

## ABNORMALITY IN TYPE-MOON: MADNESS OF ANIMEVERSE

### Chapter 1: Chapter 1: A Meeting Beneath the Snow



The cold wind hit like a sharp blade, cutting into his skin with a stinging pain. Before him stretched a dark, starless sky, the moon absent, hidden behind thick clouds that selfishly denied even the faintest hope of light. The fierce wind, like a cascading waterfall, swept in ruthlessly, carrying large swirls of snow with it.

Everywhere he looked, the world was covered in a vast expanse of white. It has been snowing for days, covering everything completely. The once black soil now slumbered beneath the heavy quilt of snow, as though even the earth was being crushed, unable to lift itself under the weight.

"Huff... huff..."

In this endless snowfield, a lone, thin figure stumbled forward, his steps heavy. He was draped only in a simple white linen robe, with no other garments to shield him from the biting cold. His frail form was visible beneath the robe as he struggled through the snow, clutching his arms tightly around himself. The wind and cold pierced him to the bone, causing him to shiver uncontrollably.

The figure was so fragile that it seemed he might break apart at any moment. It was a wonder he was still alive.

Behind him, there was nothing but a vast expanse of snowy wasteland. In front of him, only a relentless storm of wind and snow.

No one knew why he was here, walking alone in the middle of this deadly snowstorm, with no companions, no proper clothing, and no clear destination.

Step by step, his gait was slow and unsteady.

His breathing was heavy, and the freezing air burned his lungs. White clouds of breath escaped from his mouth in quick succession, freezing almost immediately in the frigid air.

The alternating sensations of hot and cold stimulated his senses, granting him moments of fleeting clarity.

He had long lost track of how long he had been walking through this snowfield.

He could only remember starting at dusk, entering this snow-covered world, and not stopping since. Now, it was deep into the night—perhaps even early morning—the temperature had dropped dangerously close to freezing.

The thin white robe flapped in the icy wind, sticking to his sickly pale skin.

He hugged his arms closer, rubbing them in a vain attempt to find some warmth. His face had already turned a ghastly shade of blue, and his body temperature had dropped so low that he was beginning to feel numb. He could hardly open his eyes, and yet, strangely, a faint warmth began to spread from deep within his bones.

Continuing like this would undoubtedly lead to his death, but there was nothing he could do.

He had been walking through this barren landscape for half a day, and in all that time, he had seen no signs of life—no villages, no towns, not even another person. There weren't even animals; not a single bird in the sky.

The only things that met his eyes were the occasional withered branches and scattered bones.

It was as if he was the only person left in the entire world, the overwhelming sense of solitude creeping up from the depths of his soul.

The realization hit him: this place was utterly devoid of life.

Faced with this stark truth, a deep sense of helplessness surged from within him.

There was no point in struggling anymore. It was futile to continue. Maybe the easier option was to just give up, to freeze to death here in this frozen wasteland.

Human nature tends to favor the path of least resistance, especially in such circumstances. No one would blame him; after all, everyone is like this at heart. Everyone would understand. Besides, there wasn't anyone here to judge him.

"Huff... huff..."

Though his pace grew increasingly sluggish, his consciousness hazy, and his body weakening, his footsteps never stopped.

No one knew where he was headed.

Just as no one knew why he was so insistent on moving forward.

"Roar!"

Suddenly, the air trembled with a powerful vibration, accompanied by a low, guttural growl that felt almost like a hallucination.

He stopped, his eyes widening slightly. Instinctual fear snapped him back to a fleeting moment of consciousness.

In the endless expanse of snow before him, a dark, ominous shape had appeared.

It was a beast.

No, it was more than just a beast. It had the appearance of a wolf but with a set of grotesquely twisted fangs more fitting for a zombie. Its size was larger than that of a lion, its muscular body tense and rippling beneath its fur. Its blood-red eyes gleamed with a predatory hunger. It crouched low to the ground, poised to strike, radiating an aura of raw, unbridled aggression.

This was no ordinary beast—it was a monster.

It seemed devoid of any rational thought, driven only by a primal instinct for blood and carnage.

The intense sense of danger rushed into his mind all at once, momentarily clearing his muddled thoughts. He wanted to assume a fighting stance, but his weakened body refused to cooperate.

He gritted his teeth unconsciously.

Was this the end?

He hadn't even begun to accomplish anything.

"Roar!!"

The monster, ravenous and eager for its prey, saw through his futile struggle. With a deafening roar, it charged at him, its massive paws digging into the ground as it propelled itself forward.

In the blink of an eye, the beast had crossed the distance between them at a speed no human could match.

He could see the gleam of bloodlust in its eyes, a twisted, primal joy.

He wanted to dodge, but it was too late. He could only stare helplessly as the monster's fangs loomed closer, growing larger with each passing second—closer, closer—

"Buzz—!"

Just then, a blinding light erupted before his eyes.

It was a brilliant, overpowering light that surged from the distance, filling his entire field of vision. It was so dazzling, so bright, it was like the long-lost sun.

When the light faded, the monster's fangs had vanished. All that remained was half of its body, lying lifeless in the snow, black blood seeping into the earth.

"Is it you?"

In his dazed state, a figure stepped into his line of sight.

It was a woman, her presence as commanding as a rose in full bloom. Her long crimson hair danced wildly in the snowstorm, and her fierce gaze locked onto the frail young man below, scrutinizing him from above.

But the boy could no longer respond to her.

Having just escaped death, his consciousness finally sank into darkness.

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Chapter 2: Chapter 2: The Refugee Shelter



"Everyone, come and get your paper and pens!"

"Don't miss a single one, or we won't guarantee your safety!"

"For the sake of your own lives, just cooperate for now..."

The already cramped hall was now packed to the brim with people.

Uniformed staff members rushed back and forth, distributing paper and pens, occasionally shouting orders amidst the flurry of activity.

In the center of the hall, a large group of people sat on the floor, as there were no chairs available. They varied in gender and age, and their clothing was just as mismatched—some were dressed in summer attire, while others wore heavy winter coats. Upon closer inspection, there were roughly several dozen of them.

It was late January, the heart of winter.

Those wearing summer clothes were shivering violently, but none dared to utter a word of complaint. They obediently accepted the paper and pens from the staff and began filling out their personal information.

Along the walls of the hall stood several heavily armed soldiers, stationed in the corners with automatic rifles in hand. They exuded an air of deadly seriousness, like seasoned warriors who had been through countless battles. Their grim expressions suggested they were not to be trifled with, as if they would truly kill without hesitation. The intimidating atmosphere made it impossible for anyone to meet their gaze.

In fact, not long ago, someone had caused trouble in this very room. A soldier had shot him dead on the spot, and the body had only just been dragged away. A pool of stark blood remained on the ground, a grim reminder of the incident.

Realizing that these people really were capable of killing, the refugees seated on the floor lost all will to resist.

They gradually came to understand that, in the eyes of these armed men, their lives were worth very little. Human life, in this place, had no real value.

Obedying was the only way to survive, no matter how wretched it felt.

"Damn it... What kind of world have we ended up in..."

Among the group, someone gritted their teeth and cursed under their breath, venting their anger and fear.

Most of the people shared that same reaction, cursing the fickleness of fate, or whatever mysterious force had brought them here. Others remained silent, but their faces were filled with dread, their hearts clouded with confusion about the uncertain future.

"Sir Kanzaki, the identification forms have been collected."

After a while, the staff finished gathering the completed forms and handed a thick stack of papers to the man in charge of the hall, a middle-aged man named Kanzaki.

Kanzaki glanced over the papers briefly before stepping forward to address the group.

"Well, I suppose I should welcome you all. You, refugees—no matter where you came from, no matter how wealthy or powerful you once were, that was all in the past. Now, you are nothing but refugees. Without the protection of this city, Fuyuki, you would be nothing more than food for the monsters, demons, and cursed spirits roaming the wilderness!"

"I'm sure you've already seen what it's like out there on your way to Fuyuki."

Several faces in the crowd immediately darkened.

When they had first gathered in the wilderness, there had been over a hundred of them.

But on the road to Fuyuki, they were attacked by creatures unlike anything they'd ever encountered. Massive beasts, as though bred for slaughter, easily overpowered even firearms. More than a dozen refugees had been devoured on the spot.

They had endured hours of sheer terror, their nerves frayed, until the sound of gunfire signaled the arrival of a rescue squad. The beasts were driven off, leaving behind only mangled remains and the stench of fear.

Many among them had witnessed the bloody carnage firsthand, and the mere thought of it now made their stomachs churn.

That attack had shattered their perception of reality.

Kanzaki, observing their subdued expressions, nodded in satisfaction.

"But you don't need to worry. At least within the walls of Fuyuki City, you are safe. You can live as you once did. However, never forget your status as refugees. It is we who have given you a place to survive. Without us, you wouldn't even have your lives. You've already been given more than enough, so don't be ungrateful and do anything rash, foolish, or impulsive. If you do, you'll face the consequences."

After his stern warning, no one dared speak up.

Even if some harbored resentment, the pressure from the armed soldiers kept them silent.

With the customary speech out of the way, Kanzaki clicked his tongue and began reviewing the forms in his hand.

The forms not only contained basic personal information—such as name and gender—but also asked for skills and previous occupations.

Kanzaki's attention was drawn to the latter section, particularly curious about their past professions.

"Students, convenience store clerks, novelists..." The more Kanzaki read, the deeper his frown became.

Someone had even written that their specialty was playing video games—specifically galgames. Kanzaki's eyebrows twitched in frustration.



In a world like this, they needed highly skilled professionals, people who could contribute meaningfully. What use was playing video games?

Especially galgames.[T/N: It's bishoujo games.]

What a joke!

After reading through the thick stack of papers, Kanzaki still hadn't found a single useful candidate.

Rubbing his temples, he clicked his tongue in disdain.

"Why did I even expect anything from you refugees? Anyway, you all have two choices. One is to become miners or farmers. You'll be provided with three meals a day, but no pay. After working a certain number of years, you can transition from refugee status to civilian status. The other option is to become a servant—"

"Oh, there's one more option."

Before he could finish, a voice cut in from the entrance.

A man stepped into the hall. He looked to be in his mid-twenties, with tanned skin, blonde hair, and the distinct features of someone of Middle Eastern descent. Handsome, with a confident stride, he spoke slowly and deliberately, as though expecting his words to be heeded without question.

"Who's in charge here? I need two servants."

As the young man sauntered in, his eyes swept across the room, scanning the refugees with the same detached indifference one might show when inspecting merchandise. There was no trace of emotion in his gaze.

Kanzaki's eyes landed on the badge pinned to the man's vest, a black tag inscribed with the characters "Kai Wei"

The moment he saw the badge, Kanzaki's demeanor shifted. He quickly straightened up and offered a respectful bow, as though a soldier had just encountered his commanding officer.

"Sir, you have the right to choose two servants this month. This group of refugees has just completed registration. Feel free to make your selection."

"Good."

The man acknowledged him with a casual nod and resumed his cold appraisal of the refugees.

After a brief survey of the room, his gaze settled on two figures.

"Didn't expect to find something decent in this batch of refugees. I'll take that woman, and that man over there."

He snapped his fingers with a sharp, smug grin, his hand gesturing toward his chosen targets.

Following his direction, Kanzaki glanced over at the two individuals.

One was a burly man, his eyes dark and brooding, exuding an air of danger.

The other was a young woman, no older than sixteen or seventeen. She wore a high school uniform, her long black hair cascading behind her, with a white headband resting on her forehead. She sat quietly, clutching the hem of her skirt.

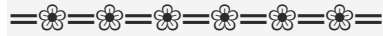
Her face was smeared with dirt, her gaze lowered as if she was deliberately trying to make herself inconspicuous. It was hard to tell how beautiful she might be, but her curvy figure stood out. Her stockings were torn in several places, revealing smooth, pale skin. Several men nearby had their eyes glued to her.

"I understand. I'll arrange the paperwork for you."

Kanzaki nodded slightly and opened his ledger.

"Excuse me, but could I have that girl instead?"

At that moment, another figure strolled into the hall, smiling as he interrupted the conversation.



### Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Kasumigaoka Utaha



"Th-this might be a bit inappropriate, sir..."

Kanzaki looked at the newcomer and couldn't help but show a troubled expression.

The golden-haired young man, who had his eyes on the girl first, was clearly displeased by the interruption. He glanced over at the new arrival.

Among the refugees, the high school girl who had been trying to blend into the background realized she had become the center of attention. Her face visibly darkened.

At the entrance to the hall, a slender figure stepped inside.

He was a young man who appeared to be around sixteen or seventeen years old.

He wore a striped baseball cap, and beneath the brim, a few strands of wavy, snow-white hair peeked out. His hair color was a pure white, as flawless as freshly fallen snow.

His facial features were delicate, almost ethereal—he wasn't exactly handsome, but more elegant, like a work of art that had been meticulously

crafted. A faint, gentle smile tugged at the corners of his lips, giving off a sense of approachability that made people instinctively feel at ease.

Unfortunately, a pair of black-framed glasses obscured his eyes, making it difficult to read his true thoughts.

For a fleeting moment, anyone staring into his eyes might catch a glimpse of a faint crimson glow.

Upon closer inspection, it was clear that his irises, hidden beneath the glasses, were a striking blood-red, carrying an eerie yet captivating beauty. One couldn't help but be drawn to them.

Pinned to the front of his plain black trench coat was a nametag that bore the word "Matsu."

"Sir, these two refugees have already been chosen by this esteemed mage. Perhaps you might consider selecting someone else?" Kanzaki, now visibly anxious, suggested.

In Fuyuki City, anyone wearing this kind of badge was no ordinary person. They were "mages"—individuals who held the city's lifeblood in their hands. Their numbers were few, and they stood far above the common populace. Someone like Kanzaki, who merely managed a refugee shelter, wasn't even qualified to appear on their radar.

"Mage?"

A startled exclamation came from one of the refugees.

"Could it be the legendary supernatural powers? The kind we always read about in fantasy novels— who wield magical powers? Does this world really have magic?"

The voice belonged to a bespectacled, black-haired boy who was now gazing in awe at the two mages. His eyes sparkled as though a dream had come to life before him.

Coincidentally, the girl with the black hair and headband was seated right next to him.

Annoyed by his outburst, the girl shot him a fierce glare.

The situation was already complicated enough, and drawing attention like this could only make things worse. How could he be so clueless?

The refugees around them had mixed reactions. Some remained silent, some whispered to each other, while others cast schadenfreude-filled glances at the pair.

The black-haired girl instinctively crossed her long, shapely legs, the black stockings covering them trembling slightly.

However, the reactions of the refugees had no effect on the two mages.

"To be honest, I'm quite fond of that girl too. Atram, would you mind letting her go to me?" The white-haired boy, smiling warmly, turned his gaze towards the golden-haired young man.

Kanzaki's heart skipped a beat.

If these two mages ended up in a disagreement, would they end up fighting here?

He grew increasingly anxious. He had heard that "Matsu" was the lowest rank among mages, while "Kai" ranked third. How could he dare ask for such a favor? Wouldn't it be better to back down gracefully?

"...Oh, I was wondering who it was. Isn't this Mr. Roy?"

The golden-haired man, Atram, first appeared expressionless, but then a bright smile quickly spread across his face.

"Of course, no problem. After all, it's just a refugee. If it makes Mr. Roy happy, please feel free to take her."

Kanzaki blinked in surprise but sighed in relief.

Judging by their amicable demeanor, it seemed the two knew each other well, which helped ease his nerves.

"Then I'll go handle the paperwork! Oh, by the way, sir, as a 'Kai,' you're allowed two servants per month. You've only chosen one. Would you like to pick the second one now?"

"I'll choose now. I don't have the time to come back later. I'll take that noisy boy over there."

"Understood!"

Kanzaki swiftly agreed and hurried over to the counter to process the paperwork.

In just a short while, the paperwork for all three servants was complete. The burly man and the bespectacled boy were assigned to the golden-haired Atram.

The girl with the black hair and headband was assigned to the white-haired, red-eyed Roy.

"Mr. Roy, if you have time, you're welcome to come by my place to discuss magic. And if your family is free, all the better."

"Thanks for the invitation, but no one's home. Farewell."

Roy smiled flawlessly at Atram, then left the refugee shelter with the black-haired girl.

Once they were out of sight, the smile on Atram's face finally disappeared.

"Ugh, what a pain."

Atram's face contorted into a sneer as he spat in the direction Roy had gone, his eyes brimming with disdain and mockery.

Kanzaki kept his head down, his scalp tingling with unease, pretending not to see anything.

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Fuyuki City, nestled along the edge of the sea and surrounded by mountains, should have been a city of breathtaking beauty.

But as they walked out of the shelter, what greeted their eyes was not the serene landscape of green hills and blue waters, but a world of pitch-black scorched earth and a polluted, murky sea.

Even the air was tinged with an acrid, burnt scent that gnawed at the nerves.

"What's your name?"

As they walked along the road, Roy kept his eyes straight ahead.

Passersby, upon noticing the badge pinned to Roy's chest, shot him respectful glances and immediately made way for him. It was as if an invisible force parted the crowd, allowing the two to walk undisturbed.

"...Kasumigaoka Utaha."

After a moment of silence, the black-haired girl quietly answered.

As expected.

Roy nodded to himself.

When he first saw her in the refugee shelter, he had already suspected her identity.

"My name is Roy."

"Yes, Lord Roy."

Kasumigaoka Utaha obediently nodded.

Roy made no comment on how she addressed him, his expression unchanged, leaving her unsure whether he was pleased or displeased.

This uncertainty made Kasumigaoka Utaha, who had been watching him closely, feel a bit disheartened.

Then, she noticed something else.

It seemed they weren't walking further into the city but heading towards its outskirts. The enormous city walls, towering over ten meters high and encircling Fuyuki, were growing closer and closer.

She wasn't sure what he was planning, so she kept her questions to herself for now.

"You'll be working for me from now on, so it's best you familiarize yourself with some essential knowledge about this world."

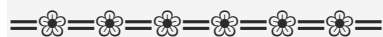
But as though sensing her thoughts, Roy suddenly turned to her with a gentle smile.

It was a smile that came from the heart, warm and infectious, and it gradually eased the anxiety building up within her.

"Take a look. This is just the tip of the iceberg of this world."

The two of them climbed atop the city walls.

And there, a glimpse of the vast, hidden world was revealed before her eyes.







Stepping up the stone staircase resembling ancient pillars, they finally reached the top of the city wall.

The moment the view outside the wall came into sight, Kasumigaoka Utaha instinctively held her breath.

When they entered the city from the wilds earlier, her mind had been in chaos, too preoccupied to pay attention to the surroundings. It was only now, standing here, that the world unveiled even a small part of its horrifying truth.

And just this small glimpse was terrifying beyond words.

Outside Fuyuki City, a vast expanse of pitch-black land stretched out endlessly.

Everything her eyes fell upon looked as though it had been scorched by a great fire. The earth was charred black, with not a single blade of grass or tree in sight. Only darkness covered the land. Even the sky above was a murky, clouded color. The entire world seemed drained of all but the bleakest shades.

This land appeared utterly lifeless.

Desolate, barren.

Utterly hopeless.

As she gazed at the scene, Kasumigaoka felt a heavy weight press against her chest, as if a massive stone were crushing her, the scent of burning flames lingering in her lungs, making it painful to breathe.

"Don't stare at it for too long."

Roy noticed her increasingly irregular breathing and gently placed his hand over her eyes.

"This land has been cursed. Just looking at it can make you feel unwell. Prolonged exposure could even lead to mental disturbances... In simple terms, madness."

Kasumigaoka couldn't help but shiver.

So, the city guards had truly saved their lives by bringing them back to safety.

"But that's not the biggest danger," Roy said, lowering his hand as Kasumigaoka regained her composure. He pointed toward a certain direction beyond the city walls.

"Look over there."

Kasumigaoka followed his gaze.

In the distance, accompanied by terrifying roars, several massive, monstrous beasts appeared over the horizon, charging toward the city wall with terrifying speed. The ground trembled beneath their thundering steps as if it were crying out in pain.

"Are we really safe here?"

Unable to suppress her worry, Kasumigaoka blurted out her concern.

Those beasts, though not quite the size of elephants, were far more muscular than lions. Could the stone walls truly withstand such a powerful onslaught?

"No need to worry. These walls have stood for nearly ten years. Creatures like these can't break through them," Roy reassured her, waving off her concern with a calm, collected demeanor.

His unwavering confidence brought Kasumigaoka a small sense of relief, easing the tension in her heart.

She turned her attention back to the monstrous beasts.

'So, these are magical beasts?'

Before long, the creatures reached the base of the wall. But just as they approached, the walls shook violently, followed by the sound of cannon fire. A flash of light streaked across the sky, and the beasts were sent tumbling.

"The wilderness is a forbidden zone for humans. Almost no one dares to live out there. One of the main reasons is the abundance of dangers like these. Magical beasts are just the beginning. If you run into evil spirits, cursed entities, or even those corrupted Servants... then you're in for real trouble."

Roy raised his hand, and with a flick of his fingers, glowing runes appeared in the air, forming intricate symbols.

Whirr!

In an instant, flames ignited from the runes, forming a wave of fire that rushed toward the magical beasts.

Within moments, the creatures were engulfed in the roaring flames, their agonized howls fading as they collapsed one after another.

"So remember, Utaha, someone like you—an ordinary person—should never leave the safety of the city walls without a Magus like me accompanying you. No matter what anyone says."

"Yes, I understand."

Kasumigaoka stood there, staring at the blazing flames, dazed for a long time before she slowly regained her senses.

It really was magic.

To conjure flames from mere symbols—such a power was far beyond anything technology could achieve!

"Magus... Lord?"

"Was that magic you used just now?"

Roy's display of power had caught the attention of the city guard. The captain himself came to the top of the wall, offering Roy a deep, respectful bow, his eyes filled with sincere admiration.

"I was just taking a look. You all may continue with your duties," Roy replied dismissively.

"Yes, sir."

The captain's response was firm and energetic.

Even though they had their orders, the guards couldn't help but shift their attention to Roy and his magic, fully entranced by the Magus's abilities.

To avoid interfering with their duties, Roy led Kasumigaoka away from the wall.

"Lord Roy, did you say the walls have been standing for nearly ten years?"

As they descended, Kasumigaoka followed behind him, her curiosity piqued.

From their brief conversation earlier, she had learned a bit about Roy's personality. He seemed approachable, which gave her the courage to ask her question.

"So, what was here ten years ago? Were there no walls, or were there different forms of defense?"

"Sharp observation."

Roy nodded approvingly.

"Ten years ago, there were no walls here because the world wasn't like this."

"Ten years ago, in 1994, the world was still quite normal—probably not much different from the place you came from. Even if there were differences, they were within the acceptable range of parallel worlds. But everything changed ten years ago."

"That year, on one fateful night, a massive curse was unleashed without warning, spreading across the entire world in a short period of time. Not just Japan—the whole world burned for a year straight. And when the flames finally died down, the world was left in this state."

"More than ninety percent of the world's population was wiped out. Governments collapsed, and it became impossible to live outside. The few survivors built a handful of base cities amidst the ashes, shielding themselves with massive walls and the mysteries of magic. Since then, humanity has been hiding within these cities, barely clinging to survival."

"Take Japan, for example. Today, the entire population is less than a million, scattered across four base cities. This city, Fuyuki, is one of those four."

As they walked onto the cobblestone streets of the main city, Roy gazed at the dark sky, the scorched earth, and the murky sea, feeling a deep sense of melancholy.

Though he was familiar with the lore of the Type-Moon universe, this version was unlike any he had ever encountered.

What Type-Moon world had ever turned out like this?

'My Type-Moon world is seriously messed up.'

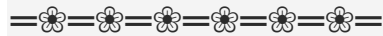
Following Roy, they soon arrived at his home.

It was a large traditional Japanese-style residence with a spacious courtyard. In addition to the main hall and master bedroom, there were several other rooms—enough to accommodate more than ten people. There was even a

storage room in the corner of the front yard. Even in the past, in a normal version of Fuyuki City, this would have been a luxurious estate befitting a wealthy landowner.

As they stepped into the courtyard, Kasumigaoka's gaze instinctively swept over the nameplate by the gate.

The pristine white plate was neatly engraved with two characters: Aozaki.



Chapter 5: Chapter 5: Aozaki Residence



"Just wear these clothes."

Upon returning to the residence, Roy retrieved a set of shirt and pants from a side room and handed them to Kasumigaoka Utaha. Noticing her shivering from the cold, he also gave her a down jacket.

"There aren't any clothes for someone your age in this house. Tomorrow, I'll take you shopping for a few outfits. For today, just make do with these."

Kasumigaoka accepted the clothes and went to the adjacent room to change out of her dusty high school uniform. She also removed her torn stockings and changed into the simple, classic business attire Roy had given her.

Though a bit old-fashioned, the clothes fit her fairly well. The chest area, however, was a little loose, as if someone else had worn it before and stretched it out.

"What should I do now?"

After changing, she returned to the living room and asked Roy.

"Cleaning and laundry, things like that."

Roy was sitting comfortably at a kotatsu in the center of the living room, looking quite cozy. Spread out in front of him were several sheets of paper, which he was browsing through while answering her.

"This yard is a bit too large for me to handle alone. It's always such a hassle to clean up, which is why I was planning to get a servant from the refugee shelter. You'll take charge of keeping things tidy here. That shouldn't be a problem, right?"

"I understand."

Nodding, Kasumigaoka followed Roy's instructions, found the cleaning tools, and headed outside to start sweeping the yard.

"... You can skip the lawn. Just clean the open spaces."

Pausing for a moment, Kasumigaoka made her way to the open area facing the gate and began sweeping up the fallen leaves and debris from the stone pavement.

"... You don't have to gather the leaves into a dustpan. Just sweep them onto the lawn."

Kasumigaoka's breath hitched slightly. Embarrassed, she brushed a loose strand of hair behind her ear and did as Roy instructed, sweeping the leaves off the path and onto the grass instead.

If you looked closely, her broom-handling technique was rather clumsy.

Before long, her breathing became noticeably heavier.

'I guess I'll let her figure it out on her own.'

Roy turned his attention back to the papers in front of him.

"Guard duty or the task of removing curses from the farmland... Guard duty sounds more dangerous since it involves going outside the city, while removing curses would be physically exhausting..."

After thinking for a moment, Roy signed his name on the guard duty mission.

Not long after, Kasumigaoka finished sweeping the yard and moved on to cleaning the entrance hall and living room. Once she had dealt with the dust, she fetched a bucket of water and, like an ox plowing a field, began scrubbing the hallway floors.

The sky outside was gradually tinted with hues of dusk, casting an eerie glow over the already grimy atmosphere.

Sitting on the tatami mats, Kasumigaoka gasped for air, large droplets of sweat rolling down her forehead, streaming past her cheeks, and disappearing into her collarbone. At some point, her shirt had become soaked, faintly revealing the outline of her black bra underneath.

She looked around the house, and a wave of exhaustion washed over her.

After two or three hours of effort, she had only managed to roughly clean the front yard and the living room.

The bedrooms, kitchen, and storage areas hadn't been touched yet.

'Surely, I'm not expected to finish all of this today?'

She glanced nervously toward the kotatsu in the living room but saw no one there. Instead, the sounds of clanging pots and pans came from the direction of the kitchen, accompanied by a faint but enticing aroma filling the air.

Grumble.

Kasumigaoka instinctively covered her stomach in embarrassment, but her hunger was undeniable, and she couldn't help but swallow at the delicious smell.



Having been unexpectedly transported to this world, escorted by the guards back to the city, and not having eaten in ages, she had worked herself to exhaustion doing unfamiliar tasks. Now, she was both tired and starving.

"Let's eat."

Roy emerged from the kitchen carrying a tray of dishes, motioning her over to join him.

Not bothering with needless politeness, Kasumigaoka sat down at the dining table and was momentarily stunned by the sight of the meal.

"Chinese food?"

"Authentic," Roy replied with a smile. "It's a personal preference."

Kasumigaoka took in the dishes on the table: braised pork chops, stir-fried eggs with tomatoes, sautéed three treasures, and seaweed egg drop soup. It wasn't a large spread, but the aroma was intoxicating.

---

A little while later, the young woman lay sprawled out in her chair, ungracefully holding her belly, which was now noticeably rounder.

She could confidently confirm—the food was indeed authentic.

"Feeling tired?"

Seeing her slumped in the chair, Roy didn't press her to do more. He simply collected the plates and headed back to the kitchen.

"I'm just not used to it," Kasumigaoka muttered defensively.

"Hmm, this house is large, so don't push yourself too hard. It's just the two of us living here. It's okay to lower the standards a bit," Roy called out from the kitchen, his voice warm and understanding.

"I'm only a low-tier Magus, after all. At this level, I'm only allowed one servant per month. For now, just get used to the place. Next month, I'll find someone to help you out."

Having an extra pair of hands would certainly make things easier.

Though she didn't respond, Kasumigaoka felt a sense of relief wash over her.

But at that moment, another thought crossed her mind.

"A low-tier Magus... how low are we talking?"

"The lowest, actually," Roy said casually, not at all bothered by it.

"There are seven ranks in total: Grand, Color, Ritual, Canon, Open, Firstborn, and Lastborn. I'm ranked at the bottom—Lastborn."

He sounded completely unfazed.

Clearly, this wasn't a touchy subject for him, nor did he view his rank as some forbidden topic.

"Is this rank based on strength? Are the tiers of magic ranked similarly?"

Kasumigaoka quickly realized she might be delving too deep, and hurriedly added, "If it's something you can't talk about, forget I asked."

"In the past, it was considered sensitive information. Nowadays, it's not a big deal," Roy replied, still in his usual relaxed tone.

"Maguses used to be more like researchers, and the ranks were determined by their accomplishments in magical studies—like students, graduates, or doctoral candidates in academic fields. Everything was kept highly secretive. If a regular person found out about magic, there were organizations dedicated to silencing them, even killing them if necessary. But after the Great Calamity ten years ago, half of the secrecy protocols were abandoned, and Maguses

were pushed—albeit reluctantly—into the public eye. Strength became part of the ranking system."

When Roy said half of the secrecy was abandoned, it meant that not everything had been revealed.

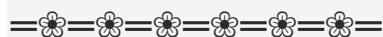
To most citizens, magic still remained in the realm of urban legends.

After all, in the Type-Moon universe, the more people knew about magic, the weaker it became. Magic's power was limited by its mystique; the fewer people who knew about it, the more potent it remained in the hands of those who wielded it.

In ancient times, when the human population was small, magic was almost universally known. That was because magic operates on the manipulation of concepts—if humanity entirely forgot about magic, the very concept of magic would cease to exist.

To ensure its survival, a certain number of people needed to be aware of magic, passing on the concept to future generations.

Nowadays, with the global population having shrunk to under a billion, it was no longer necessary to enforce strict secrecy.



## Chapter 6: Chapter 6: The Night of Two



Kasumigaoka Utaha only half-understood what Roy had been explaining.

He had said quite a lot.

What she could grasp was that the magic of this world was entirely different from the magic she had read about in novels—far more intricate, complex, and difficult to comprehend. It could almost be considered an entirely separate system.

But if the assessment of Maguses now included a test of strength, and Roy was ranked as a Lastborn—the lowest tier—did that mean he was considered the weakest among Maguses?

Yet he had just effortlessly taken down a magical beast larger than a lion in a single move?

And if that was the case, why had that Open-Rank Magus at the refugee shelter treated Roy with such warmth?

"You should take a bath."

Roy's voice broke her train of thought as he walked out of the kitchen, hands still damp.

He pointed in the direction of the bathroom. "I'll bring you some clothes in a bit."

"...Alright."

Kasumigaoka was silent for several seconds before standing and heading toward the bathroom.

The bathroom was traditionally Japanese, with an air of old-world charm that she found beautiful despite its age. Thankfully, the utilities were still functional.

As she began to unbutton her shirt, she suddenly paused.

Looking down, she realized her shirt had long since become soaked. The outline of her underwear was faintly visible through the fabric—not entirely clear, but the subtle suggestion was somehow more alluring.

Had he noticed this during dinner?

A flush rose to her cheeks, whether from embarrassment or anger, she wasn't sure, as she crossed her arms over her chest, looking both flustered and unexpectedly captivating.

After a while, she sighed, smiling bitterly, and began to rinse herself off.

Her fair skin and voluptuous figure were impossible to ignore, yet her expression remained troubled, her thoughts far from the task of bathing.

"I've brought your clothes."

Thump!

In the silent bathroom, the sudden loud heartbeat seemed to echo, as a surge of tension flooded Kasumigaoka's mind, making her feel as though she were sitting on pins and needles.

"I left them by the door. If they don't fit, you'll just have to make do."

As soon as the words left his mouth, the sound of footsteps gradually faded away.

Kasumigaoka let out a sigh of relief, her smooth shoulders sagging in exhaustion.

An hour later...

Kasumigaoka sat properly by the kotatsu, wearing an oversized, pure-white pajama set. Her hair was down, still slightly damp from her bath, and her complexion appeared even more delicate than during the day.

Her expression was serious, as if deeply pondering something important.

When she heard Roy's approaching footsteps, her body instinctively tensed.

It was as though she had made some critical decision as she looked up to meet his gaze.

Roy was dressed in a simple white T-shirt and dark blue pants. Without his usual baseball cap, his wet, white hair fell into slight, elegant curls that gave him a refined, almost fashionable look.

His glasses were also off, and for the first time, Kasumigaoka saw his face clearly.

His features were striking—almost like a work of art. He didn't fall strictly into the category of handsome or beautiful, but seemed to possess a blend of both, his appearance transcending traditional gendered notions of attractiveness. He was more captivating than any idol she had ever seen on TV.

Under the light, his pale skin seemed almost blindingly white, not inferior to hers at all. His slender frame gave off a fragile, almost sickly air.

As she stared at him, Kasumigaoka felt a sudden sense of unease.

She couldn't quite place it, but something about his face felt... off.

Just as she was lost in thought, Roy turned his head toward her.

Their eyes met, and Kasumigaoka was instantly locked in place by his gaze—his blood-red eyes.

A shiver ran down her spine, her body instinctively trembling. It was as if she had been caught in the gaze of something dangerous. A deep sense of panic welled up from within her.

For some reason, Roy's red eyes seemed far more sinister than they had during the day. His expression, once soft and gentle, had taken on a colder, more distant edge.

"You're here."

Roy noticed her sitting by the kotatsu, put his glasses back on, and smiled.

The moment that warm smile appeared, the chilling atmosphere that had surrounded him vanished completely, replaced by the gentle demeanor she was used to.

"You can sleep in the side room tonight."

Kasumigaoka still wasn't fully accustomed to his sudden mood shifts but didn't dwell on it.

She let out a quiet sigh of relief. Thankfully, Roy hadn't asked her to share his bed.

As a refugee, she knew her status in this world was extremely low, as the shelter's attitude had made very clear. Even the smallest offense could lead to punishment—or worse, execution.

If Roy had asked her to sleep with him tonight, she wouldn't have had much choice. Refusing him could very well have led to her death.

And who knew if Maguses had methods like hypnosis to compel people?

But Roy hadn't made any such demands, which eased her anxiety considerably.

Kasumigaoka silently thanked her luck that the person she was serving wasn't driven by lust.

Under Roy's arrangement, Kasumigaoka was given a side room to stay in. Even though it was labeled a "side room," it was still larger than the master bedroom of most ordinary households, complete with a bed, bedding, and wardrobe.

After turning off the lights, Kasumigaoka lay in the bed, her mind racing.

She recalled the scene at the refugee shelter earlier that day. That Open-Rank Magus with the dark skin and golden hair had clearly taken an interest in her, planning to claim her for himself.

Then Roy had arrived, using the same excuse of interest to take her away from that man.

But after bringing her here, Roy hadn't done anything.

If Roy had wanted something, she would have been powerless to resist. There was no need for him to act like a gentleman. So, why had Roy taken her from that black-skinned man if he had no intentions?

It wasn't that she wanted Roy to do anything, of course—she just found it strange.

If he wasn't interested in her in that way, what had been his purpose in taking her?

To be honest, she hadn't liked the dark-skinned man at all. The way he looked at her, it was as if he were evaluating a product rather than another human being.

By comparison, Roy's gentle and respectful demeanor was a thousand times better. Naturally, she preferred being Roy's servant rather than that man's.

As for Akiyama from her school, she figured he was probably fine. After all, he was a guy, so he likely wouldn't be in as bad a situation as hers.

Too much had happened today. Kasumigaoka was utterly exhausted, and soon, her mind became a muddled haze as she drifted off to sleep.

"I hope I wake up tomorrow and find out all of this was just a dream..."

---

That night, after settling Kasumigaoka into her room, Roy grabbed a bottle of liquor and went to sit under the eaves.



He looked up at the sky, but the thick clouds blocked everything out, making it impossible to even see the moon. Drinking under the moonlight was clearly a luxury here.

Tilting his head back, he took large gulps from the bottle, the harsh flavor of the alcohol burning its way down his throat and into his stomach. His drinking style was casual, completely at odds with the gentlemanly image he projected.

"It's about time to begin..."

---

Later that night, Roy had changed into a black robe, his face concealed by a mask. Shrouded in darkness, he slipped out of the residence.

Only his blood-red eyes were visible.

Without the glasses to shield them, his gaze was far sharper and colder than it had been during the day.

Without a sound, his figure disappeared into the night.

On the western outskirts of Fuyuki City lay a small mountain, barely a hundred meters tall. There was only one long staircase leading up the mountain.

This mountain was called Ryuudou Temple.

Years ago, there had been a temple here—Ryuudou Temple—but it had burned down during the Great Calamity ten years ago. The head monk and his family had all perished in the flames, and to this day, the land remained nothing more than scorched earth.

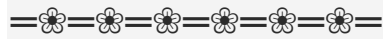
"So many barriers..."

Roy halted at the base of the mountain, having made his way there without alerting anyone.

"But they're meaningless."

A cruel smile tugged at his lips beneath the mask, his voice laced with malice.  
He closed his eyes briefly, then opened them again.

A brilliant light, like the gleam of gemstones, flashed within his crimson irises.



## Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Summoning a Heroic Spirit



The moment his eyes reopened, the blood-red hue vanished from them.

His pupils became deep and black like bottomless voids, with mysterious runes swirling around them like chains, rotating endlessly.

Brilliant, jewel-like radiance burst forth from his eyes.

The barriers surrounding Ryuudou Mountain were a mix of different traditions. A glance revealed wards from European, Middle Eastern, American, and even traditional Japanese Onmyodo systems.

Touching any of these barriers would undoubtedly trigger multiple alarms, resulting in an unstoppable tsunami of retaliatory attacks.

In the distance, faint lights could still be seen, indicating that even at this late hour, Maguses were patrolling the area.

The place resembled a veritable dragon's lair, more dangerous than even the most meticulously designed magical workshop.

The Mage's Association had clearly gone to great lengths to prevent anyone from approaching Ryuudou Mountain.

But Roy showed no fear, walking straight toward the barriers.

He moved openly, with no intention of hiding or evading detection, making no effort to dodge. He casually touched the barrier.

A barrier that should have set off alarms upon contact remained utterly still when Roy touched it. There was no reaction whatsoever.

His form slipped through the barrier as effortlessly as a drop of water vanishing into the sea.

Even after he had completely passed through, the barrier continued to function as usual, oblivious to the intrusion. It was as if Roy didn't exist at all.

No one noticed his entry. The numerous alarms and traps might as well have been illusions.

He passed through thirteen layers of barriers before finally setting foot on Ryuudou Mountain.

"The stench of curses is overwhelming..."

Like the rest of the world, Ryuudou Mountain had long since turned into a scorched wasteland.

The land was saturated with curses, twisting and wrapping around the soil like deep-rooted weeds. Without a Magus to cleanse these curses, not only would no one be able to live here, but not even crops could grow.

In fact, the concentration of curses on Ryuudou Mountain far surpassed that of the wilderness—nearly suffocating.

Out in the wild, curses merely made people uncomfortable. Only prolonged exposure would lead to mental disturbances, and unless they encountered wandering monsters, people generally wouldn't die.

But here, on Ryuudou Mountain, ordinary people wouldn't even be able to look at the curses.

Just by gazing at them, these dark, writhing curses would infiltrate the brain like parasitic maggots, corrupting the spirit and soul. Any regular person would instantly collapse from the sheer mental assault.

Without mental defenses, even a Magus couldn't approach this place.

"After all, the source of the curses that engulfed the world ten years ago is right here."

Roy muttered to himself, his voice laced with scorn.

Rather than taking the stairs up the front of the mountain, he circled around to the back, weaving through the scorched earth until he found a pitch-black, bottomless cave.

From deep within the cave emanated waves of pure malice.

It was as if the very depths of the cave housed the source of all evil in the world—the origin of every malevolent intent.

The entrance to the cave was also protected by a barrier.

Roy's Mystic Eyes glowed with brilliant, gem-like light. In his eyes, the runes alternated between black and white, blending like yin and yang, radiating an air of mystique.

With the power of his Mystic Eyes, he passed through the barrier as if it didn't exist.

Beyond the cave entrance lay an underground cavern that extended beneath Ryuudou Mountain. Stalactites hung from the ceiling, and jagged rocks littered the ground. The deeper Roy ventured, the denser the curses became.

As he neared the heart of the cave, the curses had grown so potent they had taken physical form. The intangible curses turned into clouds of black smoke, so thick they obscured his vision and shrouded the innermost depths.

This place was filled with malice—evil intent that continually assaulted his mind.

As Roy walked through the cursed fog, he could faintly hear a chaotic murmur in the background.

Something hidden in the mist tried to tempt him with promises of absolute power, unimaginable wealth, unparalleled beauty, and the thrill of reckless slaughter.

Simultaneously, the voices accused him of heinous crimes—murder, rape, theft—hurling moral condemnation in an effort to drive him to suicide.

In his daze, it felt as though he was truly experiencing every word spoken, as if his desires were growing boundless, guilt and shame surging wildly in his heart. His mind was assaulted by a torrent of fear, lust, and sin.

"How boring."

Roy walked on, unfazed, ignoring the temptations and taunts with a sneer.

Finally, he reached the deepest part of the cave.

A massive hollow chamber lay before him.

Here, the overwhelming curse mist abruptly cleared, and the area around him became strikingly visible.

On the floor of the cavern, inside a crater-like depression, was an enormous magic circle, glowing alternately with the red hue of fresh blood and the pitch-black shade of a bottomless void, absorbing all surrounding light. The cycle of red and black continued without pause, vast, mysterious, and terrifying.

The magic circle was intricately detailed, etched with countless geometric patterns and ancient runes. At its core stood a towering statue of a woman, silently watching over the chamber.

Even with Roy's considerable mastery of magic, the sight of the magic circle left him in awe.

The complexity of this magic circle was beyond comprehension—far beyond the reach of modern humanity.

"A remnant of the Third Magic, huh? Impressive... but ultimately meaningless."

Roy's tone was calm, almost indifferent, making one question the sincerity of his earlier admiration.

At the same time, his eyes began to shine once again with their enchanting light.

Buzz!

The massive magic circle trembled ever so slightly.

"Connection established. Synchronization complete. Calibration initiated. Flow stabilized..."

A fearless smile spread across Roy's face beneath his mask, each step of the operation proceeding smoothly.

Without hesitation, he extended his hand.

"—I declare!"

A sharp burning pain seared across the back of his hand. Looking down, Roy saw three crimson strokes, resembling wings in flight, form into the shape of a Command Seal.

"You, my body shall be under your command, my fate shall be entrusted to your sword.

If you heed the call of the Holy Grail, and obey this will, this reason, then answer me.

I hereby swear—

I shall be all the good in this world. I shall defeat all evil in this world.

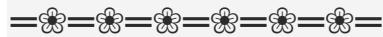
You, seven heavens bound by three words of power, descend from the circle of restraint, O keeper of the balance—!"

Blinding light erupted from the magic circle, nearly overwhelming to the eyes.

Roy squinted, refusing to close his eyes, focusing on maintaining control of the Grand Holy Grail ritual.

Within the circle, torrents of immense magical energy gathered, coalescing into the shape of a person.

"Servant Saber, answering your summons. Are you my Master?"



## Chapter 8: Chapter 8: The Swordsman



Before Roy stood a young swordswoman, her sharp gaze full of spirit and determination.

She didn't look very old, perhaps around fifteen, with a black scarf wrapped around her neck and a pale blue haori draped over her shoulders. Her golden hair shimmered like desert sand, and her serious gray-green eyes were locked onto Roy.

From the waist up, she was a flawless image of a disciplined swordswoman.

Roy's gaze drifted downward, and he noticed that the hem of her inner garment barely reached her thighs.

Her legs were wrapped in thigh-high boots that fit snugly, exposing a strip of pale, delicate skin—the perfect "absolute territory." Her toes peeked out from the open-toed, traditional geta-inspired footwear she wore.

[Image: Swordswoman.jpg]

"Huh? Wait, wait, wait!"

The blonde swordswoman stepped out of the summoning circle, her head adorned with an ahoge that suddenly swayed in panic.

"Hold on a second! It's not time for the Holy Grail War yet, right? Why am I here? And what's with this world? It's like the end of days! I've only been dead for a hundred years or so, but how did the world turn out like this?"

It seemed she had already received the basic knowledge of the current world through the Grand Holy Grail.

"Calm down, Saber," Roy interrupted her anxious rambling, raising his hand to show the Command Seal on the back of it.

"As you can see, I am your Master. I summoned you early."

"Oh, I see!"

The young swordswoman's face lit up with understanding when she saw the Command Seal, the proof of a Master. Her expression quickly shifted to seriousness.

"Very well! I, Okita Souji, acknowledge you as my Master... But Master, your magical energy is enormous! I feel better now than I ever have!"

The young swordswoman, Okita Souji, gleefully flexed her arms, her charming face filled with satisfaction.



As a Servant, she could feel the connection to her Master's magical circuits. The mana flowing from Roy was not only exceptionally pure, but also vast in quantity.

She wasn't sure how modern Magi compared, but her Master's abilities as a Magus had to be top-tier!

Thanks to this overwhelming mana, her condition was the best it had ever been, and she felt as though her parameters had received a significant boost!

Roy lowered his hand, remaining silent in response to her praise.

"Master, where are we?" Okita asked after savoring her excellent condition, finally taking in her surroundings. She jumped at the eerie atmosphere.

"Why did you summon me in a place like this? And, Master, you're wearing a mask... Could it be that you're hiding something? If so, let me help you resolve whatever's troubling you!"

"I'm glad to see you're full of enthusiasm, but there's no need to fight right now," Roy replied, rejecting her offer while gaining a sense of her fiery spirit.

"Let's get out of here."

"Understood!" Okita muttered to herself for a moment, feeling like her Master was a bit cold toward her, but she didn't let it get her down. Still brimming with energy, she followed Roy as they made their way back from the way they had come.

As they re-entered the cursed mist in the cave, Okita found herself frowning. The cheery smile on her face faded as she groaned in discomfort.

"This curse seems specially designed to affect Servants..."

"Indeed, it is. You should revert to spiritual form for now."

"My apologies, Master."

Okita, looking somewhat troubled, apologized to her Master before promptly transforming into spirit form, her physical body vanishing as she followed him in her ethereal state.

"After all my big talk, I'm leaving you to cross this cursed fog alone. How shameful..."

"A little cursed fog like this is nothing."

Roy walked through the cursed mist with ease.

The malicious curses swirling in the air couldn't touch him in the slightest, and he continued to communicate with his Servant in his mind as if there were no danger at all.

"Really? Even in spirit form, I can feel a bit of mental strain from this mist, yet you're completely unaffected? Such mental fortitude is admirable. Oh my, it seems I've gotten myself a wonderful Master this time!" Okita's voice chimed happily in his thoughts.

The mental pollution from the mist was severe. Any cracks in one's psyche would allow the curses to worm their way in easily.

Even Okita, a Heroic Spirit with a steely resolve, could feel her mind wavering slightly. Yet, her Master was walking through it as if it didn't exist.

His mental strength must have been beyond extraordinary.

...Or, to be honest, Okita mused, he was either a genius—or a lunatic.

As Roy and Okita emerged from the cave and began to descend the mountain, Roy suddenly halted.

"I thought we could leave here quietly, but it looks like that won't be so easy..."

Outside the cave, a figure stood, waiting in the shadows.

The figure kept a vigilant watch on the cave's entrance, and the moment she saw the masked figure emerge, her eyes turned sharp.

It was a woman dressed in men's clothing.

Her short magenta hair was neatly styled, and she wore a reddish-brown suit that accentuated her tall, straight figure. Her posture was as firm as a sturdy pine tree, and her piercing gaze was like that of a hunting hawk.

She was imposing, exuding an air of strength and resolve, yet the small beauty mark at the corner of her eye added a touch of allure.

"The barrier shouldn't have detected me."

"The unusual flow of magical energy from the Grand Holy Grail is what gave you away."

The woman lowered the metal case slung over her back and pulled on a pair of black leather gloves, her expression turning cold.

"I'm surprised as well. I didn't expect anyone could pass through thirteen layers of barriers unnoticed and infiltrate the underground hollow. Who are you?"

"I thought a small surge of magical energy from the Grand Holy Grail wouldn't be noticed. Well, I see now. It must have been the forced summoning—things got a bit out of hand."

Roy nodded to himself, realizing the source of the disturbance.

Although he had scouted Ryuudou Mountain before, this was his first time conducting a Heroic Spirit summoning here.

"Answer me!" the woman barked, taking a combat stance, her voice growing more forceful.

"The Holy Grail is tied to the fate of the world. No one is allowed to interfere with it. Answer my questions, then come with me. After we've determined your guilt, Mayor Tohsaka and the Mage's Association will decide how you can atone. It's for your own good."

"I refuse."

Roy rejected her without a second thought.

"I know who you are—Bazett Fraga McRemitz, an Enforcer of the Mage's Association. But this era has no more need for Enforcers. So now you're here to protect the Holy Grail? You're strong, but not strong enough to make me surrender."

"I see. Then I have no choice."

Bazett's voice dropped, her tone turning icy.

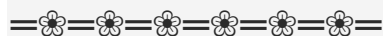
"Then I'll make you submit by force!"

As soon as she finished speaking, runes lit up along her limbs, and she dashed toward Roy with the speed of an arrow released from a bow.

"My compatibility with her is terrible."

Roy muttered this as he backed away.

"Saber, I'll leave this to you."



Chapter 9: Chapter 9: Okita Souji vs. Bazett



"Yes, Master!"

In an instant, Okita Souji materialized before Roy. Her delicate face was cold and serious, as sharp as a blade ready to strike.

Without a sound, she moved, her steps ghost-like as she advanced toward the enemy.

"A Servant?"

Bazett was briefly stunned.

The Holy Grail War hadn't started yet, and this man had already summoned a Servant? Though her mind faltered for a second, her body reacted swiftly.

In the blink of an eye, the girl dressed in a green haori crossed the distance, appearing right in front of her.

Despite facing a legendary Heroic Spirit, Bazett showed no fear. She raised her left fist in defense while her right fist shot forward like a bullet, aiming straight for the swordswoman.

Okita's eyes were unwavering, without hesitation or mercy. Her gleaming blade didn't dodge but met the punch head-on.

Clang!

The sound of steel against flesh echoed in the air like a ringing bell.

Okita's eyes flashed with surprise.

So hard. Reinforced with magecraft? And the strength... comparable to firearms!

Bazett's expression remained unchanged as she retracted her right arm, keeping her left ready. She launched a fierce punch toward Okita's wrist, aiming for the hand gripping the sword. The force of her punch was enough to make the air tremble, accompanied by a faint whistling sound.

Okita sidestepped, evading the blow and slicing toward Bazett's torso in one swift motion.

Bazett quickly blocked the strike with her right arm. At the same time, her left arm swung down like a hammer, aiming for Okita's face. Okita, however, raised her sword hilt high, blocking the punch with an overhead guard.

The rapid exchange was fierce—neither side gaining an advantage.

In mere seconds, they had already traded over a dozen blows.

Okita's swordsmanship was fierce and relentless. She pounced on even the smallest opening, pressing her attack with the determination to tear a piece from her opponent, even at the cost of injury.

But Bazett was cautious. Fully aware of a Servant's strength, she avoided recklessness. Her attacks were calculated, her defense always in place. Whenever there was a gap in her defense, it was quickly mended, giving her an impenetrable presence.

Okita's eyes gleamed.

She hadn't expected to find such a skilled warrior in this era. This woman, though a magus, fought like a composed and battle-hardened warrior, with hand-to-hand combat skills that were top-tier.

Okita inwardly admired her opponent.

Then, her eyes sharpened, and a surge of magical energy enveloped her. The mana flowing from her Master greatly enhanced her strength. She stepped forward, her slender form now brimming with explosive force as she rushed at Bazett with terrifying speed.

"A change in strategy?"

Bazett was startled.

The shift in Okita's attacks made her strikes several times more ferocious. Bazett took a few steps back, dodging the initial thrust. For a moment, she hesitated.

In martial arts, there is a delicate balance between strength and speed. Enhancing one's power might yield greater damage, but it often comes at the cost of leaving larger openings.

As Bazett weighed her options, Okita had already closed the gap again, reversing her grip on the sword and slashing upward toward Bazett's side.

Bazett's eyes narrowed.

Had she miscalculated the height?

The sword wasn't aligned with her vision, but instead, its side was exposed.

When a blade is aligned with the opponent's sight, it becomes a mere line, making it difficult for them to gauge the length or distance. Such a move often forces the opponent to retreat in caution.

But exposing the side of the sword gives the opponent a clearer sense of distance. It allows them to block more effectively and might even provide an opportunity to counter and close the distance for a decisive blow.

Was it an overzealous strike, neglecting the angle of attack? Was this a genuine flaw or a trap? If it was truly a mistake, this could be her chance for victory!

"I can't afford recklessness against a Heroic Spirit!"

Bazett's instincts urged her to strike, but in the end, she resisted the temptation and retreated.

Okita continued her relentless assault, delivering a flurry of powerful blows. Every few strikes, she seemed to leave a glaring opening, as if daring Bazett to take the advantage.

But seeing that Bazett remained cautious, refusing to engage, Okita furrowed her brow slightly.

Not taking the bait.

She had deliberately left several openings, and although Bazett seemed tempted, she suppressed her urge every time, remaining firmly defensive and cautious beyond belief.

A warrior this disciplined would have been a force to reckon with even in Okita's era.

"But as an enemy of my Master, I must cut you down!"

Okita's resolve hardened, and the killing intent on her face deepened.

Suddenly, she covered more than ten meters in an instant, appearing right in front of Bazett.

It was as though she had teleported. With a single step, the distance between them seemed to vanish, as if time itself had been skipped. The seamless transition from standing still to closing the gap was astonishing.

"What?!"

Bazett's eyes widened in disbelief.

Gatotsu!

Okita held her sword in a middle stance, the tip aimed directly at Bazett's left eye.

Bazett felt a piercing pain in her eye, as if it were locked onto by a bullet. Before her mind could even process the attack, her body reacted instinctively.



Her feet scrambled backward, while her left arm, held defensively near her face, shot up to block.

Clang!

The clash sounded like the tolling of a bell, as Bazett was sent flying backward, skidding more than ten meters across the ground. She scrambled to her feet, immediately resetting her guard.

A searing pain spread through her left arm. She didn't dare look at the wound, her eyes fixed on the petite, golden-haired swordswoman. Sweat dripped from her brow.

"If I hadn't been defending from the start, that strike would have pierced my brain!"

Bazett's heart raced, her chest heaving.

She had nearly died!

It was as if she had just returned from the brink of death, leaving even the reaper confused by her sudden visit.

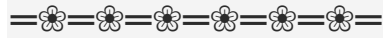
Had she acted with even a hint of recklessness, there was no way she could have blocked that strike.

"That wasn't teleportation. If it had been, I wouldn't have been able to react. It must be some form of advanced footwork! She's using her swordsmanship, breathing, blind spots, movement, and even her opponent's consciousness to its fullest—the pinnacle of footwork!"

Bazett held her hands tightly near her chin, her arms raised defensively. Her eyes never left Okita for even a second.

"But now that I'm ready, if I go full defense—"

Bazett calculated her next move. That previous strike had given her some insight into this young swordswoman's technique.



Chapter 10: Chapter 10: The Mystic Eyes of Inverted Moon



Okita Souji stood in place, her cold face showing a hint of surprise.

"I even used my Shukuchi technique, and she still managed to block it..."

She flicked her sword, sending a crimson arc of blood scattering onto the ground.

As soon as the words left her mouth, she stepped forward again, her body disappearing into Bazett's blind spot, reappearing in an instant like a dimensional leap, slicing towards Bazett's abdomen.

Bazett, always on guard for Okita's attack, saw her reappear before her and her expression shifted. But she didn't panic. She sunk her right arm down.

There was a tearing sound.

As fabric shredded, Bazett retreated several steps, putting some distance between them. Her right arm burned with searing pain, but her abdomen remained untouched.

"No problem. I can defend against her."

Bazett's spirits lifted, and battle intent returned to her eyes.

Okita Souji pursed her lips in frustration.

She really blocked it!

Her Shukuchi technique was her trump card, second only to her Noble Phantasm. Revealing it without being able to sever at least an arm left her unsatisfied.

"This is my first battle since being summoned by my Master. Forget about defeating the enemy—she's barely even hurt! And the worst part is, she's not even a Servant but a modern magus. What will my Master think of me?"

Okita Souji's heart raced.

Oh no! What if my Master thinks I'm useless?

"Saber."

"Yes, Master!"

Okita immediately straightened her posture, standing like an obedient puppy waiting for instructions.

"You are permitted to use your Noble Phantasm."

Roy's magically-modified voice reached her.

"...Understood!"

Okita Souji bit her lip, reluctantly agreeing.

To be forced to use her Noble Phantasm against a modern magus... her Master must be terribly disappointed and see no other way!

Okita Souji turned to face Bazett, only to notice that Bazett had returned to her previous position, where she picked up a metallic cylinder from the ground. From it, she withdrew a black sphere made of an unknown material.

A final showdown, huh?

Okita Souji took a deep breath, positioning herself in a chūdan no kamae stance, her legs spread wide apart.

This chūdan stance, commonly used in traditional Japanese swordsmanship, placed the sword's tip at eye level, aiming directly at the opponent's left eye. It was a clear indication of a thrusting attack.

Okita Souji was renowned in history for her mastery of this stance. Her most famous technique, her signature thrust, had eventually been honed into the Noble Phantasm she now wielded.

"Behold the brilliance of my secret sword! One step, sonic boom; two steps, instant strike—"

Opposite her, Bazett's lips curled into a confident smile.

"A showdown of trump cards? Too bad, you've already lost the moment we entered this phase!"

The black sphere floated up from Bazett's hand, glowing with ancient runes. The surface shimmered, and from its core emerged a short sword, barely a foot long.

Electric sparks crackled along the blade, forming a faint smoke ring around it.

Bazett swung her fist, about to make contact with the sphere.

"Ugh!"

Suddenly, a surge of excruciating pain, as sharp as an electric shock, coursed through her body without warning.

Bazett groaned, her eyes widening in disbelief as she collapsed to the ground, her body uncontrollably writhing.

The runes on the sphere flickered out, and the weapon fell to the ground, as dull and lifeless as an ordinary rock.

"That's enough, Saber. You can stop."

"Three-step... what?!"

Okita Souji nearly tripped over herself, stumbling in shock.

When she came to her senses, she saw Bazett lying on the ground for reasons she couldn't comprehend.

"M-Master~~!"

The girl swordsman looked up at Roy with a pout, dragging out the last syllable of her complaint.

"Agh... Ahhhh—!"

Bazett lay on the ground, clutching her chest in agony.

A mysterious pain radiated from her heart, which was beating erratically, as though it were rebelling against her body. The overwhelming pain rendered her motionless, leaving her no choice but to gasp out weak cries of suffering.

Her previously formidable image was now utterly shattered.

"Master, how did you do that?"

Okita Souji scanned the area, confirming there were no other enemies present. Satisfied, she dropped her guard.

She turned to Roy and was taken aback.

In Roy's eyes shone a brilliant light—black and white, gleaming like precious gems. His gaze was locked on Bazett with an almost hypnotic intensity.

Mystic Eyes?

Roy didn't respond to Okita's question. Instead, he walked over to Bazett, who was writhing on the ground, and knelt beside her.

"Master?"

"It's nothing."

Seeing Okita's concern, Roy waved her off reassuringly.

He knelt down beside Bazett and reached out his hand.

Then, he began unbuttoning her suit.

Okita Souji: " ㄱ(ㄷ.)ㄱ "

After undoing the buttons on her suit, Roy moved on to the buttons of her shirt.

"M-Master?!"

Okita Souji covered her eyes with one hand but peeked through her fingers with the other.

What are you doing, Master? Could it be that her beauty has ensnared you? Stop! My Master isn't someone who would be so corrupted!

With both her suit and shirt fully unbuttoned, Bazett's burgundy undergarments and a generous expanse of pale skin were revealed.

Bazett's figure was more voluptuous than expected. Her ample chest, the sculpted lines of her abdomen—everything about her physique exuded strength and sensuality, the kind that only comes from rigorous training.

Unable to speak due to the unbearable pain, Bazett could only glare at Roy, her eyes filled with a mix of confusion and helplessness.

Roy stared down at her exposed body before slowly extending his hand toward her chest.

Okita Souji: "(/ω\)"

"There it is."

Roy's hand landed over Bazett's heart.

On her pale skin was a glowing green magical seal.

With a swift motion, Roy clenched his hand, shattering the seal.

"AAAAAHHHHH!!!"

Bazett's eyes bulged in agony, her scream tearing through the night. Moments later, she passed out, her body going limp.

"Let's go."

Roy picked up a fragment of the broken seal and turned to retrieve Bazett's metallic cylinder, walking away without a second glance.

"You're not going to kill her?"

Okita Souji glanced at the unconscious Bazett, now utterly defenseless.

"No need."

Okita nodded, then stepped forward to carefully adjust Bazett's clothes, covering her up before following Roy down the mountain.

Along the way, the thirteen layers of magical barriers they had passed earlier seemed to ignore their presence entirely.

"Is this your Mystic Eyes at work, Master?"

"Yes."

At the foot of Mount Ryuudou, Roy closed his eyes, visibly weary.

"These Mystic Eyes are unique to me. There's no record of anything quite like them in human history, so I named them myself—The Mystic Eyes of the Inverted Moon."

"Their power is simple: complete control over all spells."

