended past her predictions, then his was because Ainz had just lost the advantage.

“Ahaha!”

Shalltear laughed at him and displayed another skill.

Floating above her palm was a huge divine war spear that measured over three meters long. Its blade was particularly large. The pure aura radiating from the spear was proof that it was no ordinary weapon. Its silvery white brilliance that seemed to reflect the sun was beautiful.

“Ohhh.... It is my first time seeing this. Did you create it with your skill?”

“Ahahaha. How long will you be able to keep up this farce, Ainz-sama? Since you don't even seem to know what this is, I'll explain it to you. The name of this spear is the Purifying Javelin!”

Mocking his ignorance, Shalltear fired the silvery white spear. She did not throw it. Instead, it levitated by itself and shot through the air. By expending MP, it had the added effect of perfect accuracy—

“Ughhh!”

—stabbed Ainz through the chest. To Shalltear, it looked as if the face that should not have been moving was twisted greatly in pain.

“Ahahaha! It seems magic weapons with the holy attribute are different after all. This seems pretty effective?!”

Once again, a huge spear materialized in Shalltear’s hand and was immediately fired. The spear flew with an unavoidable speed and pierced through Ainz’ shoulder.

“Kuh, you dare! 「Maximize Magic: Reality Slash」 !”

A powerful spell was cast.

A minor version of 「World Break」 , the most powerful skill possessed by the strongest warrior class, World Champion. It was a skill that was only obtainable when one reached the maximum level of that class. Despite being a weakened version, its destructive power was top class even amongst the 10th tier spells.

Blood sprouted as high as a fountain from Shalltear’s shoulder as space itself was cut in its wake.

However, the attack that almost completely ignored her magic resistance— as if time was flowing backwards; the blood returned to her shoulder and the damage was negated.

Witnessing such a scene, Ainz shouted.

“What did you do!”

“Don’t be so surprised, Ainz-sama. This is also a skill.”

Shalltear was dripping wet from superiority as she answered his question.

“Tsk! You mean my skill is ineffective, yet you use yours freely?”

“Please don’t think of it as unfair. This is a power granted to me by Peroronchino-sama. Isn’t it proof that he was greater than you, Ainz-sama?”

“—It seems that those words are your true feelings.”

It was as if his expression had vanished. His was a quiet voice devoid of emotion. Before Shalltear could begin to doubt, Ainz shouted once more.

“Here I come, Shalltear! No matter what skills you possess, know that my magic is stronger!”

「Maximize Magic: Reality Slash」 and Purifying Javelin were exchanged, chipping away at each other's bodies.

As the skill exchange occurred once more, Shalltear mocked in her head how foolish he was. At the same time, she was wondering why she was fighting him.

Shalltear Bloodfallen was the Floor Guardian in charge of the Great Tomb of Nazarick's first three floors, as well as a loyal subject created by Peroronchino, one of the 41 Supreme Beings of Ainz Ooal Gown. Then wasn't it strange that she was now fighting that same Ainz Ooal Gown, who had once used the name Momonga? Why was she pointing her blade against a member of the 41 Supreme Beings?

If her creator had ordered it, she would have fought with all the strength in her body. She would not hesitate even if all of Nazarick became her enemy. But this was different.

No matter how much she wracked her brain, the answer did not come.

However, she could not stop her hands from moving. A voice was whispering to her, telling her to kill with her full power.

Shalltear spied with 「Analyze Magic」 as Ainz used up his MP. While suppressing her mounting laughter, she used her time reversal to restore her health.

Powerful magic comes at a heavy cost. Among them, 「Reality Slash」, considering its damage-to-cost ratio— was terribly inefficient. The fact that he used it in succession meant that he determined the crux of the battle to depend on how much he could wear down Shalltear before the battle came to a melee.

That's right. Aiming for a short battle was the correct idea, since I would hold the advantage in a drawn out fight..... though I don't know how effective debuffs would be against undead.

Shalltear narrowed her eyes as she stared at the person casting powerful spells one after another.

Alright. Shall I follow your lead?

Shalltear's skills were divided into those that could be used infinitely and ones that had a set number of uses. Her method of recovering through time reversal could only be used three times a day, same for the Purifying Javelin. The Unholy Shield had only one charge left.

But saving them held no charm. From the start, Shalltear believed that the final showdown would come to a melee. Her MP and skills were only tools for her to chip away at Ainz' MP.

Although I can still fight without my MP, if yours is gone then it's fatal, Ainz-sama.

Shalltear who fought with both her HP and MP, against Ainz who was forced to fight with just his MP. From the beginning, there was an overwhelming difference between the two sides.

Shalltear's gentle eyes were fixed on Ainz, who could not choose anything other than magic. Rather than a mother worrying over her child, it was more accurate to describe it as a look of compassion from the strong to the weak.

With her last Purifying Javelin fired and receiving 「Reality Slash」 in response, Shalltear moved to the second stage of the battle.

“Then how about this? 「10th Level Summon Monster」 .”

“As if I'll let you! 「Greater Rejection」 !”

The summoned monster vanished in an instant. Ainz spoke in a voice tinged with pride.

“I won't let you stall for time, Shalltear.”

Don't laugh, Shalltear. He's just using his MP right after my skill!

Struggling to keep a straight face, Shalltear cast her magic.

“Is that so? Then shall I face you directly? 「Maximize Magic: Vermillion Nova」.”

“ 「Triple Maximize Magic: Call Greater Thunder」.”

Dark red flames that were Ainz’ weakness wrapped around his body. At the same time, three enormous thunderbolts, fused from multiple strands of lightning, pierced through Shalltear.

Along with the feeling of her health being carved away, for the first time in this battle, an unpleasant expression floated to Shalltear’s face.

He raised his fire resistance?

No matter how strong a person was, it was impossible to be fully resistant to every type of attribute. Even if you were to stack resistances from your race, class, and even Divine Class equipment, there was still a limit. However, if one were to completely erase a resistance to an attribute, it was possible to raise another to be fully immune. This was the case even if it was an attribute that you were weak against.

In other words, Ainz had abandoned a different attribute in order to focus on improving his fire resistance.

How annoying, I don’t know which attribute he gave up.

The only way to find out would be to use 「Analyze Life」 to bring up his HP and cast spells from every attribute to see how it reacts.

As if I’d do something as bothersome as that. Then with an attribute he’s definitely weak to—.

“— 「Maximize Magic: Brilliant Radiance」.”

“— 「Maximize Magic: True Darkness」.”

While Ainz was purified by a holy light that engulfed his body, Shalltear’s body was assaulted by a dark void.

In that instant— Shalltear did not miss it; the momentary image of his body shaking.

Even now, he had quickly fixed his posture and was pretending to not notice. But no one would fall for such an obvious act. It was the struggle of a body trying to endure the pain.

Shalltear laughed without letting it show on her face, she had found his weakness.

No, it couldn't be helped. The undead were critically weak to the holy attribute. It was incredibly difficult to erase this weakness. Even more so if his equipment was used to raise his fire resistance, then it was absolutely impossible.

As the two stared each other down, they cast the next magic. Of course, Shalltear chose the same, 「Brilliant Radiance」 .

Just how many times did their spells go back and forth? Even for Shalltear, she had lost a significant amount of her health. If she hadn't secretly used her skill that weakens magical effects in exchange for continually draining her MP, then her HP may have even dropped downed to zero.

As I thought, he's incredible.... Both in attack and defense, Ainz-sama is overwhelmingly more powerful than me in a battle of magic. Even with me using holy magic in succession, he probably didn't take as much damage as I did. But still... he's used up quite a bit of MP.

Ainz' MP that showed up in her vision was now much lower than when they first started. Despite this, his eyes still burned violently with a fiery spirit.

Ahh, my body is tingling. Such a wonderful man, I want to see what he looks like when he's defeated and his spirit broken.

Shalltear quelled the feeling surging from her lower abdomen. If she were in her room, she might have called a vampire bride. Unfortunately, there were none here. Needless to say, she could hardly pleasure herself and vent her sexual urges here and now.

Then the only option left— satisfy herself in battle.

Her eyes wet with lust, Shalltear stared at Ainz while licking her lips with her tongue. What sort of reaction will he show if she were to further increase her advantage right here?

“Then I’ll be healing myself now. 「Maximize Magic: Greater Lethal」 .”

The living are healed by positive energy and damaged by negative energy. Undead are the opposite. That’s why a spell like 「Greater Lethal」 , that channels powerful negative energy inwards, becomes the greatest healing magic for undead like Shalltear.

“You’re right. I have lost a considerable amount of health as well. — 「Greater Lethal」 .”

Shalltear blinked her eyes several times. She couldn’t believe what was happening. However, seeing how his wounds were being healed before her very eyes, she had no choice but to accept it.

“.....Huh? How can Ainz-sama cast faith magic like 「Greater Lethal」 ? Was it on the learnable skills list for your class?”

“No, unfortunately this power is not my own, but from a magic item. It is an item that lets me use just one specific spell. For that, I have to use up one of my equipment slots. It also cannot be used with the Maximize Magic skill and the effect is not as powerful as the one from the original class. There is not a lot that’s good about it.”

Seeing Ainz use 「Greater Lethal」 a second time while complaining about what a bother it is, Shalltear muttered that the schedule had changed slightly. With that said, it didn’t make too big of a difference since one of her objectives of making Ainz spend his MP was successful.

Having made her judgment, Shalltear activated 「Greater Lethal」 once more and treated her wounds. Since she was level 100, it took some time before she made a complete recovery.

And the last—

“ 「Maximize Magic: Greater Lethal」 .”

“ 「Body of Effulgent Beryl」 .”

—while she healed her injuries, Ainz was casting a defensive spell on himself.

Shalltear, in addition to being a faith based magic caster, did not receive a great amount of information from Peroroncino. Thus, she did not know what type of effect the 「Body of Effulgent Beryl」 spell produced. Seeing Ainz wrapped by the green sheen that he had worn just moments ago, Shalltear determined that he had used a defense magic.

That's the correct decision. I was just about to start attacking you personally.

Just as Shalltear was getting ready to wield the Spuit Lance to her heart's content, she heard a complaint that sounded as if it was spilled unintentionally.

“To think I would be at such a disadvantage.”

Completely blindsided, Shalltear loosened the hand that was around her Spuit Lance and thought to herself.

You just figured it out?

With that said, she reasoned that saying such a thing to her master, Ainz-sama, would be insolent and did not let it out of her mouth.

....master? Ainz-sama?

Shalltear wondered at the word that had surfaced in her mind several times already throughout the fight. She wanted to know why she had to point her blade at her master, Ainz-sama. But it was like that. There were plenty of things in the world that she didn't understand. This was just one of them.

Even when she determined it to be such, Shalltear thought her actions against Ainz were not consistent with that line of thinking. That's why, with a calm voice that couldn't have come from the middle of a battle, she spoke to him.

“If the battle is unfavorable, maybe you should run?”

“But, about that...”

Something similar to a bitter smile seemed to flash across Ainz' face; on the skeleton face that should not have been able to move.

"I am.... yes. I am very selfish, Shalltear. I do not wish to run away."

Ainz stared at his empty, skeletal hand. As if she was drawn to it, Shalltear's vision also moved to that spot.

"Though I doubt anyone will understand, even if others think of me as a fool, in this moment, as a Guildmaster, I feel satisfied. How should I say.... I.... even though I held the position of Guildmaster, in truth, all I did was regulate and handle menial tasks. Ultimately, I did not lead from the front. However, right now, I am fighting for the sake of the guild at the forefront....though it may just be for my self-satisfaction."

"Is that so? Perhaps that's what they call a man's pride?"

"That.... is that what this is? Perhaps.... it may just be out of desperation. It seems I've ruined the mood with such a boring story. Forgive me. Shall we continue?"



Part 2

Ainz calmly stared at the figure of Shalltear holding her Spuit Lance. In order for him to seize victory, he had to get through this melee.

The equipment around Shalltear's back swelled, and as if bursting through the armor, sprouted the wings of a bat. Ainz knew what would come next.

Countless large bats flew into the air from her back. They were Elder Vampire Bats created from the 'Raise Kin' skill. They were also accompanied by Vampire Bat Swarms.

Although they weren't that strong, they still couldn't be ignored. Ainz immediately cast his magic.

“「Shark Cyclone」.”

In an instant, a tornado that was 100 meters high and measured 50 meters in diameter made its appearance. It tore through the land and lifted the earth into the air. Darkened by the debris, the tornado swallowed the fleeing bats into its body.

Within the raging cyclone, numerous shadows could be seen slowly moving about. The shadows that were swimming around as if inside an ocean— sharks measuring around six meters. They flocked in groups to the swarms of bats desperately trying to fly against the tornado, like bait thrown to the surface. While the spell effective against airborne creatures displayed its strength, much like how the sharks were tearing through the Elder Vampire Bats, there was another who was tearing through the storm.

The crimson figure pierced through the tornado head on and charged at high speed. With the tip of her lance pointing forward, the figure left behind a trail of heat like a jet.

Unable to react in time, Ainz felt a sharp pain all over his body. *Crack*, he felt every bone in his body fracture.

The instant he had lowered his guard, Shalltear moved right up to his eyes and had pierced through his sternum with her murderous weapon. The tip of the lance crushed his bones and shot out of his back.

“Ugh!”

He cried out in pain. Shalltear had used her skill to give the lance a striking property and delivered a blow to his HP.

The undead Ainz was strong against pain. Like his mind, damage that exceeds a fixed threshold was suppressed. That was why even a complete novice of fighting like Suzuki Satoru could keep his composure without losing himself to the pain.

But this was intense.

The feeling of his life being carved away. A feeling similar to your vision darkening from losing most of your blood, it violently rattled Ainz'— no, Suzuki Satoru's weak mind.

But Ainz' will surpassed it.

The man fighting here was not Suzuki Satoru. It was the Supreme Ruler of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, Ainz Ooal Gown.

Even as Ainz was searching for his next course of attack, Shalltear's assault did not stop. With the end of her lance still penetrating through Ainz, she pushed forward again and again. As the blade stabbed deeper, the thicker part of the lance continued to dig into his body. The feeling of his body splitting in half and the pounding pain, along with his rapidly deteriorating health.

It triggered the activation of his 「Body of Effulgent Beryl」 .

The green sheen that hugged his body shattered.

The 10th tier magic, 「Body of Effulgent Beryl」 . For its duration, it had the passive effect of reducing damage from strike attacks. When activated, it had a one-time use of completely nullifying strike damage.

The damage dealt by the lance was absorbed by the 「Body of Effulgent Beryl」 . As if time was reversed, the lance was pushed out of Ainz' body.

Pushed away by the lance to his location, Ainz launched his spell at Shalltear who didn't seem to understand what had just happened.

“ 「Wall of Skeletons」 !”

A wall of bone made of countless skeletons wielding weapons appeared between the two figures. The skeletons that formed the wall swung and stabbed at Shalltear.

However, not a single one reached Shalltear's body.

“「Maximize Magic: Force Explosion」.”

An invisible shockwave burst out with Shalltear at its center and crashed into the wall of bone. The wall bent, and unable to withstand the force of the shockwave, exploded.

The scattered bones showered down with the sound of rain. But it had proved useful in buying Ainz time.

“Release!”

Following his command, 「Greater Magic Seal」 released three magic circles, each firing 30 shots of white arrows of light, for a combined volley of 90 shots. What was released was normal attack magic, 「Magic Arrow」. The beautiful afterglow from the flying arrows resembled the wings of an angel. However, this was an angel that signaled death.

Magic of the 1st tier cannot penetrate Shalltear's magic resistance. Sensing the danger behind the fact that Ainz used it regardless, Shalltear hastily tried to dodge to her side. However, the white arrows made a sharp turn and perfectly lodged themselves into the target, like a shower of rain.

The damage from 90 consecutive white magic arrows instantly destroyed Shalltear's health.

The secret behind how they managed to pierce through her magic resistance was because he had used a skill that temporarily brought up their power to rival that of 10th tier magic.

His assault did not stop there.

“Dance! 「Triple Maximize Magic: Obsidian Sword」!”

Three swords that gave off a black light floated in midair. As if they had a will of their own, they immediately flew straight towards Shalltear.

Shalltear repelled them with her Spuit Lance, as if telling them to stay out of her way. However, 「Obsidian Sword」 continued its assault. It was incredibly difficult to destroy a sword made of magic with a physical attack.

“ 「Magic Destruction」 .”

Shalltear used what little MP she had left to cast a magic canceling spell. With her MP now completely gone, her magic destroyed two of the swords in midair. But with one left, the remaining sword continued to attack Shalltear. 「Magic Destruction」 ’s success rate varied depending on the ability of the user. The result simply showed which of the two was the stronger magic caster.

“Ahh, annoying!”

Shalltear ignored the blade heading in her direction and charged at Ainz. Magic of that level wouldn’t be able to damage her.

The blow from the Spuit Lance threw Ainz to the side. Ainz was weak to strike attacks. Unable to ignore the damage, he steadied himself in the air using his 「Flight」 magic. And—

“Damn it!”

— For the first time in this battle, he lost his calm and cursed.

It wasn’t that his HP had dropped enough to warrant such a reaction. The problem was the phenomenon that was occurring before his eyes. The health that he lost was absorbed by Shalltear and had healed her.

The speed of that restoration surpassed the damage from the 「Obsidian Sword」 . In order to deal damage greater than her healing, Ainz immediately covered her with attack magic.

“ 「Triple Maximize Magic: Reality Slash」 .”

One after another, three attacks that slashed space itself drew blood from Shalltear’s body. However, she ignored it and approached him to shorten the distance, bringing the 「Obsidian Sword」 on her back with her.

Without her MP, Shalltear has no choice but to close in and fight inside the range of her Spuit Lance..... But that is not in my favor.

While retreating with 「Flight」, Ainz continued his barrage of attacks.

“ 「Triple Maximize Magic: Reality Slash」 .”

Despite the fact that he was on the run, with every blink, the distance between them was shrinking. It was the difference between the flying speed strengthened by a skill and that of 「Flight」 magic.

With blood spilling from her body, Shalltear closed the distance until she was right in front of his eyes. Crouching forward, Shalltear released a shockwave with herself at its center.

It's not 「Force Explosion」 ! Unholy Shield?!

The shockwave formed from her skill shattered the remaining 「Obsidian Sword」 and crashed into Ainz, blowing him back a great distance.

“Kuh! Gaah!”

There was no doubt that she had combined her Unholy Shield with another unknown skill. Ainz crashed into the ground and rolled twice, three times— and forcefully recovered his balance with the help of a magic item and his 「Flight」 magic.

Whether it was because he lacked a vestibular system or because it was a characteristic of being an undead, Ainz, who didn't even feel dizzy, glared at Shalltear over the widened distance.

This was a stroke of good fortune. Ainz did not desire a close range fight. The fact that their distance increased meant that he had more time to use his magic

As he was about to cast his spell, Ainz spotted a gathering of bright light that appeared in front of Shalltear. As if to block the two, the light occupied the space between them and formed into a shape the size of a human.

He knew very well what that was.

Ainz twisted his unmoving face into a frown, while Shalltear wore a victorious smile.

“So it’s here... at last. I thought it would appear eventually, but to use it here.... ‘Einherjar’ – Shalltear’s greatest secret weapon.”

The white light took the shape of a complete human.

Its appearance was that of a figure wearing white armor. If you were to exclude the fact that its skin radiated a pale light, it would look almost identical to Shalltear, its summoner.

Ainz knew that the appearance wasn’t the only similarity the two shared.

It doesn’t have the ability to use magic or items, along with some of its skills. However, its equipment and stats are on par with Shalltear herself. Although the race was a construct similar to a golem, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that its resistances were nearly identical to those of an undead.

It could be considered as a second Shalltear that could only use regular attacks.

Although he had expected this to happen, the burden of fighting two level 100 enemies at once was huge.

On top of this, Shalltear raised a great number of her kin. Wolves, bats, rat swarms— and many more.

Although none were at the level of the Einherjar, the strength in numbers was not to be underestimated.

Assuming I take them out instantly with area of effect magic..... What should I do about the Einherjar?

While Ainz was exploring his options, the Einherjar charged in his direction. It was a situation that even he hadn't predicted.

Why isn't Shalltear making a move? Isn't her plan to decide the fight with numbers?

The question was answered as soon as he shifted his eyes. At the same time, the flame inside his empty eye sockets flared greatly.

“Uwah! So unfair!!”

He accidentally spoke as Suzuki Satoru, asking if something like that was allowed.

The scene that was reflected in Ainz' vision; the summoned kin were being destroyed, pierced by the Spuit Lance.

Shalltear was attacking the creatures she herself summoned with her Spuit Lance and healing off of them.

The healing ability of the Spuit Lance, needless to say, depended on the amount of damage inflicted. Ainz, who was the same level with high defense, versus her weak kin. There was no need to state which side would give more health. Reflected in Ainz' vision in real time was the image of Shalltear restoring great amounts of her health.

The summoned creatures soon vanished, pierced by the lance.

It was a truly cruel and unthinkable situation.

But since friendly fire exist in this world, it could be called an obvious strategy.

Ainz regained his composure and began to hatch a plan for this unexpected situation. But to witness a scene where one killed their own summoned creature to restore health, it was something that could never have been possible in YGGDRASIL. As if he couldn't completely suppress his agitation, Ainz took the full brunt of the attack from the Einherjar that managed to close the distance right up to his face.

“Kuughh!”

Ainz was blown away with a scream; the Einherjar continued her attack with an expressionless face.

As Ainz continued to retreat while under attack, he decided that he too, will lift the seal on his secret weapon.

Shalltear's ability to summon kin wasn't unlimited, so it would eventually end. But letting her heal from all of the creatures around her was too dangerous.

Originally, he was going to use it when the Einherjar made its appearance. Aside from her healing herself by killing her own summons, the plan was still proceeding accordingly. Amongst his 60 or so class levels, there was one particular class.

Even in YGGDRASIL, it was a highly rare class that only a few possessed.

The reason Ainz was able to get such a class was because he ignored power and maxed his death magic for the sake of role playing. A person who only wanted to make a strong character would not have been able to find it. It was a coincidence because builds skewed to the extreme were rare.

The prerequisite was to have five levels in Overlord. The next step was to be specialized almost completely in death magic while having a total level of 95. Only then, could you obtain the class.

A rare class like this, if it were a different game, the information would have been immediately uploaded to a guide site and shared. But YGGDRASIL was a game where information itself had value. Like the case with World Class items, the number of people who freely shared newly discovered information with others was small. This was especially the case with classes that had a secret weapon.

That class was 'Eclipse'.

「The Overlord that has mastered death in the truest sense will rise to this class. Like an eclipse, he will encroach upon all life.」 — was what was written in the class status description.

And what he was about to use now, the skill learned at level five, which was the highest possible level of the Eclipse class. It was a skill that could only be used once every 100 hours.

The name of the skill— ‘The goal of all life is death’.

In an instant, a clock with its hands marking the twelve o'clock position appeared behind Ainz' back. He then cast a spell.

“ 「Widen Magic: Cry of the Banshee」 .”

A woman's scream rang throughout the surroundings like a ripple. It was a shout with an instant death effect.

It was reinforced by Ainz' many skills, making it stronger than normal and difficult to resist. But needless to say, it did not affect an undead like Shalltear and neither the Einherjar, who was considered a Construct and therefore had complete immunity to instant death effects.

But strangely enough, not even the creatures in the area that did not have complete resistance were affected.

Despite the strange situation, Ainz did not budge. Actually, events were proceeding as they should.

Clunk

With a noise, as if matching the timing with when the spell was cast, the clock behind Ainz began to tick.

As his health was being chipped away by the repeated attacks from the Einherjar's lance, Ainz observed Shalltear from the corner of his vision and at the same time, was disappointed.

....As I thought, the battle won't be settled. That Peroronchino, did he set up this countermeasure just for me? You didn't have to give her a resurrection item, damn it!

He felt anger in his heart towards his friend whom he had been close with, even within the guild.

While Ainz was busy dodging the Einherjar's attacks, twelve seconds passed. Having completed a full revolution, once again, the hand on the clock pointed towards the sky.

And Ainz' secret weapon activated.

That moment— the world died.

It was not a figure of speech.
Everything had died.

In front of his eyes, the Einherjar turned into a white mist and began to crumble. Even the lifeless construct had died instantly. Likewise, Shalltear's kin, succumbing to a power that they could not resist, began to die out.

But it did not end there.

Even the air that was devoid of life died and turned the 200 meter diameter into a space where breathing was impossible. If there had been a being here who needed to breathe in order to live, the dead air would have contaminated the lungs and ended its life.

Not only that, the land died as well. With Ainz at its center, an area measuring 200 meters in diameter instantly turned into a desert.

In a world where only death existed, the only thing left moving was Ainz and Shalltear.

Ainz' secret weapon, 'The goal of all life is death', it strengthened the instant death effect of spells and skills to the point where even those with complete immunity were killed.

A method to defend against it was to, like Shalltear, deploy a self-resurrection effect and so on.

It was also the reason why even inanimate objects like the air and land had died. Although its effects weren't to this extent in YGGDRASIL, in the real world, it was much more clearly pronounced in the form of granting 'Death' to all equally.

Even Ainz was taken aback by this strange occurrence. The fact that using a game skill in reality could change it to this degree, it was almost enough to make him unwittingly shake his head in wonder.

But Ainz swallowed his surprise. His pride was what kept him from letting his shock seem obvious. As if to say that this was what he was aiming for, Ainz, with a haughty arrogance befitting a ruler, quietly spoke to the lone survivor.

“How do you feel after witnessing the power that grants death to even those without life?”

A fresh breeze flowed into the surroundings, thinning the dead air. Carried by that wind, another voice could be heard.

“It was amazing, as expected of Ainz-sama. All of my kin ended up getting killed. But Ainz-sama’s MP seems to be almost gone. On the other hand... my health is still fine.” Shalltear’s eyes reflected the nearly depleted state of Ainz’ MP. Although he still had a bit left, it was only enough to cast probably two or three more spells at max. With so few, no matter what spells he used, it would be impossible to kill Shalltear.

This was the case even if he were to use the super-level magic 「Heaven’s Downfall」 .

“Is using two more 10th tier spells your limit? But since Ainz-sama’s magic is so strong, there’s no telling what amazing things you could do even with just that.”

“Indeed, it seems about two is all I have left.”

It was not a lie.

She won.

A smile of satisfaction rose to Shalltear’s mouth.

The line that divided the victor and the defeated was now clearly decided. Shalltear Bloodfallen as the victor, Ainz Ooal Gown as the defeated.

With the composure of the winner, Shalltear praised the loser, Ainz, who had put up a good fight.

“You were incredible Ainz-sama. Like how your MP is almost gone, mine is completely spent and my skill charges are nearly gone as well. You’ve fought very well until now.”

She channeled her strength into her hand grasping the Spuit Lance. The only thing left was to end his life in close combat.

“I agree. Your compliments, I will accept them graciously.”

Twitch. Shalltear’s cheek moved.

She didn’t like it.

Ainz Ooal Gown’s calm behavior.

But Shalltear cut down the encroaching snake named anxiety with a single slash.

No matter how hard she thought it over, there was no way for Ainz to overturn this situation. He had already spent his single use secret weapon. Then that could only be the appearance of the condemned who has accepted his final moments. Rather than calling it composure, it was more like a feeling of resignation born from his resolve.

Shalltear slowly walked and began to close the distance. Even if he were to attack with a scroll, she was confident that her attack would be faster. That was why there was no need for her to be impatient.

Ainz did not flee. Not only that, he simply stood his ground without moving. Sensing his resolve, Shalltear asked:

“Do you have any last words?”

“Let’s see... Because I was at a disadvantage, because I would turn into a weakling once my MP ran out... And because you thought as much, for not saving your power, I am very grateful, Shalltear. If you had fought with discretion, the battle would not have gone nearly as well. “

“...What?”

Shalltear doubted her ears. Just now, she had heard something incredibly out of place.

Having left Shalltear in such a state, Ainz spoke quietly.

“The most important aspect of PVP is how well you transmit fake information to your opponent. For example, switching your equipment in order to raise your holy resistance while acting as if it was still effective. While on the other hand, leaving your weakness, the fire attribute, untouched. Only... my predictions were slightly off. I expected you to use 「Analyze Life」 and had prepared 「False Data: Life」 in advance, but it ended up being a useless effort. If you ever get another chance, make sure that you clearly observe your opponent's health. Otherwise, there will be a large disparity between devising the plan and its execution.”

They were not the words she was expecting.

Shalltear couldn't understand what was being said. No, she didn't want to understand.

He simply has yet to accept his defeat—.

No, that wasn't it. She felt a strong will. Not only that, a presence of someone with victory in his grasp.

Her steps as she approached Ainz felt heavy, weighed down by something rising in her heart.

....Why isn't Ainz sama widening the distance? A magic caster like him won't be able to beat me at this range, it's a bluff!

“My friend Peroronchino has told me quite a bit about you, back when he was still working on your design. Ever since first arriving in this world, I have memorized the data of all of my servants. Still, if we were to exclude Pandora's Actor, whom I created personally, among all the NPCs of Nazarick, you may be the one I understand the most. “

“A moment ago, you said that you didn't.... know about my skills....”

Ainz laughed in response.

“Is it not obvious that it was a lie? I thought it would make you more confident. But if you had saved your Unholy Shield, then I would not have been able predict the outcome of this battle.”

Although blood coursed through her veins, as an undead, it was useless to her. Shalltear felt that same blood drain from her body, coupled with her swelling anxiety.

It wasn't a bluff.

His words just now did not carry a single trace of falsehood.

Standing before her, the reason that Ainz Ooal Gown did not retreat was because he was sure of his victory.

“Ahhhhh—!”

Shalltear opened her mouth wide and screamed. She was venting the emotions surging within her as noise.

Shalltear was supposed to be the lion while Ainz was the rabbit. He should have been her prey. – No, that was never the case.

From the beginning, this was a battle between lions. Shalltear had just thought on her own that he was a rabbit—.

Filled with apprehension, Shalltear resolved herself that even if he resisted the first attack, she would not stop her assault until he was dead. With the intent of ending everything, here in this moment, Shalltear thrust her Spuit Lance—.

A step faster, Ainz cast his spell. At the same time, moved his hand as if he was trying to tear off his robe.

The sound of impact rang out.

Shalltear doubted her eyes.

It just wasn't possible.

The Spuit Lance had been deflected by a bright white mass.

If it had been a spell, Shalltear would have immediately prepared herself to receive an attack. All the while thinking how it was only a useless struggle because of the low amount of MP that Ainz had remaining. However, Shalltear, unable to comprehend what had just occurred before her very eyes, felt her mind go numb for an instant.

The bright white mass was not magic.

— it was armor.

A white armor. The huge sapphire embedded in its chest radiated a pure and divine light.

The armor had protected Ainz' body and repelled the attack from the Spuit Lance. Due to their difference in height, Ainz, whose field of vision was higher, was looking down at Shalltear.

No... he may actually have been looking down on her in earnest.

Although the situation was enough to make her furious, the current Shalltear could not afford such a luxury. It was because she had heard a chilling voice.

“From the beginning, I too wished to end this battle in a melee.”



Crash. Someone slammed down on the table. The impact caused the grand table to shake violently.

The battle up to this point was being observed from this room.

Although the sound of the table being slammed had rung out several times already, this was the first time he had touched it.

“Impossible! That. is... that. person's. armor!”

“.... Touch Me–sama?”

Without taking her eyes off of the crystal screen, Albedo muttered the name of one of the 41 Supreme Beings.

“That’s. right! That. is. Touch. Me–sama’s. armor!”

As if he was agitated — No, it is likely that he was agitated in earnest — a shout escaped from Cocytus’ mouth.

The armor that Ainz was wearing belonged to a certain person who had managed to obtain the World Champion class, of which there were only nine in YGGDRASIL.

The World Champion was a special class granted only to the victor of the official martial tournament. As for the prize, the champion was given one piece of special equipment from the administrator.

Touch Me had chosen that white armor as his prize. The power of the armor suited for a World Champion surpassed that of Divine Class items, rivaling even Guild weapons. Of course, since it was a reward for the winner of the tournament, only the World Champion could equip it.

“Warrior transformation magic— 「Perfect Warrior」 Definitely, if you were to use that.... You would be able to ignore the class restrictions on equipment.”

Demiurge spoke in a voice filled with awe while Albedo muttered under her breath.

“He’s thought this far ahead....”

Albedo hugged her body with both arms and trembled.

Turning into a warrior through magic allowed one to wear equipment even if was restricted to a special class. It was a measure by the administration to give a way for players to enjoy the more obscure equipment like the shuriken, vajra, or the monk robe. However, this measure of ignoring class restrictions ended up also including the equipment given to the World Champion for winning the official tournament.

“I. can’t. believe. it... to. think. this. was. all. part. of. his. plan... I. can. only. give. my. admiration.”

The winner of the battle still hadn’t been decided. But seeing Ainz, with his resourcefulness, and the smooth way he carried out his plan that showed his experience in battle, the gathered Floor Guardians couldn’t help but express their awe.

As the Floor Guardians looked upon their master with a gaze of both delight and admiration, they heard the sound of the table being slammed a second time.

“That. is!”

Once again, it was Cocytus who shouted.



Part 3

—A slashing noise.

“Kyaaaaaaa!”

Absent-minded from witnessing an impossible scene, Shalltear screamed. The blade entered through her shoulder, cleaved her sternum and stopped at her unmoving heart.

With faltering steps, she retreated. Her crimson armor now dyed in a deeper shade of red, Shalltear glared with shock.

Ainz held a sword in his hand. A sharp and huge katana wrapped in lightning. It had cut through her armor like paper.

Even amongst Divine Class items, there were few that could so easily cut through Shalltear's Legendary Class armor.

Then— the answer could only be that 'few'.

Indeed.

The weapon that Ainz held in his hand was one of them—.

Along with her blood, Shalltear coughed out the name of the weapon.

“Takemikazuchi Mk 8!”

Once again, the blade hurtled towards her, causing Shalltear to retreat a great distance in order to avoid it. Her large distance outside of the weapon's range showed how much she feared it.

No one could fault her, especially if one was a Floor Guardian of the Great Tomb of Nazarick.

Because a weapon wielded by 'Warrior Takemikazuchi' – one of the 41 Supreme Beings, had made its appearance.

“As I have already said, Shalltear. There is no defeat for 『Ainz Ooal Gown』.”

Ainz advanced forward one step, and Shalltear retreated two.

“Realize now, Shalltear. You face Ainz Ooal Gown, with the combined might of all 41 Supreme Beings. From the beginning, you had no chance of victory. “

Then— the tide of battle was no longer the same as before.

A low voice rang out, one belonging to a man who has blown away his overwhelming disadvantage.

“Shalltear Bloodfallen. Engrave into your eyes the power of the one whom you all call and revere as the Supreme Ruler of the Great Tomb of Nazarick, leader of the Supreme Beings.”

It was a signal that he was now going to switch to the offensive.

Ainz stepped forward, raising his two hands high above his head and brandished his katana.

Ainz spoke quietly.

With absolute conviction and an unbroken confidence.

Like walking on thin ice, it was a battle where even the smallest mistake would have sent him plummeting down a bottomless lake. The current Ainz was now closing in on the heart of his enemy.

Both of their MPs were at zero. In HP, Shalltear held the advantage.

However, Ainz, who was now a level 100 Warrior thanks to [Perfect Warrior], surpassed Shalltear who was not of a pure warrior class. Even in equipment, Ainz held the advantage.

Shalltear took a step back and readied herself to charge in at the same time. She was planning to attack during the opening after the blade was brought down. In reality, Takemikazuchi Mk. 8 was considered a large weapon and, like the Spuit Lance, incapable of nimble movements.

Wrapped in lightning, Takemikazuchi Mk8 cleaved through the air— and stopped right at the edge of Shalltear’s chest, who was in a stance ready to charge forward. What followed was a god-speed thrust.

No matter how physically strong you are, it is difficult to stop a swing brought down in full force in midair. Even more so if the weapon is of a considerable size.

The reason such a thing was possible was because Ainz did not swing with his full strength. In other words, it was an attack with the assumption that it will not hit, purposefully creating a weak spot.

Planning your attack while thinking several moves ahead, it was an obvious tactic for a warrior.

All Ainz did was to put it into practice.

However, he would never have thought of it if not for the battle experience he got in Re-Lantier. He would simply have swung aimlessly and be met with Shalltear's counterattack.

There was no doubt that he, despite becoming a level 100 warrior, would have ended up in a situation where he was unable to bring out his full strength and wasted away the treasure. It was similar to driving a car. Even if one had a license and knew how to drive, the difference between a beginner and an experienced driver becomes incredibly apparent when faced with a difficult situation.

This— was experience.

What Ainz believed to be his greatest 'weapon' in his battle against Shalltear.

Dodging it will be difficult.

Shalltear calmly judged it as such while staring at the incredibly fast thrust heading her way. However, a thrust was a risky technique. Exploiting its weakness will give her a great opportunity.

Then... I have no choice.

With the determination to sacrifice an arm, Shalltear squeezed her left hand into the trajectory path of the thrust.

The instant the katana stabbed her; Shalltear slightly moved her left hand and averted the force of the thrust to veer off to her side.

Piercing through her left palm rather than her chest, the katana lost none of its momentum and cleaved through both the flesh and bone, tearing through the inside of her left arm. The lightning riding through the blade pierced Shalltear's body from the inside.

Even for an undead, the feeling of having one's flesh torn apart gave her goose bumps. However, a corner of Shalltear's lips twisted upwards.

That was a smile— it was not an expression that should have been on someone who had just received such damage. But it was not a bluff either. This was what Shalltear had been aiming for.

Shalltear flexed her left arm with the katana lodged inside. Her muscles grabbed on to the blade and stopped its movements.

It was common that a thrust would often miss its mark or become stuck because of the muscles. That was why it was considered difficult to use, in other words, it had a weakness. Because Shalltear knew this, she gave up her left arm to create such an opening.

It was an incredible technique where the window of timing between the blade entering the arm and cutting through the flesh was less than a second.

“An opening!”

With his sword restrained, Ainz had no way to avoid the Spuit Lance.

Shalltear, who was about to swing her Spuit Lance with the speed of light, saw a surprising scene.

Ainz threw away the Divine Class katana, one of the strongest in its class, and drew one of the many wooden rods that he wore around his belt.

“Hah! How foolish! You're going to try blocking my Spuit Lance with something like that?! And you even threw away your weapon, you've made the wrong choice!”

Not clinging to the Divine Class item Takemikazuchi Mk 8 was wise, but there was no way to win without it.

With a jeer, Shalltear, determined to inflict as much damage as she received in her left arm, thrust her Spuit Lance with all her strength and— was repelled with a metallic sound.

“Eh?”

Shalltear let out a stunned noise.

The wooden rod in Ainz’ hand was no longer there. In its place were two kodachi. The weapons held a brilliant radiance like the sun, a serene light like the moon.

Smoke rose from Ainz’ hands that were holding the weapons, as if they resented being touched by an undead.

“Where is this opening, Shalltear?”

“Ehhh?! What? H, How?”

The weight of the weapon that was supposed to be in Shalltear’s left arm was no longer present. As soon as Ainz pulled a new weapon, it disappeared, as if it couldn’t exist in the same world. Shalltear vaguely understood: It had returned to where it originally belonged.

“Not knowing how to feint, even if I held a sword in each hand, it would be better for me to just use one... was it?”

As if recalling a memory, Ainz’ muttering seemed to be directed at a person who was not present.

“Maybe, but what about the present me?”

Without even a chance to ponder the meaning of those words, the kodachi seeped in moonlight flashed towards Shalltear.

Despite looking as if it was heading for her neck, the trajectory skillfully changed course and headed for her shoulder. Such an attack was just barely deflected by the Spuit Lance.

Aiming for this, Ainz deeply stepped into the gap in Shalltear's opening. The larger the weapon, the weaker they become in close quarters. Understanding this thoroughly— those were the movements of a veteran.

The sun kodachi in his other hand— penetrated the Spuit Lance's defences and lightly dug into Shalltear's body.

“AAAAAHHHHHHH!”

A voice filled with pain exploded from the space between her lips.

The pain from the actual sword was nothing. However, pain from the holy attribute of the blade seeped into her body like a toxin. This she could not endure.

With the blade still lodged, Ainz moved the sword to the side to try and widen the wound.

“Get away!”

Because it was not a distance where she could freely swing the Spuit Lance, Shalltear threw a kick. Although Ainz blocked it with his kodachi, he could not completely absorb the force of the impact and was blown backwards. Then Shalltear saw it; the figure of Ainz letting go of the kodachi and grabbing a small wooden rod.

And the moment the rod shattered, it covered his hand and revealed a dreadful, huge gauntlet. Large enough to touch the ground even while standing, the gauntlet—

“Haah!”

—cleaved through the air as Ainz stepped forward and charged with a yell.

Although she unwittingly blocked it with her lance, the fearsome impact rode through the weapon and struck Shalltear's body.

“Gueh!”

The impact from being rammed by a giant fist forced an embarrassing noise from Shalltear and sent her flying. The damage from the shockwave was insignificant, and the physical attack itself was blocked by the Spuit Lance. However, the knock back effect of the shockwave penetrated the magic defenses of Shalltear's equipment.

Although her stumbling balance was quickly restored with the help of a magic item, her head was dyed red with anger.

“Y, You, how dare you make me utter such a disgraceful sound! Before I tear you to pieces I'll pry the same.... same?”

As she turned around, Shalltear's vision was met with a huge light and she felt her temper instantly vanish.

In Ainz' hand was a bow covered in the light of the sun. The arrowhead that was giving off a brilliant resplendence, needless to say, was pointing directly at Shalltear.

“N, No way. No, it's a lie.... That's, Hou Yi?”

A story passed down in a distant land called China*, a weapon named after the hero who was said to have shot down the sun. It was the main weapon of Shalltear's creator.

*(Author's Note: A legend from the time of Emperor Yo. The sudden appearance of ten suns in the sky burned the land and crops. It is said that a man named Hou Yi shot down nine.)

Almost all of the Guardians had established measures against ranged attacks, so an arrow was nothing to fear. However, that arrow did not deal physical damage; instead, it was a mass of elemental damage. In other words, it was regarded as magic and unblockable.

Damn it! I don't have any MP! I could block it if it's magic! Even a skill would be fine! I should've saved a bit if I'd known... No, that's not right!

The fact that she had no MP, nor any skill uses left, everything was a result of the earlier battle. In other words, everything was a result of the scheme of the man known as Ainz Ooal Gown.

With her eyes dyed red, Shalltear let out an angry cry. It was the appearance of one who understood what was to come next, the struggle of one who did not want to admit defeat.

“You bastard! Peroronchino –sama’s weapon! Everything was part of your plan! How did you prepare that weapon?! Where were you hiding it! Was it a skill triggered by breaking the wooden rod?!”

Just what sort of trick was it?

It was as if his actions were favored by the world itself.

“A magician does not reveal his tricks.”

“How is that a magic trick! How did you pull out Peroronchino –sama’s weapon with something like that!”

“..... Indeed, you are right. This may have been rude to him. Well, the answer is that it was a cash item. Rather, did you finally come to understand? That everything was within my plan?”

The sphere of light, with its charging complete, flew towards Shalltear. Despite knowing that it was useless, she held her lance diagonally to block and— the explosion of light covered the surroundings.

While her whole body was burning within the divine light, Shalltear judged that it was dangerous to retreat back. If things continued like this, she would be overwhelmed without being able to do anything.

Even if the white armor was powerful, it would not be unaffected by the Spuit Lance. Then she had to forgo defense and attack while relying on its life absorption effect.

“Ooohhhh!”

Ill fitting with her outward appearance, a vigorous battle cry exploded from Shalltear’s throat. A chilling voice floated back in response.

“A 7 to 3 chance of victory.... around there I believe. There is no need to say which side was the seven, I hope?”

Ainz slowly raised a monstrous, huge axe. Emitting a purple light, the pressure alone from the axe forged from red crystal was enough to make closing the distance difficult. Despite this, Shalltear charged.

The only thing she could do now was move forward.

“Good resolve. This is the final phase, Shalltear!”



“..... It. is. Ainz-sama’s. victory.”

As if locked in admiration, Cocytus muttered while nodding his head. Whereas Demiurge, who had no aptitude as a warrior, threw a doubtful glance. Of course, Demiurge too, believed that his master will emerge victorious. But his need to analyze the situation logically caused him to question.

“Why is that? To me, it looks like it will still be awhile before the victor is decided.”

“Shalltear. has. decided. to. forgo. defense. and. focus. on. offense. It. is. not. a. bad. decision. I. too. would. have. done. the. same. in. that. situation.”

“That’s right. Ainz-sama has been swapping out his weapons in succession— you can’t tell what others weapons he has. In such a situation where there isn’t enough information, leaving a wide distance could turn out to be a painful mistake. Wouldn’t seeing the bow make her even more sure of that? So Shalltear has no choice but to fight at a range where her Spuit Lance can reach. And she can’t even use her magic or skills, which would spur her on even more towards that decision.... Maybe that’s how she judged the situation?

“Aha, so that’s it. The Supreme Beings never did ostentatiously flaunt their weapons in front of us. So you’re probably the only one who completely understands their weapons, Cocytus.”

Cocytus shrugged his shoulders.

“I. too. am. only. knowledgeable. about. their. names. and. effects. I. have. never. seen. them. in. person.”

“Hmm. I’ve understood most of it. In other words, now that Shalltear has abandoned her defense, Ainz-sama will pull out the axe and—“

“—‘Suck. The. Blood. And. Eat. The. Flesh’.”

“Thank you, Cocytus. It appears that ‘Suck The Blood And Eat The Flesh’ has poor balance and thus decreased accuracy. However, it should not be a problem against Shalltear who has decided to forgo defense.”

“To. think. that. the. entire. flow. of. this. battle. had. been. dictated. by. Ainz –sama.... Although. I. have. said. this. before. I. can. only. give. my. admiration.”

“If it’s him, then it’s even possible for him to read everything from the view of a god. Wouldn’t you agree that his insight is fitting for the one who led the Supreme Beings? Honestly, he probably would have ruled Nazarick just fine even if we didn’t exist. It’s a little frustrating.”

“....I. give. my. admiration. to. his. aptitude. for. strategy. as. a. magic. caster.... no. as. one. who. battles.”

“However... is it not true that the victor still has yet to be decided? A battle of HP will not be in Ainz –sama’s favor.”

At those words, Albedo smiled. It was a smile that was sure of his victory.

“It’ll be alright.”

“Why is that?”

“He is the one who wears the name of Ainz Ooal Gown, the one who rules over us all, the one who is both high and supreme. Such a being has declared his victory with his name.”



Each time the two exchanged blows, their health was chipped away.

Although Shalltear healed herself with her attacks, Ainz' attacks dished out enough damage to ignore healing of that level. At the same time, his health was also being chipped away by the Spuit Lance. The battle was turning out to closely resemble such a chicken race.

The armor threatened to break with every attack from the axe. The feeling of bones breaking and flesh being crushed. It was met by a lance thrust, the lance that was imbued with the striking property from a skill. It transmitted the sensation of shattering through bone.

This feeling.... Based on the remaining health, I might win....?

Shalltear was glad that she still had a path to victory. If they continued this exchange of blows, she would very narrowly be able to win.

A close combat abandoning defense and focusing entirely on offense, where the only thing she could think about was which side would fall first. Ever since such a grisly exchange began, Shalltear had been anxious. A faint glimmer of hope now showed on her face.

That was because, in a corner of her mind, she was calmly calculating their health losses. Her delight was as great as her previous anxiety.

“Ahahahaha!”

Even while trading blows, laughter trailed out.

“Ahahaha! Ainz –sama! It seems you're going to be the first to run out of health?! The difference in our base health is proving to be crucial here! “

A single phrase threw cold water over her thoughts.

“.... Do you really believe that?”

The machinator who gave her a harrowing fight all the way up to this point, the voice of the one who had been controlling everything within the palm of his hand, she realized her own foolishness.

Impossible.

Then how was he going to turn the tables on this battle?

Shalltear could not understand. The answer came in the form of a voice from a third party.

[Time's up— Momonga onii-chan!]

A female voice.

One she had never heard before, the purposefully childish female voice reminded Shalltear of a certain woman from her memories. That person may sound like that if she disguised her voice, she thought.

“Shalltear, what time do you think is it talking about?”

Unaware of the meaning behind the question, as they continued their melee of stabbing each other's bodies with their weapons, Shalltear floated an honest, questioning look to her graceful face.

“If everything until now has been proceeding according to my plan, then this time we have spent also falls within the realm of my predictions. Then the time that has elapsed as told by this watch, what meaning do you think it holds for you and I?”

The axe in Ainz' hand disappeared and was replaced by a shield of pure white. The shield that matched so well with his armor gave him the appearance of a pure white paladin.

The shield made a solid noise as it repelled the attack from the Spuit Lance.

Why was he now switching to defense? Although it was probably due to the female voice from just before, Shalltear could not understand the reason for it. Ainz, who had completely switched to defending, the echo of metal carried with it his chilling voice.

“There is no need to even answer. It is to bring this to an end. The time has come to finish this battle.”

Why? Shalltear still had 25% of her health remaining. Then just how was he going to end the battle? Although Shalltear wanted to scream those words, they would not come out.

“.... A single attack of super magic cannot bring you down from 100%. Then would not the answer be to bring your health down to where it is appropriate? It seems your health has dropped considerably from our melee.”

“.....Ah, Ah, Ahhhhhh!!”

With her composure gone, Shalltear showered him with attacks; As if her imminent defeat could somehow be prevented by stopping him from talking.

Solid noises rang out endlessly from her barrage. It was like a torrential downpour.

However, Ainz splendidly blocked all of her attacks. With the composure and confidence to not let even a single drop touch him, even if it had been a waterfall, he continued to speak.

“.... In actual fighting strength, I fall short.... but equally so, I am higher in magic resistance. Then— do you understand what I am trying to say? Here I come, Shalltear. You can only pray that my calculations were wrong.”

“Kuuuuuuu!!”

Sensing her approaching defeat, Shalltear renewed her assault. Seeing her face that was greatly twisted, yet still not unsightly, Ainz started his final gamble.

Although he had boasted with confidence to Shalltear, in truth, not everything was still certain. Super magic shared similarities with skills and did not consume MP. However, it was still considered to be magic and thus could not be used while he was a warrior.

If he released his warrior transformation magic, he will no longer be able to wear his shield and armor and they will fall off of his body. There was no chance that he could block Shalltear's attack in that moment. If she were to use all of her skills in that attack, there was a possibility that the super magic would not be enough to end the battle.

That would mean his defeat.

However, there was no other way to win.

Ainz estimated the timing. He would first have to release his magic, then use the cash item he held in his hand.

Ainz laughed lightly.

Even in YGGDRASIL PVP, he had never used so many cash items. A game and reality— this was the difference between recreation and a fight he had to win at all costs.

Now!

He blocked Shalltear's powerful attack with the shield of his friend and gathered strength to his eyes.

He released the warrior transformation, and launched the supermagic.

Like before, a magic circle appeared in the surroundings. As he was about to destroy the cash item in the shape of an hourglass in his hand—

—for an instant, he hesitated.

It was born from the feeling of guilt of killing the NPC who carried the thoughts of his comrade.

A fatal mistake.

Shalltear did not miss that opening. Having discovered the item in his hand, she channeled her skill into the Spuit Lance with the intent to destroy his arm.

Ainz, who released his warrior transformation, had no way to avoid that attack—.

—*shudder*.

As the Spuit Lance was about to break the item, she felt the presence of an enemy crawl up her spine.

Not knowing how it appeared, Shalltear sensed a presence right by her side. It was filled with such hostility that she could not simply overlook it. This was something she absolutely could not ignore.

Shalltear quickly took her eyes off of the item and turned to look at the one responsible. And— saw that there was nothing.

The desert 200 meters in diameter created by Ainz' magic. Within it, there was no one save for Ainz and Shalltear. The hostility that she sensed before was already gone without a trace. As if it was a daydream—

“Ah...!”

Although Shalltear, having regained her senses, shouted, it was already too late.

The broken hourglass reduced the casting time to zero.

“[Heaven's Downfall].”

At the same time as his voice, everything was wrapped by the light that formed from the narrow space between them.

Within the white heat, Shalltear felt her body crumble away.

Her right hand carbonized and broke apart. In that white world, the Spuit Lance slowly fell to what should have been the ground. Her face dried up from the raging heat and her eyes could now only see white.

Her throat too, dried up and— no, whether or not her throat had yet to finish burning— it was difficult to speak. However, these words alone, she had to say no matter what. Gathering all of what was left of her life, of the existence known as Shalltear Bloodfallen, she spoke.

“.....Ahhhh, Long live Ainz Ooal Gown—sama. You are supreme, truly the strongest existence in all of Nazarick.”

Towards the strongest leader of the 41 Supreme Beings, she expressed her heartfelt respect. As if the wave of heat had burned away her fetters, while her body could no longer move, her heart felt very light.

At the same time, within her fading consciousness, she recalled the appearance of a figure that should not have been there. It was the one who had cut a path of light through the darkness in order to achieve this outcome.

Normally, undead are immune to all mental effects. However, there was a method that held the same power, despite not being considered as a mental effect. That person used such a method.

Shalltear simply smiled as she said:

“..... Brat.”

And with a satisfied expression, Shalltear completely vanished into the white world.



While releasing the skill ‘Sky Eye’ that she had been maintaining until now, the pretty, pink lips that were pouting returned to its original position. Aura wore an unhappy look as she piled on abuses to the person who was not there.

“Stupid. An undead shouldn’t be getting mind controlled. Really, so dumb.”

“W-what’s wrong, oneechan?”

“Hm? Nothing.”

Mare looked over to where Aura was staring, but the only thing he could see within this forest was trees. However, he could make a guess from the direction she was staring at.

She was likely observing the battle between their master and Shalltear.

His sister's skill from the ranger class allowed her to observe everything within two kilometers around her. That was why she, along with the Eyeball Corpse, was given the task of keeping watch.

"S-so, is the battle over?"

"Yeah. Ainz-sama's complete victory."

"O-of course."

Not even Nazarick's strongest Guardian could defeat him. Mare imagined the figure of Ainz and thought it was obvious. There was no way that the one who led the Supreme Beings could be defeated.

"Then oneechan, uh, um, when are we going to collect the items Shalltear was wearing?"

Aura recalled the scene right before she released her skill.

"I think Ainz-sama has already taken care of it. Let's pull out like we've been ordered to."

"O, Okay."

Knowing that his sister was in a somewhat bad mood, Mare agreed without a word.

The one who could have been called Aura's 'best friend' became mind controlled. She then pointed her blade against their master, the object of their esteem and loyalty. Although it was obvious that she had to die, it couldn't be helped that Aura would be a bit grumpy.



Part 4

Within the throne room, Ainz reopened the list and, as expected, found only empty space where there used to be Shalltear's name. With this, Shalltear's death was confirmed and the 1st phase of the plan was concluded.

Pain filled his heart. Although there was no other way, confirming it like this had made him fully realize what he had done and he was overcome with a sense of guilt.

Ainz apologized to Shalltear in his heart. Swallowing his nonexistent saliva, he gazed at the Floor Guardians that had gathered there.

“Then I will now carry out Shalltear’s resurrection. Albedo will watch Shalltear’s name. If, like last time, she is still under the effects of mind control.....”

“Ainz-sama, though it may be impertinent, at that time, we will deal with her.”

At Demiurge’s words, Cocytus and Aura both expressed their agreement and even Mare passively showed his affirmation. Only Albedo was quietly watching the situation.

“Demiurge....”

As Ainz muttered, Demiurge, unlike his usual self, nailed in his point with a voice that carried a strong emotion.

“Ainz-sama, as a Supreme Being, your words are most noble and we are well aware that we must devote our all to following your will. However, allowing any further harm to come near you will be our greatest shame as your servants.”

Demiurge’s eyes moved slightly from Ainz to Albedo.

“If Shalltear rebels once more, we Guardians will destroy her. Please leave this to us.”

Understanding their good will, Ainz had no intention of continuing to be stubborn.

“I understand. Guardians, if such a time comes, I will leave it to you.”

They bowed their heads in unison.

In that moment, Ainz felt ashamed.

A pathetic master.

In the end, he had left open the possibility of his 'children' fighting each other.

From the beginning, the cause was his incompetence. He was to blame for everything.

As Ainz was about to heave a sigh, he saw Albedo's tender expression as she stood quietly and stopped himself.

"Ainz-sama, it is fine if you simply remain here. If all of the Supreme Beings were to disappear, then we would no longer have anyone to pledge our loyalty to. And even if we know that we were not abandoned, it would still become lonely if everyone were to leave."

"..... Indeed. If no one is here then it would get lonely."

Ainz unwittingly moved his eyes to the insignias of the 40 flags hanging across the Throne Hall.

"..... Yes, you are right.... back in the Treasure Hall.... that was foolish."

Ainz let out a whisper that affirmed his conviction and gazed at the Guardians.

"Guardians, protect me. Prepare yourselves!"

As they strongly responded in force, Ainz grasped the Staff of Ainz Ooal Gown that floated just beside him and pointed it at a corner of the throne room.

There, laid a mountain of 500 million gold pieces, more than enough to revive Shalltear.

Normally, it would require a keyboard to be operated. There was no need for such a thing now.

The mountain of gold began to lose its shape and slowly changed from a solid to a liquid state.

As the Floor Guardians watched with nervous eyes, the melted gold flowed and gathered into a single pool. The gold that weighed ten thousand tons became compressed and changed into the small form of a person. It eventually took on the appearance of a golden doll and the light gradually receded.

Soon enough, the light disappeared completely, leaving behind a skin of white wax and long silver hair. In that place was, without a doubt, the figure of Shalltear Bloodfallen. “Albedo!”

Without taking his eyes off of Shalltear, Ainz loudly shouted Albedo’s name.

“There is no need to worry. It appears the mind control has been dispelled.”

“Is that so....”

Ainz’ heart was swept by a powerful sense of relief. He could feel his mind regaining its calm. He put his hand into his item box and pulled out a black mantle, all the while approaching Shalltear’s body.

Her eyes were closed and her chest was unmoving. Although the body that was loosely lying on the floor had the appearance of a corpse, the undead were living corpses, there was nothing wrong with this fact.

The strange part is—

The part that was confirmed just now was a chest that was so flat that it seemed to belong to a boy rather than a girl. In that moment, his eyes lost the place where they were headed and struggled to avert their gaze.

Having just been revived, Shalltear was not wearing any clothes and he didn’t know where to look. In his panic, the thought that he could just look elsewhere didn’t even enter his mind.

Since his eyesight was greatly improved from when he was a human, Ainz could see everything in clear detail. Because she was lying down outstretched, the slight space between her legs—

—Ainz hurriedly threw the black mantle in his hand.

The mantle unraveled in the air and accurately landed on Shalltear, covering her body.

I didn't think it was a pity! I'm an undead so I don't have a sex drive! Well, almost none. I was just tiny bit curious since her clothes didn't appear with her. Well, you know, you can't take off all their clothes in YGGDRASIL. Like I'm saying, right, it's not like I was curious if she had hair down there!

Not knowing who he was making excuses to, his thoughts were in turmoil as Ainz walked towards Shalltear. His head grew hot, which may or may not have been the reason his footsteps had slightly slowed. He also ignored the female voice behind him saying: "If it interests you then you need only to say the word. I am always ready."

As Ainz stood in front of her, sensing his presence, Shalltear opened her crimson eyes. Like someone who overslept, her gaze circled around and stopped on Ainz.

"Ainz-sama?"

A dazed voice, still only half awake. But within it, one could sense the clear presence of loyalty. Although it was already confirmed by both Albedo and the entire administration system within Nazarick, Ainz felt it with his body. With joy, he fell to his knees and carried Shalltear, who was lying on the floor, in an embrace.

"Ueehhhhh?"

It was a slender body that did not match with her immense physical strength.

While wearing a stunned expression that showed she had no idea what was happening, Shalltear let out a strange noise. Paying no mind, Ainz hugged her even more tightly.

"Thank goodness.... No, forgive me. Everything was due to my mistake."

"Yes? That's not true, I don't know what's going on, but how could Ainz-sama ever make a mistake?!"

Shalltear's cold arms wrapped around his back and drew him close. Although the way her hands were groping around was slightly gross, Ainz left it to the fact that she was probably confirming her sense of touch after being dead until just recently.

"Ahh, my first time right here...."

He heard something along those lines, but ignored it.

However, with a monotonous voice, Albedo raised an objection.

".....Ainz-sama. Shalltear is probably tired, so perhaps you should stop."

"You may be right."

Like Player revival, NPC revival may be similar and come with a penalty. After all, this was their first attempt at resurrection since coming to this world.

"Let us save the full story for later. Before that, I would like for you to tell me a couple of things."

As Ainz released his arms, Shalltear wore a face of regret before shooting Albedo a piercing glare. In response, Albedo flaunted her usual kind expression. Although it seemed like the two were about to continue glaring each other down like usual, Shalltear moved her gaze and brought it to an end.

"Yes, anything. but Ainz-sama, why am I in the throne hall? And this appearance, your reaction, have I done something to cause you trouble?"

"That is what I wanted to ask you, do you remember what happened?"

"N, no."

".... I am sorry, Shalltear. I would like you to tell me the last thing you remember."

Shalltear's memories lasted up until the incident five days prior. Her memories of between then and now had vanished.

Like what he did in Carne Village, Ainz was able to erase or fabricate memories with the 10th level magic [Control Amnesia]. However, fabricating memories that spanned even a short length of time cost a large amount of MP. Erasing five days' worth of memories, even for Ainz who boasted a MP pool and recovery rate that surpassed the limits of ordinary magic casters, was impossible.

Of course, there was always the possibility that reviving an NPC came with the cost of a few days' worth of memories. And although he didn't know whether such a thing could be done, there was also a chance that her amnesia was the result of several people cooperating together.

There was too much information that he lacked. At this stage, it was most likely impossible to solve the puzzle.

What was certain was that the identity of the one who used a World Class item on Shalltear had sunk back beneath the surface.

An unknown identity is quite bothersome. There is a high possibility that the enemy will aim for an opportunity to bite Nazarick from below the water.No, perhaps I should be thankful that they're stopping with just that. Well..... I will have to thoroughly exact my revenge on whoever is responsible for this.

Ainz forcefully swallowed the fury that even his undead trait could not suppress and gently spoke to Shalltear.

"Is there anything else that you feel is off?"

If this was YGGDRASIL, there would not be any problems. NPCs did not suffer from the level down penalty. However, there was no way of knowing that this world would be the same.

There was a chance that her level fell like a Player Character's would.

At that question, Shalltear patted around her body and answered.

"I don't think there are any problems."

“I see.”

As soon as he answered, Ainz was gripped with apprehension as Shalltear’s face showed a shocked expression.

“Ainz-sama!”

“What is it! What’s wrong?!”

“My chest is gone.”

If one had to summarize the look on the faces of the Guardians from her words, it would be ‘give me my concern back.’ With his lips turned upside down, even Demiurge wore an incredulous expression.

“You, do you even know what you’re saying given what the situation was like until now?!”

Hearing Albedo yell as everyone’s representative, Shalltear’s shoulders flinched.

Ainz felt the strength leave his body, enough for him to feel as if he was going to keel over. As he stared at the Guardians who were starting to bicker with Shalltear, various thoughts regarding resurrection ran through his mind.

In particular, he thought that it would be good if the people at the graveyard, Clementine and Khajit, would lose their memories as well if they were to be revived.

But that was being too optimistic.

The reason was that he didn’t know as to why Shalltear’s memories had vanished. Being brought back from the dead— there was no guarantee that using revival magic was the same as spending gold to revive an NPC.

While Ainz was in the midst of such thoughts, Shalltear was one-sidedly being admonished by Albedo and even had traces of tears in her eyes.

Seeing this, Ainz knew that his eyes were filled with a sense of longing.

The scene of the sister Simmering Teapot picking on her younger sibling, Peroroncino. His comrades laughing as they watched over them.

The same scene that was now overlapping with the NPCs. As Ainz was about to lightly raise his hand, it halted in midair. As if a thin glass wall blocked his way.

What Ainz felt was loneliness.

The warm place where the Guardians existed, it was like a projection on a screen—different, a place far off.

If Ainz were to join them, they will assume a stance of servitude. But that was merely out of intimidation, different from the warmth of his past comrades.

He felt it was regrettable.

As he let his hand fall weakly to his side, as if she sensed something, Albedo turned and quietly stared at Ainz. It was impossible to discern the emotions hidden within him through his eyes. Just as he was about to ask her why she was staring at him despite this, his eyes went wide at the tender light that glinted from her pupils.

She was gently holding out her hand to him. After a brief hesitation, Ainz grabbed it and— joined the rest of the Guardians.

Albedo was the first one to open her mouth, soon followed by the others.

“Ainz-sama as well, please give Shalltear a firm scolding.”

“I agree! Please say something harsh to this idiot!”

“Indeed. I. believe. it. will. be. prudent. to. give. a. strong. word. of. warning.”

“It’s Ainz-sama’s precious words so make sure you listen closely.”

“B-but not too mean..... Uh, umm, I mean.....”

“—— ha, hahaha.”

Despite the surprised eyes of the Guardians that fell on him, Ainz could not stop the laughter that burst from his lips, no, his heart.

Having laughed aplenty, Ainz quietly turned his eyes to Shalltear.

“Although I have said this to Albedo before, Shalltear is not to fault for this incident. All of the blame lies with me. My predictions could not reach this far despite all of the information that I managed to obtain. Shalltear, you are blameless. Remember these words.”

“Th-thank you.”

“I will leave the matter of finding out what happened to Shalltear to Demiurge. How about it?”

Demiurge bowed his head to express his reverence towards the command. Then, as if suddenly remembering, asked.

“Ainz-sama. About Sebas—.”

“He is bait.”

The Guardians all nodded their heads in subordination as Ainz calmly proclaimed that he would use one of their own as bait. It was obvious to them that the will of the master of the Great Tomb of Nazarick took precedence over the safety of their comrade.

“I do not wish it, but there is no other choice. Although I do not know why Shalltear was targeted, if the enemy were to make another move, there is a high chance that their next target will be the one who accompanied her. That is why I did not call him back to give him a World Class item. Albedo, select someone who will secretly observe Sebas’ surroundings. Even if Sebas is to be bait, I have no intention of handing him over so readily. Tell the observer to engage the enemy if they approach him.”

Having given his order, Ainz narrowed his eyes. The intensity of the red flames dimmed slightly.

..... I don't know who used a World Class item on Shalltear, but eventually, somewhere, we will clash. At that time, I will be sure to repay this debt in full!

“I hear and obey. I will take their strength into consideration and send a dispatch as soon as possible.”

“I leave it to you. Although I have learned that resurrection is possible thanks to Shalltear, I do not wish to ever repeat having to kill what my comrades have created.”

Deeply moved, they bowed their heads. Even if the Guardians already knew that Ainz cherished them so, hearing it directly from his own mouth made it all the more effective.

As if she had just vaguely figured out what had happened to her, Shalltear’s face was appalled. Her expression struggled to hide her shame. Ainz gestured at her to perish the thought.

At that moment, someone beside him spoke.

“Uh, umm, Ainz-sama.”

“What is it, Mare?”

“Um, uh, well, the traces of that battle, should I cover it?”

“No need. Did you know? If you destroy a magic sealing crystal, a powerful blast will come forth and destroy the entire area.”

“Re-really?”

“..... Forgive me, I lied. It is like this. Sometimes, even a lie can turn into the truth. Magic sealing crystals are supposed to be valuable, so they will not be able to test it. Albedo, create a crack in Nigan’s crystal. Tell the head blacksmith to do the same on the armor I commissioned. It should seem like it went through a battle.”

“I will carry out your order.”

“Also, it appears I have been too naive. There is no doubt that there is an enemy near us who seeks to harm Nazarick. We must move onto the plan for strengthening Nazarick as soon as possible. For that reason, I will use my skill to create an undead army. I have said all this before..... ah, was it only Albedo who was present then? Regardless, this will be our utmost priority. I wish to establish a plan to collect the corpses from the Re-Lantier graveyard.”

“There is something I wish to say to you regarding that matter, Ainz-sama.”

“What is it, Albedo?”

“When Ainz-sama creates undead with his skill, it is to my knowledge that using human bodies as the catalyst will, at best, result in the weaker type of undead minions, even if they are of the intermediate rank.”

“Right. And what of it?”

The undead made from the bodies of the Sunlight Scripture were, at best, level 40. When he tried to raise them past that level, after a certain time, they vanished along with the corpses.

“Yes. In truth, I have devised a way for you to obtain new bodies. Will you not consider using corpses other than humans?”

“..... I will assume that you are not talking about the corpses of Nazarick’s servants.”

“No, of course not. It is a different race.”

Albedo smiled. A smile that was both cruel— and beautiful.

“Aura discovered a village of Lizardmen. Will you not invade their land and purge them?”