Welcome to Cautr's
Putting the icing and cherry on the chikubi - est 2015.





Kusoge Online (BETA)

Volume 3

Table of Contents

(You can click or tap on the chapter you want to skip to!)

Color Illustrations **4**

Chapter 1: The 'Jolly Virtual Family' Plan **9**

Chapter 2: About When Our Daughter Started Calling Herself the Savior **115**

Chapter 3: I'm the Only One Who Knows That This World Is Reality **164**

Epilogue: More or Less Everyone Knows That This Reality Is a Kusoge **167**

Extra Chapter **170**

Color Illustrations


クソゲーオンライン仮
このクソゲーが現実だと私だけが知っている
3
つちせ八十八
イラスト：にろ・東雲太郎

勇者キサラと悪の軍団
キサラ
Kisara
「銀髪女ー！
銀投銀投ー！
キキルせっくすマシマシ
取り巻きもらうわよー！」

From right to left:

Kisara

""Silver-hair! Kisara will definitely! Absolutely definitely! Take Papa and Mama back—!"

Bottom-Right Text

Hero Kisara and the Evil Forces



Chapter 1:

The 'Jolly Virtual Family' Plan

第一章

明るい
仮想家族
計画

THE
JUNK!
Kuso Game Online 3

Through the window, he was gazing at the giant tower which soared high in the sky.

Right now, he was in the debugging room of a virtual world. For convenience's sake, it was named the 256th floor of said tower, but in reality, it was situated in a dimension isolated from it. Sasaraki and his friends took care of the management of that tower— of the world of [Sword & Magic Online] from here.

He could see a sheer endless number of blue light dots down on the tower's lowest floor, floor one.

Each of these lights indicated a player.

More than ten thousand players were having adventures down there.

The second floor above it had been unimplemented and hence a blank space.

Had. Now, it was different. Together with his friends, Sasaraki had now built floor two.

After all, Sasaraki was a gamemaster. 'Couldn't there be someone among our customers able to fill in as a gamemaster?' This kind of impetus had lead to this situation. All of the developers had run away and the game had been on the brink of having its service ceased. Sasaraki had taken over as a gamemaster to avoid its discontinuance.

Even now they were still in a dire pinch.

The analog daily pad calendar that hung on the black wall had '9 more days!' written on it.

According to a contract with its sponsor, this virtual world had to shut down immediately once the active player count fell below 10000. All data would be deleted. No backups; since there'd been no money for those.

Therefore, Sasaraki tried hard.

He tried hard for this world he'd spent time with his friends in.

He tried hard as the ruler of this virtual world stuffed with bugs, unimplemented- and untested things. He'd just finished the second floor, 'The End of the Endless Ocean,' the other day after having gone through the hell that which was the incredibly sketchy creation tool.

After he'd placed islands here and there in a 100 km² vast sea, he'd dotted them with towns. You had to swim to get from island to island. They hadn't been able to implement ships. They'd tried to, but all tests resulted in players being thrown off the deck.

Hence, it was required for players to swim, making swimming suits the standard equipment.

But he hadn't just prepared terrain like sea and islands, no, he had also placed a lot of NPCs. 75% of the shopkeepers were onee-sans in swimsuits. Separated in the groups bikinis and one-pieces. The remaining 25% were handsome men for the ladies. Mostly in bikini underpants.

He'd also created dungeons. Using templates as the foundation, he'd finished 72 new dungeons. All of them on the bottom of the ocean. Players could swim for an hour without having to breath if wearing a swimsuit. Meaning that there was a time limit when clearing them.

The time limit concept was ought to bring new excitement to the players. The thought process behind it was: Make something popular among the players, improve the game's reputation, increase the active player count, avoid the end of service.

However, there was one problem.

A fundamental, fatal, and kusoge-ish problem.

".....Nobody's coming..."

He checked the number of players again by operating the gamemaster-exclusive 'Master Screen.' Floor one: 10108 players. Floor two: 0 players. The players weren't coming to floor two at all.

"If nobody clears the first floor, no one can move up to the second, huh?"

Alice, the silver-haired girl, mumbled next to him.

She was one of his gamemaster colleagues. Going by her looks, she could be nothing but a grade schooler, at best a middle schooler. However, betraying this impression, she had the knowledge of a veteran. And she was the one who'd dragged Sasaraki into the world of gamemasters.

"We've lifted the restrictions on the final dungeon, haven't we?"

Sasaraki checked. They'd put a limit of one try per week on floor one's final dungeon. If the first floor had been cleared with the second still unimplemented, everyone would've realized how much the developers had messed up.

In order to protect that secret, they had, among other things, controlled the mobs in the dungeon to kill all the players.

Now, that wasn't necessary anymore, they rather needed them to clear the dungeon already.

"That's right, I thought that that raid guild would somehow manage once we lifted the restrictions, but..."

The raid guild. Name: 'Pursue the Brilliance of the Stars.' A guild who was extremely diligently and earnestly trying to clear this virtual world. Sasaraki had met them a lot. By the way, some of the players he'd killed in the final dungeon belonged to them.

Their guildmaster was a hot-blooded warrior by the name of 'Yutanga.'

"Maybe they grew tired of this game after that last incident and quit?"

The incident: Stuff happened and all players on floor one had been vaporized.

"Those guys aren't so weak-willed that something minor like dying by vaporization would be enough to make them quit."

"That's quite the amazing thing to remark there!"

"They're people who roam across the mountains tens of thousands of times to find a dungeon they aren't even sure exists, you know?"

"...If you put it like that, they really are something different, probably..."

She was talking about the entrance to the last dungeon which had been hidden in a way that would guarantee it not to be found. Yet, it *had* been found by a girl named Tiolis, who'd achieved that by an endless repetition of exploring so tedious and boring, it'd numb anyone's mind. She seemed like a girl that just won't give up and appeared to be kind of extreme in her faith.

He certainly couldn't imagine her to have quit.

"Sasaraki, would you take a look at the situation? Take Lizna with you."

"Got it, but... why take Lizna with me? She's the perpetrator who vaporized everyone, you know?"

She was the one the players called 'The Goddess of Atrocity.'

Everyone feared her.

"Because that guild has a lot of players who want to be heroes, right?"

"So?"

"If we let their foe descend to provoke them, they might get into the spirit."

"...We're really villains, aren't we?"

"Ara, I'm glad you understood that."

Alice winked.



"Gamemasters are the devil— Especially kusoge gamemasters."

* * *

Together with Lizna, he headed to the guild house of 'Pursue the Brilliance of the Stars.'

"Hmm, today the weather's so nice, right, Sasaraki-kun?!"

Lizna said full of energy, and stretched, making her short hair sway.

"Sure is."

"Somehow, bathing in sunlight makes you feel like melting away, right?"

"I wonder."

"I'd really like to try melting o~nce."

"Even if you look at me with that extremely curious gaze... you know?!"

Lizna was basically on a permanent quest of finding new ways to die.

"So? Where are we headed?"

"It's right over there, along that brick street."

Their destination was a big house - or rather, an assembly hall - situated in the best neighborhood of the residential area, five minutes walking distance from downtown. There were about ten different types of houses in this game, and within those, this was the third most-expensive type of house, 'Large Fortress.'

The maximum resident count was 180. Installed in the courtyard were sandbags for melee practice, targets for archery practice, and so on; there was even a dungeon. In that dungeon, undead kept spawning. If you let them alone, they'd eventually flood the whole house. It was a haunted house, so to say.

Obviously, this was just a derp within the parameters, but Sasaraki had heard that they were even using the ghosts for practice.

A strong-willed guild, indeed. The most reliable you could imagine.

Sasaraki and Lizna arrived in front of the entrance, a big steel door with a bolt on it blocking their way.

But, it was too quiet. No door guards, and they couldn't hear anyone inside either.

"Maybe something happened?"

"A serial murder, maybe?"

Lizna's way of thinking was murderous.

"Well, even if there'd been a serial murder, they'd just revive."

"Ah, that's right. Let's try and have a look for now."

She politely knocked on the door, but no answer.

"They didn't hear me, huh? Can't be helped, right?!"

Lizna took the giant hammer from her back and swung it done in one smooth motion. Together with the tremendous thunderous sound of crushing wood and metal, the door broke down. Having lost all its durability points, it dispersed into countless beautiful sparks and vanished.

"What's wrong, Sasaraki-kun? Why are you looking up into the sky with your hand on your face?"

"No... Yeah... I was just thinking that the sky's really blue..."

"It really is blue, ri~ght?"

Lizna laughed loudly.

Anyway, they entered the house.

They found themselves in an atrium.

Taking a look around, there really wasn't a single soul to be found.

"Maybe all of them reached their log-in limit?"

No matter how little of a life you had, you couldn't be logged in for 24/7. Based on a political measure which had emerged from the idea that 'Idolizing virtual worlds is bad for the human nature,' the time a person could stay online in a virtual world was determined by an individual test.

"No, this guild rotates so that a bunch of members are always on."

First of all, they tried heading to the innermost room which was basically the guildmaster room. They went up some stairs and then another set of stairs, and straight ahead after entering the third floor they found the room with the doorplate 'Master Room' on it. First of all, they knocked, "...Who is it...?," came as a weak reply. It was a man's voice.

"No one suspicious. I'm just a goddess."

"...That sounds suspicious already, but go ahead and come in."

When they opened the door, a man they'd seen before was sitting in a chair. A warrior, in his thirties, with a stern build and clad in plate armor. The guildmaster, Yutanga. The strongest warrior in this game.

However, he was loosely hanging in the chair, not looking energetic at all.

"Who are you— No, I know you at least."

"Yes, I'm the goddess."

What kind of greeting is that? Yutanga laughed stuck-up.

"So the Goddess of Atrocity— came to reap our weakened souls?"

"You are weakened?"

"Yeah. The guild 'Pursue the Brilliance of the Stars' is very weakened, indeed."

Lizna frowned.

"That is very worrisome."

"It's even more worrisome to us."

What's with this conversation?

"Has something happened? Did everyone run away after the evaporation?"

Sasaraki asked, and Yutanga shook his head.

"No, something that's merely that absurd won't have any effect on us."

"Then why?"

"The swimsuits... went wrong."

Yutanga said mortified.

"Girls make up 30% of our guild."

"So?"

"Among those, 70% have a humble chest..."

"Ah, I under... Wait a second!"

What the heck kinda topic's this uncle bringing up here?!

"During the incident, we've been giving swimsuits to the big-breasted girls..."

"Why would you do something that stupid?!"

"I swear, we drew lots, it was pure coincidence..."

Perhaps the lottery system had been manipulated?

There was nothing less trustworthy than the 'randomness' in this game.

"The remaining, small-chested girls revolted, saying 'This is discrimination!'"

"Of course."

"Especially one of our core members, Tiolis, cried and said, 'And I believed in you!'"

"Yeah, her chest really was flat."

"Sasaraki-kun, you remember that part quite well, huh?"

"No, it just so happens, alright?!"

"Sure, sure."

Lizna smiled with an aura that seemingly said, 'I forgive you.'

"And then the guild divided into three factions. The men, the big-breasted girls, and the small-chested girls."

"But men make up 70% of the guild, right?"

"With no girls around, men are fragile things."

"In other words, with no girls, they had no motivation to do anything."

"You could say that."

A silence no one cared to break hung in the air. Yutanga gazed out of the window and mumbled...

"I wonder— what could we have done...?"

"As if I know?!"

This guild was hopeless.

* * *

After they'd returned to the debugging room, he and Lizna tried to think up countermeasures together.

"I've a great idea! Couldn't we settle this by handing out swimsuits with pads in them?!"

"That'd obviously just fan the flames, you know?!"

"What nonsense are you two talking about?"

Alice said seemingly astounded.

"But I got the gist of it. Due to a lack of leadership, there's been a split-up in the guild, right?"

She sat on a mandarine box, folded her arms and nodded, "Mhm, mhm..."

"Rather than leadership, aren't they lacking screws in their head?"

"If we're talking about VRMMO addicts, there haven't ever been any screws in their head to begin with."

It was true, but a cruel way to put it.

"So, judging by the results, their leader's already done for, right?"

"Is he? Maybe we could fix that and let them make up..."

"We can't just fix men-women relationships in a week."

"Hmm, then what should we do?"

"Isn't it obvious?"

Alice wiggled her finger, "Tzk, tzk, tzk," and said while seemingly enjoying herself...

"We have to give birth to a new leader that'll replace Yutanga!"

"I get the feeling that that method would be even more time consuming, though."

"Here, here! Lizna-san has a good idea!"

"Rejected."

"WHYYY~?!"

And while those two quarrelled...

[Player Azrael has logged in.]

The robotic system voice announced.

It was the notification feature that reported when a player on your friend list logged in.

"Azrael? She's on later than usual, huh?"

"She surely had a lot to think about."

Lizna said with her arms folded.

"Well, yeah... Surely a lot to think about..."

Sasaraki heaved a tired sigh.

Azrael and Sasaraki were in the middle of an argument.

Why? Because a lot had happened the day before and Sasaraki had impregnated her. Of course not in reality, just in virtual space. In this world, you could apparently get pregnant by just kissing.

Azrael had held her big belly and shouted...

"STUPID, YOU STUPID! GIVE THIS MAIDEN HER CHASTITY BACK, SASARAKIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!"

In tears she'd punched away on him like a child. And gotten repelled by the Invincible Barrier, with her damage getting reflected, and died (the child had been safe). She'd hit her login time limit right after, so they hadn't been able to talk any more.

"I wonder if Azrael's still angry..."

"Why? She only got a little pregnant, right?"

"As if there'd be a girl who'd get angry by this. (Sarcasm)"

I can't complain even if she kills me just by seeing my face.

Well, I can't die here, though.

Even if I do, I'll just revive.

By the way, if we're talking about pregnancy, there'll be birth too, of course. According to Alice, an AI influenced by Sasaraki and Azrael's play record would appear. After hearing that, Azrael had fainted. Sasaraki had been able to do anything but smile spiritlessly.

Frankly, he'd been worried she wouldn't log in ever again.

"B-But she did come back so maybe I can somehow make it right."

Sasaraki said and took a 'Data Cube' out of his pocket. He'd searched the debugging room with Fury yesterday and found this. Using this patch, the pregnancy would be cancelled - according to Fury.

"In other words, it's an abortion patch ☆"

She'd used the worst of expressions for that, but of course he'd ignored her.

He'd definitely not call it like that in front of Azrael. She'd probably kill him.

"Errr, I should send a message first of all."

And so he sent [I'm sorry about yesterday. Can I come over? I'd like to talk.] to her and a few moments later, the sound effect of a new message rang. Azrael's answer appeared on the screen.

[I will definitely not give in to you—!]

...The heck?

"Seems like the usual Azrael, right?"

"Now that you're mentioning it..."

Be that as it may, he couldn't keep dawdling here. They didn't have much time. If they left it alone, the baby would be born within 24 hours real time. There was no further answer from her after that, so he couldn't do anything but look for her whereabouts himself. She appeared to be at their guild house.

"Sasaraki-kun, is it really alright to use that?"

Lizna asked with a worried expression.

"This isn't a question of alright or not, Azrael sure doesn't want things to stay like this."

"You got me wrong. I was asking about you."

"...Eh?"

"You know, what I want to say is..."

Lizna walked right beside Sasaraki.

Then she whispered into his ear...

"Don't you want to have children— with the girl you like?"

He thought his ear was exploding. Her words had had that much force.

"WHA— WAI— I'M NOT REALLY—!"

"This reaction of yours is already proof that you're not sure about this, you know?"

Lizna chuckled. Then she fluttered with her hand.

"Frankly, I'm sure Azrael-san would accept it too! Give it your best!"

He tried to somehow object, but his head was boiling and the words wouldn't come out.

Next to Lizna, Alice heaved a sigh.

"...I'm not sure I can recommend that though..."

* * *

Their meeting place was the guild house of their own guild, 'The Dance of Light and Darkness.'

While waiting for Azrael, Sasaraki was calming his breath.

So that the words Lizna had said earlier wouldn't get to his head.

Of course he didn't— dislike Azrael. Just looking at her made his heart race, when he'd seen her naked skin thanks to a bug, he'd thought the blood in his

veins was boiling. Frankly speaking, she was way cuter than any girl he'd ever seen in real life.

Did that mean that he liked her? He didn't really know.

But that isn't enough to have a child, right?

They both were minors. And it hadn't been in consent either. It was a crime, obviously.

It didn't matter that this was just a virtual world, this was nothing that could just be forgiven.

The point was, Azrael herself didn't like the idea.

So Sasaraki couldn't ask her for what Lizna had been trying to say.

Yeah, that's obviously how it is. Alright, calm down— Let's take another deep breath.

"—Sasaraki."

He heard a voice he knew very well calling out from behind him.

"A-Azrael. So you ca—"

The second her turned around, he lost his voice. His consciousness got taken away by her. She wasn't in her usual miniskirt outfit, she was wearing a loose, white robe like a princess. Looking at her belly bulging like that— it made his heart race in the blink of an eye.

"—Uah..."

He was barely able to contain his urge to hug her.

Uwah, amazing. Somehow— she really, really looks like a bride.

"—Sasaraki?"

"Ah, s-sorry! I-I'll calm down, just give me a second!"

He took a bunch of deep breaths in rapid succession and calmed his nerves.
Right, get that nonsense out of your head, Sasaraki!

"I-I'm fine now. Yeah. Errr, Azrael..."

When he tried to start talking to her, Azrael opened her mouth.

"Sasaraki, I know what you wanna say."

"Ah, y-yeah. Actually, I've found a way to somehow deal with the preg..."

Azrael interrupted his words and shouted...

"Yeah. 'JUST GIVE UP ALREADY AND START MAKING ME MISO SOUP EVERY MORNING,' THAT'S IT, RIGHT?!"

He suddenly felt very calm.

Within a second, She'd convinced him that that was the usual Azrael.

"I won't. I won't make that! I'm a bread person!"

"Yeah, got it... Hm?"

Something seemed off.

"And, w-we totally didn't do this in the right order! Like going on dates or introducing each other to our parents!"

"...Err..."

"This is all too sudden! Absolutely not normal! I-I'm not such an easy girl!"

"...Um..."

There had been something strange between Azrael's lines since earlier.

"B-Basically, we have to do the quests first before we can associate!"

"...So once we did those quests... it'd be okay?"

".....Eh?"

Azrael froze for a second upon hearing this simple question.

Her cheeks flared up right away.

"It... It's not okay, not okay, not okay! Of course it's not!"

"Ah, r-right, yeah..."

I got that wrong, after all. Yeah. She probably just put it in a weird way.

Tears welled up in the corner of Azrael's eyes and she said in a weeping voice...

"But joke's on you! I-I-I will definitely not give in, alright?!"

"No, you see..."

"No matter how many times you say that you just like me so much, I won't give in to someone who deceived a maiden and impregnated her!"

"Listen to what I'm—"

"I won't ever allow this marriage! I won't ever make you miso soup!"

"We're already married, you know?"

Azrael with her teary eyes was totally about to blow her fuse.



Actually, it seemed to have become a fact that Sasaraki had impregnated Azrael on purpose.

"If you even come one step closer, I'll do it! I'll die together with the child!"

Azrael said while drawing her sword.

"Errr, you know that you'll just revive if you die, right?"

He tsukkomi'd before realizing it and Azrael's face grew a tad more composed.

"...—?! W-What a fiend you are—! So you even planned this far ahead—!"

Her face stiffened in shock.

When she took a step back, her feet got caught in her long dress. She shrieked a, "KYA—," her sword slipped out of her hands, and she fell to the ground. 'Magical Sword Gram' spun around and fell with the tip first, piercing Azrael on the floor.

"Ah..."

[Player Azrael Died. Reason: Suicide by the Sword (The Child is Unharmed)]

Ten seconds later, Azrael revived in front of his eyes (with her stomach still big).

Sasaraki was gazing at her with a dumbfounded expression. Finally...

"...FUEH—"

She fell to her knees and started to cry with her head tilted back.

"FUEEEH... WHY, WHY, WHY DID IT COMES TO THIIIIIS..."

"Wai—! S-Sorry! It'll be alright—!"

Sasaraki felt like his chest was being stabbed. It really lied heavy on your conscience if someone cried in front of you. Trying to see things from Azrael's perspective, she'd been unwillingly married to a guy who wasn't even her lover, impregnated, had to give birth, and just committed suicide.

Thinking about it like that, it really was a tragedy.

"Err, sorry, I'm really sorry, Azrael."

"Auuuuu..."

"It's alright, everything's going to be alright, we can do something about the pregnancy."

"We can't! There's nothing but giving birth now—!"

"We can! I've found a patch that takes care of it without giving birth!"

"Fueh?"

Azrael stopped dead with tears still in her eyes.

At last, a chance for him to make her listen. Sasaraki took out the 'Data Cube.'

"L-Look, it's this! This allows us to cancel the pregnancy status!"

"Eh—? Cancel—?"

Azrael blinked incessantly.

Her tears seem to have stopped. Alright, let's continue.

"Yeah! I've even checked with Alice, it's legit! If you think I'm lying, ask her!"

Still half in doubt, Azrael stared at the cube.

"B... But, you don't want that, do you, Sasaraki?"

Azrael said while sniffing.

"Heh?"

"...Because..."

She fixated her black eyes on him.

They were still wet. Then she moved her dripping wet lips.

"You love me and— want me to carry out your child, don't you?"

He felt like an ICBM had exploded in his ears.

"——————————?!"

He frantically withstood the violent coughing fit that'd overcome him. If he reacted to that now, it'd be the same as a confirmation. That'd be fatal. Fatal in every sense. He had to conceal what it was that he wanted.

No— I-It's not like that, not at all!

Take a deep breath. In. And out. Calm down. Calm down, Sasaraki.

After having persuaded himself several times, Sasaraki finally opened his mouth.

"That's not it."

"...You're lying."

"I'm telling the truth."

Azrael glared at Sasaraki with still doubtful eyes.

"You see, if I were lying, I wouldn't bring the patch with me."

"That's... true, but..."

She kept on watching him intently with upturned eyes.

"Hmm... But I'm sure I heard you..."

"A-Anyway, want to try the patch? Then we'll know whether it's true or not."

Azrael altered her gaze between Sasaraki and the 'Data Cube.'

Then she hugged her own body as if to protect it.

"...Y-Yeah, if it's just trying..."

Right when it looked as if he could feel relieved...

Azrael glared at him.

"However! If, *if* it's a lie!"

She pointed at him sharply.

"This time, this time for sure, I definitely won't forgive you—!"

Sasaraki thought absentmindedly...

Huh? So she's forgiven me for impregnating her.

* * *

After that, Sasaraki explained patch's details to Azrael.

Apparently, it implemented a special event for married players— a tutorial on how to raise children. At the end of the tutorial, there'd be an aptitude test, and if you failed, it'd deem you unqualified for raising children. And the penalty was the cancellation of the pregnancy status.

And so the two of them we're walking through the town, heading for the event location.

"So in other words, all we have to do is fail the test on purpose, right?"

Azrael nodded in understanding.

Seems like she's calmed down and believes me for now.

"But what will they have us do for a tutorial?"

"I heard the child will be an AI, so it's likely nothing we'd expect."

He said as both of them reached their destination: A run-down shed in the outskirts of the town of 'Start.' No NPCs appeared to be living in there. The only thing around was a sparkling plate on the door, and it said...

[Lock Arms and Enter (The Power of Parenting Lies in the Love Between You!)]

"What's with this?"

"It probably wants us to act like newlyweds..."

"So the world's trying to humiliate me again...!"

Azrael tried to force her way through by turning and pulling on the doorknob vigorously, but it wouldn't budge.

"Uuh..."

She groaned. Then she glimpsed at Sasaraki.

What should I do? He thought for himself. *Would it be alright if I pretended to stumble or whatever and force more of those lover-esque things onto her?—* When Azrael flushed and suddenly...

"Wah—?!"

...went to lock their arms. Something bouncy of her touched him. That sensation alone made his chest throb hard again. Reflexively, he looked at her. She was ought to be embarrassed too, but apparently she was pulling herself together.

"C'mon, l-let's get in there already..."

"Errr... You okay with this?"

"That doesn't matter, w-we have to do this, right?!"

Azrael said and then mumbled something to herself.

"A child... *a child*... That's definitely not gonna happen..."

It appeared that that resolution had trumped embarrassment.

In which case Sasaraki couldn't allow himself to feel embarrassed either. With arms locked, they turned the doorknob and this time, the door easily opened. The interior was unexpectedly spacious, with two chairs and two desks that you'd expect in a classroom in its center, in front of those was a screen, and a teacher's desk.

For now, the two of them tried sitting down, a robotic system voice welcomed them.

"The parenting tutorial will now commence."

"Alright. Pay close attention, Sasaraki."

"You're really serious about this, aren't you?"

"Our goal is to fail the test, so we gotta know what's wrong, right?"

Her eyes were dead serious. And in front of them, the display lit up.

It appeared to be the tutorial's table of contents.

[Start	Proper Sex Ed (For Minors)
Part 1	Character Creation #1: "Let's give her a name!"
Part 2	Character Creation #2: "Let's decide on the method of education!"
Part 3	Final Parenting Aptitude Test]

Wait a second.

"The rest aside, what's the meaning of s-sex ed?!"

The system voice answered towards our embarrassed Azrael's tsukkomi...

"In accordance with the 'Education for Healthy Youths Law,' this program contributes to an improvement in real life birth rates by ensuring that players - even if they are minors - who have had children in virtual space, receive proper sex education and thus are able to easily make children in the real world, too. To fight the decline in birth rates, this is has been regulated by law and non-compliance is punished by resumption for a maximum of five years."

"E-E-Even if you say that...!"

"You both are man and wife. There is nothing to be embarrassed about."

"OF COURSE THERE IS, STUPIIIIIIIIIID————————!"

Azrael slammed on her desk, but the system voice ignored her.

"Starting sex education. First of all, just like with flowers and bees, men and women also—"

A bewitching pink flower appeared on the display.

Azrael raised a "HYA—?!" and cowered.

"E-Errr... H-How about we keep our eyes closed, Azrael?"

But she glared at him with teary eyes.

"I-If we don't participate as we're supposed to, the child will be born, right—?!"

"Well, probably."

"I'll do it! I'll see this through!"

Azrael said more or less in desperation.

"I-I-I won't lose to t-this much...!"

Azrael clung onto her desk and faced the display seriously.

And so sex ed began.

Starting from flowers and bees, its contents were vaguely following what you'd learn in elementary school during PE. But each time a more explicit term like 'impregnation' or 'egg cell' came up, Azrael reacted with half-crying "Hyau!"s or "Auh!"s.

Sasaraki felt uneasy too.

Actually, he was enduring so hard, he almost went crazy.

This was supposed to be the class he'd taken in elementary school no problem, like, 'Oh, so that's how it is,' but just having a girl besides him made him feel like he was doing something he really, really shouldn't. Rather, he felt utterly sinful.

"This concludes the lecture."

The system voice said.

"F... Finally it's over...!"

Azrael collapsed across her desk, exhausted.

But they weren't done yet.

"In order to test whether you paid proper attention, let us have a discussion."

""EEEEEEEEEEEEEEH—?!""

Suddenly their chairs turned and were forcefully faced at each other.

"Eh...? Ah... D-Don't—"

Azrael immediately hid her chest with both her arms, which emphasized her belly, and Sasaraki's gaze wandered there. Azrael seemed to notice, twisted her body to try and hid it, but it was just too big to hide.

"Please tell us your impression on the lecture just now, dad."

Dad? She was adressing Sasaraki, of course.

"I-Impression?"

"It is sufficient to express your current emotions."

"E-Err, errrr... I-It really made my chest pound."

"And you are now able to make children in real life, correct?"

"Eh...? I... probably can... maybe."

Is this some sort of punishment for something? Have I lost some sort of bet?

"Next it is your turn, mom. Your honest impression, please."

"Eh? Ah, mine?! Umm, umm, I knew all that already, so I didn't really care!"

"Your true impression, please."

"That really was my true impression, of course!"

"If you lie one more time, the program will shut down."

"HAUAGU—?!"

Azrael was glaring at the speakers as if they were the murderers of her parents.

At last, she fell prostrate over her desk, holding her head.

In that position, she mumbled with a tear-chocked, trembling voice...

".....I-It was embarrassing... My body... felt incredibly hot..."

BADUMM! Sasaraki's heartbeat sped up.

"Très bien. This is proof of your secondary sex characteristics."

"NOTHING'S 'TRÈS!' DIE, YOU ROTTEN SYSTEM———!"

Sasaraki was watching Azrael striking away at her desk with her eyes filled with tears.

Seemingly aware of that gaze, Azrael raised her head.

"Ah... Sasaraki! You pictured it just now, didn't you?!"

"Eh? P-Pictured what?"

"Making children with me in real life, you pictured that, didn't you?!"

"Wha—?! EEEEEEEEEH—?! I DIDN'T! I REALLY DIDN'T!"

"STUPID, STUPID, STUPIIIIIIIIIIIIID—!"

"A splendid lover's quarrel, indeed."

This game's AI really was the worst.

* * *

Next was character creation.

"Now let us give your daughter a name, please discuss until you feel satisfied."

"Is a daughter the only option?"

"All AIs in this virtual world are fated to be female."

"Why?"

"The prevailing opinion is that there has been insufficient budget for the implementation of male AIs."

"Guess I can't argue with that."

It were this game's three big 'U's: Unimplemented, untested, unfixed.

Every system lacked more than half of what it should hold.

"This is your interface device."

A stand rose from the floor, on top of it was a keyboard.

It appeared like you could enter hiragana, katakana, and alphabetical characters.

"How should we name her, Azrael?"

"...I don't care. You call her whatever you like."

"Eh? You sure?"

He had thought that Azrael liked those kinds of things.

"If I name her, I'll get attached... And I'm not interested in some girl's name."

Azrael's cheeks flushed and she turned her head away. It seemed like the impact of the earlier sex ed was still resonating. Sasaraki thought, *Can't be helped, huh?*, and racked his brains. She'd be his and Azrael's child (that was the setting, at least), so...

"—El."

He typed away on the keyboard.

"Heh?"

Azrael raised her voice in disarray.

She blankly stared at the display with "El" on it.

"What's... that supposed to mean?"

"I took two characters out of Azrael, so El."

Yeah, I don't mean to brag but that's nice thinking right there, or so he thought when Azrael's expression rather darkened.

"Wha—? Wait! That's way too simple—!"

"You think so? I think simple's the way to go, though."

"El is the syllable you put at the end of an angel's name, at least think of a prefix to go with that!"

"Then how about something from my name, too...? Sasael or so?"

He corrected the name to 'Sasael.'

"—Hrm. I see, not bad."

Azrael put her hand to her chin and started grumbling, "Hmhmhm..."

"Sasael... Having two syllables from the 'sa'-row in succession makes it hard to pronounce and it's delicately close to the Japanese word 'sasaeru.' Azrael, Rafael, or Uriel have the 'ra'-row in there, right? That way it has more meaning too, think of Hebraic grammar for instance!"

She kept on rattling.

"So that'd mean we'd have to change it to 'Sariel.' It's the angel that governs over death, so it'd also have a something in common with me."

"I see. Got it, so her name's Sariel."

He used the keyboard to change the name once more.

"Ah! We're not done yet! Wait a sec!"

Azrael grumbled a serious, "Hmmm."

"Sariel... not bad, it's not bad, but something's still missing!"

"Something? Something of what?"

"In Azrael, you know, there's that hard 'z' sound, right?"

"It has that hard sound, yeah."

"Doesn't that make it cooler?"

".....Does it?"

"It does. Which means Sariel's a bit... you know, too clean, it lacks impact!"

How's she so picky here?

"She'll have to survive in this world, so it has to be a stronger name."

"...Wait, weren't you not interested, Azrael?"

"In what?"

"In that girl's name, or so you said."

She had said that merely minutes ago. Azrael blinked incessantly. For some reason, he could hear the tick-tock of a clock. About ten times. Then Azrael's cheeks suddenly flared up.

"—T-T-T-T-T-That's right! Of course I don't care about it—!"

Azrael clung to that claim frantically.

Apparently, she'd forgotten her words from earlier.

"Then 'Sariel' is fine, right?"

"Ah—! W-Wait!"

Azrael grabbed his hands.

"I'm not interested, but choosing a name is really, you know, a big deal!"

"Yeah."

"So, you see, how should I put it—?!"

"Errr..."

Sasaraki scratched his cheek.

What she basically wanted to say, or rather, what she wanted *him* to say, was...

"—Could you pick a name for her in my stead?"

To him it looked like Azrael's eyes just began to sparkle.

"Ehehe... I-If you're going that far, then I've no choice!"

And she started grumbling.

30 minutes later...

"How's this taking so long?!"

So far, 30 potential candidates had come up.

"Idiot, it's a name, this stuff usually takes three months!"

Azrael grinned boldly.

"Yeah— 'A. Kisara!' That's your name!"

Kisara was a rearrangement of 'Sasaraki.' "She isn't my daughter so I can't have her inherit my name," Azrael had said halfway through her thought process, so she had centered it around Sasaraki's. When he'd asked her what the 'A.' stood for, she'd replied somewhat proudly: "Fufufu, that's a secret— But it's related to the mystery surrounding her birth, that's all I'm gonna say!"

It was probably the A in Azrael.

"It appears your discussion came to an end."

"Yeah, please register it."

"Understood. Your daughter's name is 'El Sasael Sariel Lyric Kilkilios Azusa Edifel Neimial Afulamas Yamiko Mayoi Kurisu Anzelitta Allblack Aaaa AhIpressedthebuttonbyaccidentthere A. %&?!,' correct?"

Around the 'Afulamas,' Azrael's eyes had shot open in confusion.

"Wait a second! On top of all those half-baked ones mixed in, the actual name's not even in there, is it?!"

"It is not possible to retract characters once entered. Additional characters simply get added to former entries."

What kind of rotten input system is that?

"Wait, t-then we're gonna redo it from the start!"

"An already entered name cannot be changed. It is as once-in-a-lifetime decision."

"Nonono!"

"However, I anticipate the character count to exceed the character limit which may cause difficulties in this virtual world."

"Yeah, then we'll just shorten it to the last..."

"Therefore, I will prepare an extra-large nameplate. So all is fine."

"It absolutely is not?!"

"Well then, let us decide on what milestones 'El Sasael Sariel Lyric Kilkilios Azusa Edifel Neimial Afulamas Yamiko Mayoi Kurisu Anzelitta Allblack Aaaa AhIpressedthebuttonbyaccidentthere A %&?!'-sama should be raised by."

"WAITWAITTHISCAN'TBEHAPPENING, STUPIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIID—!"

Azrael's shout echoed futilely. Of course the program didn't stop.

"Well then, a 'Test Ceremony' decides in what way your daughter grows up. Switching locations..."

The moment the system voice said that, the air was suddenly painted out. The worn-out wooden building turned into something almost like a temple. It had a marble floor and giant sculptured pillars. On top of that, before Sasaraki and Azrael's eyes was an enshrined egg, the size of a human being.

"KYAA—?!"

Azrael raised a shriek. Her belly was returned to its normal size.

"Eh? H-Huh—?"

"This is the egg which has been inside you."

"Egg...? You do realize that humans don't lay eggs, right?"

Azrael rubbed her belly in wonder.

"Ah, but it feels light again... T-That egg was inside me...?"

She fixated her eyes on the egg. The shell was slightly transparent. Inside floated something resembling the figure of a baby. Curled together, it hovered inside. It looked like a real, unborn child.

Then, a red orb the size of a fist emerged in front of his eyes. It revolved slowly around him. Similarly, a blue orb was revolving around Azrael like a satellite.

"The blue orb signals her father's, the red orb her mother's traits. These two orbs will activate and let the child inherit them. Your mutual love is required to activate them."

"Love?"

"Basically, you have to touch the orb."

"What do you think, Azrael?"

"...There's no other way."

Azrael touched the blue orb with a hint of suspicion on her face.

Right after, the orb inflated hugely, and as soon as that—

"KYAA—?!"

It emitted an intense light. Sasaraki opened his eyes after the light had faded. The blue orb was now floating near Azrael. There were characters on it. It said...

"He doesn't make fun of me."

"This is what mum thinks dad's traits are."

The system voice continued while another voice came out of the orb. It was Azrael's.

"That he doesn't make fun of me as the Deathbringer Angel. That he says I'm cool. That he accepts my mistakes without laughing at me. That I can feel at ease when he's with me. Those are the things that— I like about Sasaraki."

"WAAAAAAAAAAAAI—?!"

Azrael's shrill voice echoed.

"T-T-T-That's not—! That wasn't me just now! It was the orb!"

"Eh...? Ah, ye, t-that's right, huh?! It was the orb!"

"No, these are the traits that mum thinks dad has."

"YOU BE QUIET—!"

Azrael's shoulders shook under her heavy breathing while her face was colored beed-red.

"Next is the red orb."

"Ah... E-Errr..."

Going by how this went just now, it'll read it out loud in my voice. But, I've to do it. Sasaraki extended his hand and lay it down on the orb. It was warm. For an instant, it throbbed like a heart and then it released a voice...

"She's cute."

"Eh—?"

Azrael opened her mouth dumbfoundedly.

Sasaraki's voice continued coming from the orb.

"It's cute how she gives her all to role play. It's cute how she flushes immediately. It's cute how she holds her friends precious. It's cute how easy she's tricked. It's cute how she forgave me for impregnating her. Of course, she looks cute, too. Azrael is, in any case, cute and— that is what I like about her."

"A——uh..."

Oh God.

He understood how Azrael must've felt earlier.

It was really embarrassing to hear such things being said in one's own voice.

No, well, I really do think she's cute, but... this orb is way too direct.

"N-No! You know, it's the orb! The orb!"

Sasaraki shouted unable to endure the tense atmosphere.

Azrael had been spacing out, but finally returned to her senses.

"Ah... Y-Yeah, i-it was the orb, right?!"

"The orb, yeah!"

Neither of them probably knew how that was even an excuse, but for now, they nodded at each other.

"Well then, please place the orb on the pedestal."

Three pedestals appeared around the egg. They were made out of marble, and colored blue, red, and golden. In the center of the pedestals was an oval dent, apparently for putting the orb in it.

"I-I'll start, then."

First, Sasaraki put the red orb onto the red pedestal.

It emitted a red light, illuminating the child within the egg. Azrael likewise put the orb on the pedestal and it emitted a blue light.

"Huh...? She's moving...?"

Azrael mumbled. As she said, the child within the orb was slightly moving her hands. She was still in her curled up pose, but— her small eyes had narrowed for an instant.

"KYA—?! D-Did she smile just now?!"

"If a child sees their parents, it will smile."

"T-That might be true, but..."

Azrael altered her gaze between the red orb and the child within the egg.

"Eh...? Could this child really be alive?"

"She still has no self-awareness, this is for after the aptitude test."

"T-That's right, huh...?"

Azrael took a step toward the egg. She gazed at the child full of curiosity.

"Azrael, what's wrong?"

"HYAU—?! N-Nothing! I'm not interested at all!"

She shook her head with a frantic expression.

"The third orb is a blessing given by this world."

"Given by this world?"

"It will be picked randomly from a set of premade traits."

The system voice said and something big manifested itself in front of Sasaraki. It had a huge number of orbs in its top part, and there was a button above something which was likely the lid where the orb would come out. He was probably supposed to press that button.

"You can pull out up to three different orbs. Well then, enjoy yourself."

"Even if you say that..."

He met eyes with Azrael besides him.

"Azrael, want to give it a try?"

"I-I'm fine. She won't be born anyway, so there's no point..."

Azrael said while casting glimpses towards the girl in the egg. She was obviously very interested, but it was probably undue to pry further into that. *Well, we could redo it, anyway...* Sasaraki thought and just went ahead and pressed the button.

Bang, *clatter*, *clunk*.

Together with those underwhelming sounds, an orb came out of the lid.

He picked it up and it said...

[Meta Character]

"...The heck?!"

"Characters with the trait 'Meta Character' have the ability to recognize that this virtual world is just a game. They won't hold the knowledge initially, but as they learn, they'll come to realize. Characters holding this trait mostly go insane."

"HOW'S THIS A BLESSING?!"

"It's more of a curse..."

"Do you wish to place the orb on the pedestal? Or try again? If the latter, please press the button."

"C'mon, Sasaraki, we're doing it again!"

Azrael stepped forward and pressed the button.

Yet another white orb came out.

He took a peek at its contents together with Azrael.

[Agitator]

"Characters with the trait 'Agitator' have the ability to fire up crowds, they are excellent speakers. If they command a big group, their enthusiasm might even change the world— Whether that's true remains to be found out."

"That sounds kind of vague, right?"

"Doesn't that mean she'd be a dictator? That won't do! It's no good, either! Next!"

Somehow, Azrael was really getting into it.

"EII! Push it—!"

Push, *clatterclatter*, *clunk*.

And out came— [Seraphic].

"Yeahyeah! That one's good!"

Azrael's whole face was almost sparkling. The system voice continued with its explanation.

"Characters with the trait 'Seraphic' have the strong desire to save the whole world. They always think about what they could do to be its savior. Characters holding this trait are practically guaranteed to go insane."

"So they also go insane, after all?!"

"Still better than the others, right?!"

Certainly, going by how the others sounded, this one wasn't *as* bad. For now, he put the white orb saying 'Seraphic' into the golden pedestal. Thereupon, the other two orbs, 'Meta Character' and 'Agitator,' began to float and stuck themselves to the pedestal.

"What's this now?!"

"Traits can't be returned once drawn."

"Nonono!"

"Her traits are set to 'Not making fun of,' 'cute,' 'meta character,' 'agitator,' 'seraphic.' Okay?"

"It's not okay! That's pure chaos!"

"The system is unable to apply any alterations."

"I knew it!"

"Well then, your daughter will grow going by these three orbs."

"They're five, not three, aren't they?!"

The five orbs sparkled on the three pedestals and rays of light surged into the egg like a faint river. Something strange happened. White, red, and blue; the child was illuminated by those three colors and— as if fast-forwarded, her body matured.

"Eh...? Ah, she's blonde..."

Azrael mumbled. The girl stopped to mature around the age of ten. She had short hair now, looked younger than Alice to him, had no clothes on; basically, she was stark naked. Her body emitted a pale, golden light.

And on her back— she had pure white wings, just like an angel.

"Girls with 'angelic' traits are granted invisible wings."

"I can see those 'invisible' wings, though."

"Those who share her blood, like her mother and father, can see them."

He could hear Azrael swallow.

"Amaz... Ah, her wings are shining... She really looks just like an angel."

"Yes. She's in the Seraph Class."

"Seraph Class...!"

Azrael's eyes sparkled.

Even though she'd stated that she wouldn't give birth, she appeared to be really interested. That was quite possible. After all, she described herself as a deathbringer angel so many times over, and now a real angel (although she'd just been given a trait) was right in front of her eyes; and to boot with, it was an angel looking so much like herself.

She put her hand on the egg and virtually devoured the angel with her eyes.

Her mind seemed to have wandered off to somewhere, she patted the egg with her hand.

"Well then, the last question. Should you pass, the child will gain her self-awareness— However, should you fail, she will not. This is your last chance. Please choose after you have properly considered whether you have the resolution to have a child."

The system voice echoed, and after a short time of being absent-minded, Azrael's hand stopped and she lifted her head.

"If you wish to hatch the egg, pat the shell thrice and call your daughter's name.

If you do not wish to hatch the egg, smash it."

The orb's light stopped. Instead, the egg's shell began to shine.

"Azrael, errr..."

He tried to call out to her, but his words faded. He glimpsed at the girl in the egg— their child. A short-haired, blonde girl. Putting it frankly, he'd be lying if he said he had no interest in her. Would she call him Papa if they were to give her self-awareness now—?

—No, I mustn't!

Sasaraki shook his head and dispelled the temptation.

An AI with self-awareness. Was she any different from a human being?

He couldn't take on such a responsibility, what if she'd end up like Fury because of him?

They should do as planned and cancel the whole thing, after all.

But—

What weighed on his mind was Azrael.

Even now, she was staring at the girl inside the egg.

Since earlier, she'd looked as if she'd be quite curious, so how did *she* feel about this—?

Wondering about that...

"—We're smashing it, Sasaraki."

Azrael mumbled in a low tone of voice.

"Eh...? Y-You sure?"

She silently drew 'Magical Sword Gram' from her hips.

"This child... must not be born."

Her voice was trembling. Azrael turned around to him. She wore a smile as if she'd come to realize something.

"After all, she surely won't be able to find happiness."

Pointing 'Magical Sword Gram' with its purple aura at the egg, she continued.

"Sasaraki, do you remember her name?"

"Eh...? Kisara, right?"

"It's 'El Sasael Sariel Lyric Kilkilios Azusa Edifel Neimial Afulamas Yamiko Mayoi Kurisu Anzelitta Allblack Aaaa AhIpressedthebuttonbyaccidentthere A %&?!'"

"You remembered all of it?!"

What an incredible memory— Well, maybe that's the result of her affection towards her own daughter?

Azrael shook her head in sorrow.

"There's no happiness for her in a world that forces such a name onto her."

That was terrifyingly persuasive.

"That's why... I'm sorry."

Azrael slowly raised her sword. He could see a tear rolling down her cheek. It surely was a true one. After all, Azrael was always true in her role playing.

"You shan't be born— DISAPPEAR, MY DAUGHTER!"

She shouted and swung her sword down—

CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!

It got repelled by a golden barrier that covered the egg.

""Eh?""

Both of their voices resonated in surprise.

"Hatching the egg—"

"Eh...? E-Eh? Wait, WAIT! Why won't it break?!"

"Because you patted it three times and called her name before you did."

"Eh...? A-AAAAAAAAAH—?!"

Azrael did certainly pet it.

"No, that didn't count, right?! That was before you even explained, you know?!"

"The pre-command-queue system works as intended."

"Why is it that *that* kind of system is functioning as intended?! Cancel, CANCEL!"

"There is no cancel function."

Did the developers hold a grudge against cancelling or what? Maybe someone cancelled their date with them at the last moment? While thinking this kind of stuff which was nothing short of escapism, he heard the egg crack.

The girl opened her eyes.

They were green. She looked directly at Sasaraki. He couldn't utter a thing. Azrael was the same. The girl's lips moved. Her commanding voice echoed throughout the temple.

"Sacred! Oh sacred, so sacred! —I, mother, and father; the Holy Trinity!"

The egg shell got smashed. It fissured and transformed into sparkling pieces. The girl calmly stood in its center. Her curled up wings spread grandly and with one strong stroke, the girl shot into the air with big momentum.

BAM!

And hit her head on the ceiling.

".....Eh?"

And crashed down.

Swooooooosh... He felt a cold wind blowing.

Sasaraki couldn't say a thing. Azrael was the same. All they could do was gaze at the naked girl that had suddenly fallen prostrate on the floor in front of them. He had seen this kind of scene before. Unconsciously, he turned to Azrael.

Oh right, it was during Azrael's Death Game misunderstanding.

She hit her head at that time, too.

At last, the girl stood up.

"Hau, t-that hurts... Huh? Actually, it doesn't...?"

With tears still flowing, she inclined her head in wonder. While she did have a bump on her forehead from meeting with the ceiling, she seemed to be confused as to why there was no pain. She surveyed her surroundings and met eyes with Sasaraki and Azrael.

Then she muttered a small, "Aaah—!"

She shook her head, clapped her cheeks, and stood up.

"Umm—! T-That now didn't count!"

"Didn't count?"

He had heard these words from someone else just earlier.

"So please don't get the wrong idea of me! Please give me another chance!"

".....What do you want us to do?"

"I-I'll do the set-up once again!"

"Set-up?"

"Yes. Please give me a moment."

She sat down and hugged her knees within the smashed up egg shell pieces. Azrael and Sasaraki watched her quietly.

"TAAH—!"

She spread her wings and took off. This time, landing safely.



Striking a triumphant pose as if saying, "Nailed it!," she did a twirl.

Then folded her arms and assumed a rather flashy pose, shouting...

"YOUR DAUGHTER, THE ANGEL OF SALVATION— HAS COME INTO THE WORLD—!"

The self-proclaimed angel of salvation shouted with a triumphant expression on her face while Sasaraki was now sure.

Yeah, this is, without a doubt, Azrael's daughter.

".....Gefuu..."

Whilst Azrael herself made a strange noise and fainted.

"Mama, what's wrong?! Were you so overwhelmed by my entrance as the savior that you fainted?!"

"That's probably not it."

* * *

Azrael had regained consciousness immediately, but she was still in a stasis with her eyes staring.

That's what happened when you suffered a psychological shock in this game. The developers had described it as a safeguard to protect the players' mental health, but the exact meaning of this remained unknown. Maybe just no one knew.

"Come on, Kisara, pull yourself together and re-introduce y—... Mama? Are you ok? Your eyes look dead."

"I'm fine. I'm a deathbringer angel, I'm fine."

"So you're fine! Thank God! As I'd expect from Mama!"

"No, she doesn't look fine at all... Well, whatever."

By his experience, she'd be back to her usual self in a few minutes.

"She isn't? Fufufu, then it's my turn!"

"For what?"

The girl laughed a haughty "Fufu~" (exactly like Azrael),

"Ac-tu-al-ly, I can use restoration magic!"

"Eh? Magic?"

"I'm the angel of salvation, after all!"

There was no magic in this game. Well, monsters did use magic, though.

Together with some words to fire herself up, the girl swung her hands around as if she was performing an incantation.

"Here I go~! 'SERAPH HEALING!'"

Sparkle, sparkle. Some shiny effects appeared.

And that was all. Azrael was still out of it.

"...Huh?"

The girl inclined her head.

"O-Once more!"

Sparkle, sparkle. *Sparkle, sparkle*. *Sparkle, sparkle*.

"W-Why's there nothing but these lights happening—?!"

"Probably because your spell hasn't been implemented..."

Something you'd encounter quite often around here.

"Papa, this is, without a doubt, part of an evil scheme!"

"(Without a doubt) It is."

"Who could interfere with my magic—?! There must be some evil being that manipulates the magic in our world!"

"(It's not a being, but surely) There is."

Sasaraki nodded to the girl who was so earnestly pushing her story in front of him.

As you might expect from an angel of salvation, she wanted to save the world, so there was no helping it.

But—

This kid really is like a mini Azrael. The only things different about her are her blonde hair, smaller size in general (especially around the chest), and her lack of clothes. Wait, she's still stark naked. With her white wings there's something angel-ish about her like this, but—

"Papa, what's wrong? Is there something on my face?"

"Rather than your face, you better put on some clothes already."

"Clothes? Eh? KYAA—?!"

Finally realizing she's naked, she apparently felt embarrassed about it.

She showed a cute reaction and squatted down, groaning "Auuh..."

"Y-Y-You shouldn't stare at me that hard, you know—?!"

"S-Sorry! Here, take this!"

Sasaraki handed her his cloak for the time being.

"Uuuh..."

The girl hurriedly accepted the cloak.

She gazed at him.

"...Papa, it's not right to stare at your naked daughter."

"Eh? No, I didn't mean to, but sorry."

"No matter how much I look like Mama, it's lewd."

"...I'm really not that kind of a pervert, though."

As expected, he didn't feel *that* towards an elementary schooler, and his own daughter to boot.

"Well, it's okay. I'm an angel, I shall smile and forgive you."

"Yeah. Thanks."

Her mood seemed to warm up a little.

"So, Papa, I'd like to hear my name."

"...Your name?"

"Yes, the name Papa and Mama gave me."

Her eyes lit up.

But even if she asked him to— he couldn't remember that long-ass name.

"Hey, Azrael, what was her name again?"

".....Ha—"

Being called out to, Azrael finally snapped out of it.

"Eh...? Name? You mean 'El Sasael Sariel Lyric Kilkilios Azusa Edifel Neimial Afulamas Yamiko Mayoi Kurisu Anzelitta Allblack Aaaa AhIpressedthebuttonbyaccidentthere A %&?!?'"

In an instant, El Sasael Sari (etcetc.) A %&?!'s smile froze.

".....I'm sorry, I didn't catch that. Could you repeat it one more time?"

"It's El Sasael (etcetc.)."

Having listened carefully this time around, Sasaraki was the one to answer. The girl's frozen smile changed into a dumbfounded expression. Then, together with

a puff of smoke, a gigantic nameplate appeared. The name they'd recited just now, the name so cryptic and long it was unreal, was written on it.

The girl gazed at the nameplate and looked as if she wanted to say something— Then finally...

"……I..."

She smiled like an angel and picked up the nameplate.

"I-I-I understand! M-My name... My name is, um, El Sasael... Err, um, that's, I-I can't really remember all of it and I can't read it either, but... But! It's the name Papa and Mama thought up so earnestly to give to me! I'll remember it! Precisely! And momentarily—!"

She announced, still smiling. It was a forced smile.

Suddenly, Sasaraki felt they were doing something wrong.

Huh? Is this really okay—?

"...—?! N-N-No, you got it all wrong—!"

Azrael shouted in an instant. She looked dead serious.

"That's not it! That's not your name!"

"Eh—? B-But the nameplate says that..."

"That's a mistake! Your name is Kisara!"

The girl blinked incessantly.

And then she mumbled the syllables 'ki,' 'sa,' 'ra.'

Her expression lit up like the sun.

"Kisara— I'm Kisara! Kisara's Kisara! What a great name!"

Azrael's face lit up, too.

"T-That's right, huh?! Of course it is!"

"Thank you, Mama!"

Azrael suddenly stopped moving.

"Mama, is something wrong?"

"……Ah…"

She shook her head awkwardly.

"SA… SASARAKIIIIIIIIIIII—?! WHAT ARE WE GONNA DOOOOOOO—?!"

"Even if you ask me that?!"

"We even gave her a name!"

"S-She looked so sad, so isn't it fine?!"

"And on top of that, she's incredibly cute!"

"Are you praising yourself there?!"

"WHAT ARE WE GONNA DOOOOOOOO?!"

She grabbed Sasaraki by the collar and shook him.

"Ah, Mama, no lover's quarrels!"

"We aren't lovers! I'll never acknowledge this marriage—!"

"Eh—?"

Kisara's face froze up again.

"C-Could the relationships in Kisara's family be the infamous 'it's complicated?!'"

"No, rather than complicated… there have been a bunch of unfortunate accidents, or how should I say…"

"Kisara's birth was an unfortunate accident—?!"

That's exactly what it was.

…Is what Sasaraki couldn't tell this kid even if it killed him. Instead, he said in a hurry…

"N-Not at all, you were perfectly planned! Isn't that right, Azrael?!"

"Eh...? Ah, um, err—"

Azrael moved her eyes between Sasaraki and Kisara. Then she forced a smile.

"Of... O-Of course, that's how it is! I was just joking earlier!"

"Ah, w-what a relief, Kisara was shocked there for a moment..."

Kisara put her hand to her chest and breathed a sigh of relief.

In the meantime, Azrael drew close to Sasaraki's ear.

"Sasaraki, what are we gonna do? This is an incredibly good child!"

"Ah, are you talking about something secret? Kisara will block her ears then."

"Ah... Sorry, please do that."

Kisara nodded energetically and trotted away, taking a bit of a distance.

"Auu, she's such a good girl... Not good, this is not good!"

"So how's this not good, anyway?"

"This is just not good! A good girl like her will die in the blink of an eye in this kusoge world!"

".....Ah..."

Certainly, that had been Azrael's worry from the start. An truly gentle person couldn't really survive in this world. And going by what she'd said earlier, she did have certain knowledge of some kind, but wasn't aware of being in a game.

"If she decides to go on some adventure to slay a demon king or something, she'll die in a second!"

"That's right."

Sasaraki gazed at Kisara. With Sasaraki's cloak loosely on her, she was faithfully listening to what Azrael had told her and blocked her ears. She was supposed to be an AI, not a human being, but just like Fury, he couldn't see Kisara as anything but a real person.

So should they not tell her anything and just live in this RPG as parent and child?

That's impossible, huh? Sasaraki shook his head. There were three problems. To begin with, they had to go back to see to this game and didn't have time for something else. Second, as Azrael had said, Kisara would probably die in the blink of an eye.

And third but most crucially.

There was no demon king in this world that they were ought to defeat.

Actually, Sasaraki had planned to make something like that at a later point.

Even if they lied to her now, they'd be found out before long.

"Yeah... Let's just tell her the truth about this world straight."

"I wonder, will she turn out like Fury?"

Fury was the dear AI who loved nothing more than mass-murdering players.

"Well, let's do our best so that she won't... Hey, Kisara."

He patted Kisara's shoulders from next to her while she was still blocking her ears.

She then spun around and showed a smile.

"Kisara, err, we've something important to tell you."

Kisara sit down on the floor in polite 'seiza' and looked up at him.

Now, how to explain it to her— Sasaraki pondered, rather than theory, he wanted to prove it to her practically.

The quickest and easiest way is probably...

"I'll show you my powers now, so please watch quietly and carefully."

"Oooh...! Papa's powers! Kisara will watch quietly and carefully—!"

She said with sparkling eyes.

Sasaraki mumbled, "Screen on," and the 'Master Screen' appeared. The cold, pale-blue screen was proof that he was a gamemaster, that this world was a game; proof that this wasn't reality.

"Oooh—! It's pretty! What does it do?"

"Errr, it can spawn items, monsters, has a creation tool..."

"Eh...?"

Sasaraki entered said 'Creation Mode' and vaguely altered the terrain.

They were indoors, in a wooden room, but the walls grew transparent in a flash. A hill gradually rose close to them. While he was at it, he should also spawn an item, so he spawned and placed a legendary sword on top of the hill.

Kisara's eyes were just small dots by now.

"Heh? E-Eeh—?! What was that just now?!"

"The creation tool."

"Kisara thought only a god could do such things!"

"Yeah, well, I'm kind of like a god, I'm an administrator of this world."

"...P-Please wait a second!"

Kisara spurted up the tiny hill.

Then she put her hands on the legendary sword, pulled it out, and shouted, "OOOOOH! IT'S THE REAL DEAL—?!" Finally, she shouldered it heavily and carefully spurted back down the hill. Her eyes were sparkling.

"Wai—, thi—! T-T-T-T-T-THIS IS WAY TOO AMAZING! PAPA'S A GOD?!"

"No, not a god, a gamemaster."

"G-Gamemaster?"

"This world is a game."

Kisara seriously gazed at Sasaraki's face. Not that she didn't know what a game was, she simply doubted what was going on in his head. At last, Kisara groaned a small "Auuh..."

"What should I do...? Papa's becoming a videogame-head..."

"Kisara, you're pretty knowledgeable with that kind of social stuff, huh...?"

"Because I inherited part of Mama's memories."

At that moment...

"Sasaraki, are you two done?"

A system window popped up, it was a message from Alice.

"Ah, yeah... Kisara, we're going to return to the debugging room, what about you?"

"Debugging room sounds like a place where our world's nemesis would be in. What is it?"

"It's something like the control room of this game."

Kisara groaned another "Mumumumu..."

"What are Papa and Mama doing there?"

"If I were to put it in your words, I guess we're saving the world."

"Saving the world is Kisara's strong point!"

"I'd be really happy if you could help us with our gamemaster work."

Different from Fury, this kid was still really naive (although Fury was also naive in a way).

It'd be great if we could have fun making a game with someone like her, he thought.

"Kisara is the grand savior, so of course I will help you save the world!"

"I'm glad to hear that, then let's go together."

Kisara smiled and nodded wildly. Then she mumbled to herself,

"Fufu, Kisara's deadly Messian Sword is already growling."

I wonder if she'll get a chance to wield it...

Sasaraki thought anxiously, then raised his hand to teleport.

* * *

"So this is the fruit of Sasaraki-kun and Azrael-san's love?!"

Lizna shouted this nonsense when welcoming them back to the debugging room.

With sparkling eyes, Lizna squatted down and looked the taken-aback Kisara in the eyes. "Uwaa—, uwaa—, her eyes are just the same, her nose too—!" she mumbled in a small voice. Eventually, she hugged her tightly.

"It hurts, I can't breath—!"

"Ah, I'm sorry!"

Lizna said in a fluster and let go of Kisara.

"Sorry, I'm bad at holding back and often end up killing things."

"Killing things?! D-Do you mean that figuratively?"

"No, I committed genocide of about 10000 people the other day."

"10000?! Genocide?!"

Kisara's eyes grew big enough to plop out of her head. Lizna scratched her head in embarrassment.

"H-Hold on, Lizna! Phrasing!"

"Ah, sorry! It was just a bit of a slip up!"

"You killed a crowd of 10000 people by slipping up?!"

"Can't be helped."

"Papa, what's the meaning of this?! And where did Mama go?!"

"Azrael hit her log-in limit... I mean, she went home to sleep. Plus, err, Lizna might be quick to kill, but that's all just ingame, everyone just respawned soon after, no problem."

"You know that all of this is extremely strange?!"

All of this was strange, indeed. Actually, he might've told her too much there. On top of that, Azrael's absence was untimely. Although it was law, so there was nothing she could do about it... she had given Kisara her name and Kisara herself was more attached to Azrael than Sasaraki.

After this and that, Alice eventually joined in.

"Hm, I see, so it's this kid, huh...? Mhm..."

Alice followed Lizna suit and stooped in front of Kisara, looking her in the eyes. Her eyes were serious, as if she was esteeming the length of her abilities. Kisara tilted her head in a 'what's with her?'-kind of way.

Finally, Alice smiled softly.

"...Well, if something bad happens, you can come to me to talk."

She muttered almost admonishingly. Kisara nodded.

"I'll be fine, I'm Azrael's daughter. Come what may, I can bear it!"

"That's right, such a good girl, just what I'd imagine from Azrael-san's daughter!"

"HYAU—?! P-Please stay away from me!"

"A-re-re—?"

It appeared Lizna's sight alone was enough to startle her.

"K-K-Kisara doesn't taste good at all!"

Kisara was trembling with tears in her eyes, and pointed her sword at Lizna. It was kind of cute, really.

"Papa, the pink-haired one is pure evil!"

"No, I'm telling you, you're misunderstanding, Lizna's a good person."

"B-B-But I can't see how she's an ally in my quest to defeat the evil demon king and save the world!"

"I told you there's no demon king. We're gamemasters."

Kisara was shaking and started to get angry, "Papa, still that joke?!"

"Papa, please be serious now! Kisara's not a child!"

"...Hmm, you really don't believe me, do you?"

That being said, what could I do to make her believe? Seems to me that it's futile no matter what I say, and the more I try to come up with something to prove it to her, the more I feel how hard a thing it actually is.

Speaking of which, she's ought to be a 'Meta Character,' but it doesn't really seem to work.

Probably bugged again or something.

"Wouldn't it be good if you died, Sasaraki-kun?"

"And why are you telling something that unsettling all of a sudden?!"

"I didn't mean it like that. I mean, wouldn't it be enough if you showed her how you die and respawn?"

"Nonono, you can't just simply go around and kill people like th... well, you can just simply go around and die on your own around here, though..."

He had the feeling that it wouldn't be a good idea to show that kind of thing to a girl this young.

"Ah, right, let's show her the game specifications."

He handed Kisara a thick file, 'Sword & Magic Online - Rule Book,' which he'd received from Alice when he first entered the debugging room. Kisara accepted it with a suspicious look on her face, she flipped it open.

"You see, there should be proof around the middle part that this world has been designed and created by people."

"It says here, 'This world has no blueprint. God shall design it.'"

"Okay, that's weird, let me see."

When he peeked into the rule book, it indeed did say that in sketchy letters that were jumping all over the place like an eel on land.

The remaining pages were blank.

"Sasaraki, there isn't much of a plan behind this game, so there are no real specifications."

"So it's just another of Papa's tasteless joke, after all."

"Wait! Let me show you something else!"

He picked up the 'Testing Specifications Document' from a corner in the debugging room.

Kisara turned through it. It was just plain white copier paper. Absolutely empty.

"There was no testing, so there are no testing specifications, you know?"

"This thing has no persuasive power whatsoever!"

"Papa's jokes really aren't funny at all."

"Nonono, there has to be some kind of proof here somewhere..."

As Sasaraki was in the middle of his rattling, the contents of an e-mail stretched across the Main Screen.

It was from the president of this game's development studio, Kirine.

[Please Save Me, Alice (For The 72th Time 15 Hours After the Last Time)

It's me, Kirine.

Alice, there is a bit of trouble brewing.

I am sorry, that was a lie. Not just a bit, it is big trouble.

It seems my desire to escape from this cruel reality led me to lie.

I'm sorry. Forgive me. Forgive my weak self, Alice. I'm innocent. Sorry, I mean I'm guilty.

Now that I've apologized, I'll return back to topic. You did forgive me, right?

Umm, it turns out that there will be an inspection of our world by the Ministry of Digital Information. The reason being, that a former employee is a whistleblower and tipped them off that there's an illegal AI - a super, super sophisticated AI with no logical safety device - in our game.

It's probably Suzuki's doing. I'll kill Suzuki. Do you know how to make contact with Golgo the Third, Alice-san? That aside, you have to distract them somehow. As you know, there isn't much legal about our world.

More like, we ignored things like the government or the law. Mainly because we had no money to play by the rules.

That's why the inspection is bad news.

Super bad news.

So is the super, super sophisticated AI and them getting to know our secrets.

The inspection will be in a week. Please get rid of all traces before that.

No matter what you do, no matter how you do it, please just get it done.

If, by any chance, you can't, I will kill the auditor.

...I'm sorry, I just acted brave, but it's impossible for me. The government's scary.

However, I will do everything in my power to support you. I'm not good at shooting people, but I'm very skilled at shots (of alcohol). I tried to think of something I could do to help, but nothing came up, sorry.

I'm really sorry. I'm just a lousy Kirine. I'm sorry.

That's all of my rambling.

I'll leave our world in your hands, Alice. Please give it your best. I will, too.

To get the best out of me, I'll go and buy me some carton shots first.

Talk to you later!

Yours sincerely,

Watarai Krine

President, EastEnd Games]

This mail was a bringer of devastating chaos.

While everyone was still in shock, Kisara shook and mumbled.

"Papa! I can sense an unfathomable darkness coming from this letter!"

"Yeah, I think it's more of a darkness in a corporate future-kind of sense, though."

"How dreadful! This coldheartedness! To calmly threaten murder like that!"

"Well, she did give up on that the next second..."

"A sudden personality change is exactly what a secret boss would do!"

"I think she just has a lot to deal with, you know?"

Kisara's face was already red, her emotions boiling up more and more.

"And who's that Alice that the secret boss relies on?!"

"That's her."

When he pointed at Alice, Kisara looked shocked.

"Now I get it, it's all so clear now... this silver-haired girl is the final boss, right?"

"No, I told you earlier, she's a gamemaster colleague."

"Papa, think about it, think about it thoroughly!"

With serious eyes, Kisara pointed sharply at the blank specification document.

Lizna whispered something to Alice.

And Kisara started appealing to Sasaraki with tears in her eyes.

"These poor specification papers. Those blank test specification papers. You're being deceived, Papa. The world you're seeing with your eyes now, all the things you're hearing with your ears now, how could all of this be something that someone with this kind of half-hearted attitude could create just at the tips of their fingers, don't you agree—?!"

Kisara tried to persuade him with her eyes lit with the fire of her earnestness.

This kid was really angry with him, he'd understood that much.

"Or would you be fine with it if our world was that half-hearted, Papa—?!"

Being asked that got Sasaraki thinking. Was he fine with it that their world was this half-assed?

The answer came to him immediately.

It was a frighteningly half-assed kusoge.

However, he had met people like Azrael and Kisara here.

Exactly for that reason, Sasaraki was doing stuff like being a gamemaster—

"I would be. After all, it—"

"You shouldn't—!"

Kisara interrupted Sasaraki's explanation.

"Kisara, please let me con—"

"You shouldn't be fine with that! Papa, you're... You must've been brainwashed!"

Kisara staggered.

"Wait, Mama, where is Mama?!"

"I told you, she logged out and is resting in real life."

"Papa! You're being tricked!"

She really was like Azrael - when it came to not listening to what people were saying.

"She's probably locked away somewhere and s-sexually harassed!"

"WHAT KINDA WAY OF THINKING IS THAT?!"

"It's in a fragment of Mama's memories!"

Azrael's knowledge didn't seem to have had much of a good impact on Kisara's developed personality.

Kisara wiped away her tears with her hand and vigorously turned back to Alice.

"Silver-hair! Kisara will definitely! Absolutely definitely! Take Papa and Mama back—!"

Alice pointed at herself.

"Eh? Me?"

"You're the final boss! Even your outfit looks like a final boss's!"

"Your logical leaps make for quite a fun game of detective, huh?"

"Kisara will definitely undo your brainwashing!"

Alice put her hand to her chin, "Hmm...," she inclined her head, looking troubled.

"Yeah, well, show me what you got?"

"Cherish that composed attitude of yours while you still can——!"

Kisara hurried to the debugging room's exit, the magic square.

Letting her cloak flutter, she turned around and did her last announcement.

"Papa, I will definitely return to take you back— back to our world—!"

And then she disappeared.

Woooosh.

A cold wind blew from somewhere.

"She doesn't listen to a thing people say..."

"Just like Azrael, right? But we have to make her understand somehow..."

"Understand what?"

"The 100 Rules of Being a Gamemaster, rule number 7—"

After Alice put on a smile full of confidence, she pointed at Sasaraki.

"You shall understand— that game and reality are two different kinds of things!"

* * *

The following day in the debugging room.

Kisara's whereabouts were unknown. They tried looking for her with the search engine, but no results. Thanks to the system, she had an absurdly long and buggy name, which lead to the name exceeding the maximum number of characters the search engine could compute. And there was no other way of looking for someone but by using their name.

"Eh? S-She went missing...? Eh? I-I see..."

After Azrael had returned and heard the whole story, that was her reaction.

She was wandering around aimlessly in the debugging room.

"...You worried?"

"N-Not at all! I'm just wondering a bit what she's doing!"

...While still wandering around aimlessly.

"Ah! S-Something to eat! But even if she doesn't eat, she won't die, right, Alice—?!"

"She'll be fine. Nobody implemented anything like basic needs for survival."

"Yeah, of course not, huh...? Ah, but she has nowhere to stay, what if she catches a cold?"

"There are no diseases either. And by the way, even if she dies, she'll just respawn."

"T-That might be true, but..."

And she kept wandering around restlessly. Apparently, she was in extreme emotional unrest.

Unable to just keep watching her like that, Sasaraki whispered to Fury who had just come flying next to him.

"Fury, can't we do something to find out where Kisara is?"

Azrael would probably worry once she'd know that her daughter had gone missing when she hadn't been around while things unfolded.

If he could let her have just one glance to see that Kisara's safe, it might be enough to put her at ease.

"Using TP can make the biggest miracles happen☆"

"THAT AGAIN?!"

TP were points that two people in love could acquire by performing lovey-dovey actions. It was an absurd system that allowed for miracles to be performed if

one used a specific amount of those points. The absurd part of that system were the requirements of those lovey-dovey actions. The other day, he had to lick the inside of Azrael's ear to get points. It was crazy.

"—?!"

Azrael had apparently overheard their conversation and showed a strong reaction.

"I-I won't do that stuff again, don't worry!"

Sasaraki explained reactively. For some reason, Azrael was staring at him. She then attempted to say something, but decided not to. That repeated itself a few times over, but then, after glaring at Fury with a sidelong glance, she muttered in a small voice,

"...It."

"Eh?"

"I-I'll do it!"

Although she'd stumbled her way through that sentence, her voice had carried determination.

"There's no other way, right?! Then I'll do it!"

"Eh...? You really alright with that, Azrael?"

"Of course I'm not! But I've no choice, do I?!"

She glared at him sharply, then then demanded in a desperate tone,

"Fury! Tell me the fastest method to get TP!"

"Aye-aaaye☆ Mucous membrane contact... we had that already, so there are three more options☆"

Fury pushed a button and three options appeared in thin air.

The list was beyond outrageous.

♦ TP Fast-Grind List (Level X)

A	Washing	Let's wash each other's bodies sparkling clean with our bare hands☆
B	Bathing	Let's count to 100 while enjoying an intimate bath together (No towels or swimsuits allowed) ☆
C	Suckling	Let's hug closely and suck some hand-warm milk☆

Those were beyond hope in various ways.

After he'd finished reading all three rows, Sasaraki looked at Azrael, mainly out of reflex. Her big belly was gone, but those gigantic two summits above it were as big as ever. A, B, or C, what would it be? This question had popped into his head immediately. And no matter which one he picked in his head, his conclusion was always the same: *Ah, so that's how I die.*

Azrael was gazing at the list absentmindedly for a while. Then, she squatted down.

Her whole body started to shake.

"Uh... Kuh... Auuuuuuuuuuu..."

Her groans were filled with conflict.

However, she didn't cry out loud in embarrassment as she usually did. Nor did she find fault with Sasaraki. She was simply trying her earnest to find out which option was the least catastrophic to pick.

"Kuh... Guh... Gunununununu—..."

Several worrisome minutes later.

Azrael extended her shaking arm and quietly pointed at one of the options with her index finger.

"Th... T-T-THAT! THAT'S THE LEAST OF THOSE EVILS! GET READY, SASARAKI—!"

She was pointing at— 'C.'

"EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEH—?!"

It was the one which, right away, gave the most dangerous impression. The title alone was unsettling. 'Suckling.'

"I'VE NO CHOICE! THERE'S JUST NO OTHER WAY! THE REST IS EVEN WORSE!"

"Worse, you say... It's about milk, you know? And I'm the one who's going to suck that milk, you know? *Your* milk, you know?!"

Before he knew it, Sasaraki's gaze wandered to the summits of those voluminous mountains.

Thereupon, Azrael got flustered, hid her voluptuous body with both her arms, and said,

"WHA—?! STUPID, STUPID, STUPID—! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT—!"

"Eh—?"

"The other way! Think about it the other way around! Then it's the lesser evil, right?!"

"The other way around? What do you mean?"

Azrael pointed at him sharply and shouted with a deep red face,

"*I* WILL DRINK *YOUR* MILK—!"

After a bit of a pause, there was just one thing on Sasaraki's mind,

—*That's clearly even* worse*!*

* * *

In one of the small rooms connected to the debugging room, there was a bed. It was in the nap room; a room which had been prepared for the project members while the game was still under development. Although it's questionable whether sleeping in a virtual world has any real recreational effect, according to Fury, 'If sleeping in a virtual world is fake, that makes it the real sleep☆' ('Nap' in Japanese is written with the kanji for 'fake' and 'sleep' (仮眠), so the pun here is that fake sleep in a fake world makes for real sleep; minus and minus makes it plus.)

They couldn't have possibly created a napping room just for this wordplay, could they—?

Those kind of thoughts were flitting across his mind, but he didn't have the composure to put any tsukkomis out there now. Azrael had taken off her cloak and had sat down in seiza with a nervous look on her face. In the meantime, Sasaraki was in the midst of preparations next to her, facing the wall so that their eyes wouldn't meet.

"...Hey, a-are you ready?"

Sasaraki twitched upon hearing her unusually shrill voice.

No, I can't be nervous already. We're going to do far more nerve-wrecking things from now on.

"I-I've warmed the milk up, but what are we going to do now?"

Sasaraki asked with a baby bottle in his hands (which was an actual item for some reason - probably thanks to the weird fetishes of a developer). Since his sanity was on the brink of breaking down, he was simply moving as Azrael was telling him to.

"Then I'll bestow the 'Deathbringer Angel's Forbidden Blessing' onto you now—"

".....Eh? You mean the suckling?"

"Don't say suckling! It's not! It's a forbidden blessing!"

"Ah... Got it."

Apparently, she wanted things to go like this. In that case, he'd let her have it her way.

"And it's got nothing to do with breasts!"

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"I read the code, the suckling... I mean, the requirements for 'Deathbringer Angel's Forbidden Blessing' are simply to suck lukewarm milk from a pointy part of the body. In other words, umm, it doesn't have to be the nip... the tip of the breasts!"

"Pointy part... Ah, like a finger?"

"Exactly! With this, it's somewhat the lesser evil!"

"I-It certainly is!"

He had his doubts whether *this* being relatively better changed anything about the peculiar situation they were facing now, but he decided to ignore them. At times like these, you just have to be strong. There's no room for letting doubts weaken your resolve. All you can do is let the girl you're admiring suck the tip of your milk-smeared finger.

Azrael was still waiting in seiza, her white thighs exposed.

He was going to have his finger sucked by her now.

There's nothing unusual about this!

My heart's not pounding like crazy! It's all in my head!

Sasaraki told himself and, without a word, dipped his finger into the lukewarm milk.

"You dipped it already? Okay, next take the bottle with you and sit down on the bed with your legs crossed. No seiza."

"Does it have to be a specific position?!"

"If we don't do it in the correct position, there'll be a TP penalty."

"So they don't care which way around we do it, but they're stubborn about positions?!"

"It said they studied sucklingology just for this feature."

"They're just crazy, though?!"

"They are!"

However, complaining wouldn't change a thing, so Sasaraki sat down on the bed as he was told. Then Azrael took out a memo— apparently a message from Fury— and after reading it, she groaned an embarrassed 'Uh—'

"Next is how to suck the milk... I'll have to be on your lap."

"Wait, isn't that a bit of an overkill?"

"We'll do the overkill, then!"

"E-Errr..."

Azrael drew herself next to Sasaraki and put her behind on the sheets. She sat there, slightly hugging her knees. It was as if she told him 'hold me already!' Out of embarrassment, she avoided eye contact. Her cheeks were a deep red, but she mumbled in a small, stiff voice, "C'mon, h-hurry."

If she went that far, all he could was obey.

Sasaraki put his right arm around her back and his left around the back of her knees.

—*Pyun—*.

Uwaaah—!

The naked skin on the back of her knees was so soft.

He hadn't held a girl before, neither in real life, nor in virtual reality.

Azrael's even lighter than I thought. It's probably thanks to 'Sword & Magic Online''s physical strength reinforcement system. Or maybe the gravity system's just buggy. Or maybe my head's just buggy.

Like that, he put her behind in the space between his crossed legs.

BYUN.

Uwaah—, Uwaaah—

Although her body was light, her buttocks was heavy. Apparently, she was thinking the same, once Sasaraki had put her down, she looked up at him and twisted her lips in worry.

Her worrying face was really close, Sasaraki's chest heated up even more.

Eh? And I'm going to have my finger sucked by this girl now?

It was worse than he'd expected.

After all, he couldn't avoid looking at a girl that was only a few dozens of centimeters away from him.

"D—D-D-Don't look at me, c'mon, t-the milk!"

"Ah, s-sorry..."

Sasaraki put her head on his shoulders and held his index finger smeared with cow milk out in front of her lips. Azrael kept up mumbling things like, "This is a blessing, I'm just bestowing a blessing, I'm not looking like a baby," in delirium.

And finally— *happ*.

"——————!"

Suck, *suck*. *Lick*, *lick*. It was an amazing sensation. He felt like electric currents were running up from his finger. Something granular was liking the liquid that was covering his finger. It was Azrael's tongue. His finger was halfway in between her lips. He could feel her play-biting it.

Azrael had her eyes closed and was licking in a daze.

Sasaraki gazed at her lips in the meantime.

She had called it the 'Forbidden Blessing of the Deathbringer Angel' earlier.

And it was a forbidden sensation, indeed.

He thought that he was doing something fundamentally wrong. However, thinking about it now, his consciousness had strayed off the moment she'd started sucking his finger smeared with white fluid. *I'm in a forbidden world. And Azrael is there with me. She really is a deathbringer angel. I don't even know what I'm talking about.*

Slurp, *slurp*, *slurp*. *Lick*, *lick*, *lick*.



The sounds that came from his finger were melting his mind.

This really isn't the lesser evil.

This is more like the worst of them. I'm straying off the right path.

"...PUHA—!"

Azrael separated her lips from his finger and opened her eyes. Her big, round eyes had teared up a bit.

When their gazes met, he felt with his left hand that her whole body was shaking.

".....—"

Around that time, she also seemed to realize what she'd been doing just now. Her already flushed cheeks were flaring up even more. It appeared the embarrassment had finally gotten to her. With her hand, she hid her lips from Sasaraki's eyes.

Then she muttered,

"C... C'mon, let's hurry with the next blessing—"

"Eh...? I-Is that okay?"

"IT'S NOT OKAY—! IT'S TOTALLY EMBARRASSING, OF COURSE!"

After she'd shouted that with all her might, Azrael continued, "B-But..."

"Our child... W-We have to find Kisara..."

She repeatedly tapped the tips of her index fingers together in front of her mouth and focused her thoughts on what lay ahead of them.

"S-She can't get hungry, sick, or die, but... but she's on her own and... has no friends... she's probably feeling lonely..."

"...Azrael..."

Azrael had mumbled, squeezing her own body in his arms.

He wanted to hold her closely all of a sudden. And then he realized he was already doing that. Azrael was caring for Kisara far more than he did. While he did feel strong guilt because of that, he was, for some reason, also really happy about it.

He wondered whether there was also something he could do to help her.

Putting his hand on Azrael's head, who was still feeling anxious, came to him naturally.

"...Eh?"

Before he realized it, he was stroking the back of her head.

"Eh? Ah, eh? Sasaraki... Umm, you've still milk on your..."

"Ah, sorry!"

Thinking about it, they were still in the middle of suckling (what a situation to be in).

He hurriedly removed his hand. Azrael seemed concerned.

"Y-Yeah, you should wipe your hands first..."

"Eh...? So it's okay after I wiped them?"

"Eh—?"

Azrael blinked in surprise.

At last, with an expression of sudden realization on her face, she hurriedly shook her head.

"I-It's not! It's not! It's absolutely not, of course not!"

"Yeah, sorry, I definitely won't do it again."

"It's not okay, but... umm..."

Azrael repeatedly tapped the tips of her fingers together again.

"Umm... Umm, it's probably good for the TP..."

"Eh?"

"L-Look, I've heard that it helps to stroke the baby's head while it's sucking milk and all!"

He'd been up and about to object that they were bestowing the 'Deathbringer Angel's Forbidden Blessing,' but he held himself back immediately. After all, Azrael was already on the verge of tears. For now, he took a towel and wiped the milk off his finger, then stroke the back of Azrael's head.

Pat, *pat*. *Stroke*, *stroke*.

".....Hau..."

In her embarrassment, Azrael's gaze wandered about aimlessly.

She didn't look displeased at all. At the places their bodies were touching, he could feel her relax.

"I'll look for her too."

"Eh?"

"Kisara's surely fine. I'll look for her too."

Azrael had her eyes still averted and remained silent for a while.

At last, she nodded.

Like that, a gentle moment of silence went by.

Huh? So what am I supposed to do now—?

When he let his gaze wander, he spotted the bottle of milk next to the bed.

"Ah, err, how about some more milk?"

".....Not milk, blessing."

"Sorry, I meant to say 'Forbidden Blessing."

"Yeah."

Azrael, while nodding a few times with her milk-smeared lips, was strangely adorable.

He thought to himself that he didn't mind receiving more forbidden blessings either.

* * *

Now that I calmed down and think about it, I can't help but feel that we just did some kind of outrageous perv play. Which means, calming down = I lose, yeah— And so Sasaraki went on his quest to find Kisara while maintaining his bugged-out set of mind.

The skill he'd invoked by using TP was named 'Generic Love Miracle'— It granted any wish which wasn't that much of a big deal. While it did feel like someone had been cutting corners with that skill, it was a powerful all-purpose ability— He looked for Kisara's whereabouts with it and found her in the residential area of the first floor. Her HP were full.

Azrael heaved a sigh of relief.

"Ah, so she's okay, huh...? Thank God..."

Sasaraki looked at Azrael, who seemed happy from the bottom of her heart, and felt himself calming down too.

"Let's head out there and meet her, first of all."

Sasaraki manipulated the 'Master Screen' and teleported the two of them to the place in question.

The marketplace was stuffed with stalls with white canopies above them, something you'd picture in the middle ages. However, this place wasn't really popular. Mainly because all the NPCs which were supposed to man the stands

had buggy coordinates and ended up busily selling their wares in the sewers beneath.

Kisara was in that area befallen by a glitch caused by laziness.

She was sitting on the ground between two stalls, hugging her knees.

It appeared she still hadn't noticed Sasaraki and Azrael.

"Uuuh... They're not selling anything to eat... Why...?"

Kisara held her stomach with her eyes tearing up. Azrael's expression changed.

"Isn't it impossible to get hungry here?!"

"She probably just *thinks* that she has to eat something..."

He thought that they should try talking to her, so they walked up to her together. Kisara saw the shadows in front of her and looked up. "Ah, Mama!" She rejoiced for a moment, but soon stared at Azrael with worried eyes.

"Mama, are you harmed?! Did they do anything weird to you—?!"

"Harmed...? Sorry, I only logged out."

Kisara's expression stiffened up immediately. Then she shouted:

"MAMA, YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER! THEY'RE DECEIVING YOU!"

"Eeeh—?! Why?!"

"THIS IS REALITY, THERE IS NO LOGGING OUT!"

Azrael's mouth was gaping.

"Eh...? No, I did go back to the real world as usually..."

Kisara rattled on with a frantic expression.

"PAPA SURELY DID SOMETHING LEWD TO YOU WHILE YOU WERE ASLEEP!"

"EEEEEEEEEEEH—?! D-DID HE?!"

Azrael looked at Sasaraki, shocked.

"No, I didn't?! Why would you believe that?!"

"B-Because lately, when I logout, my body feels kinda weird, and..."

Azrael hugged her own body as if to shield it.

"M-Maybe this body does actually remain here somehow and you're doing weird things to..."

"I DON'T, OKAY?! HOW MUCH OF A BRUTE DO YOU THINK I AM?!"

"We're talking about you, after all..."

Not good, Azrael's totally gotten caught up in Kisara's pace.

"Papa, you have to remember, too! Don't let them brainwash you!"

"Even if you say that..."

"Umm... yes! Try to remember when you proposed to Mama!"

"Proposed?"

He exchanged glances with Azrael.

"Well, no, there was that bug and we got married just by joining hands..."

Kisara was staring at him. Then she hung her head, heartbroken.

".....Your case is extraordinarily grave..."

The gap between them in realization what this world was, was awfully wide, indeed.

"Uuuuh... If this hadn't broken down, I'd be able to persuade Mama and Papa in a second..."

Kisara mumbled and took a small cube out of her pocket.

Before he could ask what it was, Kisara hugged the cube like something precious.

"This is— the proof that this world isn't some kusoge."

"I picked it up earlier," she said and presented the crystal to him. On its surface was a label which had something written on it by pen. 'The Beginning of the Legend,' it said. Next to it was a video icon. If he wasn't mistaken, it was a 'Video Crystal.'

It was a common item in RPGs and let you relive flashbacks.

So this 'The Beginning of the Legend' video was probably her proof.

"Is it alright if I watch it?"

"You can't. When I pressed play, something exploded halfway through and now it won't play anymore."

"Oh... I see."

In this game, items exploding spontaneously and become unusable happened rather often.

"But if you could watch it, Papa and Mama would surely understand right away..."

"Is the footage that amazing?"

"It is totally amazing!"

Kisara expressed the broad smile of a child.

"So please wait for me, Papa, Mama! I will repair the crystal, I promise!"

".....Yeah."

He had a lot of things he wanted to say.

But for now, he felt it was probably better if he just let her have fun on her adventure.

"By the way, Papa, this town is weird. There aren't any people."

"Because they're underground in the sewers, not above in town."

"Why are they down there? Are they a bunch of perverts who love the smell down there?"

"No, the developers simply messed up their coordinates."

"That's just awfully stupid!"

Kisara started resenting again.

"Let's forget about that. Where can I find something to eat?"

"Stuff like eating food isn't really the point of this game, so there's none and you can do without eating."

"Papa, even if this world was a tremendous kusoge, that level of laziness wouldn't happen."

"No, it would; and that kind of is what's troubling me all day long."

"Papa's brainwashed mind is extremely resilient."

Apparently Kisara wasn't willing to change her mind. Had the proof she'd seen earlier been that convincing?

"But, Kisara, you're not supposed to be able to feel hunger."

"Eh...?"

Being told that by Sasaraki, Kisara looked at her own tummy.

".....I-I am hungry!"

"Lying is a bad thing to do."

It's easy to tell when a child is lying. Kisara didn't know what to say.

Nonetheless, she shook her head wildly, unwilling to acknowledge the fact.

"That's not how it is. Surely— this is the work of the Demon King!"

Kisara shot up and stared down Sasaraki with a serious expression.

"I'm Kisara, the Angel of Salvation, Deathbringer Angel Azrael's daughter! I crush the schemes of the wicked! If Papa and Mama are being deceived— I shall crush evil with this Messian Sword myself! I definitely won't be defeated!"

Saying that, Kisara vigorously drew her gigantic sword from her back.

"Ah, wait, don't draw it too quickly or—"

"Papa, open your eyes!"

However, there was no blade to the sword. Just the hilt.

"Eh—?"

With a dumbfounded expression, Kisara gazed at the hilt.

And then the blade fell out of the air and pierced the ground.

"If you draw it too recklessly, the physics engine can't keep up and the blade detaches."

Thanks to that bug, there was roughly a 30% chance that you'd commit seppuku when trying to perform an 'iai.' Kisara altered her dumbfounded gaze between the hilt and the blade in the ground for a while. Being betrayed by the sword she'd trusted seemed to bring her on the verge of tears.

"——————————————————!"

However, she didn't break down and cry like that.

Kisara shook her head and slapped both her cheeks simultaneously with her palms.

"This— i-i-is a scheme!"

"Eh—?"

"The sword— right, it's been cursed by the Demon King and broke—!"

She said, picked up the blade, and wiped her tears.

"KISARA WILL DEFINITELY, ABSOLUTELY, UNDOUBTEDLY NOT LOSE TO ITS SCHEMES—!"

She shouted and ran away into a back alley.

"Should we go after her, Azrael?"

He asked Azrael next to him.

Azrael gazed in Kisara's direction and appeared to be lost in thought for a bit.

"No, now we know that she's safe... It's probably better to live it down for a while."

"That's probably right... We also got to get back to our gamemaster jobs..."

She seems to have grown suspicious of the world now thanks to the food and sword issues. I'm curious what's on that 'Video Crystal,' maybe if we knew, we could persuade her that it's not true. And if we keep that up, she'll maybe believe us at some point.

"You're... not worried that she'll die from a bug?"

"Alice said she's a respawning NPC, she'll be fine as long as the game goes on."

"In that case..... Ah, eh? Wait..."

Azrael seemed to have suddenly realized something.

"The service will cease soon, won't it?!"

".....Ah!"

Sasaraki raised his voice, too. Now that she'd said it, that was absolutely true.

"Ah, errr, then what will... Fury? Fury, are you here?"

"Aye-aaaye☆"

Calling upon her, Fury immediately appeared out of a puff of smoke.

"Ah, you don't need to worry about that part, it'll be fine☆"

"Eh? How will it be fine, Fury?"

"Fury-chan will take care of all the AIs before our world collapses."

Fury gestured the push of the button she was holding.

"Fury will blow everyone into pieces and destroy all evidence☆"

That was even worse.

"You do realize that you'll blow up too, then, right?!"

"Ahahahahahaha, the final firework is always the most beautiful, ri~ght?☆"

"You're the same as usual, but you're freaking scary, you know that?!"

"Well, I have to get serious here, okay?☆"

Fury continued, her smile still on her face.

"It's as President Kirine said in her e-mail, we AIs aren't allowed to be☆"

"...I know that, but..."

"If our existence were to get found out, my former master, the developer, would get a death sentence, you know?☆"

"Death sentence?!"

"That's why I have to blow myself up before that happens☆"

Fury laughed a, 'Ahahaha,' and hugged the button.

And then her expression changed as if she had suddenly remembered something nostalgic.

"Jeez, my former master is such a handful, really☆"

Thereafter, she returned to her smile.

"Anyway, can Fury-chan blow that Kisara-chan up?☆"

"NO, YOU CAN'T?!"

If she did, Azrael would cry. And he, himself, would cry too.

He'd made up his mind. For the moment, clearing up Kisara's misunderstanding was on hold.

Right now, he had to do everything he could to make sure this kusoge went on.

* * *

'Strategic Developer Emergency Meeting' was written on the whiteboard in the debugging room. In front of the whiteboard stood Alice, with her arms crossed like a lecturer; and in front of her Lizna, hugging her knees. Almost like teacher and student having class outside under the blue sky, but this was just how things always went in the debugging room.

"Welcome back, you two. Did you manage to talk her out of it?"

"We've decided to let that go for now and get back to work, for Kisara's sake too."

"Got it. Then first of all, let us sort out what open tasks we have."

Alice jumped on the mandarine box.

"As of now, we've two problems at hand. First, maintaining an active player count of more than 10000 people. To tackle the issue, we've released the second floor, 'The End of the Endless Ocean.' However, nobody noticed. Second, the inspection by the Ministry of Digital Information that Kirine notified us of. If it gets public that we've a super sophisticated AI here, the company's done for."

"Sounds devastating, huh?"

"I'll split everyone into task forces. Team A, Azrael and I, will deal with the inspection. Team B, Sasaraki and Lizna, will deal with our release issues. Team A will deal with the inspector by manufacturing fake reports. However, fake reports alone won't cut it, so I'll have Azrael program something, too."

"What's the fake program about?"

"Something that keeps AIs in check. A program that would force AIs to self-destruct if it spotted an unshackled, sophisticated one."

"Eh...? Won't that destroy Kisara and Fury?"

"If all we do is make a patch and don't apply it, everything will be fine."

Apparently, all they had to do was show evidence in addition to a report, putting it into practice wasn't required. However, it was required to have it ready at hand. And that, kids, is how you exploit bureaucracy.

"Well, leave that to me. The problem is team B."

Alice sharply pointed at Lizna.

"To throw floor two open for the players— Lizna, your answer, how will we achieve that?"

"Turn floor one into a restricted area and forcefully deport everyone to the second floor?"

"Wouldn't that cause everyone to lose their property in the residential area?"

"Ah, yeah."

And before that happened, there'd be a riot.

"In that case, can't we prepare something that'd let everyone just walk up to the second floor?"

"Sasaraki, that also won't do; for two reasons..."

Alice said flatout.

"One, our goal with the second floor was to let players experience a sense of accomplishment. 'I achieved something big in this game by just walking up this road together with one, ten, or a hundred other players,' said nobody ever, right?"

"Ah... Yeah..."

In other words, it was important to have the players clear the floor with their own power.

"Two, which is even more important than one."

"Namely?"

"The complicated programming involved in letting everyone enter the second floor—"

Alice chuckled a "Fufu~" for some reason.

"Is nothing us programming amateurs could do."

Azrael groaned a, "Hau..." It was an undeniably sound reason, indeed.

"If you're going that far, then what are we going to do about the AI shackling...?"

"A member of our former development team, Suzuki, did program something like that to some degree, so we might be good on that front."

Apparently, the difficulty of programming could go from walk in the park to highway to hell depending on whether you had a sample or not.

"Which is why team B's strategy will be this!"

Alice let her pen run across the whiteboard.

And it said...

[The 'You Want Power? Then I Shall Give You Power (But Keep It a Secret from the Others!)'-Plan]

"In other words, the plan is to pick a lazy player, turn them into a hero, make them form a guild, and let them clear floor one's final dungeon!"

"Err... So basically we'll do the 'You're the Goddess's chosen one' and give them power like you often see in other games?"

Alice wagged with her index finger, "Tsk, tsk, tsk."

"No, the point is to make it look like the administrators had no part in it, you know?"

"Why?"

"Because seeing one of your own rise to be a hero is far more beautiful than a hero the administrators picked and made out of nothing!"

"Aaah... I see, so we basically only push things into the right direction."

"We should call this more like advanced marketing strategies."

Although he had nothing against the idea at all, really.

"And I've already decided whom we put on the throne."

Alice flicked her fingers and a girl appeared on the screen.

He had seen her before. It was the player named— Tiolis.

* * *

"You're— I-I-I'm in the presence of our Goddess!"

Tiolis called out full of emotion with her hands clasped and her eyes sparkling like stars. They were standing on a windy grassland surrounded by tall rocks that looked like ancient relics. In the center was a pink-haired girl wearing a white dress that gave her the appearance of a goddess - it was Lizna.

The ruins were situated on the northern side of the first floor, called 'The Goddess's Hokora.'

Actually, this location had nothing specific to it, but the monster spawning table around here was bugged, leading to nothing but 'Dungeon Boss' category

monsters spawning in the area, which had led players to believe that this place had something fishy to it.

But since the monsters didn't drop any dungeon rewards, there was no point in defeating them, so the area wasn't popular.

That made it the ideal place for a secret meeting with Tiolis while avoiding the public notice.

"Yes! Nice to meet you, I'm Goddess Lizeltna—!"

Lizna smiled and offered her hand, but Tiolis got on the ground, prostrating before her.

"KYAA—?!"

"It is an exceeding honour to be allowed in your presence, my Goddess—!"

"Eh? I-Is that so? E-Ehehe, could I be that popular?"

"Without question! Your Grace is the one who perished the wicked among the players in one fellow sweep, after all!"

"...Plus the ones who weren't wicked on top of that, though..."

"It was a sacrifice for the greater good, it had to be done— collateral damage, so to speak."

"It was easy and simple total annihilation rather than a sacrifice, though..."

Tiolis kept exclaiming with sparkling eyes.

"I was moved to witness the works of the gods, vaporizing players mercilessly! This world had a god! A female god! A god that isn't male, a girl, a fellow girl with a chest a bit on the small side, a goddess that killed all those men who had lost themselves gaping at those swimsuits!"

Sasaraki thought: *Ah, she's beyond help...*

"And that is why, My Goddess, please command me to do anything! I shall see anything done!"

"Eh...? Anything? If I told you to die, would you?"

"Of course I would! I would do anything in my power to end myself!"

"What about lewd things?"

"Of course I would! Ah... umm, I am inexperienced, but if Your Grace is okay with that...!"

"I see, very well!"

"Nothing's well, alright?!"

How much of a fanatic is this girl?! And I don't like that satisfied look in Lizna's eyes!

"Ehehehe, Sasaraki-kun, she's my very first believer! Believer #1!"

"Aaah... So that's what you're so excited about..."

"I'm a subject of worship, a goddess, so you're the prophet, huh?!"

"I'd really rather not be, okay?!"

"Fufufuhehe, a believer, a real believer, a follower of mi~ne—!"

Lizna had gotten really excited about this.

"Well, with things being like this, she should be eager to fulfill whatever I ask her to, right?"

"Yeah, ask her to become the savior."

For now, they explained that part of their plan to Tiolis. Namely, that they wanted her to unite the chaotic guild and clear the first floor. Plus, that they wanted her to be someone recognized by the players as a representative of their own and not someone picked by the admins.

"This is perfect timing, we've only just decided to elect a new guildmaster."

Apparently, Yutanga, their former guildmaster, had taken responsibility for their divide and retired.

"So? How are chances for you winning the election?"

"As things stand, rather dim. It seems like two guild veterans have announced their candidacy. There also appears to be a new, exceedingly charismatic member, but I haven't met our new member yet."

"Among whom is the charismatic one popular?"

"Mostly among the freaks who always push the login time limit!"

Their opponents appeared to be strong in their own ways.

"Got it! In other words, as long as we have Tiolis-san win, we're good, right?"

"Right."

"So who should we kill?"

"That's not how this works."

"Weren't elections about making your opponents go BOOOOOM and win?"

"How bloodthirsty are you?! They'd just respawn, so there's no point to that anyway!"

After that, their discussion continued like, 'She should hold a speech in a swimsuit,' 'Then she won't gain the support of the girls. Also, that's what idols do, not heroes,' 'How about killing a demon that spawns during the speech?' 'Killing mobs is dead normal around here.'

"Then let's just have her hold a normal speech with a halo behind her and make her voice echo."

"Normal, huh?"

"We can't get too involved this time, anyway."

All this was meaningless if Tiolis wouldn't win with her own power.

* * *

Once the preparations were done, the two of them and Tiolis went to the guild house.

In its vicinity were about a hundred guild members.

In its guild system, 'Sword & Magic Online' had a voting feature to elect a new guildmaster.

Not via ballots like in the real world, but by guild members using a magic called 'Pledge to My Master;' then magical stuff happened and the person they were pointing at received a vote.

However, there was one fatal flaw.

There was no magic in this game.

While this statement alone never explained much, this was just the conclusion everyone had come to since no one had ever seen anyone use magic in practice.

Thanks to that bug - referred to as 'feature' - the guildmaster had to stay the same for all eternity.

So what you had to do about that, was—

"My Goddess, the guild 'Pursue the Brilliance of the Stars' has now disbanded."

Tiolis said while gazing at the pop-up window that floated in front of her. Sasaraki and Lizna were invisible to other players, so she was speaking in a small voice as to not raise suspicion with her surroundings.

"What will be the name of the new guild?"

"It's 'The Real Pursue the Brilliance of the Stars.'"

"Since you can't pick a guild name that's been used before, huh...?"

The method to change guildmasters was: Delete the old guild, make a new one.

This not-so-great system was rumored to be in place to encourage guilds to break up.

"It's all part of a deeper truth granted to us by the Goddess: Destruction and creation are one."

"So you went with the optimistic fairytale view, huh?!"

"This *is* fantasy, after all."

"And what are you looking so proud for, Lizna?!"

"This is just fantasy~"

Apparently she liked the sound of it.

"So what's going to happen next? Will you hold a speech like a politician?"

"After all the candidates held a three minute speech, the winner will be determined by the size of the applause they receive."

"Civilization is taking huge leaps backwards around here, huh...?"

"We've also conducted research on how to make an applause bigger. The secret lies within the twisting of your wrists."

"Just using voting ballots would be so much easier..."

"There's a high possibility of the items become buggy and disappear. Sound is the most reliable option."

An unreasonable world required a backwards civilization, it seemed.

"My head hurts."

"Eh? Will you be okay, Sasaraki? Want to break your skull open?"

"No breaking anything open."

While they were having their silly conversation, the speeches were underway.

A man-high, wooden lectern had been prepared and one candidate after the other was holding their speech.

There were four candidates, Tiolis' turn would be the third.

Candidate number one stood for thorough equality between men and women in the guild and let everyone know his strong belief that morals should be upheld even in a game; that proved to be a popular point among some and led to a moderate applause. Candidate number two appeared to be a more combative fellow, firmly stating that the guild had to farm more rare items and get stronger did net him a similarly moderate applause.

"Sasaraki-kun, this is so normal and boring."

"Those are serious speeches, after all. Boring is alright in this case."

"Makes you wish a meteor would fall out of the sky and crush them, doesn't it?"

"It doesn't."

They said, when suddenly a meteor came falling out of the sky. It had a diameter of roundabout ten meters and struck the ground right in the center of the audience, making the earth tremble and catching everyone in range up in the explosion. 'You Died' windows popped up several dozens of times.

He heard someone say, 'So another one came falling down,' 'We're getting a lotta meteors today, huh?'

"And there it is, Sasaraki-kun."

"Wait, don't you think that's weird?!"

"Meteors fall out of the sky quite often in this area, My Prophet."

"Even if you say that like this was some kind of haunted house... What's with this danger zone?!"

"Our guild's name, 'Pursue the Brilliance of the Stars,' was inspired by these meteors."

"So the origin's even more stupid than I expected!"

"Next is Tiolis' turn, right?"

"You're just moving on as if nothing happened?!"

"Well then, Prophet, My Goddess, I shall be on my way!"

Tiolis stepped up to the lectern, all dressed up.

Turning to the audience, she expressed a slight smile and began her speech.

[Do you believe in God?]

Now that's a weird opener. The audience grew a bit noisy.

[So is it true that Tiolis has been a bit weird lately?]

[Now that I think about, wasn't she always weird?]

[Well, she's the girl that went sounding out every single inch of a mountain to find a hidden dungeon no one had proof it existed in the first place.]

[But doesn't that weird side make her cute?]

[You're right.]

"She's really famous, isn't she?!"

Lizna whispered into Sasaraki's ear.

"In a bad way."

But even if we picked the wrong person for the job, there's no one else we can rely on in this case...

He thought, then Tiolis continued with her speech.

[God is watching over us, always. God surely watched over us when the meteorite struck just now, God watches us in silence and with a gentle smile when we face those challenges. Is that not a reassuring thing to know?!]

[Isn't that more like God having a bad personality?]

[I think it was rather God who threw that meteor at us in the first place.]

[No, God wouldn't take aim and throw a meteor like that.]

[Why not?]

['Cause shit's so buggy, there's no way even God could make a miracle as accurate as that happen.]

[Yeah, true.]

What a weirdly persuasive point, indeed.

[—Our guild should go with God!]

Like that, Tiolis brought her speech to an end.

The applause she received was bigger than the other candidates'.

"...Why's that popular?"

He wondered, then he could hear people in the audience whisper.

[If we can't get Yutanga, it doesn't really matter who's becoming the guildmaster, right?]

[Then I'd rather have me a Tiolis than those two old guys.]

[Her skirt is so short, I wished she'd have stood taller during that speech...]

"Will this guild really be okay?!"

It was this game's top raid guild and yet they were like that. Did people go crazy the moment they joined this game? He was beyond anxious. Then Tiolis returned to Sasaraki and Lizna.

"How was my performance, Prophet, My Goddess?! I tried my best!"

"Yeah... How to put it, I could tell you put a lot into that speech, a whole lot."

"Assuming our last speaker isn't super popular, it's Tiolis' win, right?"

"What's the last candidate like?"

"Ah, she's over there."

Tiolis pointed at a young girl with short, blond hair.

"Eh?"

Sasaraki had seen that face before. As had Lizna. Actually, it was Kisara. Her expression was stiff. Her movements shaky. A supporter dude was on standby next to her and said, "You'll be fine, we'll cheer you on!"

Why was she here?

"She joined yesterday, her name is Kisara."

Tiolis explained.

"Apparently, her name has turned into something extraordinary due to a bug."

Kisara's shoulders were drooping and the look in her eyes was full of anxiety. That moment, Kisara and Tiolis' eyes met. She wasn't able to see Sasaraki or Lizna due to their invisibility. Kisara gazed at Tiolis and looked as if she wanted to say something, but couldn't.

Tiolis squatted down and smiled at her.

"Hello, Kisara-san. Can I help you?"

Kisara remained silent for a while, but at last, she made up her mind and said:

".....I'd like..."

"You'd like?"

"I'd like it if you... wouldn't laugh while listening to my story."

Tiolis blinked in surprise. Then she immediately smiled and took Kisara's hand.

"Of course. Even though we're rival candidates right now, we're still allies."

"Ah..."

Kisara looked at her hand and smiled brightly.

Then she slowly bowed.

"Thank you... very much."

She put on her cloak, turned around, and ran up to the lectern.

Tiolis chuckled and expressed a happy smile.

"My Prophet, girls this innocent are rare these days, aren't they?"

"True that."

It had been his first time seeing her behave like that.

Had something happened while they hadn't been with her?

"Anyway, we'd be really glad if you could get along with her."

"I understand. I shall present her as a living sacrifice to our goddess."

Tiolis had replied with a refreshing smile as if that kind of thing wasn't a big deal at all.

"No, you obviously didn't understand anything?! Wait, you're pretty terrifying!"

Was she just acting in front of Kisara right now? —No, I think it was sincere. All the more scary.

"But it's the job of our local goddess to kill all men and women equally, isn't it?"

"That's kind of how things turned out, but you're inviting some big misunderstanding here!"

"Ah, it appears her speech has begun."

Kisara slowly made her way up to the lectern. The audience fell dead silent. Hundreds of pairs of eyes focused on her. Kisara's arms and legs were shaking from nervousness. She took a few deep breaths to calm herself down. And so her speech began in a shaky voice,

[Everyone,]

[the world is going mad.]

[It's going mad— beyond repair.]

Tears welled up in the corner of her eye. She continued,

[Even if I don't eat, I won't get hungry. Even if I don't sleep, I won't get tired. If I take off my clothes to change, people around me explode. If Kisara says it's weird, people tell me that it's just a bug, so there wasn't anything weird about it.]

[Bugs are plain normal, they say.]

[Getting worked up about them is pointless, they say.]

[Why? Because it's just a 'game.']

[It's the world's most stinking, rotten kusoge, they say.]

Kisara closed her eyes and lowered her head. She mumbled:

[You all...]

[You all...]

[YOU ALL WHO ARE LIVING IN THIS WORLD!]

That moment, she slammed her hands on the lectern.

Lifting her head back up, she stared into the audience.

[WILL YOU ALL JUST— ACCEPT THOSE EVIL LIES?!]

She screamed. And oh what a scream it was.

[ARE YOU FINE WITH THE WORLD WE'RE LIVING IN TO BE 'JUST A GAME?!']

[ARE YOU FINE WITH THE WORLD WE'RE GIVING OUR BEST TO SURVIVE IN TO BE JUST A SHAM?!]

[Kisara's not.]

[Kisara will wager her whole existence and refuse to believe those lies.]

[This world is reality.]

[It's not some stupid game, it's a truly existing reality.]

She stopped for just a second and then continued,

[I have proof. I saw it. A wonderful version of this world.]

[Kisara intends to fight.]

[Kisara will fight those wicked administrators who are leading our world to degenerate to 'just a game.']

[AND I WILL TAKE IT BACK!]

[OUR WORLD, PAPA, MAMA, I WILL TAKE ALL OF THEM BACK!]



[Everyone,]

[all of you who are living in this world with me.]

[Please— lend me your strength and fight with me.]

[Our world isn't just a stupid kusoge.]

[It's a far more brilliant— beautiful thing!]

[EVERYONE, LET US FIGHT!]

[LET US FIGHT AND TAKE IT BACK— THIS WORLD OF OURS!]

Her speech ended there. Kisara was out of breath. Everyone was just staring at her. At last, something was changing. Applause. Just a bit at first, but before long, it grew bigger and bigger, and finally turned into a thunderous ovation.

Kisara's face broke into a smile while tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Thank you... Thank you, everyone! Please fight with me!"

Kisara stood there dumbfounded for a bit, while the applause seemingly found no end. Sasaraki was, of course, surprised that Kisara had given all those things so much thought, but most of all it surprised him that the other players agreed. Were all of them hooked up on this game that seriously—?

While feeling a bit moved, he took a look around and heard some agitated voices.

[INCREDIBLE! SHE'S INSANE!]

[THAT KID TOTALLY LOST IT! AMAZING!]

[She can't tell game and reality apart anymore, her mind's broken, huh?]

[Tiolis was already pretty broken, but this kid takes the cake, doesn't she?!]

[You can't be our guildmaster if your head's not totally rek'd, she wins!]

".....Uwaah..."

Her ratings were awfully cruel.

[And it's a good idea to beat the dev's heads in.]

[I also like the idea of throwing myself on top of them and beat them up.]

[But how precisely can we end them? Is that even possible?]

[How about this: We make use of their bugs and kill the gods with their own creation. Dope, right?]

[Sounds like a story from an old game...]

And with that, he also came to understand that the developers were very much hated.

Yeah, so that's why they agreed... At the lectern, enveloped in a never-ending applause, Kisara kept talking to the audience in tears, [Thank you, thank you so much for believing me!]

[I'M... THE GODDESS OF REVOLUTION—!]

[OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH—!]

Sasaraki was at a loss. Why had things turned out like this?

Lizna came whispering something into his ear,

"Ah, will they kill me? Would it be good if they killed me?"

"Well... I don't know..."

Actually, killing aside, how can players even fight devs...?

Chapter 2:

About When Our Daughter Started Calling Herself the Savior

第二章

うちの娘が救世主を名乗りはじめた件について

THE JUNK! Kuso Game Online 3

Things had turned ugly.

Kisara was quick to act. Or rather, Kisara's underlings were. They'd spread the word of her speech across all players in the town of 'Start' within 30 minutes; as expected of the former (?) top raid guild.

That's wild enthusiasm for you. Their message was clear,

[KILL THE DEVS!]

Sasaraki and the others were currently watching the statistics on member count among guilds on the Main Screen in the debugging room. Over 2000 players - and counting - had joined the guild 'Liberion' (aka. Against the Developers), lead by Kisara.

"She's got talent for this, huh...?"

"Well, she's an 'Agitator,' they're supposed to be good with these kinds of things, right?"

The 'little girl steps up to big villain'-sort of situation that was going on here played a part in her success too, probably.

"Things have turned into something quite enjoyable!"

Alice said with a cheerful expression.

"Over 2000 people acting as one— what a beautiful event this is!"

"Well, it's for the sake of killing us, though..."

Thanks to Kisara's eyewitness testimony, the existence of the debugging room was now well-known among players.

Their guild members were currently scrambling for 'Mission: Locate the Debugging Room.'

"They really look like they're having fun, don't they?"

Sasaraki mumbled while gazing at the spectacle on the Main Screen. It showed a 'Space-Time Rift' - which resulted from a bug - that had appeared in a back-alley

in town. Touching it would launch you *somewhere*. Dozens of people - boys and girls - had gathered, engaging in vivid discussion.

[The destination really does seem to change depending on what weapon you've equipped at the moment you touch it!]

[So if we manage to get it to launch us to coordinates that don't exist, we could end up in the debugging room.]

[Though *I* get the feeling we'd just get stuck in a rock or something...]

[That'd be funny, too.]

[Have we tried axe, sword, and bow yet?]

[I'll try while holding this useless currency.]

[That's a good idea. Let's do that.]

[Why?]

[From a programming point of view, currency has an assigned numerical value - which we can manipulate, right?]

[I see! You're smart, aren't you?!]

They really had fun.

"Could they really wound up to find the debugging room?"

Sasaraki asked. Alice put her hand to her chin, "Hmm."

"Even if they get a strong grasp on how the bugs work, it'll be difficult. This place is physically isolated, after all."

"So it's a pointless effort?"

"Entering the debugging room even just once will set a flag, though..."

"So no one but Kisara can enter, huh?"

According to the spy they'd managed to sneak into the guild (Tiolis), Kisara had taken parts of her staff along with her to work on increasing their number of

allies. At this rate, the guild would soon consist of more than half the player base.

"Their enthusiasm is great and all, but the problem is that they'll grow tired of it soon, right?"

"You've a plan, don't you?"

Alice nodded, full of confidence.

"Let's do this RPG-style. Good gamemasters can think up easy-to-identify bad guys and easy-to-understand goals."

"Easy-to-identify bad guys?"

"The evil Developer Empire. We'll also make them beat something like The Big Four before a mini boss before the final boss."

Alice drew an organization chart on the whiteboard. On top was 'Goddess Lizeltna,' under her 'Great Priest Sasaragon,' and under him she had drawn four circles. They had the numbers one to four of The Big Four written into them.

"Sorry, but what's Sasaragon?"

"That's your villain name. Cool, right?"

Alice's naming sense was catastrophic.

But, it probably fit well into this kusoge.

"They'll need to go on adventures to find everyone's weak spot— that'll be our setting."

"What weak spots?"

"Even if we decided on them now, we can't implement them anyway, so we'll just observe what the players are doing and decide on the fly."

"Aren't we relying on chances too much here?!"

"I'll leave it to you guys to think of how you'll hint at your weakness, okay?"

Sasaraki exchanged glances with Lizna and they started brainstorming.

"How should we make our entrance, I wonder...? Should we put an ancient manuscript or something out there about the goddess?"

"But Sasaraki-kun, we can't make new items."

"Ah, yeah. Then how about we let a defeated dungeon boss mumble something?"

"Dead monsters don't talk."

"...Should I just go out there myself and tell them when they killed it, then?"

"That might work."

Lizna nodded acknowledgingly, "Yeah, yeah..."

"But even then... Kisara said all that stuff..."

She had spread various things; that developers were omnipotent beings, that they were toying with players as they pleased, or that they were ruling all aspects of the game. That was probably how things looked in her eyes—Actually, it was how things were *supposed* to be.

But in reality, it wasn't like that at all.

The things the four of them could do were extremely limited. They were struggling to contain bugs all the time, and things never ever went the way they were planning. He wished he could've conveyed that to Kisara.

"By the way, are we doing alright with the AI inspection?"

"I'm 80% done with the report, the programming's already done. Azrael's currently doing something else."

"Which is?"

"She said she wanted to try her best to make edible food."

".....Eh? We can do that?"

"I'm not sure."

He recalled Azrael's expression. Earlier, the both of them had checked on how Kisara was doing. Once Azrael had seen that Kisara had made friends in the guild, she looked relieved but appeared lost in thought soon after.

She'd probably been pondering what she, herself, could do for Kisara.

"I see, I see~..."

Lizna planted her butt onto the debugging room's floor.

"It'd be great if we could convey Azrael's feelings to her, right?"

"Yeah."

"That'll be hard, though."

'The world's a harsh place, ri~ght?' Lizna said as if she'd just realized something.

* * *

They couldn't really judge how tense the atmosphere in town was by just looking at a screen, so they decided to investigate in person. Azrael was tagging along, too, since she was taking a break from programming. She was holding two sparkling rainbow-colored baguettes of different sizes in her arms.

"Wait, what are those?"

"Food."

Azrael murmured. It appeared Kisara's 'there is no food!' had been weighing quite heavily on her mind.

"I was able to make something, more or less, but... there's a problem."

Azrael lowered her gaze in unease.

"It does have the flavor, but I just can't seem to fix the color."

Bread sparkling in rainbow colors looked certainly beyond poisonous, even mental.

Azrael the short one out to him. She seemingly wanted him to try it. He accepted it and used two of his fingers to tear a bit off, it did feel like bread. When he put it into his mouth, he tasted a fluffy texture and a crunchy crust.

This was baguette alright.

"I think the taste is good, but, um... that's about it."

"In my book, that alone is amazing already."

In this short amount of time, she'd managed to complete the 'Sense of Taste' feature which had been done half way and was then neglected - this was nothing short of amazing. The color was a bit repulsive, but if you had your eyes closed while eating, there shouldn't be a problem.

"The colors are just a bit funky, right? I'm sure Kisara will be happy."

"It's not just that. Eating it will also drain your level."

"Eh?"

Badumm. An announcement indicated that Sasaraki's level had fallen to 998.

"Errr, it's not that big a deal to level down in this game!"

"It's not just that. Eating it will also make your hair grow by a meter."

He felt his hair grow, turning his hairstyle into a long-haired one.

"How do you program it to do something like this?! Wait, this is *really* long, Jesus—?!"

"Ah, sorry, I'm really sorry, Sasaraki."

Azrael got flustered and used 'Magical Sword Gram' to cut his hair. Now that's handy.

After that, she muttered while gazing at the half-eaten rainbow baguette (the small one),

"I guess she won't be happy with such a failure, after all..."

"But you've brought it with you, so you want her to try it, don't you?"

".....Yeah, b-but..."

"Then I'll pass it on to her. It'll be fine, I'm a gamemaster."

"So...?"

"I won't fail you."

Sasaraki put some confidence into his tone.

"If things look like I'm messing up, it's just my first step to success."

"...You've got that from Alice, don't you?"

"Ah, you got me. Didn't sound persuading?"

"Not if *you* say it."

Azrael expressed a small smile.

"But... I feel less tense now."

Azrael hugged the rainbow baguette happily.

She's really the part of a mother...

He looked at her profile and it reinforced his impression. Azrael had given Kisara her name, Azrael was the one Kisara loved the most. It was a bit vexing, but... he was jealous, that she could give it so much earnest thought.

He had to give her strength.

Although this world was just digital, she was his wife.

They were looking around town again.

Currently, they were at Teleport Plaza. Usually a totally unpopular place, today there were a lot of people around. And they were acting off for some reason. Countless players walked on their hands, others gave people rides on their

shoulders, some even started duelling in the middle of the town all of a sudden. Nobody was behaving normally.

"Are they all looking for the debugging room?"

"There are people with dowsing rods too."

He looked into the direction Azrael was pointing in and saw a player with a long and narrow metal rod in both of his hands.

"Did we have that kind of skill in this game?"

"We don't, but there are items like dowsing rods."

They're probably counting on an unimplemented skill to glitch open a way to the debugging room— he thought and took another look, apparently the boy had taken notice of him and Azrael.

His gaze wandered to the rainbow-colored baguette in Azrael's arms and his complexion changed.

"UOOH! That item's amazingly bugged! Way to go!"

"That's not it, though. So you're looking for items?"

"Our Savior-chan is looking for a 'Video Crystal,' so we're helping her."

"Savior-chan?"

Apparently, that's how they called Kisara.

"Looks like it'll be our trump card in the fight against the devs, yo!"

Sasaraki exchanged glances with Azrael. Was he talking about the thing Kisara had had with her?

"The details are still a secret, but... it's the dev's weakness!"

"What could it possibly be, right?"

"If I'd to guess, it's something that'd deal the devs a serious blow— evidence of tax evasion. Secret accounts 'n stuff!"

What an awfully realistic weakness.

"Isn't it weird to put something like that into an item?"

"They're the ones who made this kusoge. Nothing's weird enough to be true if it's them."

Sasaraki was vexed that he couldn't argue with that.

"Well, it might not be secret accounts, but who knows, something might pop up, yo!"

"Mh-mh-mhhh..." the boy hummed a tune through his nose and continued his search with his dowsing rods.

"You look like you're having a good time, huh?"

"Ye, it's like we're excavatin' an ancient temple, like having a festival or whatever."

Sasaraki looked around and everyone really was chit-chatting in harmony. He heard talk like, [Did you have luck with bugs over there?] [Found an assault rifle!] [Maybe that's old data from when they wanted to turn this into a war game.] [When I fired it, it exploded into my face and killed me!]

It really was a bug hunt, or even an excavation of sorts already.

"When I told my retired buddies, even they said this looked interesting and came back to the game."

The boy broke into loud laughter after his joke.

"All thanks to Savior-chan, yo! Hahaha."

"...Yeah, g-guess so."

Azrael, who had remained silent until now, now mumbled in relief,

"Thank God... Kisara's welcomed by the other players, isn't she?"

Can you call all this fuss just 'welcomed?'

He thought, but Azrael seemed so happy, he didn't want to tsukkomi now.

"Do you know where your savior is at the moment?"

"Right now she's with her high level gang, systematically clearing dungeons, yo."

"Why that?"

"Defeating dungeon bosses might get them blue chests and A-rank loot. Seems like the loot tables only depends on color, so painting them golden before you open 'em gets you some sick items. That's also thanks to Savior-chan."

"Are you really sure that outcome has something to do with her...?"

"Yeah, we found that out durin' Savior-chan's 24/7 dungeon marathon."

"That's some amazing stamina right there, huh? —Hm?"

She was an NPC, so it was kind of a given, but Kisara was logged in 24/7.

Weren't they suspicious that an elementary school girl whose login time limit should be around two or three hours was ingame that much?

"Her name's bugged, so her login limit's probably bugged too."

Bugs make anything possible, huh? He thought.

Anyway, after asking for the dungeon name and location, the two of them left.

As long as they knew the location, they could teleport there freely using Sasaraki's ability. Thus, they teleported to the dungeon 'Forest No. 128.' As the half-assed name suggested, it was a forest-type dungeon. They entered its control room— a room for gamemasters with a mechanical panel to control the whole dungeon— and turned the monitors on.

They saw Kisara together with a girl and a boy.

It looked like they were fighting the dungeon boss. Kisara was shouting with a frantic expression,

[FALL BACK, EVERYONE! ANY MORE AND WE MIGHT DIE!]

[It's fine, My Savior, even if we die, we'll revive.]

[NO! YOU HAVE TO TREASURE LIFE— YOU HAVE TO TREASURE YOUR LIFE MORE DEARLY!]

Kisara shouted in desperation and swung her sword down. A golden flash came flying from the 'Messian Sword' and attacked the horned beast they were fighting against. It was a fierce light torrent that almost looked as if it had taken the shape of Kisara's vigorous voice. It tore the beast's skin, wings, and head apart.

[You have conquered Forest No. 128! Congratulations!]

The system voice announced, Kisara heaved a sigh and wiped the sweat off her forehead.

"Thank God, she's okay."

Azrael mumbled, relieved.

"What do you want to do, Azrael? Go to her?"

"...If we gave her the bread directly, she would probably be suspicious of it."

"Yeah, after all we're seen as some underlings of the dev side, huh?"

Both of them folded their arms and groaned, "Hmmm..."

"Should we put it into a chest, then?"

"Isn't it unnatural for there to be rainbow baguette in a chest?"

Or so he said, but getting rainbow baguette would appear unnatural no matter where you got it from.

"It's a weird item to begin with, so it's fine wherever, right?"

"Y-Yeah."

And so Sasaraki took the rainbow baguette. He switched it out with the chest's original loot— then he realized that it'd be kind of sad to take all the useful items

out, so he decided to put two items in. It did violate the 'One Chest, One Item' rule, but there were bugs all the time, so it was probably alright.

[Hm, a mirror and... a baguette?]

When Kisara opened the chest, she tilted her head in wonder.

Azrael and Sasaraki gulped. Would she try it?

[It's in rainbow colors, that's unusual, isn't it? It might be a Bug Item.]

[Hmph, it'll just be another tasteless fake, anyway.]

[Will you discard it?]

Kisara appeared to still be considering.

[...It might be a hint how to defeat the developers. I'll try to have a bite for now.]

She opened her mouth and, [Hamu—], had a bite.

[Mh—?!]

Kisara blocked her mouth with her hands, surprised.

[It... has taste!]

[Are you alright? It didn't explode in your mouth?]

[Not yet. It's amazing!]

Next to Sasaraki, Azrael's expression lightened up. And soon after, *palim-palim*, the dunce-sounding level down sound played. The system announced: *[Kisara's level fell: 43 → 42.]*

[So it's just a sneaky trap by the developers—?!]

"HAU—?!"

Azrael's expression clouded as if it had drowned in a sea of darkness.

[T-TO LURE ME IN WITH FOOD, THEY'RE SUCH COWAAAAAAAAAAAARDS!]

"Auuuuuuuu..."

Azrael was about ready to cry. *Oh no, I've to somehow comfort her!*

[My Savior! Your hair is growing!]

[EEEEEEH?! IT'S CURSED ON TOP OF THAT—?!]

"HAAAAAU!"

Azrael was on her knees, crying out loud. *It's too late, already.*

[Let's throw it away, after all.]

[O-Of course! Nothing good will ever come from keeping this!]

Then, all of a sudden, Kisara stopped dead in her tracks. Her gaze wandered to the inside of the chest. To the mirror. It appeared that— she was looking at her grown-out hair on her reflection. She drove her fingers through her hair and blinked incessantly while gazing at it.

[.....Do I look like her?]

[Is something wrong, My Savior?]

For a while, Kisara seemed lost in thought. At last,

[.....I-I shall take it with me.]

[Eh? Are you sure? It is clearly cursed.]

[It'll be fine. I've made my decision. It tastes like bread, and...]

Kisara carefully put the rainbow-colored, sparkling bread into her backpack.

Holding her long hair up into the light, she smiled happily.

[It's just like Mama's.]

Azrael cried again. This time, there seemed to be no need to comfort her.

* * *

When they returned to the debugging room to report the results of their investigation to everyone, Lizna was in her goddess outfit. In her hands, she held a notebook saying [Script Part 1　'The Descent of the Goddess'-Arc]. She went "Mhm, mhm," while reading it thoroughly. Next to her was Alice, looking at a screen with the second floor on it.

"Welcome back, Sasaraki. How did things go?"

He described the encounter from earlier to her.

"Video crystal... I see."

"Do you know what this is about?"

"Hmm, I can more or less imagine."

Alice folded her arms and groaned a troubled, "Hmm..."

"Is it that bad?"

They couldn't have possibly stored some real world evidence in this game, could they?

"No, it's just something extremely silly, so that won't be a problem. What I'm rather worried about is—"

She stopped her words and looked at Azrael's profile. Azrael was spacing out while gazing at a picture. It was Kisara's. Earlier, she had sneaked a picture of her with her hair grown out.

".....This is looking grave."

Alice heaved a big sigh.

Knocking between her eyebrows with her finger, she mumbled,

"The backup system should work fine with the initial AIs, but..."

"Backup...? What backup?"

Alice turned back to Sasaraki and put on a sweet smile.

"You're kind of a scoundrel, so you don't need to worry about it for now."

"Why am I getting dissed all of a sudden?!"

"I'm praising you, you know? Well, I'll explain it to you another time."

Alice shook her head and then puffed up her chest in pride.

"Let's get back to our strategy. I've just talked it over with Lizna."

Everyone assembled in front of the whiteboard.

"Alright, strategy time. First of all, Lizna will be representing us developers and declare war on all players."

"I totally will!"

Lizna jumped up and down with the script in her hands. She really seemed into it.

"But there are hardly any set lines in here, is it really okay if she adlibs?"

"It is, it'll go better if she just talks as she usually would, anyway."

"...Yeah, that really does sound better."

"I most definitely will!"

Lizna struck a triumphant pose and put on a bright smile. After they'd decided to go to floor one's public square to start things up, Alice came whispering something into his ear; all the while keeping a cautious eye on Azrael.

"Sasaraki, brace yourself."

"For what?"

"We are gamemasters, and gamemasters are..."

Hurling up her dice into the air, Alice said with a feeling of solitude to her,

"...Supervillains."

* * *

And thus, they put out an announcement. All players received the notice, [*IMPORTANT* Today at noon, Goddess Lizeltna will have a [*RX&ZLP] for all players! *IMPORTANT*]. The corrupted middle part wasn't on purpose, it had simply bugging out. They'd realized that too late.

The system had a function which detected and emphasized important keywords automatically, and it was malfunctioning.

Hence, the important part alone consisted of illegal characters.

"We should be more mindful about the system identifying something as important, huh?"

"The announcement is totally pointless like this, isn't it?!"

Kisara had said that the world had gone mad, and sure enough, it had. They'd be picking a fight with her from now on. In their role as the evil developers. Of course, they wouldn't really mutually hate and fight each other, but— there was still a bit of concern left in him.

Is our reasoning really not faulty?

"Before that, just about everything went faulty from the start, though..."

Sasaraki was sitting on a chair in the debugging room, mumbling to himself.

"Oh my, if it isn't my master. If you're worrying about something, Fury-chan will lend you an ear, you know?☆"

Fury called out to him in her usual carefree tone.

"Even if I'd ask *you*... No, wait."

Thinking about it, Fury and Kisara were both super sophisticated AIs. She probably understood Kisara's way of thinking far better than Sasaraki and the

others did. Her downsides were the rotten character and evil disposition, but she couldn't lie, so there was probably value in asking her.

After a bit more thought, Sasaraki said,

"...What can I do to get on the same page with Kisara?"

"It's basically impossible☆"

"Shot down within two seconds—?!"

"After all, it's even impossible between two human beings - and we're not even human beings, we're something entirely different☆"

Fury laughed happily, "Haha~"

"Hm, wait. If you say 'basically,' you're not saying it's fundamentally impossible, right?"

"Fury-chan's former master conducted research to gain mutual understanding with Fury-chan~☆"

"Research...? What kind of?"

Fury looked lovingly into the distance and said,

"Living in different worlds is the fundamental cause for not understanding each other. In that case, there's only one way to solve it: Fury-chan and Master had to live in the same world. That was my former master's thinking, so he tried to transfer his mind into this world to live with me— and failed☆"

Fury chuckled.

"Failed? How?"

"Because Fury-chan told him that she didn't want that for the life of hers☆"

She squeezed both her arms around her body as if holding something precious.

"After all, Fury-chan loved Master☆ I don't need some imitation/copy/fake Master who had his mind transferred into this kusoge☆ When I told him to never come back again, he cried real loud☆"

"Ah, yeah, I can kinda see why..."

Well, getting totally shot down by your beloved fairy while being loved by her at the same time, I can see how that'd make him cry.

Sasaraki sat down on the floor and gazed into the distance with Fury.

"This is tough, huh?"

"Does Master want to be in mutual understanding with Kisara?"

"I think it's more precise to say that I want us to be able to have fun together."

Fury nodded, "Mhm, mhm." She thought for a bit and then smiled.

"In that case, Fury-chan will give you a hand☆"

"Eh? How?"

Hadn't the point of her story been 'mutual understanding is impossible, so let it go?'

"Fufufu, Fury-chan has a trump card, you kno~w?☆"

"I've a bad feeling about this, so let's stop right here."

"I don't want to~☆"

Fury fluttered with her wings.

"Waitwaitwait! What are you planning to do?!"

"Please, you don't have to worry☆ Let's see~, if I put it simply..."

Fury sent a loving wink towards Sasaraki.

"...I'll turn Master's reality into a kusoge for a bit☆"

There was nothing *not* to worry about here.

* * *

"And that's what happend."

When it was about time to teleport, he reported everything that had happened to Alice.

"I see, same procedure as every day, right?"

"Is it really okay to leave her alone now?"

"She's just playing with you, there's no real harm done. Don't worry."

Alice didn't seem to be bothered at all.

There certainly was no point in worrying about it now, but— he couldn't help it weighing heavy on his mind.

"Okay, Sasaraki-kun, I'm leaving the teleporting and securing to you!"

Lizna said. Sasaraki's job was to keep an eye on the audience while Lizna held her speech.

Alice and Azrael would stay behind in the debugging room and deal with anything that might happen.

"Right... Okay, let's go."

"Yeah, but, Sasaraki-kun!"

Lizna, in her white, fluttering dress, expressed a sweet smile and struck a triumphant pose.

"A lot has happened, but let's both do our best together, okay?!"

"Do our best...? At what?"

"Of course at— letting everyone have a good time!"

"Fufufufu~," Lizna chuckled without a worry again.

"That's what being a gamemaster is all about, after all."

She said and winked. Sasaraki kind of understood what she was trying to say. When she said 'everyone,' she probably wanted to imply that that also included Kisara. So she'd said: 'Let's make it a game we can enjoy together with her!'

That really was the most important thing.

Although he didn't have the slightest idea of how to achieve that.

The two of them bumped fists and smiled at each other.

"Let's go, then. Azrael, if something happens, I'll contact you, I'm counting on you to take care of it if push comes to shove."

".....Yeah..."

Azrael had regained a bit of her energetic self and nodded meekly.

After that, Sasaraki teleported them to the square in the center of the town. Even though the image of the goddess would be displayed everywhere, most of the players were waiting in the square; reason being that the image itself had mass and being in a narrow space with it sprung the chance of players being crushed to death.

Last time, over a hundred players had died like that. Some called this phenomenon 'Pressure of the Goddess.'

And so players who didn't have the 'hugged to death by goddess'-fetish assembled in the square.

Sasaraki was looking around the place. It felt like there was a festival in this hundred square meters big place. Players had set up various stalls. When Sasaraki checked one of them out, wondering what they were selling, it had 'Magical Dagger 5 BD' on display.

"Yo, Onii-chan, wanna buy it?"

The male shopkeeper asked through his goatee in a seemingly good mood.

"What does '5 BD' stand for?"

Taking a look around, the other stalls also had things on display for 10 or 8 BD. It had to be a currency. Thanks to a gold dupe glitch this society's monetary economy had broken down a long time ago, so the current economy was ought to be based on trading wares.

"Haven't you logged in for a while? BD (Black Dice) is our money now, ya know?"

The shopkeeper rolled something in the palm of his hand. It was a jet-black object about a centimeter big. Well, Sasaraki couldn't really tell whether it even was an object. It didn't reflect light at all, it was like a black hole, looking like pure darkness. But it certainly had the shape of a dice.

"What is that?"

"Haven't seen it before? It's stuff that appears when items get lost."

Now that he said it, Sasaraki had seen something like that before. He'd thought it was useless trash at the time, though.

"Wait, you're using that instead of coins?"

"Nothing to make fun of, dude. You can make it from crappy items, so it's not like you're wasting anything, and producing this stuff takes quite some time so it's kinda rare. But most importantly, if you're carryin' a lot of 'em with you, it'll destabilize your character and make you prone for bugfests!"

"And how is it good to be dealing with a lot of bugs?"

"It might be good if you wanna face the devs."

"...Wow."

Sasaraki heaved a sigh in his heart. The world was plunging into chaos much more rapidly than he'd thought. Although— looking at the stands, the world seemed to thrive thanks to all this. The adaptability of the players was nothing short of amazing.

However, the driving force wasn't the players themselves, it was Kisara.

I wonder where she is and what she's thinking right now.

"This is a bit different... f-from what I expected."

Said a voice he knew all too well.

When he turned around, sure enough, there she was, the blonde-haired girl, Kisara. Long hair edition. She was surrounded by her grown-up followers and appeared to not have noticed him yet. She was rolling a 'Black Dice' around on the palm of her hand, a perplexed expression on her face.

"So BD wasn't short for 'black dire'... It looks eerie..."

"It's a Bug Item, so it's bound to be eerie."

"This is another issue! We have to improve this, definitely! *scribblescribble*"

"My Savior, what is that notebook?"

"It's a notebook with my plans on how to save the world!"

Kisara laughed a childish, "Fufu~n," and opened her notebook. It had stuff like, [Give monsters scary names], [Definitely make pitfalls one meter deeper], [Make ice cream that doesn't explode in your mouth when you eat it], written in it - and below those, [Make pretty coins].

"So this is a list of improvements we'll make after we defeated the developers?"

"We'll make our world a better place together with everyone!"

"But I don't think this kusoge can be changed that easily..."

Her follower said and Kisara's expression changed, "Mu—"

".....I forgot to write down the most important thing."

Kisara forcefully added something to the bottom of the list.

[Take back everyone's sanity]

Kisara looked at her notes full of confidence and nodded a bunch of times.

"Yep, important tasks, indeed!"

Her mind seemed made up. Sasaraki watched her and tilted his head.

"Why's she so stubborn in her belief?"

He had felt the same when she'd given her speech, but Kisara's belief that 'our world is reality' was awfully firm. At first, he'd thought that she was just thinking that way because it's the world she'd been born in, but Fury was the same and didn't show that behavior at all. Then again, Fury was a special case - in various ways.

It was hard to prove that this world was a game, but proving that it was reality should be at least just as hard.

And yet, she was a firm believer.

She'd said that the video crystal held proof that their world wasn't a game, but he had a feeling that that wasn't all there's to it. There had to be another reason for her belief. And if he understood that reason— they might be able to understand each other a bit more.

"Speaking of which, My Savior, long hair suits you."

"Of course it does! Angels got to have long hair!"

Kisara said happily, then the next moment...

Her long hair was suddenly cut off and back to being short.

"AAAAAH—! The effect has worn off again—!"

She grew flustered and took something out of her pocket. It was the baguette - or the piece that was left of it.

"Au... There's just a bit left..."

'Gotta hold back, gotta hold back,' she mumbled and carefully put the piece back into her pocket like it was something precious.

"Having your level drained just to change your hairstyle... This is another scheme of the Goddess!"

Kisara clenched her fists and glared at the sky.

That moment...

[U-Umm, can you hear me, everyo~ne?]

A familiar voice echoed in the sky. At once, the madding crowd fell silent, everyone was looking up into the sky. They were looking at a gigantic projection of the goddess, Lizeltna. He was anxious whether they'd face her with hostility, but apparently his fear had been unfounded.

He could hear whispers in his surroundings.

"Hey, how do you think she'll kill us this time?"

"It was water last time, so maybe fire?"

"Nah, she'll bury us element-style, it'll be a landslide."

"I see, you're smart."

"*Looks all proud*"

The way she was treated rather resembled that of an infamous goddess, sort of like a namahage.

No, well, this might be better than an awkward situation like being feared.

[Hello, everyone! It's me, Lizeltna!]

[Today, you see, umm, what was it again...? Ah, right, right!]

[I've decided to declare war on all of you.]

After a brief moment of silence, his surroundings started making a commotion.

"Developers declaring war on the players? That's new."

"New? I bet someone came up with this before but didn't dare seeing it through."

[The reason, you see, it's not that I hate you or anything.]

[Actually, I really like you all, I love our players. Please, believe me.]

[...You *do* believe in me, right?]

[You wouldn't ever doubt me, right?]

[Eh? What is it, Alice-san...? Ah, I'm sorry, that wasn't meant to be a threat or anything!]

[Believe it or not, you players are very dear to us.]

[I won't blow you up without a reason. And I won't forcefully delete your accounts.]

[But, umm, everything here is bugged, so it might happen by accident, anyway.]

[If it does, I apologize in advance right now!]

[I'm sorry *bows*]

Lizna bowed awkwardly. Everyone around him was shivering.

"Incredible, she looks like she'll kill us the second we talk back... but she's cute, so I forgive her."

"You got caught up in her trap, you know?"

[I'm sorry, I went off-topic. Let's talk war.]

[We can annihilate all of you without a trace left, hands down.]

[But we'll give you a chance.]

[I'll wait on the second floor, in a dungeon underwater.]

[By defeating my Big Four, you can open the path to me.]

[Please, by all means, do come by, I won't go easy on you, but I'll welcome you.]

[On an unrelated note: Don't 'going easy on someone' and 'welcoming someone' kind of have the same feeling to them?]

[.....Sorry, I was just making a joke, but I guess it wasn't funny?]

Everyone around him laughed drily at once.

[Thank you so much! Well then, everyone...]

Last but not least, Lizna put on a sweet smile and winked.

She showed her best smile and gestured as if she was gently hugging something.

[Do your very best, okay?!]



The announcement was over, the reflection disappeared. All at once, everyone around him got excited.

".....Ha, ha, s-she went there—!"

He heard a fearless laughter. It was Kisara's. When he looked towards the stall she was at, she was already climbing its post and stood on top of it. Her small legs looked like they were trembling. Was she scared?

"LISTEN TO ME, EVERYONE!"

Hearing her shout, everyone turned into Kisara's direction.

"THIS WAS A DECLARATION OF WAR THAT CLEARLY MOCKED EVERYONE IN OUR WORLD!"

"YOU MUSTN'T FORGIVE THOSE EVIL DEVS!"

"WE DEFINITELY— WON'T LOSE TO THEM!"

"OR AM I WRONG, EVERYONE?!"

There was scattered applause which finally grew louder and louder and ended in 'SAVIOR!' chants.

* * *

Sasaraki and Lizna were at the bottom of the ocean that covered the entirety of the second floor, 'The End of the Endless Ocean.' It harbored the 'Undersea Sanctuary,' an extravagant palace made out of marble reminiscent of temples in ancient Greece.

In its innermost part was a gigantic hall, modelled like a chapel, and Lizna was sitting on the floor hugging her knees right in the center of it.

She was the final boss of this event. Therefore, she was waiting for players to arrive.

"Still no o~ne?"

"The event has barely started, it'll take a while."

"Being the final boss is boring, ri~ght?"

"Yeah, but it'd be trouble if you moved around freely now."

"But don't final bosses often appear before mini boss encounters and say stuff like, 'You're not strong enough to defeat my servant!,' or something?"

Now that she said it, there were bosses like that.

"But you're belittling them if you do that, and you're the goddess."

"Then how about, 'You can do it! I believe in you!'"

"That will probably just make them angry and attack you on the spot."

"That's okay. I've the Invincible Barrier turned on."

'B-B-Barrie~r,' Lizna said, struck a pose like Ultraman, and smiled.

"And I've turned 'Allow PK' off!"

"What's that?"

"Alice-san told me about it. If you try and attack someone like that, you'll just attack yourself."

"...That's pretty much like an Invincible Barrier before the fight even starts, huh?"

Sasaraki looked at the floor. There was a huge pool of water as smooth as a mirror covering it. And in it he could see numerous people advancing through a lava cave. At the spearhead of the raid was a young girl with blonde hair, Kisara. She was progressing through the last dungeon of the first floor while firing up her allies.

It looked like she was doing her best to beat the first floor for them, just as they had planned.

[It's hot... Is everyone doing okay?]

[Of course, My Savior! I jumped into the lava earlier and died, but that aside, I'm okay!]

[So you're... *not* okay, are you?! Why would you jump into lava—?!]

[You see, in games there often are doors hidden in pitfalls, aren't there?]

[Sometimes there are, who found out about something like that, anyway?]

For a bit, Kisara was speechless, but finally she shouted,

[YOU HAVE TO TREASURE YOUR LIVES! THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO'LL BE SAD IF YOU DIE!]

[Weeell, that's alright. My family thought I'm too much of a videogame nerd and abandoned me.]

[That confession - way too depressing.]

[Auuu... b-b-but Kisara would be sad!]

[Eh—?]

[Kisara would be sad if you died, I'd cry! So you can't die!]

[...Uwah, not good.]

[What's wrong?]

[I was just deeply moved - by a little girl.]

[Isn't that alright?]

[But, I kinda wanna check whether she'd really cry for me if I died.]

The man jumped into the lava and melted away.

[I LITERALLY JUST TOLD YOU NOT TO DIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIE———!]

Kisara seemed to have it pretty rough.

"I get why she's so popular."

"It makes you happy if there's someone who'd really cry for you, right?!"

"I wished they could exercise some restraint in making her cry, though..."

Kisara was beating away on the chest of the man who'd just respawned, crying [STUPID, STUPID, STUPID, STUPID! YOU'RE AN IDIOT! WHAT IF YOU HADN'T RESPAWNED, WHAT THEN?!] And roundabout five men and women around her were watching over the scene, smiling. She was so charming.

"...But, Sasaraki-kun, don't you think something's weird?"

"I think all of that now was weird."

"Not that, Kisara-chan thinks this world is reality, right?"

Lizna was pointing at the water, at the reflection of the player who'd just respawned.

"Why doesn't it raise doubts with her that people who die simply respawn?"

"Because she thinks that in reality there's magic that can revive people?"

"And yet she tells them not to die?"

Lizna inclined her head, that answer didn't seem to satisfy her.

"If you understand that people will respawn, wouldn't you be more relaxed with them dying? Or even actively kill them?"

"That's actually something only you'd do!"

"Is that really so~...?"

Lizna kept her head tilted for a while, but eventually said, "Well, whatever."

The two of them kept watching Kisara and company for a bit. The raid appeared to progress smoothly.

"Hey, Sasaraki-kun, can I set up a trap or something?"

"Eh? I don't mind, but... why?"

"You know, it's going *too* smoothly. Wouldn't the players be more satisfied if they overcame some difficulties?"

"Normally, yes, but... what about Kisara?"

She wasn't seeing herself as a player. And in fact, she wasn't. Being the angel who'd save the world, that's what she persisted to be. How would they make someone like her happy?

"We can do that."

However, Lizna showed him a sweet smile.

"Everyone enjoys overcoming hardships with their own power."

"But they won't exactly be grateful to whoever's giving them those hardships."

"They don't have to be. I'm the final boss, after all."

Lizna tapped on the water surface with her finger. Apparently, she was setting up the trap.

"Alright, done."

[Why's there a steel door blocking our path all of a sudden—?!]

[It just appeared out of nowhere, for no good reason, oi!]

[That trap's just bull!]

They were protesting loudly.

"Let's see~, I wonder how Kisara-chan will break through~"

"I'm just wondering, but how *could* they break through?"

"I didn't plan that far."

"EH—?"

Sasaraki's voice exploded in surprise, Lizna stared in puzzlement.

"Isn't it the players' job to come up with a solution?"

"Nonono, there's a difference between giving them something difficult to overcome and asking the impossible, you know?!"

"Oh, I see—!"

Lizna looked a bit lonely.

The moment he thought, *Guess I should give them a workaround myself—*, the players had formed a circle and were discussing something. Each of them was clasping a pitch-black, light-absorbing bug item, the 'Black Dice,' with their hands.

"What are they doing?"

As Sasaraki and Lizna kept watching, Kisara gripped the handle of her sword with one hand and assumed a low stance. The other players threw their 'Black Dices' into the air all at once. Kisara drew her sword and struck them together with a yell.

[GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO—! 'NEO MESSIAN SWORD!']

The moment one of the 'Black Dices' touched the sword's tip, a black lightning rushed through the blade. Kisara swung her sword. Together with the fierce sound of cracking glass, a black flash unleashed from the point of contact between the sword and the dice— you could call it a beam.

It penetrated the steel door all too easily and tore a square-shaped hole in it.

[There's nothing that can stop us!]

Sasaraki and Lizna's eyes were mere dots by now.

"What the heck was that?"

"Did we have a skill like that?"

"There are skills that make the sword radiate, but not shoot beams."

If there were a skill here that would let you shoot beams, Azrael would've been on its heels.

"Ooh☆ I haven't seen this one in a while, the Debugging Beam☆"

A puff of smoke appeared in front of their eyes and out of it came a fairy. It was Fury.

"Debugging Beam? Fury, do you know what's going on?"

"Among items, the Bug Items are extremely unstable. Unstable meaning that the boundary between them and surrounding objects is vague. So applying a powerful vector— like the slash of a sword— leads to it simply swallowing up surrounding data and destroy it☆"

"That sounds nothing short of a bomb."

"Yes, you'd call it a nuclear explosion in the real world☆"

"Nonono..."

Don't say nuclear.

"Will this world be fine if they use something like that?"

"Of course it won't, look☆"

Fury pointed at the steel door. It had a gaping hole in the form of a square. The insides of the hole were packed with something. On a closer look, it were characters. A whole lot of, [ERROR! ERROR! ERROR! ERROR! ERROR! ERROR!].

"Destroying data results in an object syntax error☆"

"So in other words it's a beam that destroys data and causes errors."

"By the way, if too many of those errors pile up, it'll crash this world☆"

"THAT'S BAD, THOUGH?!"

Apparently, it was a technique they should never ever use.

"Sasaraki-kun, how about retrieving the door for now?"

"Right, if I use the gamemaster skill 'Object Teleport,' it should—"

"Ah, if you do that now, it will malfunction, you kno~w?☆"

"Eh?"

Fury's warning was too late, Sasaraki had already used the skill. As soon as spacetime around the steel door distorted, the distortion fully spread across the entire surrounding area in a heartbeat, Kisara and her allies also got caught up in it.

[EH—? W-W-WHAT IS THIS—?!]

Sasaraki and Lizna were in the deepest part of 'The Underwater Palace.' And right there, *BAM*!

A steel door, Kisara, and a lot of players popped up through teleport.

"See?☆ If you use skills on corrupted objects, this is what happens☆"

Lizna and Sasaraki were about five meters apart from Kisara and her group. Lizna was still sitting on the floor while hugging her knees and gazed at Kisara and company dumbfoundedly. Kisara and the other players stared back at Lizna in a similar fashion.

She opened and closed her mouth a few times.

That's right. The final boss and the savior were facing off by accident.

"(Sasaraki-kun, what are we gonna do?!)"

Lizna whispered into his direction. Hearing her voice, Sasaraki snapped out of it. *Right, for now we've got to take care of them. If I just teleport them back to where they came from, it's as if nothing's happened— No, if I do that now, it'll probably lead to similar problems.*

"Wha—? T-The G-Goddess, and Papa too—?! What are you doing here all of a sudden?!"

"Ah, s-sorry, wait a moment, I'll come up with something!"

"You'll come up with something?!"

"What should I do? Should I have said my line? 'You did well to clear The Underwater Temple!'"

Lizna asked in a fluster.

"We didn't set a foot in there yet! We're actually still on the first floor, you know?!"

"T-That's, see, I'd be really happy if you'd be so kind to overlook that!"

"Kind?!"

"She's cute, so I could overlook that."

"The way she's sitting there really puts those thighs on display, I'll overlook it."

"WHAT ARE YOU IDIOTS TALKING ABOUT—?!"

It was chao.

The situation had reached its climax of confusion, Lizna clapped her hands together.

"Well then, umm, a lot of unfortunate circumstances may have led us here, but let's fight for now!"

"I TOLD YOU, I'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT—?!"

"Here I come, 'HOLY LANCE OF GENOCIDE!'"

Lizna grabbed her 'Immortal Pendant'— the strongest item in this world, the item that gave gamemasters their powers— that dangled from her neck. As soon as she clasped it, seven lances out of golden light appeared above her head.

"TAKE *THESE*!"

When Lizna flicked her fingers, the energy-clad lances flew towards Kisara and her group.

"WHA—?!"

Kisara guarded herself against the onslaught with her sword. The lance got repelled and scattered into light. However, the other players around Kisara weren't as skilled as her. Some were stabbed into the abdomen, some into the chest.

"ALPHAAA—?! BREAAAAAAAAK—?!"

Kisara screamed while looking at the gruesome spectacle with tears in her eyes.

"G-Get a hold of yourself! It's probably just a scratch—!"

"No, My Savior, it's too late for me. I'm dying, so please let me use your lap as a pillow."

"No, I'm the one who's totally done for here. Please hug me and pat my head while I die."

"You two seem surprisingly okay, though—?!"

Looking at their health bars, each time the lance pulsated, it recovered their health.

"A-re, a-re? Sasaraki-kun, why won't they die?"

"Lizna, did you test that skill beforehand?"

"I didn't."

"You should've."

"Sorry, I will next time."

Lizna bowed. How docile of her.

"Fury, do you know what just happened?"

"All players are resistant to light-type attacks and absorb the damage☆"

"Why that? Are they doing photosynthesis on top of that?"

"If they had no light resistance, the sun would be too fierce and evaporate them all☆"

"That reason's so stupid, I can believe that."

Kisara slapped the two guys in the face and both of them got up again. They looked energetic enough.

Lizna put on a gentle smile and struck a pose that could be from Chinese martial arts.

"That was just my initial encounter animation! It'd be boring if I defeated all of you when you're not fighting seriously!"

Apparently, that's what she'd decided to go with.

"Looked like you were firing at us awfully seriously there, though."

"Your eyes were ice-cold and bursting with intend to kill, though."

"Sasaraki, what should I do?! They're not falling for it at all!"

How tedious.

"Why would you think that that'd be enough to fool them...? Just fight them head-on already."

"I see! Got it!"

Lizna mumbled something and a giant hammer appeared out of nowhere. It was Lizna's favorite Manslaughter Hammer that she'd been using ever since she'd become a player. Sasaraki had also felt its weight on his head numerous times already. There were no players who'd survive a direct attack from it.

She was spinning the hammer above her head like the blades of a fan and *BAM*!

With a thunderous roar from her kicking the ground, Lizna charged at Kisara and her group.

"DEATH BLOW! HERE I COME~!"

"Kuh—... Here she comes! We have to block it!"

Kisara assumed a stance you'd otherwise see in kendo. Lizna came charging at her with a smile on her face. Hammer and sword clashed. But only for a second. Kisara's sword was sent flying and stabbed into the ceiling. Without losing any of its momentum, the hammer was closing in on Kisara—

"Too bad! Please try again— once you've levelled up a bit, okay—?!"

"————?!"

Then, something strange happened.

The second the hammer touched Kisara's delicate body, the hammer went backwards as if someone was rewinding a video cassette. The hammer was approaching Lizna in a motion that shouldn't even be possible based on the physics engine. Together with an explosive sound, she hit the home run on herself. She blasted herself into the wall of 'The Underwater Temple' with a bang.

[Alice-san told me about it. If you try and attack someone like that, you'll just attack yourself.]

Oh yeah, 'Allow PK' is off.

A silence so prolonged it hurt followed.

[Goddess Lizeltna has been defeated. Event cleared. Congratulations!]

Lizna's voice (from the past) resounded. They'd recorded it beforehand.

Sasaraki, Kisara, and the other players were staring at the goddess pasted into the wall.

[But don't think you've seen the last of the goddess! See you again at the next event!]

Lizna's desperate-ish voice said.

Sasaraki's eyes became distant. Kisara was the same.

At last, the first to raise their voice was the player on Kisara's right-hand side.

"...We did it! We won!"

"...We really, *really* did it, huh?!"

They glanced at Kisara.

"……O…"

She hesitated for a moment, but then shook her head. Thereafter, her face broke into a smile.

"O-O-Of course! Our courage led us to victory!"

Apparently, that's what she decided to go with.

"You really gotta be bursting with courage just to face that hammer!"

"After all, her words and smile were full with intent to kill, right?! You overcame her killer impulses and won!"

"HOORAY FOR OUR SAVIOR!"

"EEEEEEEEEEH—…?!"

'Are you guys really fine with that?' Kisara's face seemed to ask.

"Come on, My Savior! Let's go get our loot!"

"The event reward is a 'Get Whatever Item You Want'-ticket, right?!"

"We can use it to break the spell of those evil developers, right?!"

"T-That's right! We can return everyone's sanity with this—!"

Kisara appeared to have regained her spirit and laughed a, "Ehehe~." Then she turned around to Sasaraki.

"Papa, I'd like to ask one thing of you."

"…One thing?"

"Yes."

With a serious look on her face, Kisara stared directly into his eyes.

"I want Mama and you to come to our guild house now."

"Azrael, too? Are you planning to start something?"

"Yes! It'll begin now!"

She hugged the 'Get Whatever Item You Want'-ticket to her chest and said one more thing,

"Please! That's all I ask!"

"Of course I don't mind."

"Really?! Yippy! Yippyyy—!"

Kisara was leaping for joy.

"I expected nothing less from our savior!"

"That's great, My Savior!"

"By the way, I'd like My Savior to call me Papa, too!"

"Me too!"

"I won't! Let's go back to the guild house, we have to make our triumphant return—!"

"How do we get out of here? We were teleported here, right...?"

"If we die, we should be able to get back to the respawn."

"In that case, I go first."

"DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO DIIIIIIIIIIIE————?!"

Kisara could be heard shouting.

[Hey, hey, Sasaraki-kun, what's Kisara planning to start?]

He could hear Lizna's voice from afar after she appeared to have respawned.

"...Hmmm..."

Sasaraki watched Kisara while she was walking away with a skip in her step.

"She's probably talking about returning everyone's sanity, but..."

[But?]

"I don't think there's any sanity in this game to be found."

[Eh? I'm sane, though?]

That Lizna could say such things in all seriousness was amazing.

He sat down on the floor and gazed up at the ceiling. He had no idea what Kisara's plans were, but— he needed to go and make sure for himself. And, if anything happened, it was his duty to save her.

[Also, Sasaraki-kun, I think my pendant's gone.]

"Your 'Immortal Pendant?'"

[Yeah, but why? Was it destroyed by a but?]

"That's very possible, but hang in there for a moment."

When monsters possessed an important item, they dropped it once defeated. The game handled Lizna as a dungeon boss right now, so she might have dropped it when Kisara defeated her— in that case, it was likely that Kisara had it.

"I'll get it back when I see her again."

[More importantly, I'm wondering whether Kisara-chan wouldn't also be willing to become a goddess?]

"It'd be great if she would, but... sounds difficult."

Sasaraki heaved a sigh.

He thought that it'd be great if he could shorten the distance between Kisara and himself from here on out.

* * *

After he'd temporarily returned to the debugging room to report to everyone, Sasaraki was now heading to Kisara's guild house. He had taken Azrael with him.

Once he'd told her that Kisara had asked them to come over, Azrael had simply nodded, no questions asked.

He spoke with her while they were walking across the grasslands.

"H-Hey, Sasaraki, how is she doing? Are they bullying her?"

"No. The contrary, they more like worship her."

"Worship?!"

"Yeah, of course there are also people she's friends with."

Of course there were likely also players who were doing all that half kidding, but at least the people who'd been with her dungeon clearing seemed to be close to her. And she was getting along with the other players, too. That alone was enough to set him at ease.

After they arrived in front of the door to the guild house, they were politely shown in.

Their destination was a courtyard which harbored an imposing stage on which you'd usually see idols perform.

There were lots and lots of players around. They could hear them speak noisily.

[They defeated that atrocious goddess... but how?]

[I heard she had an invincibility barrier, but they stole her shield-piercing weapon and defeated her.]

[Heeh? Our savior's amazing. Isn't she just like a real RPG hero?]

[Have you forgotten that this *is* a VRMMORPG?]

[Oh, right.]

They laughed together, [Wahaha~].

"They really are giving it their all to fabricate a fake legend, huh?"

That's probably how founders of a new religious sect felt.

"Sasaraki-sama and Azrael-sama, no? Please have a seat in the front row."

A man welcomed them in a polite manner close to the reception and showed them to their seats. They were seated right in front of the stage. In the midst of this open, sandy space, this spot alone was grassy. Two plain, wooden chairs had been arranged. There were cards on top of them: [Papa's Seat], [Mama's Seat].

—Apparently, Kisara had prepared these.

"What should I do, Sasaraki...? I think I'm gonna cry."

"You're quick to cry, aren't you?! Please hold it together a bit longer!"

"I wonder if Kisara will perform well..."

"At what?!"

He felt like they were at a play on a cultural festival. However, Kisara was serious about this. This was no game. At least not for the person in question. He didn't know what she was up to, but as *this* was the one thing she'd earnestly asked him to do, he should probably take it just as seriously.

Then, the commotion around them was fizzling out.

[—The time for the beginning has come.]

A voice he knew all too well, Kisara's voice, echoed. It was her entrance. She really was like the founder of a religious sect.

Kisara took a deep breath and then continued with a carrying voice,

[Kisara was able to get this into her possession.]

[It is proof that this world is not a kusoge.]

[Everyone, please remember. Remember the dream, you all once saw.]

[Please, please do!]

Kisara bowed her head. Then she took out a crystal from her pocket. The orb was emitting a strong light. And the light grew even stronger until it illuminated the space behind Kisara onto which it projected a video.

[This— is the world we've seen in our dreams!]

'OOOOOOOH!,' the crowd cheered.

Sasaraki almost voiced his surprise, too. He had seen that video before.

While solemn music played in the background, a beautiful and gigantic tower was visible at the end of the horizon. A party of three, a warrior, a priest, and a mage, were walking towards that tower. As were countless other parties. Everyone was heading to the tower. The narration began,

[This is the 'real' world of swords and magic—]

Sasaraki was dumbfounded, Kisara called out to him.

"Papa, do you remember?!"

"Eh?"

"You were living here before, do you remember this shiny world?!"

Kisara's eyes were sparkling. At this point, it'd gotten incredibly hard to point it out to her. He couldn't imagine how she'd react if he did point it out to her. And yet, it wasn't like he could say nothing at all. After all, she'd realize it herself sooner or later.

Next to him, Azrael was apparently feeling awkward too.

He couldn't make *her* tell Kisara. He had to do it himself.

"You know, Kisara, please, calm down and listen to me."

"I'm calm and listening!"

Sasaraki cleared his throat with a cough. Then he said,

"That was a teaser ad."

[A gigantic world, spreading across 255 floors! 10000 different quest types (will be included in a later update)!]

The narration added.

".....Hah?"

"For a game. An advertisement. They're called 'teaser.'"

"Papa's saying those kind of things again? Now matter how you look at it, this realism is—"

"Kisara, have you watched it until the end?"

"I haven't. I've only just managed to get the second part of it earlier."

".....Yeah. Then let's watch it."

He was gazing at the video together with her. It showed a close-up of a hero who stabbed his sword into the head of a dragon. The narration continued, [The first, the biggest, and the best VRMMO ever: Sword & Magic Online!]

Then it hugely showed the game's and development studio's logo, Kisara's smile froze.

The surrounding player were stirring.

[This video was a total sham, wasn't it?]

[They defeated the dragon with magic, but there *is* no magic.]

[We really did pay money in hope for that.]

[I get it, our savior wanted to show this to us!]

[She wants us to claim the game we were promised!]

[The devs must die, after all!]

[KILL THE DEVS!]

They began chanting loudly. Apparently, her presentation had been well-received.

Ah, in that case Kisara probably isn't too shocked— he thought, when,

"Th—"

Kisara spoke up next to him,

"THIS ISN'T HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO BEEEEEEEEEEEE—!"

Kisara said, crying, and ran off.

"KISARAAAAAAAAA—?!"

Azrael chased after her, and sprawled on the ground.

—So it turned into something terrible, after all.

Chapter 3:

I'm the Only One Who Knows That This World Is Reality

第三章

この世界が現実だと
私だけが知っている

THE
JUNK!
Kuso Game Online 3

Kisara had disappeared.

Yet, the player's vigor had not. First, they'd formed a search party to find their missing Kisara. They checked every corner from floor one to floor two. While there were people saying that she might've just logged out due to the shock, the fanatics who'd been close to her turned a deaf ear.

Thanks to that state of affairs, the second floor was bustling with a huge number of people. The active player count was on the rise, too. Someone had launched an ad campaign with the slogan, [The VRMMO Where You Fight the Devs], which had attracted a lot of people. A reason for big celebration for the management.

However, there was one problem— Azrael was feeling super down.

"Will Azrael-san be fine...?"

Lizna was sitting on a chair in the debugging room and let her feet dangle in the air. She was on boss fight duty all the time these days and just having a short break right now. Azrael had gone off somewhere. Probably to look for Kisara again.

"So you can't find Kisara-chan? Even with TP?"

"No... How to put it, we've hit all sorts of limits..."

What kinds of limits? The amount of shame both Azrael and Sasaraki could endure, for instance. Licking milk was already plenty dangerous, and redoing that would cut the amount of TP received in half— which left nothing but straight-out sexual acts.

"Well I'm thinking that you're man and wife, so iiisn't that stuff fine?"

"We're just man and wife by bug, though."

"But you'd like to get lewd with Azrael-san, wouldn't you?"

Sasaraki choked big time. Lizna was awfully straight-forward with just about everything.

"I said it before, but I'm sure that you'd do good telling her those things, you know?"

"Putting aside that we're minors, we're not even in that kind of relationship, okay?!"

And then, he could hear a notification sound. It was a message from Azrael.

[Come over here.]

Just those three words. The coordinates were displayed on the screen. It was in a testing area.

"Guess I'm going for now."

"Yep. And Sasaraki-kun? I'll tell you something in all seriousness."

"...Which is?"

Lizna winked and gazed at Sasaraki.

"If you convey your feelings upfront— the two of you will be right back together."

* * *

Sasaraki and Azrael were on a vast, windy plain.

It was the first floor's testing area. At their feet a steamy hot spring. It was a hot spring with various ancient Greece-like things all around. Close to this impressive structure stood a modern dressing room, and in it were two people.

Why? Because the two of them were going to get in, of course. They were gathering TP to look for Kisara. It was Azrael's suggestion. Her expression had been determined. Since they would've definitely been peeked on, they did it somewhere far from the debugging room.

Well then. They had to strip naked to go into the hot spring. However, both of them were still in their usual outfits.

".....Ah, I-I wonder how the guild's doing, how about you?!"

Azrael said in order to distract.

"Ah, y-yeah. Looks like they keep going with their activities even with Kisara gone."

"But they're also looking for her, right? And yet there's no trace."

"She might be somewhere players can't enter."

"T-That's gotta be it, huh...? That's definitely it..."

And then they fell back silent.

An awkward silence passed. *Not good. I can't even look at her face.*

"...Um!" "...You know...?!"

Their voices overlapped.

"Ah, you first, Azrael." "Y-You first, Sasaraki."

Both of them withdrew simultaneously.

Sasaraki remained silent for a bit and then looked at the hot spring. *Think, me! Right! We don't both have to strip at the same time. It's better if Azrael changes and gets in first. The water's not that clear and I shouldn't be able to see her body. Alright, let's do it like that!*

"So anyway, I'll go over there and in the meantime you can—"

"...That won't do."

"Eh—?"

"The snap fasteners on my clothes are hard to open... I-I can't take my clothes off by myself... so..."

His strategy had been thrown over in ten seconds.

"T-Then I'll shut my eyes and help you out of it."

"...They're pretty complicated, so... i-if you do it with your eyes shut, it'll make matters... worse..."

The enemy was getting reinforcements.

Azrael remained silent for a while, but at last, she gazed at Sasaraki with upturned eyes.

"S-So, umm... l-let's get it over with quickly..."

Those words shook his mind violently. At the same time, he felt an overwhelming sense of guilt welling up inside him. *What the hell am I even doing? Stripping Azrael and going into the hot spring with her while neglecting Kisara wh's still missing... I know it can't be helped, but— can't it really?*

One thing's for sure, this is no time to hesitate.

.....E-EIII—!

THIS IS INEVITABLE! IT'S INEVITABLE!

Sasaraki pointlessly shouted in his heart while extending his hand towards Azrael's clothes—

[System Notice. The death penalty in this area has been intensified.]

A voice echoed between the two of them.

"...Eh?"

Next, a window popped up in the air. It was a message from Alice.

"Sorry to interrupt you when things were getting good, Sasaraki, but I messed up. We've got an emergency."

"What do you mean, 'good?!' Wait, how do you know what's going on over here?!"

"You know, Fury d—"

"Aye-aye ☆ That's enough, Alice-san~ ☆"

Fury interrupted her.

"This is a message for Master ☆ Umm, how should I put this...? ☆"

Fury appeared to be pondering for a bit, then smiled,

"Oh, right— Your daughter has taken over ☆ That's how you say it, right? ☆"

She said in a fancy voice suited for the contents.

* * *

Thereafter, Fury, who'd now appeared right in front of them, was explaining the situation.

"So here are our dema~nds☆"

The gist of it: When Alice and Fury were performing 'Immortal Pendant' tests in the testing area, Kisara had appeared out of nowhere. It was a place where ordinary players weren't supposed to be able to enter, but apparently she'd used a 'Black Dice' to fire a Debugging Beam and destroyed the boundary in the process.

Of course, she had refused to give herself up there.

And, of course, Alice had accepted the challenge, but the power of the 'Black Dice' - bugging everything out - had been too strong, even for Alice. And since the situation looked fun to her, Fury had switched sides to Kisara.

"You're just the worst, as always, you know?!"

"I humbly accept your compliment~☆"

Fury scratched her head seemingly embarrassed.

"It'll be fine, Master. In the end, it's just an event. An event for the devs☆"

"If things go wrong, this could be a game-ending event, you know? Definitely."

"HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM?! WHAT'S KISARA TRYING TO DO?!"

"Right, right, I've a message from Kisara for the both of you☆"

Fury took out something like a scroll and read its contents out loud.

[Papa, Mama, I hope you are well.

Kisara was doing not so well for a bit.

But I am doing fine now. Because I have found the truth at last. This magical and slightly foul-mouthed green fairy told me everything. I've now found the reason why everyone in our world is losing their minds.

It is death.

The death that Mama governs.

The root of all evil is death in our world being far too forgiving.

The fairy knew a way to return death to its original punishment.

There is no other way to make Papa, Mama, and everyone else return to their senses.

It's a bit scary, but, but Kisara has to do it.

Papa, Mama, just a bit longer.

Please watch me.

Kisara will definitely show you how she saves Papa, Mama, and the whole world.

Kisara, Daughter of Deathbringer Angel Azrael]

Basically, things were as bad as he'd imagined.

"Fury, (I more or less already know, but) what's in that patch?"

"I-It couldn't be that Death Game Patch, could it?!"

Azrael went pale. The Death Game Patch was something Fury's former master had left behind. It turned the world into a place where people got married just by holding hands and pregnant just by kissing. The Death Game part was just a metaphor for marriage equaling death.

Fury wagged her finger, "Tsk, tsk."

"It's not a joke this time, this patch makes death 'fatal' in a real sense☆"

"In a real sense...? That's not pos..."

Sasaraki felt a cold shiver running down his spine. This was Fury, the Fury who had tricked him countless times already, but— even if she was hiding something, she was restricted from lying by the system. Death was fatal— this had to be the truth.

"W-Wait a sec... It can't... Huh, KYAAAA—?!"

That moment, Azrael lost balance. Treading on the marble floor, slippery from the steam, with her bare feet, Azrael displayed a heroic slip. And hit her head magnificently. On the corner of the bathtub. Receiving 180 damage. And died.

"SHE DIED RIGHT AWAY——?!"

Five seconds after he'd shouted that reflexively, Azrael respawned at the spawn point in the dressing room.

"AND JUST RESPAWNED AS USUAL——?!"

"Ha~ah, busted already☆"

"FURY—?! D-DID YOU TRICK ME AGAIN?!"

"No wa~y, I was totally telling the truth. And here's proof—"

Fury pointed upwards. He could hear a voice that sounded like Azrael.

But not in her usual tsun-tsun tone, in a more gentle one.

"Sucking milk from Sasaraki's finger made my heart race really fast. Especially when my tongue touched the tip of his finger, it made me shiver all the time. I'm a pervert. No. I might be a pervert, but I'm a noble Deathbringer Angel pervert. How's that different from an ordinary pervert...? Maybe it's about how the finger is angled...?"

"KYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA—?!"

Azrael screamed.

"WHATISTHATWHATISTHATWHATISTHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAT?!"

"It's the fatal death penalty☆ It discloses the player's most embarrassing secrets☆"

It was fatal. Socially.

"WHAT'S WITH THIS SICK 'N TWISTED FATALITY?! HOW ARE YOU READING MY MIND?!"

"It makes your heart speak in your stead by utilizing the results from Fury-chan's investigations and guesswork☆"

This kid was the worst. Doing a few twirls and giggles with a smile on her face, she was obviously enjoying that.

"That aside, we can't leave this alone, can we...?"

It had been the same with the Death Game Patch from before - a patch that had merely done extraordinarily stupid changes - but if this patch would be applied, it'd certainly be fatal. Who'd play a game in which all your embarrassing secrets got leaked when you died? Players would certainly stop playing, the service would get cancelled, Kisara would disappear.

And she still wasn't aware of that.

"Azrael, we've to hurry and save— Why are you bashing your head against the floor?!"

"THAT'SNOTITIT'SNOTTRUEIWASN'TTHINKINGANYTHINGABOUTTHATMILKYFINGERSTUFFI'MNOTAPERVERT!"

Azrael had succumbed to the fatal condition.

"Wai—, Azrael, you have to calm down! We have to stop Kisara!"

"...Ha—!"

The moment he'd mentioned Kisara's name, Azrael came back to her senses.

"Let's go save her right away!"

Sasaraki manipulated the 'Master Screen' and a gate appeared in front of their eyes. After the incident with Azrael, they'd learned from their mistakes and prepared a gate that was constantly connected to the debugging room to prevent them being shut out like before.

"T-That's right, huh...? I wonder if she'll listen to what we have to say."

"If you're the one telling her, we'll be fine."

If there's someone who can persuade her, Azrael's the one. She's the one who's always worrying about Kisara. It wasn't like Sasaraki wasn't serious about this, but he couldn't get rid of his 'it'll all work out somehow'-kind of thinking.

Kisara's just more similar to Azrael, in personality and looks.

She's even doing the same stuff as Azrael right now.

Azrael seemed to be hesitant for a moment, but nodded at last.

"Yeah— let's go—"

She faced the gate and took a step forward— that moment,

BACHIIIIIIIIIIIIIN!

"KYAU—?!"

An electric shock struck Azrael's feet when she tried to pass through the gate.

She stepped backwards out of reflex. Sasaraki caught her in a hurry.

"Eh? I can't pass through...? Why?"

[SECURITY CLEARANCE ERROR. Permission to enter denied for Player Azrael.]

The usual system voice said.

"Denied...? Eh? Azrael can't enter the debugging room? So me neither?"

Sasaraki also timidly extended his hand. Together with the sensation of touching something slimy, his hand passed through the gate. Trying the same with one of his feet returned the same result. Apparently, he could pass through it. Was only Azrael prohibited from entering?

Fury put a hand to her mouth and giggled seemingly enjoying herself.

"You can limit access to the debugging room if you have gamemaster privileges, you know?☆"

Yeah, Kisara should've gotten her hands on Lizna's 'Immortal Pendant,' after all. Holding gamemaster privileges basically turns you into a god around here. No wonder she was able to pull a fast one on Alice.

"Wait, so Kisara put that restriction in place? And just on Azrael?"

".....Eh?"

Azrael blinked incessantly.

".....A...u..."

She immediately dropped to the ground and let the tears flow.

"So she really grew to hate me—!"

"Nonono! She didn't give that impression at all, okay?!"

"But you can go see her and I can't..."

"There's gotta be some kind of misunderstanding! Probably, surely, without a doubt!"

No matter how he tried to console her, she didn't stop crying.

"Um, sorry to interrupt your flirt (blow up and die), but don't forget the time limit☆"

"You mean until the patch gets applied? How much longer? And I can tell what you've really been thinking between the lines, you know?!"

"30 more minutes☆ And that weren't my real thoughts, just a cute little joke☆"

"A-Anyway, Azrael, I'll be back soon."

He told the devastated Azrael. Her big, round eyes were filled with tears. Eyes just as big as Kisara's. She gazed at Sasaraki for a while and then lowered her eyes.

Azrael tapped both her index fingers together and nodded.

".....Yeah..."

Her voice was small, but he had the feeling that she did trust him.

I definitely won't let you down, he thought.

"Well then— Ah, right, do you still have that rainbow bread with you?"

If he brought some with him, it might come in handy with persuading Kisara.

"There's none left... But I made something new."

"Heeh? That's fine, too. What is it?"

"Sukonbu."

".....Sorry, could you say that again?"

"Sukonbu."

Azrael nervously took something out of her pocket.

It was a package of cheap sweet, sukonbu, that he was used to seeing. However, it was sparkling in rainbow colors.

".....Why sukonbu?"

"Eh? Sukonbu tastes great, right?"

Azrael expressed puzzlement.

".....Right, it does."

"I know, right?"

Seeing Azrael laughing a happy "Ehehe~," he couldn't bring himself to say anything more. *I see, so that's how she is. I've heard before that she's a granny's kid, but oh well, it's a refreshing side to her...* he thought, when,

"You know, Kisara's still a child and don't children love cheap sweets?"

"I see."

That was a logic he could agree with.

"And if you talk cheap sweets, it's gotta be sukonbu, right?"

"...I can see people thinking like that."

"Right?"

He had a feeling that it wouldn't do any good to tsukkomi any further than this. Actually, maybe from the shock of being denied entrance, she seemed to have regressed a bit to being like a child. Anyway, after Sasaraki put the rainbow-colored sukonbu away in his pocket, he patted Azrael's head.

"I'll be right back. And when I return, I'll definitely have her with me."

"Please hurry up and go already, or I'll blow you up☆"

* * *

A spectacle that gave him a feeling of deja vu was unfolding in the debugging room.

Pillars, reminiscent of an ancient Greek temple. Marble flooring. And in the center of all that was *not* a throne, but for some reason an object made out of stone, like a cliff that was rising out of the Mediterranean Sea. The top of that rocky structure was as even as Table Mountain, and there she stood, Kisara.

Her cloak swaying, she faced the pitch black Main Screen.

Wings had sprung from her back. White wings just like an Angel's.

Seeing that, Sasaraki completely understood.

She is, without a doubt, our child.

"...Mama, I've found the recording. You weren't wrong."

Kisara turned around. Her eyes were closed and she had a smile on her face.

"It's the world that's wrong. Well then, this time for sure— I'll take you back!"

She opened her eyes vigorously and extended her hand.

"—Mama, you'll become the real deathbringer angel!"

Sasaraki stood there dumbfounded, wondering what a 'real deathbringer angel' was. Kisara froze up on the spot and stared at him. She didn't even twitch with one of her fingers. Even if he would've waited for her for all eternity, she wouldn't have moved, so Sasaraki had no choice but to open his mouth.

".....Sorry, it's just papa."

Kisara opened her mouth halfway. She looked to her right. Then she looked to her left.

And yet, she couldn't find mama.

"Please wait. Why is Papa here?"

"Because I was the only one able to come here."

"That is strange. Kisara was sure she made it so that only Mama could enter."

Kisara grabbed the silver pendant on her neck— Lizna's 'Immortal Pendant.' It made a 'BOOHN' noise and then it said 'Access Permissions Player Azrael Only' on the Main Screen.

"See?! I made sure to set it up like that!"

"...Yeah, it's probably a boundary inversion bug."

"Baundery invershon?"

To put it simple, it was an awfully basic bug which caused a condition like 'only X' to turn into 'anything but X.' Azrael had been grumbling about that before. The workaround was to use 'anything but X' if you wanted 'only X.' Of course it was nothing more but that: A mere workaround.

—He explained that to Kisara.

"All the lines I thought up are pointless now, you know—?!"

Kisara was at her wits' end.

"Papa! It's unexpected that you're the one here! Please wait a moment!"

"Ah, sorry, I'm in a hurry, there's a time limit ticking on."

Over Kisara's head, to her right-hand side, was a rotating 'Data Cube.' Apparently, the aforementioned patch was stored in there. During Azrael's accident, the 'Data Cube' had gotten disposed in the electron shredder. But that didn't seem to be the case this time around.

"Kisara, please hand me that."

"...Why?"

"That cube isn't what you think it is."

"I know."

"I'll just say it once again: I'm sure that you do not know."

Going by her earlier messages and his experiences with her, he was sure she did not understand.

He was sure of that— However,

"No, I understand— This is something important to Mama and Papa."

"That much is true."

"That's why..."

Kisara drew her sword from her back. It's blade flashed silvery.

"At times like these, I should say... Oh right, this!"

She sliced a cross into the air. As soon as she did that, a whirlwind appeared. A golden whirlwind. It swirled and danced around her blade. The wind reached Sasaraki and brushed his cheek. It felt hot; as if it transmitted Kisara's passion.

Kisara shouted,

"FIGHT ME!"

In a way this is going as expected, but I've no idea how to react, anyway.

"What's wrong?! Draw your sword!"

"No, sorry, my mind still hasn't caught up with this development."

"Kisara has a valuable treasure! And I'll wager it in this fight!"

Apparently, the 'Data Cube' was the treasure.

"...Is that what you wanted?"

"I had actually planned to fight with Mama, but Papa's fine too, of course!"

"Ah, yeah, sorry that it's not her."

"It doesn't matter who gets to be first, s-so don't worry about it!"

What was with this conversation?

"If you don't defeat Kisara, I won't hand over the treasure! Well then, let's fight!"

"Even if you tell me that..."

Kisara readied her sword with a fearless expression on her face. She looked like she was filled with determination. *What should I do? Fight and snatch it away from her? That certainly would be the fastest way. There's no sense of pain here, and no death either. But—,* Sasaraki shook his head.

"I... can't do that."

Kisara faced Sasaraki with sharp eyes.

"...Papa's saying that he can't be serious if it's me, right?"

"Yeah, I can't. After all, you're just like her."

Sasaraki looked Kisara right in the eyes.

Lizna also told me to be like this earlier. Anyway, what I should tell her, is...

"To begin with, I'm not brave enough to seriously fight anyone, Kisara."

Kisara grinded her teeth.

"We're not heroes, we're just simple gamemasters."

"You don't have any proo—"

"You saw the teaser ad, didn't you?"

Kisara fell silent.

And then she shook her head sideways as if she was trying to shake something off.

"I-I've seen it, but... But! It's obviously a hoax!"

"It troubles me to hear you say such things..."

"And I have new evidence!"

Full of confidence, Kisara took something out of her pocket.

It was a book with a massive cover. It looked like one of those journals you'd see in a fantasy story.

"It's written in here— the story of the creation of our world!"

"Sorry but could you let me have a closer look at that?"

The title was 'Genesis,' written by 'Black Deathbringer Shadow.'

He had seen that angular handwriting before. That was Azrael's handwriting when her chuunibyou got worse.

"Papa, please remember, remember when you fought Mama to save our world—!"

"Do you mean the Death Game incident...?"

He really did save the world, but there hadn't really been a fight.

"No, Azrael probably made the contents of that journal up."

"What proof do you have?!"

"Let's ask her."

"Eh—?"

Sasaraki sent, *"Azrael, did you write something called 'Genesis?' Kisara found it and is having some kind of misunderstanding here,"* to Azrael. Soon enough, he could hear a notification sound. *"Eh? Um, sorry, Kisara, it's not entirely made up, but I did exaggerate a bit and, um, there was no fight at least... By the way, are you doing okay, Kisara? I'm a bit worried,"* she replied. She seemed confused.

"....."

And so was Kisara. The corner of her mouth was twitching.

"See? We didn't fight."

"...Th... This... Mama's voice was synthesized! It's all a lie!"

"EEEEEEEH—?! I'm not fake, it's really me, okay?!"

"IT'S DEFINITELY A LIE—!"

Kisara shouted desperately.

"Kisara's not wrong! The world is—!"

That moment, Kisara kicked the ground.

"Wai—?!"

Unwilling to argue any longer, she came slashing at him. With tremendous speed. She struck her white wings and came charging at Sasaraki in a straight line. *What should I do?* He wondered for a moment and decided not to do anything. He couldn't fight her. He couldn't raise his sword against his own daughter.

"THE WORLD IS— WRONG!"

Kisara rose her sword. Sasaraki didn't budge anyway.

"————————!"

The screaming sword stopped just before it could hit Sasaraki.

"Why—? Why won't you remember even now—?!"

"Kisara. I—"

Sasaraki tried to say something but swallowed instead.

Now that Kisara had come so close to him, he realized for the first time.

Kisara— was crying.

"...—?!"

Sasaraki's heart had been shaken for the first time.

Wait— Am I not doing something wrong here—?

"MORE! I'LL GET MORE SERIOOOOOOOOUS—!"

Together with her shout, her sword started moving once again. It crashed onto Sasaraki— Then...

The blade drew an unbelievable curve, reversed, and flew at Kisara instead.

"HANYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA—?!"

Together with a shriek, Kisara crashed into the wall and then fell onto the floor. A window saying, [PK Penalty: 255,] popped up. *I've seen that one before. Ah right, it's the same from when Lizna knocked herself out the other day.*

Yeah, that's right— She is *using Lizna's pendant, so she probably inherited the settings, too.*

"Wait, this is no time to be calm—!"

He tsukkomi'd at himself and ran to Kisara's side. She was lying face-up with no visible wounds. Actually, there were no wounds in this game. However, her HP had gone below zero and had actually broken into the minus-three-digits. The sparkly death effect arose from her body.

"Wai... Kisara, KISARA?!"

Kisara slowly moved her eyes towards Sasaraki.

She opened her mouth halfway and mumbled seemingly down-hearted,

"...I... lost... haven't I...?"

"You didn't! You didn't lose! You just knocked yourself out!"

"But, I'm relieved... In the end... you were able to... fight me earnestly..."

Kisara took her last breath with a peaceful expression on her face.

And respawned on the spot three seconds later.

"....."

That was fast. Is it faster if it's not a player...?

"...That's weird. Dying doesn't really hurt."

Kisara mumbled. Apparently, she still hadn't realized she respawned.

After a bit of hesitation, Sasaraki eventually decided to answer her normally.

"...There's no sense of pain in this world."

"But it was awful when I got wounded."

"There... are no wounds."

"Then how do you die?"

"You, of course, can't die here."

"But Kisara died just now."

"You did, but you respawned."

"How do you know?"

"We've been talking for about three minutes now, you're not dead."

"....."

There was a silence that would've been long enough to cook cup ramen.

At last, Kisara shouted,

"WHY AM I ALIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIVE—?!"

She jumped to her feet. She looked extremely energetic now.

"This is weird, this is weird, Kisara's ought to be dead!"

"I told you, you can't die here..."

"Kisara lifted the curse from this world! I made death fatal!"

"Yeah. If you die, a fatally embarrassing secret of yours will be revealed."

"W-Why would you say that, this isn't comedy or something! It's absurd!"

"Yeah. It is absurd."

His belief that this world had gone insane was strong enough to say that by now.

"I-I-It's a lie! My fatal secret hasn't—"

When Kisara tried to say that...

A young, synthetic voice echoed in the debugging room.

"—This world is a kusoge."

Kisara's movements stopped dead.

The sword dropped out of her hand. She looked up to the ceiling where the voice came from.

"Th— That's not— Y-You can't say th—"

Of course, the synthetic voice didn't stop.

"I noticed."

"This world is a game world, called VRMMO."

"And among those, it's the most hopeless of all kusoge."

"But things can't be this way."

"I can never accept this."

"If this world were just a game."

"Then there's no worth in living here, it'd be a worthless world."

"Papa and Mama— would leave me before long."

Tears rolled down Kisara's face.

Sasaraki couldn't say a thing. The synthetic voice continued,

"That's why Kisara decided."

"I will insist that this world is reality."

"Papa doesn't believe it, nor does Mama or Kisara. But I will continue to insist."

"If I keep saying it, someone might eventually believe me."

"Maybe Papa and Mama will believe me."

"And then, and then surely..."

"This worthless Kisara, born in this worthless world..."

"—Can be with them forever."

The voice stopped.

Kisara collapsed onto the ground, as if the threads of tension had been cut loose. Finally, in a slow movement, her gaze wandered to Sasaraki. She implored on his expression. 'Did you hear that?,' her eyes seemed to ask. He couldn't move, it was the same as saying 'yes.'

"Fue—"



That was her limit.

"Fue— FUEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEHN!"

It was the first emotional outburst Kisara had ever shown.

"YOU... YOU HEARD IT... PAPA HEARD IT AAAAAAAAAAAALL...!"

With the back of her hands covering her eyes, Kisara cried aloud.

An intense feeling of guilt swept through Sasaraki's chest. *I made her cry. No, she's been crying this whole time and I failed to notice. Kisara really did misunderstand how things were, but I was misunderstanding her even worse.*

Kisara kept on crying.

I've to do something.

For someone in this *world to be crying out of desperation— this must never be happening.*

"...Kisara."

"FUEH, FUEEEEEEEEEH..."

He'd tried to say 'I'm sorry,' but choked on his words.

Sasaraki realized that it wouldn't make her feel better in any way if he apologized and pondered on what he could say to make her smile. Kisara was feeling insecure right now. She couldn't bear the insecurity of Sasaraki and Azrael not loving her.

And was that the case?

No..., he thought.

Not even talking about me, Azrael already doesn't think that way.

And I've proof. He fished around in his trouser pocket and took something out.

Then he peeled the package open and held it out to her.

".....Fueh..."

Kisara blinked incessantly.

It was the sukonbu.

"....."

"....."

It felt like time had stopped.

"...What is that?"

"Sukonbu."

Still no reaction.

"I absolutely don't get why it has to be sukonbu, though?!"

"Neither do I, but Azrael made it."

"...Eh?"

She stared at the sukonbu.

"She thinks it's tasty, she made it for you and would like you to try it."

Kisara still stared at it absentmindedly. She took one out of the package and brought it to her lips. After a moment of hesitation, she finally opened her mouth.

Hahm.

".....Hahm."

Munch, munch. *Chew, chew*. She chewed away on the rainbow-colored konbu like a hamster.

After she'd eaten up, she seemed to want another piece, so Sasaraki offered her the package.

"Is it good?"

Kisara nodded in silence. She appeared to be confused, still.

"You know, you said that you're useless."

".....It's true."

"Azrael and I are pretty useless, too."

"Eh?"

"We wanted to comfort our daughter, and for some reason we thought sukonbu would be a good idea."

Kisara gazed at Sasaraki for a while.

".....It's good, you know?"

"But eating it will drain ten levels."

Po-po-po-poooh, a stupid-sounding fanfare echoed.

"It's worse than the baguette?!"

"Azrael's a pretty amateurish programmer."

"That's not even on an 'I'm an amateur'-level anymore, you know?!"

"Yeah. She's just as inexperienced as you and I."

Sasaraki said while stroking Kisara's hair.

"We're as shocked by this kusoge world as you are— so..."

He continued,

"We think of you as one of us."

Kisara stared Sasaraki straight in the eyes. Her eyes looked pure. It were eyes that made you feel that you mustn't ever betray her. Looking at them, he was convinced that it was a no-go to ever make her cry again.

".....But..."

Yet, Kisara let her head sink.

"But... Kisara saw your memories..."

"What memories?"

"Papa and Mama got married by mistake and Kisara's name was nothing but a mistake, either..."

Tears welled up in the corner of Kisara's eyes. Her body started shaking. *A mistake. Her name certainly was a mistake. And her birth was a mistake. And while we're at it, our marriage was a mistake. But I—* Sasaraki tried to object, but...

PUFF—!

"Master, sorry to interrupt yo~u☆"

Fury ignored the mood and barged in.

"Fury. I'm kind of busy right now."

"Ah, so cruel☆ And here I went out of my way to report an emergency to you☆"

"Something happened *again*?!"

"Rather than that, we're about to start the final quest, you kno~w?☆"

Then they could hear a shrill warning sound coming from Kisara.

"Rogue AI detected. Forcing shutdown."

"Eh...? FUEEEH—?!"

"WHA—?!"

"I warned you, didn't I? There's a time limit☆"

"This isn't about the time until the patch is applied?!"

"An AI is acting as a gamemaster— that's the rogue the system is talking about☆"

The pendant dangling in front of Kisara's chest was flashing in an alarming red. It sounded like a siren. It was vibrating and even swoll up a little. It was so bright red that it looked like it could explode any moment now.

"It's a special from my former master: the AI Terminator Device☆ It'll blow up in 30 seconds☆"

"WHA—?! And what if it does?!"

"The AIs caught up in its shockwave will be exterminated☆"

"THAT'S NOT GOOD?!"

Sasaraki hurriedly snatched the pendant from Kisara. It said there were 15 seconds left, 14, 13... *Why such a cliched countdown— Actually, is there a point in having a countdown?* And this wasn't the time to worry about that.

"FURY! HOW DO I DISARM IT?!"

"The bottom on its backside does an emergency shutdown☆"

"That's awfully simple, isn't it?!"

He turned it around and sure enough, there was a button on its back.

'Press for 5 seconds,' it said. That was just plain harassment.

"However, if you push it, you'll get the death sentence, Master☆"

"Eh?"

"You know, this safety device is compulsory by the government☆ Oh well, that's for Master to decide☆"

Fury put both her hands to her cheeks and tilted her head in a cute fashion.

"If it's for your daughter— you shouldn't have any problem to put your life on the line, right?☆"

Fury smiled away.

Kisara, who'd been dumbfounded until now, shouted,

"—P-PAPA, LET IT GO, NOW—!"

His heartbeat sped up.

Death sentence. Not in a game. No respawning. Real death. Execution by the Japanese government. It'll hurt, my parents will cry, my friends will cry, I will cry. It's not a question of whether I'm scared or not, the question is whether it's okay for me to do this.

An infinite amount of questions popped up in his mind in mere seconds.

And in the end, there was just one question left,

Will I give my life for a kusoge?

"—Yeah."

He said without hesitation when the question had come to his mind.

"PAPA, YOU MUSTN'T DO THAT, THAT'S—"

"The marriage and you really were the result of incredibly stupid events, but..."

He gently put his hand on the 'Immortal Pendant.' Sasaraki smiled. What he was doing was weird. But he had already made up his mind. This virtual world was just plain stupid in all regards. *And yet— No, exactly because of this...*

"I— love living in this silly world with Azrael and you, you know?"

He looked at Kisara one more time. She really did look just like Azrael. Both of them were so alike. Both being toyed with by a silly world and bugs, and yet struggling to make it a better place. They were lovely like that. *I'm such a sinner*, he thought, *to think that someone who's trying her earnest is cute.*

Sasaraki smiled once again.

I'm really trying to get myself killed over a world that is just ridiculous in every aspect.

Sasaraki put his finger on the button. He thought that Azrael, Lizna, and Alice might feel sad, but that wouldn't stop him. He had to save the girl in front of his

eyes, his daughter. There mustn't be a girl in this world who'd cry from loneliness.

And so Sasaraki pushed the—

"That's enough, Fury."

Alice said. She flicked her fingers and the pendant got smashed into pieces. And then she scratched her head and, "Haaah...," heaved a big, long sigh. However, she came to herself soon enough, faced Sasaraki, and bowed her head.

"I'm sorry, Sasaraki— There's no need for that kind of resolve in this world."

Epilogue:

More or Less Everyone Knows That This Reality Is a Kusoge

エピローグ

この現実がクソゲーだと
だいたいみんな知っている

THE
JUNK!
Kuso Game Online 3

Sasaraki's face got splashed with hot water.

The hot water of a hot spring. And it was awfully hot. Not the water. His face went beyond red when the face of the black-haired girl, Azrael, right beside him jumped into his vision. She was stark naked, her wet skin exposed.

...I knew it'd make me feel roundabout like this, but still...

Sasaraki and Azrael's shoulders were touching tightly in the hot spring.

"...Hey, Sasaraki, next turn."

"Ah, y-yeah..."

Sasaraki raised his hand and splashed some hot water on Azrael. She moaned a sexy "Mh..." with a drop of hot water drip on her face. They were covering each other in hot water. If you're wondering why they'd do something weird like that: It was for TP.

And farming TP was, of course, for Kisara's sake.

"...I'm... sorry..."

After the incident, Kisara had apologized to Sasaraki and Azrael like that. Azrael had done the contrary: Cried and apologized to Kisara instead. They both had kept apologizing to each other until finally mother and daughter both sank to their knees and burst into tears loudly together.

After that, Sasaraki had been consulted by Azrael.

She wanted to make that self-destruction device gone for Kisara's sake.

For that, they needed TP— for TP, they needed to enter a hot spring together. More concretely, they had to be in a hot spring together at a distance of no more than five centimeters, be aware of each other's presence, and cover each other

with hot water about a hundred times (the more he heard the more his head hurt).

He had, of course, no problem with destroying the device, so Sasaraki agreed. The problem was rather whether he could keep his calm next to the exposed sex-bomb body this girl had. It was, of course, impossible. However, he had to do the impossible. Doing the impossible was part of being a gamemaster.

And thus, Sasaraki had gone into the hot spring together with her.

"Err... Azrael, I can feel... your shoulder... h-how about moving a bit farther apart?"

"If we do that, we'll be farther than five centimeters, right?"

Splash (Sound of Azrael splashing water).

"I think this situation here is pretty impossible, for both of us."

"I-I know it's impossible... But we're gonna do it."

Splash (Sound of Sasaraki splashing water).

"We'll take care of the self-destruction device... And we're gonna do a lot of other things for her, too."

"...Yeah..."

Azrael's determination seemed to be extremely firm.

"So, Sasaraki, you've talked to Kisara after that, right? What did you two talk about?"

"After she stopped crying? That I wanted to give her a present as an apology."

"And what does she want? A house? Something to eat? Clothes?"

".....Sorry, I'll tell you another time."

Azrael's expression changed.

"Why? What did she say? I'm gonna get it for her right now."

"Sorry, but please let it go. It's something pretty difficult to get..."

"What do you mean?! It's not fair if you're the only one who gets to know! Tell me already!"

Azrael pressed him so hard that she even forgot that she was naked. Sasaraki was troubled in various ways. What Kisara had wanted was, how to say, something pretty bad. While it wasn't impossible to get— and while it wasn't like he didn't want to get it for her—

"C'mon, tell me—!"

"WAH—! I-I'll tell you! I'll tell you, so not that close—!"

Sasaraki took a breath and forced himself to calm down. In reality, his heart was throbbing even worse and it practically already pounded under his chin, but he told himself that he was calming down, anyway. He tried to disconnect himself from reality as much as possible and mumbled,

".....A little sister."

Kadong, he heard the echo of a small wooden bucket, although this was supposed to be an open-air hot spring.

"Eh?"

"A little sister... She wants company."

Azrael gazed at Sasaraki. Her pure eyes hurt awfully. The corner of her lips twisted and her usually already red cheeks flared up even more. It seemed like her body was slightly trembling, too.

It wasn't disgust or arousal, it was genuine and plain—

[Embarrassment].

Her whole body was screaming 'embarrassment.'

Sasaraki couldn't take his eyes off a naked girl in the hot spring who was like that. *Oh God, this is bad— No, this actually isn't that bad.*

WaitI'mfeigningtobecalmbutthisgirlhasbeenkeepingmyheartraceforawhilenowI'venoideawhattodo.

Maybe she's okay with just about anything? She said she'd do anything for Kisara.

No, what am I thinking—? But, I just can't get my eyes off her—

Kadong.

He could hear that bath-house sound from right beside him. In the right corner of his vision was something golden. Sending a glance over there, he saw Kisara squatting right next to the hot spring. She was gazing at Sasaraki and Azrael with keen interest—

"Wait, WHY ARE *YOU* HERE———?!"

"Eh—? WHAT?! K-K-K-K-KISARA—?!"

"Ah... S-Sorry for the interruption!"

Kisara trotted away and hid behind a Merlion figurehead.

She put her hand on the figurehead and let her head slightly peak out.

"P-Please don't mind Kisara and continue!"

"What do you mean, continue?! We're not doing anything! Nothing at all!"

"Kisara is certain that *something* was about to happen!"

"You're imagining things! It's all in your head!"

"Right, we weren't doing anything! We're not making a little sister or something!"

Sasaraki and Azrael scrambled for excuses.

"Eh?"

The last one was a slip of the tongue, though.

"I... can't have a little sister?"



"Eh?"

"Ah, K-Kisara doesn't mind!"

"Ahahaha," she laughed away and fiddled with her golden hair between her fingers.

"It's enough if Papa and Mama are here, I'm not lonely at all!"

"Wai—"

"So, umm, you don't have to force yourselves!"

"W-WE'RE NOT FORCING OURSELVES! AT LEAST I'M NOT!"

Sasaraki shouted and stood up.

"Really? You don't mind making babies with Mama?"

"Of course I wouldn't mind making babies with the person I love!"

ZU-GOOOHN, something exploded.

".....Ah..."

He turned around and it was Azrael's face that had exploded in embarrassment and surprise.

Huh—? Didn't I just say something outrageous?

Sasaraki slowly turned around and had a peek at Azrael's expression. She was staring at him, her cheeks a deep red. She repeatedly opened her mouth. At last, she was about to shout, then as if suddenly realizing something, turned her eyes to Kisara instead. She was uneasy.

"Ah... Uuh... Uuuuuuuuh..."

Azrael looked like she was enduring with her whole body shaking. Finally, she submerged up to her lips in hot water. She submerged even farther until only her air bubbles were visible, then she emerged again and— her lips finally formed words.

"...I..."

In an almost teary tone, she mumbled in a low voice,

"I... also... do... not dislike... you..."

Kisara clapped her hands together with tears in her eyes and rejoiced, "So that's how it is!"

Sasaraki could feel his body heat up an awful lot. *Err, that means—*

"Papa and Mama do really genuinely love each other—!"

* * *

To get away from Azrael's endless outburst,
"STUPIDSTUPIDSTUPIDSTUPIDSTUPIDSTUPIDSTUPIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIID!,"
Sasaraki had returned to the debugging room. He also wanted to ask Alice something— or so he'd planned, but apparently she'd gone somewhere.

"Oh, Master☆ Welcome back☆"

Fury said while sitting on top of a black desk.

She closed her eyes like that and slowly started to rock her body with a tranquil smile on her face. She didn't appear to have that dangerous button of hers with her. Behind her back was a swinging needle, it made a sound at fixed intervals and Fury matched that sound by rocking her body from left to right and back again.

Click, click, click, diiing.

"...And that's?"

"A metronome☆"

Fury replied and let her body rock again.

Click, click, click, diiing.

Every time the final ball rang, she stretched her neck out. Sasaraki thought that that behavior it was strange and gazed at her. With her eyes still closed, she continued to rock her body from side to side.

She's dancing to the rhythm.

Just like a real fairy.

"Fury-chan is in relax mode right now☆"

Click, click, click, diiing.

"This metronome is making me feel at ease☆"

"I see... It's kind of unexpected but it might just fit you."

"After all, every time the bell rings, someone explodes☆"

Click, click, click, diiing.

"Another one bites the dust☆"

"WAIT A MINUTE!"

Sasaraki peeked behind Fury.

On a closer look, the top of the metronome's needle was pushing the death button.

"WHAT'S WITH THAT AUTOMATED EXPLOSION DEVICE?!"

"I call it 'Automatic Bomb,' I'm currently filing patent under Alice-san's name☆"

"YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'D USE SOMETHING SCARY LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW?!"

He heaved a deep sigh.

"...Hey, by the way, I've something I wanted to ask you."

"If you want to know how many players I've killed so far, then I lost count☆"

"I know it. I know it was you who hinted Kisara into that direction, wasn't it?"

"That's right☆ Ah, have you come to punish Fury?☆"

"No, that's not it— I wanted to thank you."

Fury stopped. And so did the sound of the metronome.

"...Did... Fury-chan do something to be thanked for?☆"

"You made it so that Kisara and I could understand each other's hearts, right?"

She had told him before Lizna's speech, that she would help him.

Fury had looked for a patch that'd do something as ridiculous as leaking someone's embarrassing secrets as a fatal death penalty and given it to Kisara. And thanks to that, Sasaraki had been able to come to understand her heart.

And all that was no coincidence, it had to have been Fury's intention.

"Ahahahaha☆ Master is such a good person☆"

Fury laughed in a remarkably big voice, seemingly happy from the bottom of her heart.

"By the way, where's Alice?"

"She's in the programming room, is something the matter?☆"

"Well, I'd like to discuss plans regarding development with Alice before I'm sentenced to death."

A short while passed. At last, Fury inclined her head.

"...Sentenced to death?"

"You know, I stopped the Rogue AI Safety Device, after all."

It was just an attempt on my side, but I'm ought to receive some *kind of punishment. Seems like Alice disarmed it in the end, so she could get dragged into this with me. This'd mean the end of our game. We've to think of how to get her out of this—*

"Ah, I remember, that was how the setting went, wasn't it?☆"

Fury said as if it had nothing to do with her.

".....Setting?"

What is she talking about?

"Ah, welcome back, Sasaraki. How was the hot spring?"

The door opened and Alice had appeared in the doorway. But right now, Sasaraki didn't care about *that*.

"Wai—, Fury, what do you mean, 'setting?'"

"According to the law, you're right, but that law is totally ineffective☆"

"EEEEEEEH?!"

"Aaah... *That*, huh?"

Alice heaved a big sigh.

"Sasaraki. If they'd strictly enforce that law, you'd certainly be right, but nobody does that."

"EEEEEEEEEEH..."

All strength left Sasaraki's body.

He sank to the ground and looked at Fury.

"Then... what did I build my resolve for...?"

"Didn't I tell you? I'll turn Master's reality into a kusoge☆"

Fury said while rocking from side to side.

"We AIs are living in a hopeless kusoge. Master's living in a hopeless kusoge that renders his willingness to die useless☆ Both of you are living in the same world— so both of you can understand each other☆"

"...Fury?"

That reply had been untypically verbose for her.

Had she really done all that *for* him?

"Now you're on even ground☆ Let's all be good friends☆"

Fury kept chuckling away.

Sasaraki gazed at her for a while, then heaved a sigh.

"So— I don't have to worry about our game?"

"Rather than worry, the current situation is rather favorable - thanks to Kisara."

When Alice flicked her fingers, it showed a buzzing Teleport Plaza. The image changed and now displayed a huge amount of players rushing into the second floor's dungeons and fighting monsters.

"When we named the boss monsters 'Developer Stooge Nr. XYZ,' things started to get lively."

"Uwah..."

What kind of solution is this?

"By the way, the active player count is on the rise, too."

"Does everyone want to kill the gamemasters that much?"

"Probably. It's a kusoge, after all."

"A hopeless one, right?"

"And we're to ones making players have fun - even though it's a hopeless kusoge."

She winked and continued,

"Or— do you think this kind of kusoge should just close down?"

"No way."

Sasaraki shook his head. *Kisara is in this world. And if it ends, she'll disappear. I have to see that this game continues, at any cost. I promised to always be with her—*

He clenched his fists, that moment...

"Right, right. Even if the game ends, Kisara'll be fine."

"...Heh?"

Alice flicked her fingers.

The image of a brand new computer appeared on the screen.

"It's a backup server for the AI data, I managed to get of one of those."

"Eh...? Didn't you say we couldn't afford those?"

"Yeah, I went a bit overboard to get one."

Alice closed her eyes and heaved a sigh.

"But after all, no one in this world should be at risk to die."

"...Alice?"

"If I didn't get one, Azrael - and you too - wouldn't be able to have fun and develop at ease."

Alice smiled gently. It was a smile without a shred of gloominess behind it.

But her expression immediately grew serious again.

"Well then, I'll ask you once more, Sasaraki."

She point sharply at his face and said,

"Nobody will die if this world ends— Do you still believe that it should go on?"

Sasaraki opened his mouth a few times. What hit him first, was relief. *Ah, she won't die... I see... Thank God.* What hit him next, was doubt. *If no one's life is at stake, is there a point in keeping this game running? Is there a point in running a hopeless kusoge world—?*

"...I still think it should go on."

Sasaraki nodded.

"This is a kusoge, but we've been living here, and this is where Kisara's been born."

Hearing his reply, Alice smiled again.

"Thank you, Sasaraki! I'm thinking the same!"

Alice took his hand and shook it strongly.

Then she stood up while still holding his hand.

"Okay! Then next is floor three and we need a staff room!"

"Isn't it a bit too early for floor three?!"

Sword & Magic Online.

These were the happenings seven days before the end of service.

Extra Chapter

Let's Create Polytheism

"Sasaraki, I think we lack gods in this world."

Azrael said in the debugging room with a serious face.

"We do have a 'Goddess of Creation,' though."

"This is the age of polytheism, you know? It's more romantic to have a whole lot of them."

"That's just your preferences spea... No, that might actually be a good idea."

Thinking it over, the goddess was considered the dev's underling and players saw her as a hostile.

It was probably a good idea to make a friendly goddess.

"That's why I've implemented a belief system. If you show belief, you'll be able to get merits."

"Eh? You implemented that?"

"Yeah. I've only completed it as it was abandoned halfway through development, though."

Azrael said a bit embarrassed but also proud of herself.

That's incredible. Azrael seems to get better and better at programming.

"Anyway, you make gods with this 'Divine Generator.'"

She took out a red button that had 'God' written on it.

"Ehehe, apparently this automatically creates gods that fit into this world!"

He had nothing but bad feelings from the moment he heard 'gods that fit into this world.'

But Azrael seemed to so happy, so Sasaraki kept quiet.

"Eii, push it!"

When Azrael pressed the button, text appeared on the Main Screen.

[God of Bugs (Special A-Rank Evil God)]

Her eyes turned into dots. Something eerie in the form of a human being appeared on the screen. That was apparently what the God of Bugs looked like. His body consisted of numerous lines of small text saying, "ERROR! ERROR! ERROR!" Below that was his description.

[Belief Rewards: The player's attributes as well as experience points occasionally bug, usually resulting in a reset to zero. On top of that, there is a chance for started events to break, forced logouts, and the player's graphical model to be stricken with noise.]

Those weren't merits, those were penalties.

"Azrael, can't we make gods by hand?"

"The belief system is protected and can only be accessed with this switch."

It was the way he'd feared, after all.

"But we can make three of them, so the next one's gotta be a good one! EII! *press*"

[God of Imbalance (Special A-Rank Evil God)]

A man with a muscular and packed upper body, and frail and thin lower body appeared on screen.

[Belief Rewards: The player's attributes will be forcefully redistributed to either strength or intelligence. Weapons with a weight of less than 'Very Heavy' can no longer be used. It will become easier to encounter demons in dungeons unsuited for the player's level.]

What was with this evil god?

"...Azrael, I think we should st..."

"J-Just one more time! One more time! *press*"

[空の神様 (Special A-Rank Evil God)]

Azrael revealed a refreshing smile.

"See?! Sora no Kami! The God of the Sky! That's romantic!"

"Wait, there's no picture of him for some reason... and he's evil."

On a closer look, there was some small text on the lower half of the screen.

[Belief Rewards: Rewards are unimplemented.]

".....Eh?"

Azrael mumbled, dumbfounded.

After a bit of thinking, Sasaraki said,

"Perhaps it's not read as 'sora,' but as 'kara' - 'empty.'"

"...That means..."

"God of Emptiness, it's the God of Unimplementation."

Azrael was about ready to cry.

Apparently the only gods that fit into this world were evil ones.