

## ABNORMALITY IN TYPE-MOON: MADNESS OF ANIMEVERSE

Chapter 21: Chapter 22: The Greatest Crisis



After finishing breakfast and exchanging a few words with the two girls, Roy left the Aozaki residence and headed to the Fuyuki City Hall.

Today was his day to carry out a mission with the city's guard unit.

The mayor's secretary, a young woman from the Zenjou family, briefed the guard unit's captain on the mission details before hurrying off.

The captain of the guard was also a magician, one of the many European magicians stationed in the city.

Alongside him were a dozen or so magicians, including Roy, and about thirty or forty heavily armed soldiers.

Many of the magicians glanced at Roy as they gathered.

Some looked at him with disdain, others greeted him warmly, while some maintained a lukewarm neutrality.

Roy responded with a polite smile, chatting casually with those who greeted him.

He spoke of "definitely recommending them to the master of the house," but once the conversation ended, he promptly forgot about it.

With their mission assigned, the guard unit quickly left the city gates of Fuyuki.

The team consisted of not just the heavily armed soldiers, but also a few miners, including Aki Tomoya.

Even though the world had burned for an entire year, rendering most of the land unusable, the mines were still essential and had to be controlled. Early on, Fuyuki City had seized a nearby mine, sending miners to extract ore, with magicians stationed there for protection.

Several hours later, nearing noon, the guard unit arrived at the mine without incident.

The miners were handed over to the person in charge, and the guard unit collected the ore that had been extracted during that time. With the exchange complete, they began their return journey.

But their mission wasn't over yet.

Originally, the guard unit's task was to escort the miners and transport resources. However, starting last month, they were assigned an additional duty.

Patrolling the wilderness to search for potential refugees.

"Why do we have to look after those refugees? It's hard enough just keeping ourselves alive!"

"Come on, refugees are a resource too. Who knows, there might be some talent among them that could help the city."

"I sure envy the magicians. They get to choose refugees as their servants. If we could pick some too, I'd be a lot more motivated!"

"Yeah, right. There are more of us soldiers than there are refugees. How would they even distribute them?"

The soldiers, clutching their guns, gathered in small groups, whispering to each other.

Their words were filled with envy for the magicians.

In this era, magicians who could cleanse the cursed farmlands and fight magical beasts were the true elite, standing far above the rest.

"We'll split into three groups and search near the city walls. Don't stray too far!"

The guard captain ordered.

There were few monsters near Fuyuki City. Even magical beasts and curses seemed to instinctively avoid the area, aware of the dangers lurking there, allowing the guard to relax a little.

Roy followed orders and joined a group of magicians and soldiers to search for refugees near the city.

He was particularly focused on the search, thinking that he might come across someone he knew among the refugees.

But after combing through the area, the guard unit found not a single refugee by the time dusk began to fall.

"No luck. Let's regroup."

The group leader suggested, and everyone agreed, grateful for the break. Roy was a bit disappointed but followed the order to regroup.

"Wait, I'm detecting a massive magic reaction approaching!"

Suddenly, Roy's expression tensed, and he called out a warning to the others.

"What?"

The group was startled but reacted swiftly.

The soldiers, guns at the ready, formed a protective circle around the magicians, while the magicians began preparing their spells, all of them on high alert.

The magical presence moved rapidly. Soon, the other magicians also sensed the magic leaking from it.

And when they did, their faces turned pale with dread.

"What is this magic? It's unbelievably powerful!"

"There's a terrifying amount of mental corruption coming with it!"

"What kind of enemy are we dealing with?!"

"Retreat to the city walls, now!"

Without even discussing it, the magicians unanimously chose to flee.

The soldiers, seeing this, were initially confused. Some exchanged nervous glances, while others were already overcome with fear, joining the magicians in a panicked retreat toward the city walls.

Roy cast a speed rune on his legs and ran as well.

But unlike the others, who were fleeing in desperation, he kept glancing back to observe the situation behind them.

"Screech... Screech!"

"Screech, screech, screech!"

Before long, an ear-piercing screech echoed from behind, a chaotic, grating sound that resembled the cries of apes in a deep valley. The high-pitched tones stabbed painfully into everyone's ears.

It sounded like a swarm of monsters was chasing after them.

Roy turned to look.

What he saw was a horde of multicolored magical creatures.

Each one was about half the height of a human, lacking any facial features or limbs. Instead, they resembled sea creatures, propelling themselves forward

with seven or eight tentacles. Where a face might have been, they resembled starfish, spewing a misty black fog from their mouths. Their bodies were covered in grotesque blue, green, and red bumps, making them nauseating to look at.

And in the midst of the sea of monsters, there was a single figure.

The person wore a large robe, holding a book in their arms. They exuded an intense magical aura, their face obscured, arms spread wide as if they were praising some god.

"Screech!"

The tentacled monsters, though legless, used their appendages to move at a terrifying speed.

The leading creatures screeched and lunged at the soldiers at the rear of the group, their starfish-like mouths gaping wide to reveal rows upon rows of jagged teeth, ready to shred their prey to pieces.

"Stay away!"

One of the soldiers screamed as he pulled the trigger, unleashing a barrage of bullets.

The bullets tore through the creatures, leaving gaping wounds, but it was as if they felt no pain. They pressed forward relentlessly, like ravenous predators on the hunt.

"Ah—!"

The soldier was about to be swallowed whole by one of the creatures.

In a flash, Roy drew a series of runes in the air. Within a second, he cast four or five spells, conjuring waves of fire that engulfed the monsters.

"Run!"

"Yes, sir!"

The soldiers didn't waste time thanking him. They sprinted with everything they had.

As they glanced ahead, they realized that Roy was the only magician still close by. The others had long since disappeared into the distance.

Some soldiers clenched their teeth in frustration, others accepted it as expected, while a few looked at Roy with deep gratitude.

The tentacled monsters recoiled in fear from the flames, unwilling to approach. Roy quickly conjured several more walls of fire, successfully holding the creatures at bay and escorting all the soldiers safely inside the city walls.

"Hmm."

Far in the distance, the magician holding the book let out a strange, low hum. He stood still for a moment, then turned and left.

The tentacled monsters, seeming to act as his guardians, retreated with him, vanishing over the horizon beyond the sight of those on the city walls.

It wasn't until the danger had passed that the tense soldiers and magicians began to breathe again, gasping for air. Some even collapsed on the ground in relief.

"I thought the city walls were going to be breached..."

"That was terrifying! I almost thought Fuyuki City was done for!"

"Who was that, able to command so many sea monsters?!"

The air on the walls buzzed with voices, filled with fear and confusion over the terrifying scene they had just witnessed.

Roy, panting heavily, finally caught his breath.

He stared into the distance, watching where the sea monsters had disappeared.

"There wasn't just one massive magic reaction... there were five. And one of them... is far more powerful than the other four combined!"

Fuyuki City had just entered its greatest crisis since the catastrophe.

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Chapter 22: Chapter 21: Severing Ties with the Past



[□ New novel is out guys, "In Hentai World as Mirai Tsubakihara's Relative", do support.👁️.]

At this rate, Aki Tomoya is bound to die.

And he'll die in a disgraceful way.

Atram's method had skillfully skirted around Rin Tohsaka's decree that prohibited the mistreatment of refugee servants. He found a loophole.

Can this really be called mistreatment?

That's a tricky one!

Shiina Kasha's emotions were all over the place, her mind replaying the scene of Aki Tomoya struggling amidst a group of women. In the end, she couldn't turn a blind eye and approached Roy for help.

If Aki Tomoya's life wasn't in danger, she wouldn't have asked Roy.

But he was on the verge of death, and she couldn't just stand by and watch. After all, he had once done her a favor.

At the very least, she needed to ensure he survived.

That was all she intended to do—just make sure he lived.

She was, after all, just a refugee. Helping to this extent was already more than generous.

That afternoon, Roy went to Atram's lavish mansion and requested to take Aki Tomoya.

"As compensation, how about I strengthen the barrier around your house?"

Atram's face darkened, a dangerous glint in his eyes as he glared at Roy.

After a tense pause, Atram finally forced a smile.

"That would be very helpful."

An exchange was made.

Roy enhanced the barrier around the mansion, handed Atram the magical array he had used, and demonstrated that he had no way to control it afterward. Only then did Atram hand over a half-dead Aki Tomoya.

For Atram, this wasn't much of a loss. In fact, it was a huge win.

Aki Tomoya held no real value, and normally, no magician would ever offer to strengthen someone else's barrier.

But even as Atram watched Roy leave, a murderous glint flickered in his eyes.

They met again at the same café.

Roy sat under the parasol outside, slowly sipping the bitter coffee.

Inside, Shiina Kasha and Aki Tomoya sat across from each other.

"Really... I can't thank you enough, senpai. Without you..."

Aki Tomoya's face was blank, as if he had lost the ability to show any emotion.



"What are you planning to do next?" Shiina Kasha asked, sighing at his pitiful state.

"Lord Roy told me earlier that tomorrow, a guard unit will be escorting a shipment of ore. He'll send me with them... to the mining district."

So, Aki Tomoya would be going to work in the mines.

Mining was grueling work, draining both physically and mentally. There was little rest, no pay—only the guarantee of enough food to keep going.

But it was far safer than being a servant to a magician.

Being a magician's servant was a gamble. If your master still had a shred of humanity left, you'd be incredibly lucky. But if you ended up with a master with no morals, it would be a disaster, like falling into an endless abyss.

Moreover, if a miner worked for three years, they could be promoted from refugee status to civilian status. It wasn't an easy life, but there was a light at the end of the tunnel.

"Senpai, what did you have to give up to save me? Did you... offer yourself to Lord Roy?"

"Bang!"

Shiina Kasha's face darkened instantly, and she slammed her hand on the table.

In one swift motion, she dumped the still-warm coffee all over Aki Tomoya's head.

"Aki, don't assume everyone is as filthy-minded as you. Nothing happened between me and Lord Roy. He helped you purely out of kindness! To say something like that is not only disrespectful to me but also an insult to Lord Roy!"

Fuming, Shiina Kasha stormed out of the café, her footsteps heavy with anger.

Roy hadn't asked her for anything in return.

He had helped her simply because she asked, no strings attached.

Aki Tomoya's assumption might have seemed reasonable, but it was a slap in the face for Shiina Kasha, who couldn't tolerate such an insult.

Aki Tomoya glanced in the direction she left, his eyes blank and confused.

He sat there for a long while before finally wiping the coffee off his face and heading back to the refugee shelter.

Roy put down his cup of coffee, watching Aki Tomoya's retreating figure.

This kid was just a high school student. After enduring such torment, his worldview had likely shattered. His mental state was undoubtedly in tatters.

The wilderness outside the city was rife with curses, designed to target the mind.

Even though the mines were protected by barriers, they were still located in the wild.

Each year, the suicide rate there was the highest in the region.

In his current state, going to the mines was practically a death sentence.

But whether Aki Tomoya lived or died had nothing to do with Roy.

He hadn't helped for Aki Tomoya's sake.

Nor had he done it for Shiina Kasha.

"Magicians... They're such a detestable bunch, no matter the time or place. It'd be better if they were all wiped out..."

A wave of nausea washed over Roy.

He downed the rest of his coffee in one gulp, paid the bill, and left.

Back home.

Seeing Shiina Kasha's intimidating "don't talk to me" aura, Ai Hayasaka sought out Roy for an explanation.

After hearing the full story, Ai felt a deep sense of unease.

Magicians in this world were far worse than she had imagined!

But at the same time, she felt a sense of relief.

At least Roy didn't seem like one of those magicians.

Neither did Rin Tohsaka.

In fact, Roy, who had helped Shiina Kasha without asking for anything in return, seemed to be the complete opposite of a typical magician.

Rin Tohsaka had described Roy, glasses-wearing and all, as "easy to talk to," but this was beyond that. He was practically the moral compass of magicians!

Shiina Kasha fumed for most of the day.

It wasn't until dinnertime, when Roy suggested that Aki Tomoya's mind had likely been damaged from the ordeal, that she finally started to calm down.

You can't hold a grudge against someone who's not in their right mind.

Otherwise, you're just tormenting yourself.

But from that moment on, Shiina Kasha considered herself done with Aki Tomoya.

He would be in the mines, while she remained in Fuyuki City. Their paths would never cross again.

That night.

After her bath, Shiina Kasha lay in bed, her mind wandering back to something she had unconsciously overlooked.

"That dark-skinned bastard is a ranked magician. The barrier around his house shouldn't be weak. So how did Lord Roy get through it so easily, without even going in person... Isn't he just a low-ranked magician?"

Indeed, during the investigation of Atram's mansion, Roy had treated the barrier as if it were nothing, his tone full of disdain, clearly looking down on Atram's magical abilities.

But wasn't Roy supposed to be a low-tier magician?

Could someone at the lowest rank really possess such skill?

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The next day, February 1st.

"Lord Roy, please try this porridge!"

Roy had barely gotten out of bed when Shiina Kasha appeared from the kitchen, her face glowing with the kind of pride one feels after receiving their first paycheck.

She had woken up early, and with Ai Hayasaka's guidance, made breakfast for the first time in her life.

Though it was a small gesture, she wanted to express her gratitude.

"Not bad!"

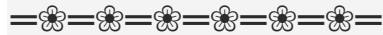
Roy took a sip and complimented her cooking.

Making porridge was a skill.

It was hard to mess up, but even harder to get right.

While it was likely Ai Hayasaka's skill that made it taste so good, Shiina Kasha's effort and sentiment were clear to Roy.

Flushed with a sense of accomplishment from the praise, Shiina Kasha threw herself even more eagerly into learning the duties of a maid under Ai Hayasaka's guidance.



### Chapter 23: Chapter 23: The Association Branch



[👉 Shoutout to TrevorOBryan for joining patreon. Thank you very much.👈]

In the northeastern corner of Fuyuki City, there's a gently sloping mountainous area.

Ten years ago, this land belonged to the Holy Church, and a cathedral stood here. Naturally, that church was burned to the ground during the Great Catastrophe of a decade ago.

However, this was prime land—one of Fuyuki City's four spiritual veins. Not long after the cathedral was destroyed, magi sent by the Mage's Association forcibly took over the area and established a branch office here.

Of course, they didn't pay a single coin for it.

Their excuse? "Since the Tohsaka family caused the Great Catastrophe, giving up one spiritual vein is a light punishment."

In truth, the Mage's Association didn't stop at just this punishment. But for those magi, paying for land seemed pointless when they could take it for free.

Why buy when you can seize?

At that time, Tohsaka Tokiomi had just passed away, and Rin was still young. No matter how talented she was, she couldn't stand up to the many powerful families within the Mage's Association. She had no choice but to swallow the humiliation.

With a loud bang, the main door of the association's branch office was slammed open.

A girl with twin tails, her face frosty, stormed into the hall with a presence so intimidating it made others take a step back.

The dim lighting, wholly inadequate for the spacious lobby, barely illuminated the large, empty space. The hall was devoid of decoration, save for the cold winter wind howling by the windows, lending the atmosphere an eerie chill.

Several magi stood in the center of the hall.

Perched around them on poles were various birds—owls, bats, and crows—watching, mostly motionless, though occasionally a few shifted their eyes.

The scene was unsettling.

"So, the little Tohsaka girl finally shows up," said one of the crows, its beak parting to utter human words as it watched Rin push open the door.

"Once, twice—you're always late to the party. How about you retire and hand over the mayor's seat of Fuyuki to us?"

Rin smirked, her eyes narrowing into crescents as she covered her mouth with her hand, the corners of her lips dripping with malice. "You know, you might want to lighten up a bit. Clinging to greed like this—who knows, you could end up keeling over from a heart attack one day."

The more enraged Rin was, the brighter her smile became.

Her gaze shifted past the perched birds and locked onto the magi standing in the middle of the hall.

These magi were members of the escort team that had taken the miners out of the city that morning.

As soon as they returned to Fuyuki, they came directly to the association's branch to report, completely ignoring her.

The only reason she managed to get here so quickly was because someone had used a familiar to send her a message.

If those magi had listened to her even a little, she wouldn't have been so late.

Her eyes landed on a young man with white hair and red eyes among them.

Roy was one of the magi standing in the hall.

It made sense for him to be there—after all, he was part of the escort team, and he was the first to notice something was wrong.

"I agree with Mayor Tohsaka's proposal," Roy said with a smile, raising his hand.

The other magi lowered their heads, pretending not to hear.

"Shut up! Who gave you the right to speak here?" the crow snapped harshly.

"You're only standing here because of someone else's favor. Know your place and stop making such presumptuous comments!"

"Got it," Roy replied cheerfully, adjusting his glasses with a childlike innocence.

Rin's smile turned cold, dripping with sarcasm. "As soon as you mention relinquishing power, you all start joking around. Seems like the nobility of the Clock Tower is just getting worse with age."

"Enough. Now's not the time for this," a bat chimed in, attempting to mediate.

"All this bickering is a waste of time. The real issue here is figuring out what kind of enemies are lurking outside the city walls. Does anyone have any clues that might speed things up?"

The magi exchanged looks, but in the end, all shook their heads.

They had fled faster than anyone—what clues could they have?

"Did none of you send familiars to investigate?"

"Of course we did! But familiars take time to track things down..."

The hall descended into noisy chaos.

Roy yawned.

He found these ancient relics insufferably boring, so he turned and headed for the door without a word.

"Hmph," one of the birds scoffed coldly as they noticed him leaving.

Roy ignored the magi and beckoned to Rin with a flick of his hand.

"Excuse me," Rin said politely to the magi, flashing a quick smile before turning to leave as well.

She didn't bother sparing the birds a glance.

So polite, Roy thought to himself, feeling a bit sheepish.

Not like him—he hadn't even said goodbye.

As they stepped outside the association's doors, Rin quickened her pace and caught up to Roy, walking shoulder to shoulder with him.

"Calling me out like this—what do you want to talk about, Mr. Roy?" she asked.

"I've got a lead," Roy said.



"Oh?" Rin gave him a surprised look. "Then why didn't you say something back there?"

"You know how it is—I can't stand those old men either," Roy smiled innocently. "Compared to them, I much prefer Mayor Tohsaka's style."

"Well, I appreciate the compliment," Rin said with a genuine smile, her earlier formal expression replaced by one of pure joy.

The difference between her earlier forced smile and this real one was striking.

"So, what did you discover?"

"Our attackers were corrupted Servants," Roy replied without any pretense, revealing the answer immediately.

"Really? Which ones?" Rin's expression turned serious.

"You should be asking, which ones didn't come."

"Wait... you mean there was more than one corrupted Servant?"

Rin's face darkened.

"There were five, by my count," Roy said thoughtfully, rubbing his chin.

"There are only six corrupted Servants, right? The remnants left over from the last Holy Grail War, ten years ago."

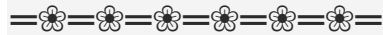
"Exactly. In the last Holy Grail War, all the Servants except Archer were corrupted. No one knows the exact cause, nor how things ended up that way."

Rin's expression grew somber as she remembered. It was during that war that her father had lost his life.

But she quickly shook off the sadness, her mind focusing on the problem at hand.

"If five of the six corrupted Servants have gathered outside Fuyuki City, then if your sensing is correct, we might just know why."

"The Fifth Holy Grail War is about to begin, and their target is undoubtedly the Grail itself."



Chapter 24: Chapter 24: The Return of the Orange-Haired Woman



[ New novel is out guys, "In Hentai World as Mirai Tsubakihara's Relative", do support.👉👉.]

Ten years ago, the Holy Grail summoned seven Servants, pairing them with seven Masters, launching them into a deadly battle.

But something went terribly wrong.

The curses accumulated within the Holy Grail spilled over, engulfing Fuyuki City, all of Japan, and eventually the entire world. For a full year, the planet was consumed by flames, resulting in catastrophic loss of life. Humanity was decimated, and survivors were forced to retreat into fortress cities, clinging to life.

This was the origin of the Great Catastrophe, a fact accepted across the magical world.

And the root cause of it all? The Fourth Holy Grail War, all those years ago.

The impact of the Great Catastrophe was immense. It not only upended the international order, but also reshaped the hierarchy within the world of magi.

Today's world has changed so drastically that even diehard Type-Moon fans wouldn't recognize it.

In theory, with the modern resources of the Mage's Association, it would have been possible to contain the cursed black mud within a limited area.

For example, if the magi had worked together, they might have been able to seal the black mud within Japan.

The black mud didn't spread nearly as fast as Tiamat's Chaos Tide, and it took a full year to blanket the globe. If the magi had the will, they could have made the immense effort necessary to contain it.

In fact, at the onset of the black mud outbreak, that's exactly what they tried to do.

And they failed, utterly.

What crushed them with overwhelming force were the six corrupted Servants that emerged from the black mud.

These six Servants were unstoppable. From the moment they appeared, they decimated the magi, scattering them like leaves in a storm. Wherever they went, no one could stand in their way, and soon the black mud had enveloped the world.

After that, the corrupted Servants returned to Japan and began wandering the wilderness there.

To put it bluntly, aside from places like the Wandering Sea, the wilds of Japan became the most dangerous place on Earth.

Running into a magical beast or a cursed spirit might be considered a stroke of luck. But encountering a corrupted Servant? That was a nightmare. Even dozens, or hundreds, of first-rate magi banding together wouldn't stand a chance against just one.

Why the corrupted Servants returned to Japan and have spent the past ten years roaming its wilderness remains a mystery. Theories abound.

But now, that mystery has finally been solved.

The power of the Holy Grail hadn't been depleted. Over the last decade, it had been accumulating mana. Now, after ten long years, the mana is finally fully restored.

The Fifth Holy Grail War is just around the corner.

At this critical juncture, five of the six corrupted Servants have returned to Fuyuki City. Their intentions are clear.

"Another Holy Grail War..." Rin muttered, a flicker of frustration crossing her usually composed face.

In this world, practically everyone despised the Holy Grail War, but few hated it more than Tohsaka Rin. Her feelings toward it were so deeply rooted that no amount of words could truly express them.

"You should prepare yourself as well," Roy said with a smile, pointing at Rin's hand.

There, on the back of her hand, three scarlet Command Seals stood out in stark relief.

This was proof that she had been chosen by the Holy Grail.

Roy had noticed the Command Seals on her hand earlier in the association's hall.

The Holy Grail had been constructed by the Tohsaka, Matou, and Einzbern families. When the ritual was established, the system for selecting Masters had been set up in advance, guaranteeing that three of the seven Masters would be chosen from these families.

The Holy Grail, after all, was designed to help these families achieve their ultimate goal—the Root. Of course, they'd prioritize their own.

No matter how much Rin might despise the idea of participating, the Holy Grail would still bind the Command Seals to her hand, like it or not.

After the three family slots were filled, two more would be reserved for members of the Mage's Association.

The remaining two slots were left for independent magi.

But this time, with the Fifth Holy Grail War, things were uncertain.

While Tohsaka and Einzbern were almost guaranteed one slot each, the Matou family had already been destroyed. Zouken Matou was officially dead, and Sakura had yet to return from Misaki City.

With over two hundred magi—both independent and affiliated with the association—gathered in Fuyuki, who knew who the Holy Grail would choose in the end?

"Or are you planning to give up and hand over your Command Seals to someone else?" Roy's smile turned teasing.

"Not a chance!" Rin declared firmly, staring down at the Command Seals on her hand. "I'm not giving these to anyone. I'll use this Holy Grail War to settle everything!"

Seeing the determination in her eyes, Roy knew she had already made up her mind.

And it made sense—Rin was fiercely independent and didn't need anyone's advice. She could find her own way forward.

"Well, you'd better get started," Roy advised. "The association will figure things out soon enough. You've got a head start, but just a small one. You'd

better use that time wisely, whether it's to seize power or to win the Holy Grail War."

"I know. Thanks."

Rin suddenly chuckled.

"Now that I think about it, I really owe you so much. I'll never be able to repay you."

"Well, you could always offer yourself as repayment," Roy joked, a sly grin on his face.

"Huh? You! What are you—wait, what are you suddenly saying!" Rin's face turned crimson as she sprang backward, raising her fists in a playful stance, clearly flustered.

"I'd also accept servitude, maybe something like a lifetime of loyalty," Roy added with a carefree smile.

"You're impossible..." Rin sighed in defeat, her shoulders slumping.

The tension in her heart, wound up tight just moments ago, suddenly melted away.

"I'll think about it," she said, tucking a strand of her dark hair behind her ear, cheeks still faintly red, as she turned to leave.

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At the Aozaki residence.

"Lord Roy."

Roy had barely stepped into the house when Aizaka, wearing a serious expression, came forward to greet him.

"What's the matter?" Roy asked, handing her his coat.

"Are you thinking of returning home? I thought you hadn't finished teaching Shiha's maid lessons."

"No, it's not that."

Aizaka shook her head and pointed toward the living room.

"We have a guest... She says she's from the Aozaki family, and naturally, the barrier let her through. But neither I nor Shiha recognize her."

Someone from the Aozaki family has returned?

Roy, now wearing the slippers Aizaka handed him, suddenly froze mid-step upon hearing this.

Moments later, his eyes lit up, and he hurried eagerly into the living room.

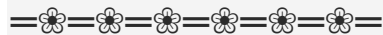
Inside, there were two figures. One was Kasanagi Shiha, dressed in a neatly lined maid outfit, her long, straight black hair flowing behind her.

The other had fiery orange hair tied up in a spirited ponytail, and like Roy, she wore black-framed glasses. She looked about twenty-four or twenty-five, her face exuding a calm, mature elegance. Her every movement radiated intelligence and grace.

She was dressed in a simple shirt and pants, and Kasanagi Shiha quickly recognized who had once worn the white business suit she'd been borrowing.


Shiha glanced down, comparing her own figure to the woman's.

And she admitted defeat without hesitation.



Chapter 25: Chapter 25: The Second Summoning





"You're finally back, Orange!"

"Hey, Roy."

Aozaki Touko, cigarette perched between her fingers, was surrounded by a haze of smoke.

"So, is this your little servant now? Looks like the brat's finally grown up, huh!"

Her teasing gaze fell on Kasumigaoka Utaha, a mixture of mockery and admiration in her eyes.

Utaha had no response.

Why did everyone who saw her assume she had something going on with Roy?

"Nice taste in clothes too!" Touko pointed at Utaha's maid outfit with an approving nod.

Utaha glanced down and suddenly understood. Wearing something like this, it's no wonder people misunderstood.

"Do you have what I asked for?"

Roy sat down at the table, his eyes eagerly fixed on Touko.

"Impatient, aren't you? You know me—if I hadn't found it, I wouldn't have come back."

Touko shrugged, crossing her legs in a new position.

As she spoke, she pulled out a small wooden box from who-knows-where and handed it over.

"Here, take it."



Roy, trying to keep his excitement in check, opened the box.

Inside was a small, pitch-black piece of iron, crisscrossed with intricate patterns. It was weathered with age, exuding a palpable sense of history, yet meticulously cleaned.

"Thanks, Touko!" Roy's smile brimmed with satisfaction as he ran his fingers over the thumb-sized iron piece.

"That'll be two hundred million dollars."

Touko grinned, extending her hand.

"Two hundred million... How about I give you my Mystic Eyes as payment?" Roy wiped the cold sweat from his brow, clearly taken aback by the staggering price.

"Hahaha! Who would dare use your Mystic Eyes?"

Touko laughed heartily.

"But I'm serious about the two hundred million. This thing dates back to the Age of Gods. The price is actually on the low side. You've got no idea how many places I had to scour to find it."

"Here I am, back home, and you didn't even offer me a cup of tea. The younger generation these days, I swear..."

"Utaha, go make some tea."

"Yes."

"Hey, at least make the tea yourself as a sign of gratitude, no?"

"How about I cook you a full-course Imperial banquet instead?"

"I'd take that!"

"Yeah, right! Even if I could cook, it's not like we have the ingredients in this day and age."

Roy burst into laughter.

Utaha returned from the kitchen, carrying a glass of plain water, and shot Roy a curious look.

"As long as you're happy, that's what matters."

Touko stood up, stretching her back, her figure perfectly outlined as she did.

"I'm going to take a bath. After being on the road for so long, I feel like I've started to reek."

Touko glanced at Utaha and smiled warmly at her, gesturing toward Roy before leaving the room.

Utaha blinked, nodded slightly, and placed the water in front of Roy.

"Lord Roy, you're in a particularly good mood today."

"Am I?"

Roy seemed genuinely surprised at her remark.

"Have I been faking my smiles all this time?"

"No, not fake exactly..."

Utaha hesitated for a moment, unsure how to phrase it.

"Usually, Lord Roy, when you smile, it feels... a bit empty. It's a gentle, polite smile, one you probably give out of habit. But today, your smile seems genuine, like you're truly happy."

True to her reputation as a novelist, Utaha was precise in her expression.

Roy immediately grasped her meaning.

In other words, she believed that today's smile reflected his true feelings, unlike his usual smiles, which, while not false, seemed to hide something.

"I guess my training still needs work," Roy murmured under his breath.

"Hmm?"

"Nothing, really."

Roy shook his head, seeing the puzzled look on Utaha's face.

"Utaha, tell me, which smile do you prefer—today's or my usual one?"

"Which do I prefer?"

Caught off guard by the question, Utaha's cheeks grew warm as she instinctively tucked a loose strand of hair behind her ear to hide her blush.

"If I had to choose, I'd say today's... But honestly, I don't dislike your usual smile either."

She had intended to answer without hesitation, preferring today's heartfelt smile. But just as she was about to speak, she remembered how comforting Roy's usual gentle smile had been when he consoled her the previous day. Almost instinctively, she added that last part.

"I see."

Roy fell silent, seemingly lost in thought.

Relieved by his quietness, Utaha took the opportunity to calm her flushed face.

While Touko was in the bath, Roy headed into the kitchen to start preparing dinner.

Though a full-course Imperial banquet was out of the question, whipping up eight or ten good dishes as thanks to Touko was well within reach.

Aizaka and Utaha busied themselves as his assistants.

The earlier attack by the corrupted Servant hadn't caused much of a stir in the city. People continued to enjoy their fragile peace, blissfully unaware that it could shatter at any moment.

Dinner was a lively affair. Aozaki Touko, in particular, thoroughly enjoyed herself.

After dinner, the two girls cleared the table.

Touko stepped out to the corridor, lighting up another cigarette with a relaxed expression.

Meanwhile, Roy took the iron piece and made his way into the storage room.

The room was cluttered with tools and equipment for maintaining the estate. Beneath it all was a large, worn-out mat, reminiscent of the kind used in school gym classes decades ago.

Roy etched a rune into his hand and pushed the mat and debris aside, leaving him out of breath for a moment.

Beneath the mat was a magic circle, though it was hard to tell how long it had been there. Even with the mat covering it, the grooves of the formation were filled with dust.

"Round two, here we go."

Roy took a deep breath and placed the threaded iron piece into the center of the magic circle, raising his Command Seal-engraved hand toward the formation.

"Declare—"

He began chanting the summoning incantation for the second time.

As the incantation progressed, the magic circle gradually glowed brighter, a brilliant white light filling the entire storage room.

Outside, in the corridor, Touko glanced toward the storage room, where light was seeping through the cracks.

"Will it work?"

Ordinarily, a second summoning would be impossible.

A Master could only have one Servant—that was an iron law set by the Holy Grail.

Not only was this rule established for fairness, but it also served to protect the Master. After all, a regular Master couldn't handle the burden of sustaining multiple Servants.

But Roy was different.

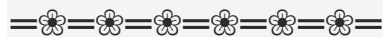
He possessed Mystic Eyes capable of controlling any magic—The Mystic Eyes of Reversal.

He had already secretly altered the Holy Grail's system, making it possible for him to command two Servants at once.

With a low hum, the light in the magic circle faded, and the wind that had been swirling around died down.


A figure stood within the magic circle.

"Ah, I see... So this time it's a Rider-class Servant, huh? Well, too bad—it would've been perfect if it were a Caster."



Chapter 26: Chapter 26: Burden, Curse, Destructive Impulse





It worked!

Roy stared at the figure emerging from the magic circle, his face lighting up with joy.

Through his Mystic Eyes, he had successfully altered the Holy Grail's mechanisms, making it possible to summon a second Servant.

But he hadn't been entirely certain he could summon this particular Servant.

After all, this Servant hadn't technically died.

After completing his feats, he had undergone a long period of cultivation, ultimately ascending to immortality, disappearing from the mortal world.

Even now, this figure was still alive somewhere in the world. By all logic, summoning him should have been impossible.

Sure, Roy possessed Mystic Eyes capable of controlling any magical technique, but defying reality itself—overriding the will of a living being to demote them to a Servant—was beyond even his powers.

He had only tried out of curiosity, with a backup plan in case this failed.

But it worked.

"You actually answered my summons. I'm honored," Roy breathed a deep sigh of relief, his body visibly relaxing.

Summoning this Servant meant half of his objective was already complete.

"Haha, don't be so modest, Master."

The Rider-class Servant stepped out of the magic circle, his lavish robes flowing gracefully, a warm smile on his face, eyes crinkling into crescent moons.

"I've always been curious about this world's development. Not just me—even my superiors are keeping an eye on things here. Given the chance to experience it firsthand, how could I resist?"

In other words, Rider had found the situation intriguing enough to voluntarily lower his status and respond to Roy's summons.

"Your superiors? Seriously?"

Roy was stunned.

Was the state of this world significant enough to draw the attention of his superiors?

"Of course."

Rider fished out a folding fan from somewhere and waved it lazily, his sly, fox-like grin never leaving his face.

"The spiritual barrier surrounding Fuyuki City—that's the work of the second True Magician, the Wizard Marshall Zelretch. He set that up ten years ago, didn't he? That alone is enough to warrant attention. And then there are those strange refugees from other worlds—how could anyone ignore that?"

Rider's words were clearly suggestive.

Roy nodded in understanding.

It made sense. Ordinary magi had convinced themselves that the refugees were parallel-world travelers, but those who had achieved immortality couldn't see through the mysterious fog surrounding them. Naturally, such oddities would attract attention.

To be honest, even Roy had no idea why people like Kasumigaoka Utaha and Aizaka ended up in the Type-Moon world.

He, too, found this world fascinating—worth exploring.

But he had more important things to focus on. Vital things that demanded his full attention.

There was no time to waste chasing the mystery of those refugees.

"Rider, since you—"

Roy was about to continue when his heart suddenly lurched.

His heartbeat spiraled out of control, thundering violently in his chest. It was as if he'd been struck by lightning—his blood boiled, surging through his veins like fire.

"Ugh!"

A strangled groan escaped his throat as his legs gave way, and he collapsed to the floor.

The white-haired boy lay sprawled on the ground, his skin flushed a deep red as though scorched by flames, sweat pouring down his face in torrents.

"Master?!"

Rider's shocked voice reached his ears.

But Roy's mind was ablaze, his vision blurring. He couldn't make sense of anything—not even his Servant's concerned voice.

Inside his head, a cacophony of demonic whispers echoed endlessly.

"Kill them! Kill them all! Kill everyone! Destroy everything!"

"Stab them! Shoot them! Drown them! Burn them alive!"

"Suffocate them! Violate them! Pierce their hearts! Crush their organs!"

The dark voices raged within his mind, the murderous intent dancing along his nerves.



Anger, humiliation, and malevolence coiled around his heart, driving him toward corruption.

"A curse... Just this much..."

Roy gritted his teeth.

His consciousness teetered on the brink, tossed around by the curse like a boat in a stormy sea, or a rootless leaf caught in a violent wind.

Yet, deep within his subconscious, he clung to his sanity with the tenacity of a starving beast clamping its jaws around its prey, refusing to let go.

"The curse... It's not just physical torment. The real danger is the mental corruption," Rider muttered as he crouched down to examine Roy, his brows furrowing slightly.

"This is a real headache. The curse has been deeply embedded in his body for years now. I can remove the physical symptoms easily enough, but the mental corruption keeps renewing itself. In the end, he'll have to fight it off himself. Man, I hope I'm not the first heroic spirit to get forced out of the battle ten minutes after being summoned..."

Bang!

Suddenly, the warehouse door was violently pushed open.

Aozaki Touko stood at the entrance, her expression so grim it was terrifying.

Her sharp gaze fell on Roy, and she strode toward him without hesitation.

"Leave it to me," she said coldly.

Without waiting for a response, she scooped Roy up in her arms and dashed out of the warehouse.

Rider said nothing. He followed her outside, watching as she rushed through the main courtyard with Roy in her arms, while the two maids stared on in shock.

Rider, with his usual fox-like grin, now looked more serious than before.

In the master bedroom, Aozaki Touko swiftly undid the sealing runes on the door and carried Roy inside.

The room was covered in bloodstains.

Fist-shaped marks, head-shaped dents, and scratch marks gouged by fingernails littered the walls. The bed's headboard was crisscrossed with complex patterns of bloodstains. Just a single glance was enough to send chills down one's spine. Whatever torment had taken place in this once pristine room had transformed it into something akin to a torture chamber.

Unfazed, Touko placed Roy gently on the bed.

She unbuttoned her clothes, letting her nightgown fall to the floor. Her bare body was fully exposed, her curves radiating an alluring scent of sweetness.

She climbed into the bed, pulling Roy into her embrace and removing his glasses.

As if by reflex, Roy's blood-red eyes snapped open.

The familiar fragrance filled his nostrils, and his gaze darkened with a savage bloodlust, as though he wanted to tear her apart and devour her whole.

"Don't resist. Let it out."

Touko's voice murmured softly in his ear.

Her words seemed to release the floodgates.

Roy sank his teeth into Touko's smooth, round shoulder with a force that sent pain shooting through his jaw. The sharp taste of blood filled his mouth.

Touko winced slightly.

"This is way harder than the last few times..."

She inscribed a rune on her body to dull the pain, then fully surrendered herself to Roy's rough handling.

Soon, the room was filled with the mingled sounds of pain and pleasure.

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Chapter 27: Chapter 27: Dark Side



In the living room.

Kasumigaoka Utaha and Aizaka sat by the table, their ears filled with the suggestive sounds drifting from the nearby bedroom.

Aizaka sat rigidly, her back straight, eyes focused forward, her slender legs wrapped in white stockings pressed tightly together.

Utaha, on the other hand, had a blush creeping up her cheeks. Her shapely legs, clad in black stockings, crossed and uncrossed restlessly.

Though both girls kept up appearances, the subtle tension in the air betrayed their discomfort.

Seriously, if you're going to do that, at least soundproof the room.

It was torture.

"What's really going on here?" Utaha asked, her voice tinged with concern.

Despite the sounds continuing in the background, her mind flashed back to the scene earlier when Aozaki Touko had rushed Roy into the bedroom.

It had only been a quick glance, but Roy had seemed to be in immense pain. It was the first time Utaha had seen him like that—something was clearly wrong.

"Could what they're doing in there... have some kind of special purpose?" Aizaka whispered, her tone filled with shock.

Whatever Utaha was thinking, Aizaka had clearly thought the same.

The moment Roy had collapsed, Miss Touko had carried him to the bedroom and... well, started singing.

Surely it wasn't just Touko losing her mind.

Could it be that doing that had some kind of healing effect?

Aizaka didn't get it, but she was definitely stunned.

"Don't ask me! How would I know?" Utaha hissed, shooting Aizaka a sidelong glare.

The sounds from the bedroom continued to gnaw at her nerves.

Fortunately, the noises eventually ceased.

The two girls waited a little longer before Aozaki Touko finally emerged from the room, her long orange hair loose around her shoulders, wearing a robe and looking as relaxed as could be.

Touko was breathtakingly beautiful, her slightly disheveled appearance adding a mature allure to her. There was even a faint flush to her cheeks, giving off a suggestive warmth.

It might have been a tantalizing scene, but for Utaha and Aizaka, it was nothing short of nerve-wracking.

Because Touko's body wasn't just marked with the aftermath of pleasure—it was covered in bruises and wounds, stark against her pale, snow-white skin.

"You two are still here, huh?"

Touko glanced at them, her expression indifferent, so unlike her friendly demeanor from earlier in the day.

"Roy's asleep now. Don't disturb him."

With that, she walked off toward the bathroom, paying no further attention to the girls.

The two maids exchanged a quick look, suppressing their urge to check on Roy, and resigned themselves to waiting in the living room.

It was half an hour later when Touko finally reappeared, her hair still damp, wrapped in a bathrobe. Her long, perfectly shaped legs peeked out as she moved about the room with complete ease, as if the strange events earlier were nothing of consequence.

"Ah, that bath felt amazing," Touko said as she sat at the table, a satisfied smile spreading across her face.

Aizaka watched her in quiet amazement.

Touko had her glasses back on now.

The difference in her demeanor was stark.

Earlier in the day, she had exuded the warmth of a senior colleague, someone who looked out for her juniors. The moment the glasses were off, she'd become an unapproachable ice queen, as though nothing in the world could touch her.

Could she be like Lord Roy, someone with a split personality?

"I can tell what you're thinking just by looking at your face."

Noticing Aizaka's gaze, Touko chuckled lightly.

"But it's not a split personality. It's a dual nature. Sometimes in life, you have to act against your true self, especially in business. That's where this personality switch comes in handy—it makes negotiations a lot smoother."

"Oh, and these glasses?" She tapped them lightly. "They don't have a prescription. Roy wears the same kind. No one in our family actually needs glasses."

Aizaka nodded in understanding.

It was similar to a routine, a form of self-suggestion, switching to the right personality for dealing with different situations, especially ones that were outside her comfort zone.

But even as she grasped this, Aizaka felt a chill run through her.

She prided herself on her poker face, but this magus had seen through her thoughts with terrifying ease. The insight of a magus was truly frightening!

"But more importantly, what exactly happened to Lord Roy?" Utaha's black-stockinged legs had been shaking under the table for a while now, and seeing them avoid the topic for so long, she couldn't help but blurt out the question.

"It's nothing new."

Touko didn't seem bothered by her impatience.

Her eyes glinted with amusement as she glanced between the two girls.

It was clear that Kasumigaoka Utaha, in particular, was genuinely worried about Roy. That kid really knew how to attract women.

"Nothing new? So this has happened before?" Utaha's expression grew uneasy.

"Mhm. It's not the first time."

"What exactly is wrong with him?" Utaha couldn't help but raise her voice slightly.

"In simple terms, it's a curse."

Touko wagged her finger, signaling her to lower her voice.

Utaha quickly complied, remembering that Roy had just fallen asleep.

"Roy was cursed a long time ago. It's the kind of curse that can't be completely broken and flares up repeatedly."

Touko's face remained calm as she continued, "He has a remarkably strong will, so each time the curse erupts, he manages to suppress it on his own. But today was different—the situation was unusual, and his mental state was already a bit unstable. This time, it was much harder for him to endure. In the end, he fought against the curse's destructive impulses, refusing to let it take over, which left him in this state."

Left him needing this kind of release.

Touko didn't explicitly say it, but her meaning was clear enough.

She had brought Roy to the bedroom to help him release the destructive urges brought on by the curse.

As for why it had to be done that way...

Well, it was certainly better than having him kill indiscriminately. Apart from murder, sexual release was one of the most effective ways to vent negative emotions.

"He might wear the same glasses as I do—oh, I'm the one who taught him this method, by the way."

Touko laughed nonchalantly, clearly accustomed to the situation.

"But Roy is different from me. I switch personalities to handle different situations, using whichever side of me is more suited to solving the problem at hand. Roy, on the other hand, uses the glasses to suppress his destructive impulses."

By wearing the glasses, he gives himself the subconscious suggestion that he's not the kind of person who wants to destroy everything, helping him keep his darker side in check.

"Lord Roy's mental state was already... unstable? Why is that?" Utaha hesitated for a moment before asking, her resolve firm.

Even as his servant, she had a right to know.

She refused to believe Roy was someone who craved destruction.

Even if it was just self-suggestion, Roy had saved her, freed her from her chains, and helped her rescue her old friends. That kind of kindness couldn't be the product of mere self-deception.

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Chapter 28: Chapter 28: No Other Way



"Don't ask about that."

Despite Aozaki Touko's usual openness, she clammed up the moment this question was raised.

"This is something Roy absolutely cannot talk about. If, one day, he decides to tell you, then you'll naturally get your answer. But if he doesn't want to, then you must never bring it up. Do you understand?"



Seeing Touko's firm expression—one that said she wouldn't reveal anything no matter how much they asked—Kasumigaoka Utaha had no choice but to drop the subject.

Her mind, however, was swimming with unanswered questions, and yet no one was willing to give her any clarity.

Aizaka had a sudden realization.

Could this topic that Touko deemed untouchable be the same "forbidden subject" Tohsaka Rin had mentioned?

If so, then the reason for Roy's mental instability, which Touko hinted at, must tie into that "past from three years ago" that Rin had spoken of.

In other words, whatever Roy experienced three years ago was likely the root cause of his psychological issues.

Aizaka felt she was close to the truth.

But, out of caution, she kept silent.

Tohsaka Rin had warned her not to dig into Roy's past, or else she should run as far as she could. That meant the subject was clearly dangerous.

And since she wasn't really part of this household, and would soon be leaving, why bother getting involved in such a mess?

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"Are you ready? Time to remove the bandages!"

An anxious voice echoed nearby.

Everything was pitch black—his eyes were covered by something he couldn't see through.

After a while, he felt someone gently undo whatever was wrapped around his face, and his eyes instinctively blinked open.

Blurred light filtered into his vision, causing his eyeballs to throb with pain, and reflexive tears welled up at the corners of his eyes.

He didn't know how much time passed before his hazy surroundings began to take shape.

The first thing he saw was an old man wrapped in bandages and wearing tattered armor. His face was hidden, but the voice betrayed his advanced age.

"It worked! It worked!"

The old man stretched out his wrinkled hands, trembling as they gently touched his newly opened eyes. Tears of joy trickled down his own weathered face, soaking into the bandages wrapped around his head.

The old man was overwhelmed, as if he had just fulfilled a lifelong dream. His gaze toward him was one of profound reverence, as though he were gazing at the world's most precious treasure. It gave off the strange impression that, if he had to choose between his own life and his, the old man would sacrifice himself without a second thought.

The intensity of the emotion was enough to move even a saint.

Tears welled up in his own eyes too, spilling down his cheeks.

But they weren't for the old man's dream.

They were for the return of his sight—after so many years of darkness.

The old man had been exceptionally kind to him.

Not only had he restored his sight, but he had also convinced over thirty villagers to revere him as a "saint," kneeling before him in worship.

They treated him like a messiah, as if bowing before him would guarantee their salvation.

The old man went to great lengths to craft magical crests for him, and whatever he wanted to learn, the old man would meticulously engrave the knowledge into the crests.

Be it knowledge, power, or status, the old man spared no effort in teaching and bestowing everything to him. His sincerity was beyond reproach.

The old man truly saw him as his successor, someone to carry on his life's work, pouring all his essence into him, without a shred of deceit.

But—

"What a pity I can't see the look of twisted rage on your face. It would've made things more satisfying!"

A great fire consumed the village, reducing everything to ashes.

He had stood there, head held high, laughing mockingly as the flames roared.

He had rejected everything the old man stood for, and destroyed it all.

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Rider opened his eyes.

"So, this is the Master's past."

His expression was unreadable, his thoughts hidden behind a veil of darkness.

He stood atop the tallest skyscraper in Fuyuki City, his gaze spreading out like a beacon, surveying the entire city as if he could take it all in with a single glance.

Dawn had come.

A cool breeze rustled the vegetable leaves in the fields.

The chill crept in, causing an involuntary shiver.

Today seemed colder than yesterday.

Roy poured himself a cup of hot tea and sat on the veranda. In winter, the veranda was sealed off with glass to keep the front yard separate. Though the temperature remained low, without the biting wind, it was rather pleasant to sit and enjoy a warm cup of tea.

He massaged his lower back, a wry smile tugging at his lips.

"Too much spirit, not enough strength."

"I told you long ago, why not let me replace some of your parts? But you insisted you didn't need it."

A teasing voice called from behind him.

Aozaki Touko emerged, dressed in loose, comfortable house clothes. The oversized white outfit hid her alluring figure, and her vibrant orange hair was tied loosely into a low ponytail with a ribbon at the end.

For some reason, dressed like this, Touko gave off a distinctly housewife-like vibe, causing Roy's heart to skip a beat.

"At least suggest replacing the whole body. Just swapping out parts is kind of weird, don't you think?"

Roy rolled his eyes and shot her a deadpan look.

Touko joined him at the veranda, also holding a cup of hot tea. She studied Roy for a moment.

"Judging by how lifeless you look, I'd say you've gotten it all out of your system. How's your body holding up? Still feeling unwell?"

"My back hurts, and my kidneys are sore."

"That's on you."

"True, I did go a bit overboard."

"No, I mean you're pathetic."

"Touko! Are you trying to pick a fight with me?!"

Roy jumped to his feet in indignation, pointing at her as he spewed a string of curses.

Touko's smile was nothing short of delighted.

"Alright, let's get serious."

She sat down beside him, taking a sip of her tea.

"You don't need me to explain your curse to you. You've always relied on sheer willpower to endure it, but that may not be enough anymore. And you know why, don't you?"

"Yeah, because I've summoned multiple Servants now."

Roy scowled and took his seat again, gulping down the tea to soothe his dry throat.

A Master could only contract with one Servant.

Not only because the Master had to supply their Servant with mana—just keeping one Servant running required a tremendous amount of magical energy. The mana drain from two Servants was something most Masters simply couldn't handle.

On top of that, contracting with a Servant put an enormous mental strain on the Master. A psychic connection was formed between them, allowing the Servant's memories and mental state to bleed into the Master. If a Master bonded with a Servant prone to mental corruption, their own mind would be at risk.

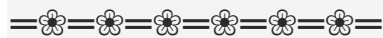
Previously, Roy only had one Servant, Okita, which kept the mental strain minimal. Even when the curse flared up, he could bear it.

But now, with two Servants, the burden on his mind was far greater.

"The curse from the Holy Grail, the mental strain from contracting multiple Servants, and your preexisting destructive impulses."

Touko's expression turned unusually serious, her gaze locking onto Roy.

"If you keep this up, you might lose your mind before you even get the chance to achieve your goal. So I'll ask you again—are you absolutely sure you want to do this?"



Chapter 29: Chapter 29: Willing to Be the Vanguard



🎉 Shoutout to Nathan & Quelled for joining patreon. Thank you very much. ☐]

"Yes, I will continue."

Roy didn't hesitate for even a second, giving his answer with unwavering certainty.

"No matter what happens, I will achieve my goal. At this point, there's no turning back. I will never give up."

"Until I fulfill my ambition, I won't break."

Despite the traces of youth still lingering on his face, his demeanor was resolute.

His eyes gleamed with an unyielding light, as though retreating had never once been an option in his mind.

"I see. I figured you'd say that."

Aozaki Touko let out a long sigh, as if she had expected his response all along.

"I almost wish I'd never taught you magic."

Her gaze lowered, making it hard to read her expression.

It was unclear what kind of regret her words carried.

"Really? I'm grateful you taught me magic."

Roy chuckled, and a rune symbol floated up in his palm, flickering like a tiny figure dancing in the air.

"Especially this whole set of Runes."

They were versatile—extremely useful.

Though they weren't the primordial Runes created by Odin, at this point, a complete set of Runes was still a level of mysticism any mage family would go mad for.

Touko remained silent.

"Alright, enough of this gloomy talk. Touko, you were away for quite a while again—did you come across anything interesting?"

"Oh, there was plenty. Kanbusu City is a mess, Tokyo's been overrun by a wave of cursed spirits, and the most bizarre thing of all—a man-made island suddenly appeared in the middle of the Pacific. Honestly, the world's getting weirder by the day."

"What?! A man-made island?"

"Why are you so surprised?"

"What's on it? Don't tell me there's a Fourth Progenitor or something like that?"

"I've been meaning to ask—you always seem to know about the strangest things."

"Just tell me, is there or isn't there?!"

"No, not a single vampire in sight."

"Phew, that's good. Or maybe... that's kind of a shame."

"But there's a lot of demon activity. I ended up setting up an exorcism company just to make some money after my funds ran dry."

"Really?"

Roy's face brightened.

"Are you finally thinking about saving up some money?"

"Nope. Every time a demon showed up, some no-name little company would swoop in with dirt-cheap prices and steal the job from the Exorcism Bureau. I spent a whole month there and didn't make a cent, so I left."

"..."

Touko's time wandering the world was far more colorful than Roy had imagined.

Especially in this increasingly strange Type-Moon world, there was no shortage of new, intriguing things to pique her curiosity.

"Master, excuse me. Could we speak privately for a moment?"

Golden lights gathered in the air, coalescing into the figure of a young man in splendid, elegant robes.

It was Rider.

He materialized beside the two of them, cutting into their lively conversation.

"I'll leave you two to talk then."



Touko, though clearly interested in Rider herself, shrugged and walked away from the veranda, leaving Roy and Rider in private.

"Rider, you're back. So, what do you think of this era?"

Roy patted the spot beside him, motioning for him to sit.

Rider, not one to stand on ceremony, gracefully swept his robes aside and sat cross-legged next to him.

"It's fascinating, to be sure. But considering the cost—the lives of over six billion people sacrificed to create such an interesting scenario—I can't exactly smile about it."

"As expected of you, always thinking of the bigger picture."

"Haha, thank you for the compliment, Master!"

Rider laughed heartily, his eyes narrowing into foxy slits as he beamed with joy.

"Speaking of which, there's actually something I wanted to ask you, Master. It's the reason I wanted to talk to you alone."

"Oh? What is it?"

"Last night, I briefly glimpsed your past in a dream."

Rider's smile faded slightly, his features taking on a more serious, inscrutable look.

"Because it was incomplete, I wanted to come back and confirm something. Master, what is your true goal for participating in the Holy Grail War? In other words, what is your wish from the Holy Grail?"

The atmosphere on the veranda stiffened for a moment.

Roy's smile vanished as well.

He raised a hand, instinctively moving to remove his glasses.

But just as his fingers touched the frame, his hand froze.

"...Ah, I suppose it makes sense. A Servant and Master are mentally connected. I guess there's no helping it."

Roy sighed as if he'd given up, then a relaxed smile slowly spread across his face—one that curved upward like a lion preparing to hunt.

"Alright, since I need your help to achieve my wish, I'll be honest with you."

"My wish, and the reason behind it..."

Roy revealed his ambition and the events that had shaped it, holding nothing back.

By the time he finished speaking, Rider's expression had completely changed.

"Are you serious, Master?"

"Even if you manage to win this Holy Grail War, the likelihood of your wish coming true is astonishingly slim! Are you really going to fight for such a far-fetched goal?"

"If I don't try, how will I ever know if it's possible?"

Roy smiled confidently, his face betraying no hint of doubt.

"I just want to know—Rider, are you willing to stand by me and lend me your strength?"

Rider's expression shifted several times.

In his eyes, admiration, pity, and respect all flickered in turn.

"I owe you an apology."

Rider rose to his feet, dropping to one knee beside Roy in a half-kneeling position.

The carefree, casual demeanor was gone, replaced by solemn respect.

"It seems my long years of cultivation have dulled my mind. I had a dream and doubted your character, which led me to test you. For that, I apologize. I judged you unfairly."

"Having a deity apologize to me—looks like I'm not doing too badly."

Roy chuckled, unfazed.

Though, that long pause Rider took earlier had given him quite a scare.

For a second, he thought Rider was about to renounce him as Master and leave. That had really freaked him out.

"I, Rider—no, I, Jiang Ziya, disciple of the Primordial Celestial, solemnly swear that as long as this Heroic Spirit form of mine persists, I will protect you to my last breath and do everything in my power to help you achieve your wish!"

Rider—also known as Jiang Ziya, the legendary strategist of the Zhou dynasty—made this vow in the name of his master, the Primordial Celestial.

As a disciple of the highest Taoist deity, and a Taoist deity himself, the sincerity of Jiang Ziya's oath was nothing short of extraordinary. If any of his fellow immortals witnessed this, they would have been left speechless.

For Roy's wish held a weight that even immortals found staggering.

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Chapter 30: Chapter 30: Miss Okita: Crybaby Mode



"I'm sorry, Rider."

Roy smiled faintly and shook his head.

Taigong Wang was dumbfounded.

Wait, what's going on here?

He had just pledged to serve as Roy's vanguard, so why was Roy saying it was unfortunate?

In all of Taigong Wang's long life, he had only said something like this once before—thousands of years ago, to King Zhou! And yet, here he was, rejected on his second attempt.

Internally, Roy was secretly enjoying himself.

Heh, serves you right for making that long pause!

"Rider, I really appreciate your willingness to help, but I don't need you to protect me."

Roy's smile deepened as he explained his plan.

"I want you to remain hidden, serving as my trump card."

"On the surface, Saber will be my main Servant, while you stay in the shadows, controlling the situation."

"I see!"

Taigong Wang let out a breath of relief.

That was close! So the Master didn't want to reject him after all—he had almost embarrassed himself!

"In that case, I'll only show myself when the situation is critical or when you're in danger, right?"

"No, even if I'm in danger, I don't want you to reveal yourself."

Roy shook his head again, his expression unchanged.

"Even if my life is at risk—even if I die, Rider—I still don't want you to appear. You're only to show yourself when you can guarantee victory in the Holy Grail War. Should I fall, I want you to carry on my will and ensure my wish is fulfilled."

"Even without a Master, you should still be able to survive, right?"

This time, Rider was left speechless.

Only allowing him to appear at the critical moment to secure victory, even if Roy were to die along the way—he was forbidden to intervene.

Roy's plan had only one goal: to eliminate every obstacle and win at all costs.

He was willing to gamble everything, even his life, for that.

To bet one's life for an unattainable dream—this level of resolve was something even Taigong Wang had rarely seen in his thousands of years.

In Roy, he saw the same brilliance found in the ancient heroes.

"I understand. If you expect this much from me, I'll act according to your wishes, Master."

Finally, Taigong Wang nodded.

If Roy survived, he believed that Roy would indeed become someone who could change the entire world.

As he marveled at Roy's resolve, Taigong Wang sent a mental message to his master, the Primordial Celestial.

Sorry, Master, I need to amend my earlier oath. Could you approve this new version?

Primordial Celestial: →\_→

With the situation resolved beyond his expectations, Taigong Wang was delighted.

After a bit more tactical discussion, he dissolved into particles of spirit energy and disappeared.

Roy remained seated on the veranda, holding a cup of now-cold water.

Rider is on board.

"With this, once the Holy Grail War begins, my battle will finally commence in earnest."

Roy set down the cup, suddenly feeling like he could use a drink.

He stood up and headed toward the kitchen. In the fridge, kept cold by runes, there was alcohol stored inside.

"Wait, am I forgetting something?"

He slapped his forehead, feeling like something was off.

He had spoken with Touko, discussed things with Taigong Wang, and didn't need to worry about Kasumigaoka Utaha or Aizaka. So who had he not spoken to yet—

"Oh no—Saber!"

"Master~~! You finally remembered me! Waaahhhh!"

A loud wail echoed in his mind.

Miss Okita's cry sounded like that of a neglected, grieving wife, so pitiful it gave him goosebumps.

"I'm so sorry!" Roy broke into a sweat, quickly trying to calm Okita down in his mind. "I swear, I didn't forget about you. I've just been really busy! Look, I was just about to sit down and talk with you—"

He realized it had been five or six days since he'd last said a word to Okita.

For a Servant who only had her Master to rely on, Roy had essentially abandoned her, ordering her not to show herself until the Holy Grail War started. On top of that, he hadn't spoken a single word to her for days—he'd outright forgotten about her!

Wow, I really am a terrible Master!

"I see... So you summoned Rider because you think I'm useless?"

Miss Okita's sniffles interrupted his thoughts, her sad, quivering voice cutting through.

Roy could already imagine the pitiful pout on her face, tears hanging on her lashes.

"No, no! That's not it at all! This was my strategy from the beginning!"

"So, Master didn't think I was useful from the very start?"

"Why would you think that?"

Roy's heart skipped a beat.

"Because from the beginning, Master planned to rely on Rider as his main force, didn't he?"

Ah.

Well, that... wasn't wrong.

"But Master, you told me before that you didn't care about my combat power and that what you valued most was my compatibility, didn't you?"

Roy's whole body tensed.

"Wasn't that because you never expected much from my strength, so you placed all your hopes on Rider instead?"

Roy was drenched in cold sweat.

"So, Master planned from the start to summon a strong Heroic Spirit. You summoned me because you only needed someone compatible, right? Anyone would've been fine as long as the compatibility was good, huh? And I was just the first one to show up!"

Oh no!

She figured it out!

The truth was, Roy hadn't expected much from Okita's combat abilities at all. All that talk about compatibility was just a way to motivate her to give it her all.

Damn it! Why was Miss Okita suddenly so sharp right now?

"Saber, come out!"

"Yes... sob sob..."

Golden spirit particles gathered, and Miss Okita, clad in her haori, appeared before Roy.

Her lips quivered, and her eyes were red and teary, looking as if she were about to burst into tears at any moment.

"Saber, remember this: Since I summoned you based on compatibility, that means you are my one and only."

Roy placed his hands firmly on her shoulders, looking deep into her eyes with a serious expression.

"It's not that anyone could have fit the role—it's precisely because it's you that I need your help. Even if strength isn't your best quality, you are indispensable to me. In the upcoming battles, your participation is absolutely critical. Without you, victory would be impossible. Do you understand?"

"R-Really?"

Miss Okita blinked, a glimmer of happiness spreading across her face.



"Of course! Think about it—why didn't I summon anyone else but you? It's because you're the one I need!"

Roy looked at her with utmost sincerity, his eyes shining with heartfelt determination.

"Master needs me?! Oh, stop it! Don't say such things that could be misunderstood~!"

Miss Okita's cheeks flushed red, her face turning as pink as a boiled crab.

...Well, whatever.

If this settled things and kept her motivated to give her all, then that was good enough.

Roy breathed a sigh of relief. Thank goodness Miss Okita was so innocent and easy to handle!

Meanwhile, from the shadows, Taigong Wang had witnessed the entire exchange.

He fell into deep contemplation.

Was I just manipulated by my Master too?

