

ABNORMALITY IN TYPE-MOON: MADNESS OF ANIMEVERSE

Chapter 41: Chapter 41: Mysteries Remain



"Archer."

Rin Tohsaka stood silent for a while, clearly torn about what to do. After some hesitation, she finally gave the order for Archer to show himself.

The red-coated Archer appeared by her side, his face full of frustration as he stared at Roy.

Who even is this guy?

Why is he always around when something's going down?

"Stop giving me that look," Roy said with a slight smile.

"Let me guess: when Rin summoned you, you told her you had amnesia, and blamed it on a mistake in her summoning?"

"Ugh!"

Archer visibly flinched, his expression growing even more sullen.

Rin, too, was dumbfounded.

"How do you know that?"

Seriously. Did you really get your hands on a script or something?

Roy nodded inwardly. Though the worldlines had been twisted beyond recognition, some things seemed to remain unaffected.

Rin Tohsaka had likely opened the snake skin relic left by Tokiomi just before the start of the Holy Grail War, but for whatever reason, hadn't used it properly, leading to the clock in her house being off and the early summoning of Archer. Archer must've seized the opportunity to claim amnesia and pin the blame on her.

True, some Servants could lose their memories. But no way would it happen for such a minor reason.

"Archer, what's your take on this world?"

Roy didn't dwell on the pair's shock and instead directed his question toward Archer.

"What do you mean?"

Archer folded his arms across his chest, clearly suspicious of Roy.

"I mean, from the perspective of whether 'this world seems normal to you,' do you have any thoughts?"

"...It's clearly not normal."

After a brief silence, Archer reluctantly sighed and spread his hands.

"Because the history you remember is completely different, right?"

"Who are you, exactly?"

"Don't worry about the details. Just think of me as someone who, by chance, got information from a parallel world."

Information from a parallel world?

What kind of half-baked excuse is that?

Archer's face was written with disbelief.

Still, he was quite concerned about the state of this world, so he decided to humor Roy and see where the conversation went.

"Yes, this place is entirely different from the history I know."

Archer's expression grew distant as he recalled, "In the original timeline, during the Fourth Holy Grail War, the black mud carrying all that malice was indeed released, but a man named Kiritsugu Emiya destroyed the Lesser Grail, containing the disaster to a much smaller scale."

"But in this world, it seems someone reached the Holy Grail and wished for the destruction of the world—or maybe just the collapse of human society. Kiritsugu Emiya is nowhere to be found..."

Rin Tohsaka listened intently from the side.

Though the conversation was moving fast, she quickly caught onto the details with her sharp mind.

At the same time, she realized something else.

Archer had never actually lost his memory!

He had lied to her!

And she had fallen for it!

"Indeed, that's the point where this world diverged from the normal timeline."

Roy nodded in agreement.

In this version of events, Kiritsugu Emiya had somehow vanished, and in his place, some lunatic had claimed victory.

Earlier that day, Roy had asked Illyasviel about it, only to find that she had no clue who Kiritsugu Emiya was.

It was entirely possible that Kiritsugu had never participated in the Fourth Holy Grail War at all.

And when Roy thought about it that way, figuring out who had made that apocalyptic wish on the Grail wasn't exactly difficult.

"But do you think the changes in the world are only limited to that?"

Roy suddenly shifted his tone, his words becoming sharper.

"What are you implying?"

Archer squinted as he replied, suspicion deepening.

The group continued making their way toward the corrupted Caster's territory, the hill in the distance growing closer with every step.

"You're not a Servant from the Gaia side; you're a Guardian of the Counter Force, aren't you?"

Roy brought up something that many people tended to overlook.

"Then you should've already figured this out: would the collective will of humanity, Alaya, just sit by and let something as catastrophic as a global reduction in human population happen? The moment it became possible, Alaya should've dispatched someone like you—a Guardian—to stop that lunatic who wished for the world's destruction. Wouldn't it?"

In the world of Fate, the Counter Force worked in many subtle ways.

It could manifest through carefully selected heroic spirits or even ordinary people, pulling them into events just at the right moment to foil some villain's elaborate scheme.

With such a diligent force in play, it didn't make sense for the world to fall apart just from one Holy Grail War.

That simply wasn't reasonable.

Not everyone could resist the interference of the Counter Force.

Even if it didn't react right away, from the moment the black mud appeared to when it swept across the globe took a whole year, and the burning of the world took another. That gave the Counter Force two years to act, more than enough time to implement countermeasures.

Yet, despite that, the world had still devolved into this decaying and pathetic state.

Archer suddenly froze, his whole body tensing up.

Roy's words struck him like a hammer, snapping him out of his shock over the state of the world.

Rin Tohsaka's face also grew more serious than it had ever been.

"As a Guardian of the Counter Force, you should have some inkling of Alaya's intentions, right? 'Intentions' might be the wrong word, but you get what I mean. What do you think? What's the Counter Force's stance on all this?"

Roy's question hit like an arrow.

This was what he wanted to confirm.

The Counter Force had the power to stop the world's collapse, yet it didn't.

It allowed things to spiral to the point where they were now.

Surely preventing humanity's extinction was in Alaya's interest.

And Gaia, the will of the planet, had no reason to interfere.

So why had the Counter Force acted like it didn't exist?

"...I don't know."

Archer's expression darkened.

He was just a hired hand, working for an organization that barely communicated—essentially, a force that handed out orders with no feedback or explanation.

What could he do?

He was just as helpless as anyone else!

"Well, that's disappointing."

Roy sighed.

Still, this was the response he had expected.

After all, even Aozaki Touko had spent ten years searching for answers to these questions without success.

The real issue now was—

Was the destruction of humanity part of the Counter Force's plan?

Or had something managed to tie up the Counter Force's hands?

Either way, the possibilities were grim.

It was clear that the disaster ten years ago held far more secrets than anyone knew.

"We've arrived at Caster's territory."

At the base of the hill, the four of them came to a stop.

Before them spread a sea of grotesque, oceanic creatures as far as the eye could see.

Not only were they horrifying in appearance, but the sheer number was overwhelming. There had to be over a thousand, likely every sea monster summoned in the past decade gathered here.

Just one glance would be enough to make anyone with trypophobia faint.

"This...this is bad!"

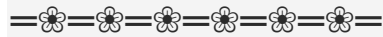
Archer's face turned grim.

Meanwhile, behind him, Rin Tohsaka's voice rang out in fury:

"Archer, how dare you lie to me! You're in for it when we get back!"

Archer couldn't help but feel a headache coming on.

If he had known this world didn't have an Emiya Shirou, he wouldn't have bothered pretending.



Chapter 42: Chapter 42: The Power of Mystic Eyes



[👉 Shoutout to Orlando Gonzales for joining patreon. Thank you very much.□]

"Master, the number of these sea monsters is just overwhelming!"

Okita Souji stepped forward, positioning herself protectively in front of Roy, her pretty face hardening with determination.

"How do we get past them and defeat the corrupted Caster?"

Maybe she should use her third Noble Phantasm?

She mulled over the thought and sent the suggestion to Roy through their mental link.

Okita Souji had three Noble Phantasms.

The first was her deadly sword, capable of unleashing her iconic technique, the "Nameless Three-Stage Thrust," which possessed the power to shatter reality.

Her second Noble Phantasm was her cloak, the "Shinsengumi Haori," a representation of the famous Shinsengumi uniform that had been elevated to the status of a Noble Phantasm.

While wearing this, her stats received a noticeable boost, and her sword—historically the "Kaga Kiyomitsu"—transformed into the more mystical "Kiku-ichimonji Norimune," a blade imbued with eight hundred years of mystery.

This was a passive Noble Phantasm, always in effect and currently active. With her Master's immense magical support, she could battle even first-class Heroic Spirits.

Her third Noble Phantasm was her trump card, "Makoto no Hata"—the Flag of Integrity.

This B-ranked anti-army Noble Phantasm allowed her to summon the members of the Shinsengumi, including famous figures like Kondo Isami, Yamanami Keisuke, and Hijikata Toshizo.

While the summoned Shinsengumi members lacked Noble Phantasms and were not as powerful as Okita, each of them was an independent Servant, capable of limited autonomous action without a Master, thanks to their E-rank Independent Action skill.

There weren't many of them, only a bit over a hundred, but in this situation, that was more than enough.

"These sea monsters aren't particularly strong; they just rely on numbers. If I activate my Noble Phantasm, the hundred-plus Shinsengumi swordsmen will absolutely be able to carve a path for you, Master!"

Okita's voice was filled with confidence as she made her case through their mental link.

"What do you think?"

Roy rubbed his chin, his face thoughtful.

He didn't respond immediately but turned to look at Rin and Archer.

"Your Saber is clearly a modern warrior, so it's no surprise she can't unleash large-scale attacks like a beam cannon."

Rin covered her mouth, hiding a chuckle, clearly feeling pleased with herself as if she'd just gained the upper hand.

"Archer, how long would it take you to clear this hill?"

"Hmm, for a wide-area attack? That's no problem."

Archer nodded after a moment of contemplation.

"But with the number of sea monsters here, it'll drain a good deal of your Master's mana. That means tonight we'd only have enough strength to hunt down one corrupted Servant."

Okita puffed up her cheeks in frustration.

"So what if I can't fire beam cannons?" Do swordsmen need beam cannons? Does that affect you in any way?

"Swordsmen are meant to fight with their swords!"

"Yes, yes, I didn't mean to look down on you," Rin replied, grinning mischievously like a villain.

"Grghhh!"

Okita bit her lip in annoyance.

"In that case, let me handle it!"

Roy sighed, shaking his head as he stepped forward.

"Huh? What are you going to do?"

Rin was taken aback, staring at him in disbelief.

"Just watch."

Roy's lips curled into a faint smile.

Even in the midst of such a chaotic battlefield, his expression remained carefree, as if the sea of monsters before him was nothing to worry about.

"Archer, could you fire an arrow into the mountain? Let's see if we can lure the corrupted Caster out."

"I'm not your Servant!"

Archer turned away, crossing his arms and staring up at the sky.

And what's with calling me 'Red A'? What kind of nickname is that?

"I asked you so politely, and you still won't help? Were you raised without manners or just plain rude?"

That hit home.

Archer's fist clenched as a large vein bulged on his forehead.

"Archer, assist him. I'm curious to see what he's planning."

"...Tch. Since it's an order from my Master, fine. But don't think it's because of your taunting, kid!"

With a huff, Archer finally relented.

He nocked an arrow and shot it toward the heart of the hill.

The hill wasn't tall—just a few dozen meters high. The arrow struck the summit in a single shot.

In the next moment, there was a thunderous explosion. The wind howled and a brilliant flash of light tore through the peak, shaking the entire hill as if it had been hit by an earthquake.

A small mushroom cloud rose from the top.

The destructive power left Okita wide-eyed and drooling.

"Damn, I want a beam cannon so bad!"

On the hilltop, the sea monsters were stunned by the attack. Many were thrown into disarray, some knocked flat by the shockwave.

Several of them noticed the four standing at the base of the hill and immediately began scuttling toward them, their slimy, tentacled bodies slapping against the ground, making nauseating squelching sounds.

And at the summit, the corrupted Caster finally took notice of the commotion and appeared before them.

His dark, oversized eyes, like something out of a Picasso painting, fixed on the group below with a cold, eerie stare.

Any normal person caught in that gaze would be haunted for nights on end.

In his arms, he held a grimoire bound in human skin.

The corrupted Caster, whose true identity was Gilles de Rais, had fought in the last Holy Grail War as the Caster.

Despite not being a master of magic himself, his possession of the grimoire, Prelati's Spellbook, gave him the aptitude for the Caster class.

The book allowed him to summon and control sea monsters, and it could even serve as a magical core, capable of casting high-level spells regardless of the caster's own ability. It was a fearsome artifact.

"But in the end, it's nothing more than a borrowed power!"

Roy's eyes narrowed as he closed them briefly.

When he reopened them, his once blood-red, glassy eyes had turned into pitch-black voids, black-and-white mystic symbols swirling like chains within their depths.

His Mystic Eyes of Contradiction manifested fully.

In an instant, his gaze locked onto the Prelati's Spellbook in Caster's hands.

Without a sound, Roy's Mystic Eyes activated.

"It's over."

Roy's eyes flashed with intensity.

"Wha—?!"

Suddenly, without uttering a single word, the corrupted Caster hurled the grimoire from his hands like it was a burning coal.

The grimoire, as if it had been ignited, began to glow hotly in mid-air.

Then, with a deafening boom, it exploded into countless fragments.

"Wha—What?!"

Caster's face was frozen in shock, unable to process what had just happened.

He hadn't even had time to comprehend why the grimoire had exploded. His mind was a complete blank.

Meanwhile, the endless waves of sea monsters began to dissipate, fading away like illusions.

"Saber, go!"

"Yes!"

With her Master's display of power bolstering her spirit, Okita leapt forward like a shadow, swiftly scaling the hill.

She didn't even need to engage in prolonged combat.

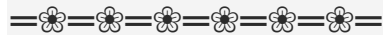
With a single strike, Okita decapitated the corrupted Caster.

It wasn't until his head hit the ground that the corrupted Caster realized what had happened.

But by then, it was far too late. His body began to dissolve into pure magical energy, vanishing into the air.

Rin and Archer stood frozen, dumbfounded by the scene unfolding before them.

They turned to look at Roy as though they were staring at some kind of monster.



Chapter 43: Chapter 43: Sisters



[👉 Shoutout to Fabrice & Hunayn for joining patreon. Thank you very much.□]

"Those eyes of yours..."

Rin Tohsaka swallowed hard, her voice betraying her astonishment.

"I had no idea you had such... overpowering Mystic Eyes."

To obliterate the corrupted Caster's Noble Phantasm with a single glance—what kind of nonsense was that?!

Sure, Mystic Eyes were powerful. After all, most magical procedures were intricate, requiring plenty of preparation. But Mystic Eyes? They could complete an entire spell with just a single look.

And Mystic Eyes were hard to defend against since you couldn't tell someone had them until it was too late. You couldn't see it from their appearance, and meeting their gaze could spell disaster.

That being said, most Mystic Eyes were relatively mediocre.

The lowest-tier artificial Mystic Eyes typically only offered basic abilities like charm or hypnosis, which were considered entry-level techniques among magicians. Real power came from innate Mystic Eyes, like the petrifying gaze of Medusa from myth. These could bind, compel, contract, ignite, cast illusions, or even bring bad luck—abilities beyond the scope of human engineering.

In terms of classification, Mystic Eyes ranged from common green and red hues to the coveted golden-tier, known as "Jeweled" eyes.

Then there was the pinnacle, eyes glowing with gem-like brilliance or rainbow hues, belonging to the legendary "Rainbow" class.

From what Rin had just witnessed, Roy's Mystic Eyes were undoubtedly in the Jeweled class, a rare phenomenon. Such eyes were almost extinct in modern times, so rare that even an elite mage might not encounter them in a lifetime.

But...

How could Roy possess such high-level Mystic Eyes?

This level of Mystic Eye power was never artificially created—it was an innate, divine ability! But Roy wasn't an ordinary human...

Could his Mystic Eyes have been artificially made?

What kind of existence could create Mystic Eyes of such caliber?

"They're called Spiral Mystic Eyes," Roy said, nodding as the glow in his eyes faded.

"All I need is one look at my target to deal with them. Impressive, right?"

"Eh? Ah, yeah..."

Rin murmured absently, her head lowered in dismay, fear slowly creeping in.

She was stuck in a spiral of terror, thinking, Could someone out there actually mass-produce Jeweled-class Mystic Eyes?

She couldn't shake the thought.

"Stop lying."

Archer frowned, unable to hold back.

"If they were really Spiral Mystic Eyes, that blast should've twisted and shattered the corrupted Caster completely. Why did Saber even need to finish the job? And I didn't see any signs of the spellbook distorting; it looked more like a spell backfiring or losing control..."

"Heh."

Roy simply chuckled and chose to stay silent.

"Master!"

At that moment, Okita Souji, having just finished the kill, hurried back down from the hill.

"I found a group of civilians up there—about ten people. Could they be refugees?"

"Refugees?"

Rin finally snapped out of her daze.

"Lead us to them!"

Okita glanced at Roy for confirmation, and when he nodded, she guided the group up the hill.

The hilltop was now devoid of sea monsters. The only evidence left of their presence was a sticky, foul-smelling slime coating the ground.

These sea monsters had been conjured by a summoning spell—much like how Servants were summoned by the Greater Grail. Once the spellbook, Prelati's Spellbook, had been destroyed, the sea monsters could no longer maintain their form, just as Servants would vanish if the Grail were destroyed.

As they ascended, a splash of red caught their attention.

Rin's face darkened, and she rushed forward.

After a quick inspection, her expression grew grim.

Roy stepped up beside her to see tattered cloth...

...and a field of severed limbs and dismembered bodies.

Crouching down, Roy examined the wounds carefully. They were jagged, torn—not clean cuts, but the result of wild beasts ripping their prey apart.

Given the sea monsters that had infested the area earlier, the cause wasn't hard to guess.

"There are still survivors inside."

Archer returned from further up the hill.

Rin took a deep breath, steeling herself.

They proceeded together to a cave hidden in the hillside.

Inside, a small group of survivors remained. There were about ten of them, both men and women, all trembling in fear, their eyes wide as they looked at the newcomers.

"You're safe now. We've taken care of the monsters... or rather, he took care of them single-handedly."

Rin spoke softly, her tone as comforting as possible.

"Are... Are they really gone?"

"All the monsters are gone?"

"Thank goodness! Ahhh!"

As Rin's reassurance settled in, the refugees responded in various ways. Some burst into laughter, others wept openly, and still others cursed at the sea monsters and the corrupted Caster who had tormented them.

They had likely witnessed the monsters devour their fellow survivors. The terror had been building inside them until it nearly broke them.

"It's all over... We're finally safe..."

Among the group were two girls clinging tightly to each other.

One, with short pink hair, was doing her best to shield the other. She wore a white blouse that accentuated her figure—surprisingly well for someone so young—and paired it with a pleated school uniform skirt.

Despite the bitter February chill, her thin clothes provided little warmth. Her skin was red from the cold, yet she continued to hug the other girl closely, as if her warmth could ward off both the cold and fear.

The girl in her arms was around the same age, likely sixteen or seventeen, with long, dark brown hair that obscured part of her face. She wore a green knitted sweater over a pair of shiny black stockings. Despite her own fear, the pink-haired girl was doing everything she could to comfort her.

The two girls were clearly twins, with matching features.

They huddled together like small animals trying to survive the winter cold.

As Roy looked at them, a familiar image popped into his mind from an anime he had seen before.

"Those two... Could they be..."

Rin busied herself for quite some time, organizing the scene.

It wasn't until midnight that a group of guards finally arrived, many of them yawning as they reached the hill.

"They're all yours. Make sure they get back to the city safely. They've been through a lot, so be gentle with them."

"Yes, ma'am!"

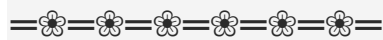
The soldiers straightened up, faces flushed, clearly eager to impress. Rin had quite a few admirers among them.

Along with the guards, three magicians arrived.

One stood out in particular: blonde, dark-skinned, with an unmistakably Middle Eastern appearance. He yawned frequently, his expression one of pure irritation.

As a wealthy man from the Middle East, being forced to work late at night left Atram in a foul mood.

But when he noticed the twin girls among the refugees, both of them strikingly beautiful, his mood visibly brightened.



Chapter 44: Chapter 44: Ichika and Miku



Nakano Ichika stood among the group of refugees, struggling to comprehend the situation.

How had they ended up in such a bizarre world? Why were they trapped in a cave filled with monsters, forced to watch as the other refugees who had crossed over with them were torn apart by those grotesque tentacled creatures? She had watched, horrified, as their limbs were ripped off, their bodies mangled. The air had been filled with screams and sobs until they choked on their final breaths, leaving behind nothing but cold, mutilated corpses.

It felt like a nightmare, like a torturous punishment that wouldn't end.

The sight was burned into Ichika's mind, following her like a shadow that haunted her every thought. Fear gnawed at her, making her want to scream and run away.

But she couldn't run. She couldn't just think of herself.

By her side was her sister, Nakano Miku, who had crossed over with her.

Miku was far more timid than Ichika. If she showed even the slightest hint of fear, Miku would crumble, overcome by terror.

For her sister's sake, Ichika had to remain strong, no matter what.

But the truth was, she had no solution.

Inside the dark cave, there was no way out. Every plea for help had been swallowed by the void. All she could do was hold her sister tight and pray that they wouldn't be the next ones dragged away to be eaten. She whispered desperate prayers to any gods that might hear her, hoping that someone, anyone, would come to save them.

Hours of torment passed slowly, excruciatingly. More people were devoured, and each time it happened, Ichika's heart skipped a beat in terror.

Then, as if the heavens had heard her prayers, an explosion echoed across the mountainside.

Shortly after, a small group arrived—two men and two women. They entered the cave and declared that they were safe.

The revolting sea monsters, along with their monstrous master, had vanished without a trace.

One of the survivors went out to check, only to confirm the impossible: the creatures were gone.

The refugees who had survived the ordeal erupted in a flood of emotions. Relief, laughter, tears—everything came pouring out all at once.

Miku cried inconsolably in Ichika's arms, and Ichika herself couldn't hold back her tears any longer. She wept silently, her chest aching with overwhelming relief.

Thank goodness... Thank goodness someone had come to save them.

More time passed, and then a young woman dressed in a red outfit, with dark hair tied in twin tails, arrived. It was immediately clear from her demeanor that she was a lady of high status. She had brought with her a team of people to escort the survivors back to the city.

Ichika didn't know much about this strange world, but at least the city sounded safer than this forsaken place.

She felt a wave of gratitude and relief wash over her.

Even Miku, who had been trembling with fear, began to relax, the terror slowly receding.

But even as one problem faded, another seemed to be brewing on the horizon.

Along with the escort team came three men, each of them exuding a distinct air of authority. One of them, a blonde young man with dark skin, spotted Ichika and Miku, and his expression lit up with undisguised interest.

Ichika noticed the glint in his eye immediately.

A chill ran down her spine.

She quickly lowered her head, pretending she hadn't seen anything, hoping that he would lose interest if she didn't draw attention to herself.

In this strange and dangerous world, they were utterly powerless. If someone of such standing took an interest in them, they wouldn't have the strength to resist.

What should I do? What should I do?

She glanced down at her sister Miku, who was still clinging to her. Ichika made up her mind then and there.

No matter what happened, she would protect her sister.

No matter the cost.

"The two girls over there."

A sudden voice interrupted her thoughts.

Instinctively, Ichika looked up toward the source of the voice.

It was a young boy with white hair and red eyes.

Though he didn't look much older than her, his features were sharp and striking, almost unnaturally so—like an exquisitely carved statue that possessed a beauty transcending gender.

Most importantly, there was a gentle smile on his face, one that radiated warmth and sincerity.

"When you arrive in the city, if you run into any trouble, just mention my name. I'm Roy. Every mage in Fuyuki City knows who I am."

Ichika was momentarily stunned.

She recognized him.

He was one of the two men who had climbed the mountain earlier.

The twin-tailed girl had personally mentioned that it was Roy who had taken down the monsters and their master, saving all of them from that living hell.

"Thank you... very much."

Ichika bowed her head slightly, her voice filled with gratitude.

Not long after, the group of more than ten survivors, accompanied by the escort team, descended the mountain.

The darkened sky and scorched earth below filled everyone with a sense of unease.

Ichika was no exception.

But the real danger still awaited them.

Upon reaching the city, the survivors were taken to a refugee shelter.

The sudden arrival of their group caused a small commotion, with whispers of disbelief and curiosity filling the air. But faced with the heavily armed soldiers surrounding them, no one dared to protest, and they all quietly accepted their fate.

"I'll take these two. They'll be my servants!"

It wasn't long after they entered the shelter when the blonde, dark-skinned young man from earlier approached the person in charge and made his demand, pointing directly at Ichika and Miku without any attempt to hide his intentions.

In that instant, a wave of intense fear surged through the sisters.

"Master Atram, you are indeed entitled to select two servants this month. I'll prepare the paperwork immediately!"

The person in charge, a man named Zenjou, bowed respectfully, eager to please.

"Wait!"

Ichika's body jolted, and she shot to her feet.

"We... We're Roy's servants! He... He already claimed us outside the city!"

She was panicking. The young man's intentions were written all over his face, arrogant and without the slightest pretense.

If they left with him, their future would be bleak—both hers and Miku's.

Left with no other choice, Ichika clung to the only thing that might save them.

Roy had said they could use his name if they got into trouble.

She hadn't expected to need it so soon, and in her desperation, she had blurted out that both she and Miku were Roy's servants.

It wasn't entirely true, of course, but she had no other option.

She could only hope that Roy wouldn't hold it against them for claiming his protection like this.

"Did you just say... Roy?"

Atram's expression darkened instantly, his eyes narrowing dangerously like a predator sizing up its prey.

"Master Atram..."

Zenjou's face turned sour as he looked between Atram and the two girls.

Why do these two always end up butting heads like this?!

I'm just a lowly worker trying to scrape by as the head of this refugee shelter. Do I really need this hassle?

If he made one wrong move, the mayor's niece—who had appointed him to this position—might just fire him.

"There are a few people in Fuyuki City that you absolutely do not want to mess with."

One of the magicians who had accompanied Atram let out a low chuckle.

"And Roy is definitely one of them. Atram, I almost feel sorry for you. This is the second time you've had your servants snatched away. Maybe it's time to throw in the towel?"

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Chapter 45: Chapter 45: Black Saber Moves



Inside the cave.

After sending off the escort team and the refugees, Rin Tohsaka stared at Roy with a suspicious expression.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Is it that time for you?"

"...What do you mean, like I'm some kind of uncontrollable animal?"

Roy's face darkened.

What kind of nonsense was she spouting?

Do I really look like someone who can't keep control of myself?

"Kasumigaoka Utaha became your servant last month, and then you asked to take Airi Hayasaka from me. Now you're showing kindness to those two

sisters... That's four girls, right? And all of them just happen to be stunningly beautiful! If this isn't a sign of you being in heat, then what is?"

Rin's face was filled with discontent as she glared at Roy.

This guy had previously joked about making her his wife, but clearly, he hadn't been serious at all!

She crossed her arms, narrowing her eyes at him while tapping her finger against her arm, the more she thought about it, the more frustrated she became.

"Where is your mind wandering off to?"

Roy was exasperated by her accusations.

"I just didn't want them falling into the hands of someone like Atram."

Atram?

Rin paused, her eyebrows furrowing slightly.

She had been so busy dealing with the refugees earlier that she hadn't paid attention to Atram's behavior. But she was aware of some of the more unscrupulous practices among the mages in Fuyuki City. Tied down by the Mage's Association, she couldn't oversee everything herself, and issuing an order forbidding the mistreatment of refugees had already been the most she could do.

"What did that guy do just now?"

"He got a bit too excited when he saw those sisters. Speaking of which, I've made some rather interesting discoveries about him recently..."

Roy then recounted what he had uncovered by sending his familiar to spy on Atram's estate.

Rin's expression darkened instantly.

Atram's family was relatively new to magecraft, a lineage born of sudden wealth. Though they possessed the rare original battery magecraft, in this day and age, due to the difficulty in sourcing and using oil, it wasn't nearly as profitable as it had once been.

Such a family seeking to explore new avenues of magecraft development wasn't surprising.

However, his actions clearly skirted dangerously close to violating the decree Rin had imposed on the city. If Atram was willing to push these boundaries, it meant he didn't take Rin's authority seriously.

In essence, his behavior wasn't much different from the overt harm she had forbidden.

"If the Holy Grail War gives me the chance to wipe out the Mage's Association, that would be ideal."

A knowing smile spread across Roy's face.

"At the very least, it would be good to eliminate the Fuyuki City branch, wouldn't it?"

The Mage's Association never had a particularly strong grip on the East. With the current difficulties in transportation and communication, if a conflict did arise, the headquarters might not even bother intervening.

That is, unless the Holy Grail itself remained in Fuyuki.

As the legacy of the Third Magic, the Mage's Association would never let go of the Grail so easily.

"You don't need to tell me that."

Rin shot Roy a glance.

After years of serving as mayor, she had long considered countless ways to dismantle the Association's local branch, but actually achieving it was another matter. The Holy Grail War presented an opportunity, though carrying it out would still be a monumental challenge.

"As long as you understand that I'm not just thinking with my lower half."

Roy shrugged, unbothered.

His kindness toward the Nakano sisters really was just because he didn't want them ending up in Atram's clutches. That guy swapped women more frequently than he changed clothes.

No way he was going to let his two-dimensional waifus fall into the hands of someone like that.

He wouldn't be able to live with himself if he just stood by and did nothing.

Of course, Roy wouldn't deny that there were some ulterior motives in the back of his mind. Who wouldn't dream of being a little closer to their beloved 2D characters?

But having a few innocent fantasies was normal, right? Everyone has them.

The important thing was that he hadn't acted on those thoughts. Utaha and Airi had been staying at his house for days, and he hadn't made a single inappropriate move.

After enduring years of torment from a curse, Roy had more than enough self-control to handle himself. If they didn't want it, he wasn't going to force anything.

"Let's go."

Roy began walking down the hill.

"Who's our next target?"

He was referring to the remaining corrupted Servants.

"Wait a second."

Rin looked up at the sky.

Moments later, a bird-shaped familiar descended from above.

"Seems like Bazett's already dealt with the corrupted Lancer."

"As expected. Bazett is practically a Servant herself, and without a Master, that corrupted Lancer was bound to lose in a two-on-one situation."

"Her Servant appears to be a blue-haired youth dressed like a druid, probably using Nordic Runes."

"Ah, I know who that is."

"Really? You've seen this before—or, as you'd say, is this from one of your 'parallel world' records?"

"Something like that."

Roy smiled and nodded.

"It's likely Cú Chulainn, the son of the Celtic god Lugh."

"The Child of Light, huh? Considering that Bazett is descended from the Red Branch Knights of Celtic mythology, summoning Cú Chulainn fits her style. He might even be her idol. Cú Chulainn was trained by the Queen of the Land of Shadows, Scáthach, and learned the primordial Runes, which explains his Caster class compatibility. But as a Lancer, he's definitely more formidable."

"Exactly. That leaves us with only three corrupted Servants."

"Right, the corrupted Saber, Assassin, and Berserker... Which one do you think we should go after?"

Rin dismissed her familiar, letting it fly back into the sky as she turned to Roy for his input.

"Isn't it obvious? The corrupted Assassin, of course."

"Yeah, that makes sense. The corrupted Saber is King Arthur, and that Holy Sword is no joke. As for Berserker, we don't know his identity yet. Meanwhile, the corrupted Assassin's identity is clear, and he's weaker—easier to deal with!"

Rin nodded in agreement, as she had already been leaning toward hunting down the corrupted Assassin first.

"You've already dealt with the corrupted Caster and earned a Command Spell. It's only fair that the next one goes to us."

"Fine by me."

Roy agreed without hesitation.

The corrupted Assassin was Hassan of the Hundred Faces, possessing dozens of different forms. Taking him down would be quite a hassle, so he was more than happy to let the Archer-Rin team handle it. One or two Command Spells weren't something he particularly cared about.

The reason he had even bothered hunting down corrupted Servants in the first place was the same as Rin's—eliminating the threats to Fuyuki City's safety.

He couldn't bear the thought of the city being destroyed.

Suddenly, one of Rin's bird familiars swooped down and landed on her shoulder.

Before she could even ask, the familiar screeched in alarm.

"Something's wrong! The corrupted Saber has started moving!"

"Which direction? Don't tell me it's headed toward the city walls?"

Rin's face turned pale. Was Saber planning to attack the city?

Boom—!!

A dark pillar of energy erupted in the distance, tearing through the sky. The overwhelming pressure of magical energy was palpable, even from kilometers away.

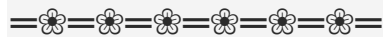
"Where is that?"

Roy narrowed his eyes.

"Not the city walls!"

The bird screeched again.

"It's headed for the Einzbern Castle!"



Chapter 46: Chapter 46: The Fall of the Mighty Hercules



[🗨️ Shoutout to Bowzer, Diego, Surge1301 & Pryho for joining patreon. Thank you very much. □ Also, please support my new book— Minecraft: I Am The Demon King]

At the Einzbern Castle.

Once surrounded by layers of powerful barriers that protected it from curses, monsters, and other disasters, the castle was a rare haven in the wilderness—so much so that even pets could thrive here under the shelter of the wards.

But today...

Boom!

With a deafening crash, the once-mighty barriers shattered.

A hulking, muscle-bound monstrosity tore across the blackened plains like a missile, while a second, much smaller figure—lithe like a young girl—sliced through the air with the precision of a razor.

The enormous muscular beast clashed repeatedly with the poised swordswoman, their collisions shaking the earth and tearing through the atmosphere.

Each impact left deep cracks in the ground, causing gusts of wind so fierce they shredded the surrounding area.

The earth trembled with every step, and dust swirled in chaotic clouds.

The muscle-bound monster, gripping a massive axe-sword, launched itself like a rocket, swinging its blade with a force that could cleave both the swordswoman and the ground beneath her.

But the swordswoman remained unfazed, her expression cold and unfeeling. Her body radiated a tangible aura of mana, which enveloped her pitch-black holy sword, forming a crimson blade as fierce as blood. With a single, resolute strike, she met the monster's blow head-on.

The ground cracked like a spider's web beneath them, leaving a crater several feet deep.

Blood splattered through the air as both combatants were thrown back. Yet they quickly regained their footing, charging at each other again like unstoppable trains. Their repeated clashes created wind so sharp it cut the ground into fragments.

The relentless sound of their battle was like a never-ending war drum, each blow pounding into the listener's eardrums.

"This is impossible! How could it be...?!"

At the castle gates, Illyasviel von Einzbern watched in utter disbelief.

"In such a short time, Berserker has already lost three lives! What's with that corrupted Saber? My Berserker is supposed to be invincible!"

In this Holy Grail War, the Einzbern family had summoned Berserker—none other than Heracles, the greatest hero of Greek mythology, elevated to godhood by Zeus after his death.

However, as Berserker, many of Heracles' abilities were sealed.

His sole advantage was his Noble Phantasm, God Hand: The Twelve Labors, which granted him multiple lives and an extraordinary level of defense. In battles against opponents of equal strength, this allowed him to gradually build up a near-insurmountable lead.

But against an opponent whose raw power exceeded his own, he was rendered as helpless as a massive wooden pillar, unable to retaliate effectively.

In a typical Holy Grail War, it was almost unthinkable for a Servant stronger than Heracles to exist.

But these days, what was "typical" in the Holy Grail War?

Even in this seemingly normal Fifth War, there was an air of madness that pervaded the battlefield.

And this time, facing a corrupted Saber, Berserker had no chance.

The corrupted Saber's mana seemed limitless. With her Mana Burst skill augmenting her abilities, she far outclassed Heracles in close combat. Each of Berserker's stored lives was being relentlessly chipped away by her overwhelming offensive.

It wasn't a quick death.

It was as if the sentence of death had already been passed, and all that was left was to count down the seconds until it was carried out.

As Berserker's lives dwindled, it was like a ticking time bomb for Illyasviel, increasing her anxiety with each passing moment.

"W-What are those things...?"

Rin Tohsaka had her hand clamped over her mouth, desperately stifling her voice.

She was terrified that even the slightest sound would draw the attention of those two monsters. Despite her efforts, her words were still laced with palpable fear.

The battle between the corrupted Saber and Berserker had transcended the typical understanding of what a Servant fight should be. Their speed, strength, and destructive power were far beyond what any human could comprehend.

They were like walking artillery, tearing craters in the ground with each sword strike, and reducing walls to rubble as if they were made of paper.

No human body could possibly withstand such devastation.

Even being grazed by the shockwave of their blows would be enough to kill someone instantly.

Any normal person would be paralyzed by such fear.

Roy stood beside Rin.

His expression was equally serious as he observed the battle.

The moment he heard that the corrupted Saber had started moving—and was heading straight for the Einzbern Castle—he and Rin had rushed over without hesitation.

Although the sight before them was undeniably terrifying, Roy remained composed.

But one question gnawed at him.

"Why is the corrupted Saber targeting Berserker?"

The corrupted Servants had been stationed outside Fuyuki City for over a day. Until now, they had stayed within their territories, not interfering with each other.

So why had the corrupted Saber suddenly taken action? And why target Berserker?

Was she attempting to eliminate a competitor for the Holy Grail?

If that was the case, why would she go after one of the strongest Servants first?

If she wanted to thin the competition, the logical strategy would be to target the weaker ones first, slowly clearing the field before confronting the most powerful opponent.

The corrupted Saber's tactical approach should have been sharper, more ruthless—unlike the blue Saber, she wouldn't make such basic mistakes.

There was no way her rational mind would allow for the arrogant notion of "taking down the strongest first, and then dealing with the rest later."

Roy frowned, his gaze sweeping the battlefield.

"Archer, how do you think you'd fare against either of them?"

Rin's voice was heavy as she asked her Servant for his assessment.

After witnessing the clash between Saber and Berserker, she had already come to terms with the fact that her Archer likely couldn't hold his own in a direct confrontation with either of those two.

She needed to know what Archer could manage if faced with either of them, and how best to support him.

"Hmm... I can understand what you're thinking, but let it go, Rin. Don't even consider going up against those two on your own. Berserker's Noble Phantasm lets him store extra lives—you'd have to kill him more than twelve times to truly defeat him. As for the corrupted Saber, she's simply too powerful. Her strength is overwhelming, and it makes her even more dangerous. Fighting them head-on is only possible with backup from others."

Archer's cold, resigned sigh echoed in Rin's mind.

On the way here, she had already learned Archer's true name and knew that he was a modern-day Heroic Spirit. She had also gained some understanding of the Servants typically summoned in the Fifth Holy Grail War.

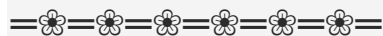
But with this world's timeline so drastically altered, knowing a few names didn't really matter much anymore.

"Roy, what do you—wait, where did he go?!"

Rin turned to seek Roy's input, only to find him missing entirely.

"He left a moment ago. His Servant too."

Archer's voice floated back, laced with exasperation. You could practically see him standing there, hands on his hips, shaking his head in disbelief.



Chapter 47: Chapter 47: Trapped Between Two Giants



🦋 Shoutout to TheBurningGoose for joining patreon. Thank you very much. □
Please support my new novel— [As Homelander In Multiverse](#)]

In the halls of the Einzbern Castle.

With most of the barriers broken, Roy entered with ease.

"Illya."

Hearing her name, Illyasviel, who was anxiously watching the battle between Berserker and the corrupted Saber, looked up in surprise to see Roy standing before her.

"Roy? What are you doing here?"

"Did you forget? We're out here hunting the corrupted Servants. We heard the commotion and came to check things out."

"Oh... right, I remember."

Illya seemed momentarily distracted, but her mood was clearly sour.

"Sorry, I don't have time to entertain you right now!"

Though surprised by Roy's arrival, her attention remained fixed on the fierce battle raging before her. She was desperately pouring her mana into Berserker, willing him to push on. But even with that extra burst of energy, it was like a dying ember briefly flaring before being snuffed out—Berserker lost yet another life to the relentless onslaught of the corrupted Saber.

"Honestly, I'd love to help, but even if we added my Saber to the fight, there's no way we'd win."

Roy couldn't help but feel overwhelmed by the sheer destructive power of these top-tier Servants. Watching them in action, it was clear that he'd stand no chance. No matter how much he'd learned in the past three years, no

matter how talented he was as a modern mage, either of these two Servants could kill him without breaking a sweat.

Even if Okita Souji joined the fray, it would likely end in her getting annihilated as well.

Hiding in the shadows, Okita Souji whimpered internally: "Why am I always the one to get picked on..."

Illya remained silent.

Although a part of her probably appreciated Roy's offer to assist, she was completely focused on supporting Berserker. There wasn't even a moment to acknowledge him properly.

"Berserker's not going to win. You need to come with me," Roy said seriously, extending a hand toward her.

"Berserker will win!" Illya snapped, her voice filled with anger and even more fear.

"Corrupted Saber's mana is endless. How can you possibly win?"

Roy wasn't buying into her blind hope. He shook his head as he pressed her further.

"If we can find the source of her mana..."

"Do you really think that's possible?"

"..."

Illya bit her lip in frustration.

Even if they somehow found the source of Corrupted Saber's mana, how could they possibly do anything about it given the chaos of the battlefield?

"Berserker would want you to survive. Come with me," Roy urged again, his voice firm but gentle.

"...No! I refuse!"

Illya clenched her teeth and rejected his offer without hesitation.

"You don't trust me?"

"No, I do trust you."

Illya shook her head, sadness clouding her expression.

"But if I go with you, Corrupted Saber won't stop. I know it—her target is me."

Illya had a clear sense that Corrupted Saber's goal was her. She had been able to feel the intense, murderous intent aimed directly at her from the moment the fight began. Saber wasn't here for Berserker—she was here for Illya. The only reason Berserker was fighting was to protect her.

If Illya fled with Roy, Corrupted Saber would undoubtedly chase after them, putting Roy in danger too.

She didn't care about others—whether Rin, Bazett, or anyone else lived or died didn't matter to her.

But she didn't want Roy to be dragged into a disaster because of her.

And besides...

Rather than running away, she'd rather fight alongside Berserker until the bitter end.

"If that's the case, then I'll just have to use brute force."

Roy sighed, understanding the gravity of the situation.

He could sense Illya's feelings of goodwill toward him, and that made his decision all the more resolute—there was no way he could leave her behind to die.

As he spoke, Roy's hands began tracing intricate runes in the air, taking his time with each stroke, as though giving Illya a chance to react.

"You... you really are stubborn!"

Illya puffed her cheeks in frustration, glaring at him with a mixture of irritation and helplessness. Seeing Roy wasn't bluffing, she begrudgingly stopped funneling mana to Berserker and pulled out the silver threads she always carried with her.

The threads interwove, forming complex shapes before her, resembling the skeletal remains of some ancient creature.

"You shouldn't be using magic in your condition."

Roy's eyes changed color as he spoke, radiant gemstone-like light flaring from within them.

"Magic eyes?!"

Illya's shock was immediate and palpable.

"How do you have eyes like that?"

In the split second it took her to express her surprise, the silver threads in front of her unraveled and, like the tentacles of an octopus, coiled around her limbs, binding her tightly.

"Wait—Roy, let me go!"

"No."

Roy smiled, placing his hand gently on top of Illya's head.

"Berserker."

Suddenly, on the battlefield, Berserker's movements faltered. He was instantly kicked aside by Corrupted Saber, sent crashing into the distance.

At the same time, Illya's eyes widened in disbelief.

"How are you able to communicate with Berserker? You're not supposed to be able to connect to him—let alone use mental communication!"

"It's just a type of magic," Roy responded with a calm smile.

Continuing to push his own mental messages into the bond between Illya and Berserker, Roy spoke again:

"I'm here to save Illya. I'm taking her with me now. Your job is to buy us as much time as you can—hold out for as long as possible."

"Wait! Berserker, don't listen to him!" Illya shouted.

"ROAR——!!"

On the battlefield, Berserker let out an earth-shattering roar.

It was as if, in the final stretch of a marathon, he was pushing beyond his limits. His muscles bulged, turning an angry red as he charged at Corrupted Saber with renewed vigor, fighting as if his life depended on it—because it did.

His power surged by at least thirty percent.

"As expected of you, Berserker, the loli protector. You have my respect!" Roy nodded approvingly.

With that, he handed the still-protesting Illya over to Okita Souji and the two of them quickly made their way out of the castle.

"So you really came to save Illyasviel?" a voice called out.

As they fled, they encountered Rin, who was clearly shocked by Roy's actions.

She had no idea why he was taking such a huge risk to save Illya when they clearly weren't equipped to face Corrupted Saber head-on.

"You're here too, Rin?"

Illya's face soured at the sight of Rin.

"Are you suggesting we team up?"

Rin let out a deep breath, clearly trying to reboot her brain as she considered the situation. She turned to Illya.

"With our three Servants working together, we should be able to take on Corrupted Saber, right?"

Illya's eyes flickered—this wasn't a bad idea. She didn't want Berserker to die in vain, after all.

"About that... I'd advise against it, Rin."

It was Archer who interjected this time, his tone cool but serious.

"I'm detecting another Servant nearby, and its energy is chaotic. It's probably the corrupted Berserker, lying in wait. Just a hunch, but I think Corrupted Saber set him up as a trap."

The group was currently retreating toward Fuyuki City, but Archer's words made them all come to an abrupt halt.

Roy rubbed his temples, letting out a bitter laugh.

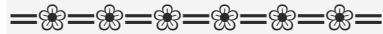
See? Corrupted Saber's strategy really was sharp.

She must have anticipated the possibility of Illya fleeing toward Fuyuki City, where the wards could protect her, and placed Berserker in the path to intercept them.

Now, they were trapped.

If they went forward, they'd run straight into Corrupted Berserker.

If they went back, they'd be diving right into Corrupted Saber's fight with Berserker. Once it turned into a three-on-one situation, Corrupted Berserker would likely join in, turning it into a deadly three-on-two battle.



Chapter 48: Chapter 48: On the Run



[📢 Shoutout to OneTimeSkinny & JacksonR for joining patreon. Thank you very much. ☐ Do support my new work—"The Villain: Claiming Protagonist's Master"]

"Since that's the case, let's avoid the Berserker. We can sneak back to the city from the left or right."

"Good plan, but unfortunately, as soon as I spotted him, he also noticed me. Now, he's charging at us like a mad dog."

"Why didn't you say so earlier?!"

Rin Tohsaka shouted in frustration.

"Archer, hold off the Berserker! Buy us some time to escape!"

"Ah, am I doing this alone?"

"We'll head back to the city as fast as we can. Once we're inside the Spirit Barrier, I'll summon you back with a Command Seal!"

The Spirit Barrier in Fuyuki City allows entry for spirits but prevents their exit.

The barrier, though built by Zelretch, draws its power from Fuyuki's leylines. Oddly enough, even though Zelretch has infinite mana, he designed the barrier this way—no one really knows why.

Naturally, Rin Tohsaka was the one in control of this barrier.

This was her trump card as the overseer of Fuyuki City, a power the Mage's Association coveted. Many of the old codgers in the Association had their eyes on the control of this barrier, but none had succeeded in wresting it from her.

So, while theoretically, spatial transfers would bounce off the barrier, with a slight manipulation, Rin could summon Red Archer back within its confines.

"Saber, you stay and help as well."

"I understand."

Roy turned to his Servant, Okita Souji, and issued the order.

"Thank you. This should ease the pressure."

Hearing this, Rin Tohsaka finally let out a sigh of relief.

Two Servants fighting together was better than leaving just one behind.

"No, this was my fault to begin with," Roy shook his head.

Had he not wanted to save Illyasviel, they wouldn't have been in this dangerous situation.

"Even without you, with Berserker's mindless nature, he would have locked onto us anyway as we tried to retreat to the city," Rin waved dismissively, looking as if Roy was overthinking it.

Roy considered her words and realized they were true.

Even without him, they would still need to return to Fuyuki City, and likely, they would have run into Berserker on the way.

The only difference now was that they had Illya with them—a rather valuable "extra."

"Roar!"

Before they could further discuss their plans, a shadowy figure enveloped in black mist charged toward them from the distance.

Clad in dark armor, it was impossible to discern the figure's true form. The thick black fog surrounding it seemed to distort one's perception.

Okita Souji stepped forward, her gaze steady and composed.

The Blackened Berserker's presence was overwhelming.

Though mindless, he was undoubtedly an extraordinarily formidable foe, likely even stronger than the warped Lancer they had previously encountered.

"Be careful. The true identity of the Blackened Berserker is Lancelot, the Knight of the Lake. His martial skills are top-tier, and even in his maddened state, his abilities remain intact. The reversed Holy Sword grants him additional power boosts, and anything he touches can become his Noble Phantasm. Don't let him grab you!"

Roy called out, sharing everything he knew about the Blackened Berserker as succinctly as possible.

"Lancelot? No wonder he follows the Blackened Saber's orders without question."

Red Archer muttered under his breath as he readied his bow.

With a flash, Okita Souji dashed toward the enemy, while Red Archer provided cover fire with his arrows from the side.

The two fought strategically, drawing the Blackened Berserker away from the others.

Okita Souji's agility was remarkable.

With the support of Roy's mana and her Haori, her agility had reached A++, putting her speed among the very top. She was even faster than the Blackened Berserker.

Having a Master with ample mana makes all the difference.

Along with Red Archer's interference, the two managed to hold their ground against the Blackened Berserker, matching him blow for blow.

Seizing the opportunity, Roy and the others hurriedly passed through the area, making their way back to Fuyuki City.

"Move faster!"

"Do you think I need you to tell me that, you brat?!"

"At this rate, we won't make it in time! We can't let Berserker's death be in vain!"

"As if I didn't know! But even if we had a car, it'd still take at least half an hour to reach the city walls!"

Rin glared fiercely at Illya, who was still perched on Roy's back, issuing commands as though none of this was her fault.

Why does your home have to be so far away? Rin silently fumed.

Illya, feeling guilty, averted her gaze.

With Okita Souji and Red Archer's combined strength, holding off the Blackened Berserker wasn't an issue.

The real concern was how long Berserker could withstand the Blackened Saber.

Even with twelve lives, standing against the Blackened Saber, who had near-limitless mana, surviving half an hour seemed impossible.

Not to mention, they were running on foot. Even with magical enhancements, there was no way they could reach the city in thirty minutes.

We're doomed!

Rin internally screamed in despair.

"No choice."

Roy sighed as he waved his hand in the air.

A long silver line appeared before them.

Roy pulled the line apart, revealing a misty, gray space within.

In the blink of an eye, something large fell from the space as if from a bottomless pouch—a machine made of black steel, crouching like a beast.

It was a motorcycle, and a powerful one at that, with four cylinders.

"Imaginary Number Magic? How do you know this too?" Rin stared in disbelief at Roy, who had just pulled a motorcycle out of thin air like a magician performing a trick.

A mage's elemental attributes determine how far they can go on their path. Normally, a mage wouldn't waste time dabbling in elements they didn't possess—it's inefficient and yields little reward.

Roy clearly didn't have the attribute for Imaginary Numbers, so why had he bothered to study it?

"Just a bit of dabbling. Get on!"

Roy swung a leg over the bike, placing Illya in front of him.

Rin quickly climbed onto the seat behind him, wrapping her arms around his waist.

"If you had a motorcycle, why didn't you bring it out earlier?!"

"Gas is expensive!"

"And by the way, do you even know how to ride this?"

"I practiced in the courtyard!"

"Wait! I suddenly have a bad feeling about this!"

"Full throttle! Hold on tight!"

With a roar, the motorcycle accelerated to its top speed in mere moments.

"Haha! There's nothing in our way, so there's no need to worry about crashing!"

"Aaah! Can you take this seriously, please?!"

Rin clung tightly to Roy's waist, terrified by the bumps and jolts.

There should have been something intimate about this.

But Roy felt nothing and had no reaction whatsoever.

For over ten minutes, the motorcycle sped across the pitch-black wilderness.

Illya's grip around Roy's arms tightened suddenly.

Roy sensed what was coming.

Above them, familiars circled the sky, keeping a close watch on the ongoing battles.

Back at Einzbern Castle, Berserker had used up all twelve of his lives and finally fell beneath the Blackened Saber's sword.

After defeating Berserker, the Blackened Saber plunged her hand into her own chest, pulling out a golden Holy Grail.

Soon, she sensed Illya's escape and began racing toward Fuyuki City, ignoring the battlefield where Red Archer, Okita Souji, and Lancelot clashed.

It was as if she had a personal vendetta against Illya, determined to eliminate her in this first encounter.

Several minutes later, the walls of Fuyuki City finally came into view.

But not far behind them, the Blackened Saber was also in sight.

==*==*==*==*==*==*

Chapter 49: Chapter 49: Another Holy Grail



[👉 Shoutout to Darth Melkor, Brandon Eugley, Dave Jake, David Aderjou and 1 other(whose name I couldn't write) for joining patreon. Thank you very much.□]

"Hurry, hurry!"

"They're catching up!"

"Shut up!"

Gritting his teeth, Roy activated his Mystic Eyes.

In an instant, the runes carved into the motorcycle's frame flared to life, and the bike's speed surged even higher. With a thunderous roar, they crashed into the barrier.

Just behind them, Blackened Saber was closing in, less than a kilometer away. In the blink of an eye, she raced to the edge of the barrier, her figure a blur of dark speed.

But by that time, Roy had already driven the motorcycle into the safety of the barrier.

Forced to halt outside, Blackened Saber glared at them through the shimmering wall, her cold, merciless gaze radiating murderous intent, sharp enough to pierce through Roy like a blade.

Roy exhaled in relief, and with a cheeky grin, he turned back to face her.

Come on then, if you dare!

Blackened Saber stepped forward.

Roy's eyelid twitched.

Bang! With a deafening crash, she struck the barrier with her sword.

However, the barrier didn't budge, not even a ripple disturbed its surface. Instead, the backlash from the barrier's defensive power sent her reeling backward.

Seeing the barrier hold firm, Roy, Rin, and Illya all let out a collective sigh of relief.

Phew, thank goodness for Zelretch's handiwork!

"Hmph."

Blackened Saber scoffed coldly before turning away.

But before she left, her eyes lingered on Roy, as though she was committing every detail about him to memory, the chill of her gaze making his blood run cold.

Moments later, she disappeared from sight.

Now that the immediate danger had passed, Roy and Rin quickly reached out to Okita Souji and Red Archer. Both Servants had successfully evaded the Blackened Berserker and were cautiously retreating toward Fuyuki City.

"Rin, use a Command Seal!"

"What happened? You can't shake off the Blackened Berserker?"

"No, we've already lost him. But now the Blackened Saber is charging straight for us!"

Silence.

Without wasting more time, Rin used her Command Seal to summon Red Archer back.

Things went a bit smoother for Roy. To his surprise, Okita Souji, with her tenacity, had managed to evade Blackened Saber all on her own. Sneaking and hiding, she had silently made her way back to the group.

Honestly, she would make a better Assassin than a Saber.

If she manifested under the Assassin class, she'd definitely be more useful!

"Phew, that was close!"

Returning to the safety of Rin's barrier, Okita Souji couldn't help but let out a breath of relief.

Her condition was unusually good this time—her chronic illness hadn't flared up even once during the fight!

Could it be? Had she finally overcome her sickness?

After all, she was now a Heroic Spirit. Maybe her frail constitution had finally been left behind!

Okita Souji's heart swelled with excitement at the thought.

"Berserker..."

Standing on the city wall, Illya gazed sorrowfully into the distance.

"Let's rest for a bit. Tonight has been exhausting."

Rin smoothed her disheveled black hair and suggested to Roy.

"Agreed."

Roy nodded in agreement.

It had been a long and arduous night—first the tense standoff with Zōken, then the journey to defeat the Blackened Caster and save the refugees, followed by their daring rescue of Illya from Einzbern Castle, and finally, the heart-pounding escape from Blackened Saber. Even Roy felt physically and mentally drained.

"Illya, why don't you stay at my place for now?"

"I don't have anywhere else to go anyway. Fine, I'll stay at your house."

Illya thought for a moment and then nodded.

"Saber, can you escort Illya home?"

"Of course!"

Okita Souji responded enthusiastically.

Roy glanced at her, puzzled.

What's gotten into Okita? Why is she so excited?

Soon, the group split up.

Okita Souji escorted Illya back to Aozaki's residence.

Meanwhile, Roy pulled Rin along as they headed toward the refugee shelter.

"Refugee shelter? What for?"

"I'm a bit worried about those twin sisters."

Roy didn't beat around the bush. "Atlam must have his eye on them. If they're smart, they should've mentioned my name by now. I need to deal with that."

"What's your plan?"

"If possible, I'll bring them home. But I can only take one servant a month. So, I'll need your help, Miss Mayor."

"Tch!"

Rin clicked her tongue in irritation.

She swallowed her frustration.

"And if they haven't been targeted yet?"

"Even better. I'll just bring them home."

"..."

So, you're going to take them home either way, huh?

Rin gritted her teeth in frustration.

How many girls did this guy have living with him now?

Four, right?

No, wait—Illya just joined, so that makes five!

Although one of them was technically her own servant.

But still, a young man living with five girls, each with their own unique charm—how could this not lead to some sort of disaster?!

Last time, he'd said something that had left her flustered for days, tossing and turning in bed, unable to sleep, with those words replaying in her mind.

And now, it seemed she was the only one who cared about that...

"Rin, what do you think is the reason Blackened Saber is after Illya?"

"Huh?"

Rin, who had been lost in her thoughts, snapped back to attention at Roy's question, quickly entering professional mode. Her expression turned serious as she pondered.

"Did you notice something?"

"There's already a fully-formed Lesser Grail inside Blackened Saber."

"What?!"

Rin's face changed instantly.

"I see. That explains why her mana seems limitless. If she's carrying a Lesser Grail from the last Holy Grail War... then the reason she's targeting Illya must be obvious."

"That's what I think as well."

Roy nodded solemnly.

"She wants to destroy this war's Grail and replace it with her own."

In every Holy Grail War, the Lesser Grail was prepared by the Einzbern family.

To put it simply, the Lesser Grail was the heart of a homunculus.

This time, Illya was the Lesser Grail.

The last war's Lesser Grail was likely Illyasviel's mother, Irisviel.

But what if the previous Lesser Grail hadn't been used up and still existed?

Which one would become the true Holy Grail?

If Illya was chosen as the Lesser Grail, then the one Blackened Saber held would become useless.

Sensing this threat, Blackened Saber must have headed to Einzbern Castle to eliminate Illya, the current Lesser Grail.

Unfortunately for her, Roy had intervened.

He rescued Illya and brought her into the Spirit Barrier of Fuyuki City, leaving Blackened Saber with no way to reach her.

"...You'd better avoid going outside for a while."

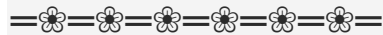
Rin's expression grew complicated as she looked at Roy.

"I'm seriously worried Blackened Saber will kill you someday."

"Haha, I'll keep that in mind."

Roy chuckled softly.

On the very first day of the Holy Grail War, he had become the target of its most dangerous opponent—Blackened Saber.



Chapter 50: Chapter 50: "Clear the Field."



[👉 Shoutout to Guto for joining patreon. Thank you very much. □]

Upon arriving at the city hall, the first person Roy and Rin sought out was Kirei Kotomine.

"Indeed, it was you who defeated the Blackened Caster," Kirei said with a gentlemanly smile. "My familiar has confirmed it. Now, let's transfer the Command Seal."

Kirei rolled up his sleeve, revealing the Command Seal etched on his arm.

"Rin, I'll give this Command Seal to you."

"Why?"

Caught off guard, Rin's face was full of surprise as she turned to him.

"You lost one earlier, didn't you?" Roy smiled. "Consider this compensation for dragging you into this mess."

"Do you even know what a Command Seal is?" Rin glared at him, disbelief in her eyes.

"This is an absolute authority over your Servant. It can even save your life in a critical moment, and you're just giving it to me? Sure, we're allies now, but once we deal with the Blackened Servants, we'll be competitors again. You're literally helping your enemy!"

They had signed a binding contract that prevented either from acting against the other until the Blackened Servants were dealt with. For now, they were indeed reliable allies.

But in the Holy Grail War, any Magus seeking victory was ultimately an enemy of the others.

Rin had already resolved to face Roy as a rival once the Blackened Servants were out of the way.

"It's no big deal," Roy replied with a slight smile.

After all, a Command Seal was nothing more than a type of magic.

"You're down to just one Command Seal, aren't you? You sure you don't want to replenish it?" Roy pointed toward the back of Rin's hand, a playful glint in his eye.

"This... this..."

Rin's cheeks flushed red as she hurriedly covered her hand.

Indeed, she only had one Command Seal left.

Besides the one she'd used to help Red Archer escape Blackened Saber, she had wasted another right when she first summoned him. He had been so unruly that, in a fit of frustration, she had impulsively used a Command Seal to demand, "Obey all of my orders." The vague phrasing had rendered the Command nearly useless.

"Did you mess up again?" Roy teased.

"Shut up!" Rin snapped, her ears turning red as she shot him a glare.

Though she appeared angry, her flushed face made her look more adorable than threatening—her indignation had no bite.

"Fine. I'll remember this favor. One day, I'll definitely repay you!"

The moment she said this, Rin felt a pang of regret.

Crap. I'm racking up debts faster than I can pay them! How am I going to settle this one?

With some trepidation, Rin extended her hand to accept the Command Seal transfer from Kirei.

"Only by offering yourself could you possibly repay this debt..." Kirei remarked with a teasing undertone as he observed her blush.

His eyes flickered with a trace of malice, gone as quickly as it appeared.

"Hm?" Roy suddenly sensed a subtle wave of hostility directed toward him.

When he turned to look, he locked eyes with Kirei.

Kirei's expression was serene, saint-like, devoid of any joy or sorrow.

But Roy, ever sensitive to malicious intent, didn't miss the fleeting glimmer of satisfaction in Kirei's eyes.

What is this bastard plotting now?

...

The refugee shelter wasn't far from city hall.

After leaving the hall, Roy and Rin made their way to the shelter together.

It was still early morning.

The shelter was quiet, mostly empty except for a few overworked city officials and the dozen or so refugees who had been brought there.

And one man—grim-faced, radiating frustration—was waiting there.

The man had golden hair, dark skin, and a distinctly Middle Eastern appearance. He was none other than Atram.

As they entered the shelter's lobby, Roy immediately spotted Atram leaning against the wall, his face as dark as a storm cloud.

Nearby, Ichika and Miku Nakano sat on a bench, their expressions lifeless and filled with despair.

"Well, if it isn't Mr. Atram himself," Roy said with a flawless smile as he approached. "It's chilly out tonight. Aren't you worried you'll catch a cold if you don't head home soon?"

As Roy spoke, all eyes in the room turned toward him—Atram, Ichika, and Miku included.

Ichika shifted uncomfortably, anxiety clear in her expression.

"Lord Roy," Atram greeted him curtly, ignoring the pleasantries.

Though Roy had been polite, Atram had no interest in small talk. His face was strained with impatience that he barely managed to hide.

"I heard you've chosen these two as your attendants. It's unfortunate, but I also have an interest in them. However, since you came first, I'll let you pick one. I'll take the other."

Ichika's face paled at Atram's words, her expression turning dark.

Roy picks one, and Atram takes the other? How could this even be possible?

"What are you talking about?" Roy asked, feigning ignorance as he looked at Atram.

"Stop playing dumb."

Atram was quickly losing patience, his tone growing hostile.

"No matter how skilled you are in magic, you're still just a youngest son. According to the rules of Fuyuki, you can only choose one attendant. I'm letting you pick first. Isn't that enough respect for you?"

"I don't want just one. I'm taking both of them," Roy said, smiling innocently.

"Are you trying to break the rules?"

Atram's voice rose several notches in volume, his irritation becoming more apparent.

"Of course not. That's why I brought Mayor Tohsaka with me."

Roy's grin widened as he gestured toward Rin, standing behind him, her black twin tails swaying.

Rin cast a disdainful glance at Atram.

The moment she remembered what Roy had told her about Atram's actions, disgust flashed across her face. She immediately turned her head, not even wanting to look at him.

Talking to this guy would dirty my mouth!

"We've already decided. I'll take one, and she'll take the other. You? You get nothing," Roy said, his smile bright and unwavering.

If you think you can outmaneuver Rin Tohsaka, go ahead and try!

Rin's rank as a Magus was Grand.

Granted, much of that rank had to do with political reasons—being the mayor required her to hold a high rank, to give people confidence in her leadership.

But regardless, Rin's rank was real. She was, without a doubt, one of the highest-ranking Magi in Fuyuki.

As an Entry-ranked Magus, Atram was several tiers below Rin. He couldn't possibly compete with her.

"Roy, enough with your games!" Atram finally exploded, his face twisted in anger.

His gaze toward Roy was filled with disgust, as though he'd been severely insulted.

"How dare a mere homunculus consider himself our equal!"

"When the law was passed allowing homunculi to earn ranks, I should have opposed it! A homunculus is nothing more than a tool for us Magi! Disposable—created when needed, discarded when not! You're only lucky that Aoko Aozaki took a liking to you. That's the only reason I've shown you any courtesy at all. Don't push your luck!"

"Oh, right. I heard your old master came looking for you recently, calling you a traitor. Are you nothing but a runaway? Maybe even your magic was stolen!"

Roy's smile remained, though it no longer reached his eyes.

"Tohsaka."

Rin's face darkened as she turned toward Roy.

Still smiling, Roy said softly, "Clear the field."

