



3

Kisetsu Morita

Illustration by **Benio**

Average of 25 ●
x 365 days
x 300 years
x (2+2 EXP)
Level 99

★ ★ ★ I've Been Killing
SLIMES for 300 Years
and Maxed Out My Level ★ ★ ★

What a
rude blue
dragon
you are!

Flatorte
will sell
the most!

They're
both
deeli-
cious!

The
Witch's
House
cookie
shop
is now
open!





Blue Dragon-Girl
Flatorte

Red Dragon-Girl
Laika

Elf Apothecary
Halkara

The Witch of the Highlands
Azusa

Don't think
I haven't
trained for
this day!

...You'll regret
showing me
as much
kindness as
you did.



★ ★ ★ I've Been Killing **SLIMES** for 300 Years
and Maxed Out My Level ③ ★ ★ ★



Kisetsu Morita
Illustration by **Benio**

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ON
NEW YORK

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I've Been Killing Slimes for 300 Years and Maxed Out My Level, Vol. 3

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SLIME TAOSHITE SANBYAKUNEN, SHIRANAIUCHINI LEVEL MAX NI
NATTEMASHITA vol. 3

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THE COOKIE BAKE-OFF

Something was rocking me back and forth.

I felt a strange force, almost as though my body would be ripped in two. What could it be...?

When I opened my eyes, I found Falfa and Shalsha standing on either side of me, pulling me from side to side as I slept in bed.

But their swaying was out of sync, so they were either scrunching my insides or almost tearing me in half.

“Heave!”

“...Ho.”

“Heave!”

“...H-ho.”

Shalsha was a beat too late!

It's times like these I see how different they are, even if they do act so much like twins, I thought, but now wasn't the time to be overwhelmed by emotion.

“That hurts, so stop shaking me!”

“Oh, you're awake, Mommy!”

“Good, good.”

Falfa beamed, and a slight smile appeared on Shalsha's lips.

Shalsha was still becoming more expressive by the day. She didn't used to smile at all.

“You were sleeping for a long time and didn't wake up, so we got worried and came to get you, Mommy.”

“We already had breakfast. It's way past time to get up now.”

Seriously? I looked at the clock and, sure enough, it was an hour and a half later than usual.

“Oh, I see... We did just come back from the demons’ castle, after all...”

A lot—a whole heck of a lot—happened at the demons’ castle, so it must have worn me out. I guess I was sleeping soundly now that I was in a familiar bed.

“Whose turn was it to make breakfast today? I don’t think it was mine...”

We all took turns making meals here in the house in the highlands. I had a feeling it was supposed to be Laika’s turn, but wouldn’t she have woken me up properly?

I headed for the dining table and found a mound of cookies placed on it.

Well, more like piled high on it.

Two piles, each on a big plate.

What is this...? There’s enough here to open a bakery... Are we going to have an eating contest...?

“Oh, good morning, Lady Azusa.”

Laika looked exhausted, too, but that was probably mostly due to travel. To be honest, it would be weird if the trip hadn’t worn her out.

“What are these cookies for, Laika? I mean, I wouldn’t mind cookies for breakfast, though.”

There was really nothing wrong with cookies, except that they could dry out your mouth. They seemed rather nutritious anyway.

“Actually, this is—”

A new face popped out from right behind Laika, cutting her off.

“Mistress, please try one of the cookies I made!”

The girl was Flatorte. Unlike Laika, who had only horns, Flatorte also had a tail in her human form, so she stood out like a sore thumb.

“I am sure the cookies I’ve made will be much better than Laika’s!”

Flatorte tried to push her aside, but Laika similarly held her ground.

“Oh no, no. My cookies will be much better, because I am well aware of Lady Azusa’s preferred tastes.”

“Ha! Then she’d tell you they were good just to be polite!”

“How rude of you! That is the most despicable thing about you blue dragons!”

The two gritted their teeth and glared at each other.

Aah, their quarrel gave me the rundown on the situation. Now that I thought about it, they had been talking about having a showdown with sweets on the leviathan on our way home from the demon lands.

Oh. I’d thought they were just getting caught up in the moment, but I guess they actually went through with it.

“Okay. Then I’ll decide whose is the most delicious, fair and square.”

The two nodded, satisfied.

They matched better than you’d expect, didn’t they? They were both dragons, so it wasn’t that weird if they were perfectly in sync.

“Then I’ll get Halkara, Falfa, and Shalsha, and all four of us will decide together whose is the better—”

“We can’t have that.” “I agree.”

They both refused. *They really are in sync.*

“I have focused all my energy into baking cookies that you will find delicious, mistress, so I want to see your reaction alone.”

“I, too, have made them to suit your tastes, Lady Azusa. And if all four of you were to act as judges, then there’s a possibility it would end in a draw.”



No matter what the outcome, one of them would end up holding a grudge...

I sat down, and they placed several of each cookie on two plates before me.

In order to keep it fair, I had no way of knowing who baked what.

“I know you will pick mine, mistress!”

“Victory is impossible for you, considering how long Lady Azusa and I have known each other!”

I wanted them to stop fighting, since it would only make it harder to savor the cookies...

Anyway, I started on my late breakfast. If they tasted good, then all would be well.

First, the right-hand plate.

“Ooh, it’s buttery and the texture is very light. It’s not bad at all.”

I ate three in a row. It was a very high-quality cookie.

It would be easy for me to tell who baked it if either of them smiled, so they stood silently with meek expressions.

Next, the one on the left.

“This one has roasted beans mixed in with it. The texture of this one is quite interesting, too. It’s almost like the sweet *senbei* we had in Japan, where carbonated water was mixed into the dough.”

They were called *tansan senbei*—a thin, crispy, sweet cracker. I often received them as souvenirs from people who went to Arima hot spring.

“So, Lady Azusa, who is the victor? I believe it is me, of course.”

Laika stood in front of me.

Her comment...made this much harder...

But still, though they both looked like cookies, the concepts were much different than I’d imagined. It was like having trouble giving an answer to the debate of which was better—math or language arts. It was hard to make a choice.

“Now, which is it? I know the winner is me!”

Flatorte confidently stepped before me as well.

Oh no, what to do...? I want to avoid giving an answer that isn't well thought out, and hurting someone's feelings... This would be much easier if one of them clearly tasted better than the other...

As I deliberated, the expressions on both their faces were brimming with confidence.

Smug, you could even say.

“This is clearly my victory.”

“It's mine, *Flatorte's*, obviously. I've already got my victory shout prepared!”

Don't both of you announce your win like that!

It's getting way too hard to choose!

Oh well. They've left me with no choice but to use my secret move.

I stood up.

Both of them stared at me.

“And the winner is—both of you, since they were both so delicious!”

It was too hard to pick a winner, so I fled from the choice with all my might!

This is fine! It's totally fair! I chose the path with the least sadness! And I really was having a hard time making a decision!

“Lady Azusa, you can't do that...”

“Mistress, you may be as merciless as you please here.”

Neither one was satisfied, after all. No, no, this was no time to be ruthless.

“This extremely haughty individual ought to cry. It would be perfect karma.”

“Excuse me, *this* individual is acting all high-and-mighty only because she's lived here for a long time. Could you please shut her up?”

“That's what I'm saying! It's almost impossible to choose because both of you keep spouting nonsense like that!”

I wanted them to put themselves in my shoes for a second.

“And even though they’re supposed to be cookies, they’re clearly different concepts. You would have a hard time, too, if you were asked to choose between an omelet or fried chicken, wouldn’t you?”

“I would choose an omelet.”

“As would I.”

That was a bad example.

I knew Laika liked omelets, though. Were there lots of omelet fans among dragons?

Either way, I knew they weren’t happy with a draw, so I thought of a countermeasure.

“Well, why don’t you sell the cookies in Flatta and decide the winner by who sells the most?”

The two stared blankly at me, as though my suggestion was beyond anything they could have expected.

“See, it’s hard for an individual to choose on their own because the flavors are so different, but it’d be easy to come to a conclusion through sales, right? Why don’t you decide the winner that way?”

“If you say so, mistress, then I have no objections.”

“My victory over you will be overwhelming, and I will show you how much more skilled I am!”

Thankfully, I escaped ending up as the bad guy.

And there was another advantage to this method.

Flatorte was now a new member of the family, and I was waiting for an opportunity to introduce her to all of Flatta.

Selling her homemade cookies would make for an excellent first impression.



That day at noon, I went to the village and gained permission from the chief

to use an empty building.

However, since many people in the village went shopping in the morning and stayed inside in the afternoon, we decided to hold the competition the following day.

The two also needed to make more to sell, so it worked well with our schedule.

And I'll take the chance to tell you now that the cookies that were like sweet *senbei* with roasted beans were Laika's cookies. They were apparently originally invented in a hot springs area by a volcano, so they might actually have the same origin as the *senbei* sold around hot springs areas in Japan.

The next day, we opened the Witch's House cookie shop in Flatta.

But although the shop had only one name, the cookie sales were calculated separately. They were sold by the bag.

"Welcome! These cookies are much more delicious than the ones beside them!"

"Try these cookies! They're so much more delicious than the ones over there, it would be stupid to compare them!"

Could they at least stop dissing each other while advertising their cookies?

Now I had no responsibilities, so I relaxed and watched on.

By the by, Rosalie the ghost was floating near the sale stand as the referee, making sure that neither of them played any dirty tricks.

I didn't think either of them would, but she was also there to make sure the loser didn't accuse the other of an unfair win. They were both sore losers, so it was possible.

"Bohh of 'em rea-hee are goooooood, 'ough."

Halkara bought one bag of each type of cookie. She was stuffing her face as she talked, so it was hard to understand her.

Falfa and Shalsha were also taking cookies from the bags and munching on them.

“Falfa is so lucky to have more snacks!”

“That’s great, Falfa. They should make some for us more often.”

There were very few people at first, but the people of Flatta tended to flock around any new rumor, so the crowd gradually got thicker.

“Ooh, we get cookies this time from the great Witch’s House?” “Which one should I get? I guess I’ll get both.” “Great, I’ll get one of each, too!”

Both types were flying off the shelves.

And I thought I saw more male customers, despite the product for sale being cookies.

“Laika’s the cutest one, though.” “The new girl’s like a big-sister type. I like it.” “Ooh, you going for her?” “You were always a fan of Halkara, though!”

I see, so they were popular like idols in a way. There were only girls in my house, after all.

But there was also a line of girls acting the same way.

“I’d want Laika to be my little sister.” “She’s way too cunning. I’d want someone like the new girl.” “But doesn’t a tail mean *she’s* the cunning one?” “I like it, even if it does. I could stroke her tail as her big sister to calm her down.”

The world sure is full of interesting people...

The two *were* cute, so their popularity wasn’t odd.

In terms of outward appearances, Laika looked like she had just entered middle school. On the other hand, Flatorte looked a little older, somewhere between middle and high school.

From my perspective, it felt like my two little sisters were scrambling for my favor, so it wasn’t all that bad.

“Oh, Madam Teacher, that was a vulgar look on your face just now.”

Ack, Halkara pointed it out. *She really didn’t need to see that...*

“It’s the same face I make when I’m calculating that month’s sales.”

“Wait, you do it, too?”

“You know, I’d say that the addition of Flatorte was a good incentive for Laika, don’t you think?” Halkara commented as she watched the two sell their cookies.

Of course, she was also in the middle of a match, but Laika’s expression certainly looked livelier than usual.

“You really like to observe, don’t you?”

“I was just thinking that if we added some ground herbs to the dough, we could sell it as a wholesome snack to the health-conscious demographic.”

“For *business*?!”

But it probably really was good for them to have someone to compete against.

Sometimes people talked about competing against themselves, but that rarely ever happened. It was much more common for people to cut themselves too much slack.

So it was easier if the enemy was an outside force.

I’d just likened them to sisters earlier, and that wasn’t entirely off base.

And by the way, the cookies were being received very well. I heard several comments from the villagers: “The cookies we bought were so good, my kids told me to go buy some more!” “I gave them a taste test, and I am definitely buying them!”

I knew for sure they would do well when I ate them yesterday.

And just as the last cookie disappeared from Halkara’s bag— “Well, I’m getting back in line to buy one more bag each.”

“Get two, Big Sister Halkara!”

Falfa announced her demands.

We sure were buying a lot of them ourselves...

The two had made quite a lot, likely because they were so confident, so their product remained on the table into the evening despite how much they were selling.

It was just before nightfall.

The last customer bought one bag each, and the competition was over.

“They both sold out at the same time, too.”

“That doesn’t matter; there’s no point unless they’re competing to see who makes more money. If it was who sold out the fastest, then the one who made the least would be at an advantage.”

They both sold their cookies for three hundred gold per unit. That was about three hundred Japanese yen. The price was the same, so whoever sold the most would also be ahead in amounts of money.

“There was no foul play during the time of sale. I, Rosalie, have kept careful watch.”

Rosalie the judge announced there were no violations of the rules, so we would now start counting revenue.

“I believe I can calculate the fastest, so I will count.”

Halkara quickly lined up the bronze and silver coins as she counted them. As a merchant, she worked very quickly.

The two competitors gulped as they watched on.

“I will not lose. The village of Flatta is counting on me as well.”

“It’s not like they acknowledge you as a professional cookie baker. When it comes to quality, you are no match for the great Flatorte.”

“By the way, was there supposed to be a special benefit for the victor?”

“Now that you mention it, I don’t think we decided on one... Why don’t we pick one now...?”

The two started mumbling about something.

Wouldn’t the loser just get a flick to the forehead at most?

For some reason, a mass of townspeople started to gather by the shop. It seemed like everyone was interested to see who would win.

In the crowd, I could see banners with messages like, GOOD LUCK, FLATORTE! and

GLORY IS YOURS, LAIKA! If these people could turn something into a festival, they would do it right away...

“All right, I’ve calculated the revenue. The price for each was the same, so I will announce the number sold.”

When Halkara spoke, everyone looked to her, not just the competing duo.

“First, Laika—three hundred units!”

The townspeople cooed, “Wow!” I was surprised, too. The town’s population was definitely less than three hundred, which meant quite a number of people had bought multiples.

“That many? I hadn’t paid attention to how many I was baking.”

Laika admitted the truth. She had made way too much, thinking about it generally.

“The great Flatorte never thinks about the *numbers*. I knew a good thing would sell, so I trusted in that.”

Both of them seemed satisfied with how things were turning out.

“And now, for Flatorte.”

Everyone looked to Halkara.

The two competitors obviously couldn’t relax, and they both wore prayerlike expressions.

Who would be the victor?

For some reason, Halkara smiled joyfully just before delivering the answer.

“Can you believe it—three hundred units! Which means it’s a tie!”

Of all things!

That must have been the most entertaining result for the spectators, since there came an excited “Oooohhh!”

It was like a high school baseball match, where both teams’ pitchers were throwing strikeouts and the match had to be rescheduled, since no one was winning!

The two looked at each other.

“What should we do now...?”

“As she said, it’s a tie. It’s just the same as before...”

In a way, I was happy that my conclusion that they were both equal was validated.

I stood between the two and lifted one of each of their arms in the air.

“We have two winners! Please give them a warm cheer and round of applause!” I called, and clapping broke out in response. There was even someone playing a flute.

“And this girl is a new member of my household, Flatorte the blue dragon! Please treat her well!”

There was another cheer.

I could hear things like, “Welcome!” and, “Flatta’s a great place!”

“Oh, mistress, did you actually plan all this...?”

It seemed that Flatorte finally caught on to my plot.

“Indeed. Don’t you think it’s the perfect opportunity for Flatta to accept you?”

I hadn’t thought of too many details for it to be called a “plan,” but my relationship with Flatta had lasted for three hundred years so far. Our bond of trust was strong. So even throwing something together would still bring great results.

Flatorte’s eyes glistened with tears.

“I was worried about starting a new life, but...I knew you were great, mistress... Fantastically great!”

Flatorte hugged me on the spot. It was a powerful embrace, since she was a blue dragon, but my status was unfairly high, so I managed.

“Come now, no need to cry.”

“I will stay with you for the rest of my life, mistress!”

This girl was more of a clingy one than I thought. Maybe she had been used to putting up a strong front before.

“Hey, that’s against the rules! You can’t do that!”

For some reason, Laika protested. She should let the newcomer do what she needed to for now, especially since Flatorte truly felt so anxious.

But something about what she said caught my attention.

“What do you mean, ‘against the rules’?”

“The rule was that the winner of this challenge would be allowed to hug you, Lady Azusa, for ten minutes.”

What? This is the first I’m hearing of this... I did not consent to this...

And that’s too long. Ten minutes is too long.

But there was no doubting that they’d both worked really hard, so afterward, I gave a big hug to Laika, too.



That night, the population density in my bedroom increased a bit. And my bed itself was a little crowded, but what could I do?

Laika and Flatorte were on either side of me.

“Now then, let’s get along when we sleep, like the roman numeral three.”

“The what?”

“I don’t know, either.”

Oh right, I was thinking of my old life. And that would imply we were all the same size.

“All of us sleeping in one bed like this makes us seem like sisters, right? So going by height, I’d be the oldest, Flatorte’s the second oldest, Laika’s the youngest, and all three of us are supposed to get along. Okay?”

“I understand, mistress...” “I will follow your orders, Lady Azusa...”

“Okay then, tonight, we sleep together!”

Feeling blessed, I fell straight to sleep and dreamed of having a delightful cup

of tea at a café with my two sisters.

“Yaaawn... I slept so well!”

I had a very pleasant night, but it didn’t seem the two on either side of me did.

“I didn’t sleep a wink...”

“Me neither...”

Apparently, neither of them got to sleep.

“Was the bed too narrow for you...? If it was, then I’m sorry.”

“No... I couldn’t calm myself when I thought about how I was in the same bed as you... And, mistress, you smelled so nice...”

“I was so, so happy, I felt like sleeping would be such a waste of time. So I stayed up...”

Both of them sure were making a big deal out of this.

“If you want, I suppose we could do this once a month or so.”

To be honest, it was easier to do things like this now that Flatorte had joined us.

Up until recently, I wanted a way to draw a clear line somewhere when it came to sleeping with Laika, since I am a woman of age, of course, and even though we were of the same gender.

But with the three of us, it was more like a sleepover, so I felt my resistance lessen.

“Oh really?! Do you really mean that?!”

“You’re overreacting, Flatorte...”

Her tail was whipping to and fro... That thing really had a mind of its own. It was way different from a cat’s tail.

“Indeed. You need to be more, you know, ladylike...”

Laika’s face was bright red, too, as she spoke, though...

Ah, I knew it. The younger sisters both look up to the eldest.

Then, I was surprised to see Laika yawn.

“Once preparations for tomorrow are over, I think I’ll head to bed early tonight...”

“I agree... For once, I agree with you...”

Flatorte seemed pretty sleepy as well.

“Hmm? What preparations for tomorrow?”

I thought I was supposed to be in charge of making food today.

“Lady Azusa, the cookies have proven to be extremely popular, so for the next while, we will be making them every other day.”

That often?!

Oh no. I didn’t think they’d be that well received. It was supposed to be a one-day-only deal.

“And by the way, it seems we’ll be selling in the town of Nascúte tomorrow. We’ll need to prepare today. I didn’t sleep very much, but I’ll do my be—*Yaaawn...*”

Flatorte gave a big yawn, too.

Feeling somewhat responsible, I decided to help make and sell them.



The day we brought the cookies to town, we sold much more than we had in the village.

Frankly, we made so much money we could live off these cookies.

“Can you imagine if we produced them en masse and sold them throughout the country?” said Halkara. “It’d be amazing!” She sounded like a CEO.

“No. Each individual cookie must be made with love and care, otherwise they won’t be good.”

“Only the great Flatorte can make her magnificent cookies. It won’t taste the same from the hands of another.”

Both of them sounded like professionals.

“Madam Teacher, don’t you think some weird switch has been flipped in them? They are acting like cookie-baking professionals, aren’t they?”

“They sure do look like they have thirty years’ experience...”

From then on, the cookies sold very well. Maybe too well.

We got a request to open up shop in the provincial capital of Vitamei, and after that, more and more people began associating dragons with cookies throughout our province.

And then we returned to Flatta again and for one day sold cookies there.

“Madam Teacher, it really is getting to be too much...” Halkara was staring at the line leading out the front of the shop.

“I know. Say what you will, but they are really getting burnt out...”

Exhaustion was starting to catch up to the two dragons after several days of work in a row.

But the more they made, the more they sold, so they just kept on making.

“We have to stop them sometime, otherwise they’ll collapse... I don’t think dragons die from overwork, though...”

“Yes... We should probably intervene at some point...”

But a little while after opening sales, something strange happened to the air about town. And the clear skies suddenly clouded over.

“Oh dear, I’m getting a chill...”

Halkara started shivering.

I, too, felt an ominous presence.

“Long time no see, Sister.”

The girl with sheep horns on her head was the demon king, Provato Pecora Ariés, also known as Pecora.

Beside her was Beelzebub, holding a parasol above her to protect her from the sun.

There was also Vania the leviathan, holding out another parasol—it was like a

matryoshka of parasols.

“Aah! Why did you come here?!”

“I heard this was where those extremely popular cookies were being sold, so I came to have a taste. By way of leviathan.”

Oh! I thought it had suddenly gotten cloudy—that was the leviathan! Since Vania was in human form, then that meant everyone had hitched a ride on her older sister, Fatla.

“There is always trouble when Her Majesty travels, so I really wish we didn’t...” Beelzebub sighed.

“I—I pray this will all go smoothly...” Vania seemed frightened, probably because she was traveling with the demon king.

“Eh-he-he-he, so we should line up, yes? I suppose it wouldn’t be too terrible to join a queue like a commoner every once in a while.”

Pecora then politely went to the end of the line.

But even the most common of commoners seemed to understand the terror of the demon king.

“H-hey... There are demons behind me!” “I thought something was in the air, and turns out it was a giant demon!” “The legendary leviathan!”

The villagers were frightened. Some of them may have been acquainted with Beelzebub, but it seemed the leviathan had a big impact on them.

Then, Pecora spoke to the villagers with a smile.

“A pleasure to make your acquaintance! I am the demon king.”



“It’s the demon king!!!” “It’s the end of the world!!!” “What are we gonna do now?!?!?” “O great Witch of the Highlands, please defeat the demon king!!!”

All those waiting turned pale and ran off.

The line shrank to about ten people in an instant.

Or from a different perspective, there were ten whole people who *weren’t* going to run away?

“Oh, well, now we can make our purchase quickly. Wonderful.”

Pecora seemed excited by her sudden stroke of luck, but I knew her ulterior motives.

“You scared off the villagers to put yourself at the front, didn’t you...? I bet that’s why you came on a leviathan, too.”

“I don’t quite understand what you mean, Sister.”

You sure look like you know what I mean!

This demon king is always up to something...

On the other hand, now with fewer customers, Flatorte and Laika stared on blankly in amazement.

“I think we can carry the rest of the inventory back, but what should we do, Laika...?”

“Oh dear, I don’t know...”

Though Pecora ended up buying all the remaining stock, the cookies now had the reputation of attracting the demon king, so we had significantly less people asking us to make more.

Pecora’s arrival did cause us trouble, but the two were finally freed from a long stretch of work, so I suppose all’s well that ends well.

I was sure we could go into the village once a month or so for a more relaxed little sale.



AZUSA AIZAWA

The protagonist.
Commonly known
as “the Witch of
the Highlands.”

A girl (?) who was
reincarnated as an
immortal witch with
the appearance of a
seventeen year old.
Before she knew what
was happening, she’d
become the strongest
being in the world.
Although she’s had
some rough times, it
has ultimately given
her a family, and she’s
delighted about it.

LAIKA

A dragon girl
and Azusa’s
apprentice. She’s
fastidious and cares
a lot about what
others think, but
she’s a good, earnest,
hardworking girl.
Gothic Lolita clothes,
maid outfits, and
other frilly things suit
her very well (which
embarrasses her).



MY DAUGHTER WAS STUCK AS A SLIME

The cookie commotion died down, and the house in the highlands was quiet once again.

The morning sun streaming in through the window woke me up.

“Oh, right. It’s my turn to cook today. I need to get ready.”

Just as I was going to leave my room...

Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang!

There was a loud and forceful knock on the door.

What on earth did this person want?

“O-oh no! Oh no! Mom, Mom!”

The voice belonged to Shalsha. It was so loud and animated compared to normal, I almost thought it wasn’t her. But now wasn’t the time to admire her courage. Something strange was going on!

“What is it, Shalsha?!”

I opened the door and there was Shalsha, sniffing.

Oh no—did she and her sister fight? It didn’t seem so, though.

“...Sniff... Hic! I don’t know...what to do...”

She reached out to hug me, but I still had no idea what happened.

“Calm down, Shalsha. I can’t tell what’s going on, now can I?”

“Sister... My sister...”

“Did you get in a fight with Falfa?”

“No...”

Which meant her older sister hadn’t done something terrible to make her cry.

In that case, then a slightly terrifying possibility came to mind.

“Did something happen to Falfa?”

Shalsha still seemed shaken, but she nodded.

We couldn’t stay sitting here for long.

I left the room immediately.

Shalsha’s reaction was too much for something like catching a simple cold. I didn’t want to think about it, but could something even worse be happening?

“Falfa, what is going on?!”

And there was something sitting in the hallway that shouldn’t be.

A big blue slime, bouncing up and down.

The longer I stared at it, the more I wanted to eat *warabimochi*, but this wasn’t the time for such carelessness.

“Why is there a slime in the house? We need to kill it.”

The slime must’ve come in the same way a bug ends up inside. I didn’t know how slimes thought.

Shalsha immediately ran up behind me.

She wrapped her arms around me tightly, trying to stop me.

“No, Mom! No!”

“Why? Were you researching this slime?”

“That’s...my sister.”

.....

.....

“Sorry, I don’t think I understand.”

“When she woke up this morning, she was a slime...”

No way. It was just a regular slime, no matter how hard I looked at it.

The slime was bounding its way toward us.

Then, it nestled close to me.

At the very least, it didn't seem like it was planning to attack. I mean, I didn't know if that was the right call, but from its behavior, it looked like it was playing instead of attacking.

“N-no! I’m just a regular graveyard watch! I watch over the graveyard twenty-four-seven!”

“Oh-ho, then perhaps we should take you to the temple and have the cleric there cast some purification magic on you. We could do it right away if I ask politely. I am a demon minister, after all.”

I thought, *Don’t conflate human priests with your demonic power*, but it sounded like the threat worked.

“I—I’m sorry! I’ll do anything, so just... I’ll do anything but work...”

Apparently labor didn’t fall under this girl’s definition of “anything”...

“Lady Beelzebub, let us hear what she has to say,” the always calm and collected Fatla said smoothly. “And...I will drag my idiot little sister away from her study of the orange grave over there...”

“The orange looks so *real*!” Vania exclaimed from within the cemetery. It sounded like a lot of trouble to have such a weird little sister...

All of us entered the cramped house.

There were piles of what looked like books and games all throughout the room.

There was a table, but it was covered in a mess of things; it was almost like a hoarder’s house.

“My name is Pondeli... I’ve been undead for almost forty years.”

“I see, so you’re still a newcomer,” Beelzebub said.

Forty years and still a newcomer—sounds like the world of fine art.

Pondeli must have been nervous, because her cat tail was actively swishing back and forth.

“I originally lived alone in the kingdom capital, but I hated working, so I always just lazed around at home. And eating was starting to become a chore, and before I knew it...I starved to death,” said Pondeli.

So people out there could starve for such a shocking reason... Life sure was full of surprises...

“But I must have been mummified well, since my body didn’t rot away at all. Then as I lay there, bathing in the light of the moon, I started coming to life again as an undead.”

“Is it possible for something like that to happen to a dead body if it sits in the moonlight...?” I asked.

This wasn’t a question a magic-user had any right to ask, but it sure was unscientific.

“The moon does have peculiar power, but that isn’t enough to make a proper undead. I would imagine a mage came for an undead-making experiment when you became a corpse, no? It isn’t entirely bizarre if you had that sort of help.”

From what Fatla said, it sounded like it was completely possible.

“Is there anything to gain for the mage?”

“It’s valuable material for experimentation. And since she was inside, they could just sneak into the room without garnering any suspicion from the townspeople.”

After hearing Fatla’s explanation, I finally understood. There was even demand for corpses in the world.

“And once I learned that I was undead, I didn’t need to work to stay alive. I knew I had reached the pinnacle of jobless life, so now I’m wandering region to region. Oh, would you like a fruit?”

“They’re practically rotten, so no thanks.”

“Well, I suppose I’ll take one... It might not be quite rotten yet. What a waste it would be to say no.”

There was a hungry look on Beelzebub’s face.

Oh right, she had some things in common with flies!

In the end, at Beelzebub’s request, Pondeli placed an almost rotten—no, probably already rotten—fruit on a plate.

If someone told me this was an undead's room, I would agree.

"But back on topic, I'm now acting as graveyard watch here. I can see everything from that window. I watched one of the headstones fall over in a storm the other day."

"Given your job description, you should go put it back to normal."

"No, even if it falls, it's definitely still there, so it's fine."

"You're really just *watching*?!"

"This is a dream job. Since I'm undead, I don't get scared when I see ghosts appear."

Ah, so that was a strength of the undead.

Apparently, Pondeli would go out into the community to get some pocket change. She looked like a young girl, so some people would just give her money. And so she saved up her change to buy games and books.

Games meaning board games and card games.

"I'm the innocent type, so they must be letting me get away with it."

Don't say that yourself, I thought, but I knew what she wanted to say.

This Pondeli girl was insanely laid-back.

People who owned cats didn't have them to put them to work. They were perfectly content watching them do whatever they wanted. There was a part of this girl that was like that.

"I am content with this lifestyle. Well, if there was something I didn't have..." Pondeli turned a sad gaze to the mountain of games behind her. "I'm alone most of the time, so I don't have anyone to play with. There are children who come to play sometimes, but..."

It sounded like the life of a lonely NEET was rough.

"Even with kids to play with... Everyone grows up, you know? So they go out to work or go off to get married... And then they stop coming over. That makes me sad, so I search for a different community and move there. I've done this over and over."

Pondeli's ears drooped.

"The only ones who stay kids forever are special beings like you."

Though there was a small number of immortal and near-immortal beings in this world, they were of many different kinds and races. Witches like me and demons were the same, too.

On the other hand, there were also people who grew and aged normally.

It was so hard to watch people I knew die when I first experienced it. I had to detach myself in order to keep going.

The girl said it had been about forty years since she became undead, so she still wasn't used to an immortal lifestyle. And yet all her young playmates would grow up into adults very quickly, so all she experienced was parting over and over again. This was probably the most difficult time period for her.

"What, is that all?" Fighsly said like it was no big deal. She must have had some sort of solution. "You'll never get lonely if you temper your body!"

What a stupid answer!

"Then your muscles are your friends! Ha-ha-ha!"

It'd be cruel to make her live a life where her only friends are her muscles!

"Even if what Fighsly says is rubbish, I agree that it's not too bad."

Beelzebub spoke with the generosity of someone who had lived a long time.

"So then why don't we play a game together here and now? We at least have a good number of people here."

When she said that, Beelzebub truly looked like a good older sister. This girl knew when to give up.

"There are plenty of people who would play games in the demon lands. From now on, you will be able to play games to your heart's content whenever you have free time."

"Really?! You would do that for me?!"

"I am a demon minister. It's a simple task for me, really."

Beelzebub flashed her teeth in a grin.

“Boss, you’re so cool!”

“Exactly what I expect from you, Lady Beelzebub!”

“Master!”

Beelzebub’s subordinates gazed at her with respect. She was acting like a big, important person, after all.

Ah, I see. I had a lot of girls around me, too, and Beelzebub was also the core of her group.

“Then what game should we play? I have so many kinds!”

“Why don’t we play this Marionettes card game?”

“This is a masterpiece. You have to be so tricky, even with just a few cards! I always play this with a girl who lives in the community!”

“Playing it with just two people isn’t very exciting. I recommend four to six players.”

“That many people don’t come here...”

And so we had a game night that lasted until morning.

Since she had so many games, we played and played with no end in sight.

It’s best to have a good night’s sleep, but it can be fun to cut loose every once in a while.

And as for the games themselves—

“Hmm! First place.”

Beelzebub was practically unrivaled.

“Boss, I think if you went a little easier, then the games would be better from a balancing standpoint...”

“What are you talking about, Vania? Wouldn’t the game be spoiled for everyone if you clearly knew that I was going easy on you? Games are battles of the mind. How rude it would be not to do it to my utmost?”

I understood what Beelzebub was getting at, but it got boring when she was

number one in everything.

And Vania never failed to take last place.

It looked like the ranking of our smarts was manifesting in the results.

“Then why don’t we play a game with a stronger element of luck? That game over there, Headhunters, is a sort of nonsense game.”

“Wait, you can’t explain the game when it’s not your house.”

Oh no, Beelzebub is taking over... She’s acting like she owns the whole place...

Either way.

I could tell right away that Pondeli was having a fantastic time.

“I’ll take first place next time!”

Both demons and cats were night owls. I just concentrated on going along with the party.

And so dawn broke.

“Phew, that was so much fun!”

“I wanted to win at least once...”

Beelzebub’s near-constant victories and Vania’s near-constant losses were creating two very different moods.

“Thank you all so much!”

Pondeli’s expression was so lively, it was impossible to think of her as a NEET.

“Please come again. You have to! And you can bring other demons, too!”

“Certainly. In a way, we’ll be closer than ever.”

“What, you’re moving to the area?!”

Like Pondeli, I didn’t exactly know what she meant at first.

“No. You will be moving to the demon lands from here.”

And that’s when I remembered our original goal.

If we left the undead alone, humans might find out what she really was and dispose of her.

We had been looking for her in order to protect her.

“So for now, we shall have you live in Vanzeld town. I’m sure you will make friends there, and you can play as many games as you want on your time off.”

“Huh? Time off...? That concept only applies if there will be time spent working, right...?”

“Yes. We’ll have you working hard in Vanzeld town. We have simple work for you, so you’ll be all right.”

When Pondeli heard Beelzebub’s words, her face blanched.

Then, she clung to the table.

“No! I won’t work! If I have to, then I’ll watch a graveyard or something! I’ll do my best!”

“Fool! One day, when you’re discovered to be undead, you’ll be erased from this world! It would be best for you to move to demon lands and work there!” Beelzebub tugged at Pondeli’s back.

“I don’t mind moving, but why does a job have to come with it?!”

“Because it’s part of *my* job to make sure the undead I bring in gets hired! I shan’t allow something so terrible as unemployment after I’ve brought you in!”

“But I’d actually prefer that! I don’t ever have to work!”

In a way, things were getting more complicated...

I had foreseen the two values clashing.

On the one hand, Beelzebub’s values dictated, *We will protect you, so in return you will work as a proper member of society.*

On the other hand, Pondeli’s was, *I don’t want to work, so I won’t! I have the freedom not to!*

Which was right...?

For me, who died a corporate slave, I wanted to say there was no need to force her to work.

But that probably meant that all she had to do was find a job that didn’t push

her.

I felt like that view wouldn't validate someone who refused to do any work at all, too. Nobody around me insisted on life as a NEET in the first place.

Beelzebub's intentions probably weren't compulsory labor; she probably just thought that a member of society should work for a profession to earn money to live.

At least that much was true. Humans were creatures who participated in society through work...

But was it okay to force someone who refused to work?

"You will not earn any money if you do not work! You won't be able to live!"

"Yes, I will! I'm undead so I don't need to eat! I'm perfectly content with receiving fruit or whatever from people who want to indulge me once in a while!"

"That's not what makes an independent adult!"

"I have no plans to be independent, but I'm not causing trouble for my parents, either!"

Figsly and Fatla looked on in bewilderment.

"Um, Miss Azusa? What should we do about this?"

"Figsly, you handed this off to me at the right time... So, what do you think about this? The questioner should give her opinion first."

"To be honest, I want to be rich, so I don't understand the mentality of refusing work itself."

"You money-grubbing woman!"

"Money-grubbing slime, actually. Motivating myself with money makes life even more fun, and it's easier to set goals."

I guess that was how a freelancer might think about it, too. There were countless answers out there in the world.

"Thank you, Figsly. Now, what do you think, Fatla?"

“For me, I believe she should move to Vanzeld Castle normally and work. Because if she stays here, we don’t know when she’ll be discovered as an undead and be put down. She should not live a jobless existence that puts her life in danger.”

“That’s reasonable.”

It was weird for an undead’s “life” to be in danger, though.

“Then you’re the last, Azusa.”

Tch. Now they’re asking for my opinion outright.

“Indeed, indeed. Azusa, tell us what you think!”

“The demons are turning employment into too much of a virtue! As a human representative, please tell them about the significance of not working!”

The bickering duo looked to me.

Urgh... It’s sounding like my opinion is going to decide everything...

I wonder if there’s some sort of magic that could produce good advice... Of course not...

“A-ahem...”

All right, I’ll make this work somehow with my own words.

“Oh, though I wouldn’t mind should you choose to let her mooch off you in your house in the highlands.”

“Nope, not happening.”

“My, that was rather dry of you.”

Beelzebub seemed slightly surprised at that, but we did take turns with household responsibilities, after all.

I even made my daughters help out with the cooking and cleaning. I couldn’t have someone in my house who wouldn’t do any of that. It would completely throw off the general mood of the household.

“Well, the answer is obvious.”

Let this solve the problem!

“Pondeli should open a game lounge wherever she moves to!”

Both Beelzebub and Pondeli blinked at me.

That probably wasn't enough for them to understand, so I explained a little more.

“Pondeli, you like playing games with everyone, right?”

“Most games need a bigger number of players... I got so fired up playing with so many people, like this time around!”

“Then, this is just a guess, but I'm sure there are tons of people in the demon lands who don't have enough people to play with. So why don't you start a trade where people pay you to play games with them? Then you can play while you work.”

“Azusa, is that work...? That sounds to be a bit much...”

“If it fails as a business, then it just doesn't generate any money. Since it's a one-man business, it's possible she won't make any profits, but since Pondeli doesn't really need to eat to live, it's no harm no foul, right?”

“Oh, that's right! I'll be conducting business in a legal sense, then! I might be able to do that!”

Pondeli's expression brightened. That was a good reaction.

“I see! If I get a lot of offers to play, then I can earn money by playing! And if I don't get any offers, then I don't have to work! It's a win-win!”

“Yes! I'm sure that won't be a problem for you!”

I felt oddly excited, probably because I'd stayed up all night. My brain was getting flushed with dopamine. Yeehaw!

“And so, what do you think, Beelzebub?”

“Rgh... Rrrrrgh...”

Since Beelzebub was a government official, she probably still wasn't completely satisfied with the idea, but— “Ooh! Fine, fine! I'll put in an application for it! But you will submit a notification that you are opening a business, okay?! Otherwise I won't acknowledge your so-called 'game lounge'!”

All right! Problem solved!

“Thank you, Miss Azusa!”

Pondeli bowed her head over and over.

“It’s fine; it’s fine. I hope you thrive in Vanzeld town.”

“Oh, but moving is going to be such a pain...”

She glanced around at the rest of us.

“That much you can do yourself!”

Beelzebub paid me for helping with the investigation, and I went back to the house in the highlands.

Since I had stayed up all night, I went straight to sleep once I got home.

And I know you’re asking what I used the investigation money for— “Okay, then Falfa’s going to use a defense card there. 🎵”

“I won’t stop you! I will use a card that strengthens my attack even more!”

“Then Shalsha will stop you with a cancelation card.”

Yep—I used it to purchase a number of card and board games we could enjoy at home.

We were playing a two-versus-two card game at the moment. It was my two daughters versus Halkara and me.

“Madam Teacher, please use an extra power-up attack card here!”

“Aww, but I like it when my daughters cooperate together, so I won’t.”

“Oh, Madam Teacher! You should not underestimate our opponents! That doesn’t make for a fun game!”

My daughters seemed really excited about the games, so they’d been playing whenever they found some free time recently.

Maybe I should implement a rule limiting game time to one hour a day soon...



BONUS: WHAT A THRILL! A BALL GAME AT THE INN!



“Phew, this is true nirvana!”

As I soaked in the outdoor bath, I gave a sigh of bliss.

The whole family was bathing in the hot springs at the volcano in Laika’s hometown.

I didn’t have a good grasp of how many geothermal hot spots there were in this world, but at the very least, there were several hot spring inns at the volcano, and most of them had outdoor baths.

Since it would be a waste otherwise, I visited a different inn every single time I came. But it wasn’t like there were dozens of them, so I’d soon be on my second go around. I’d probably find my preferred inn to stay at before too long.

“Lady Azusa, what is nirvana?” Laika asked me. Oh right, she wouldn’t understand that word.

“Well, it’s like heaven. It means a place filled with the most happiness.”

“I see! How informative. I knew you were so abundant in your knowledge, Lady Azusa.”

But it was of course a word that any ex-Japanese person would know, so I sort of felt sorry for receiving that compliment.

“This is more hell than heaven...”

Flatorte lay flat on her stomach outside the outdoor bath.

Blue dragons apparently didn’t handle heat very well, and she’d gotten out of the bath almost right away. Then Halkara started pouring water on her.

“Ooh, my body feels heavy...”

“Flatorte, you were in the bath only for about fifteen seconds. That sounds much too quick to get dizzy...”

“Yeah, I’ll return to normal, then try it again...”

Well, some people couldn’t handle baths very well. Even if the water wasn’t all that hot.

And by the way, my two daughters weren’t breaking any of our rules for manners, like splashing around and swimming. They were perfectly well-behaved. They seemed to enjoy the big bath.

“Halkara, Flatorte seems fine now, so you can come in if you want.”

“Is that so? If you insist, then.”

Halkara came back to the bath.

Her bosom was floating on the water.

Hmm... I always imagined elves as slender, so then what was up with Halkara’s breasts?

“Big Sis Halkara, you really have big boobies!”

“Miss Halkara, when did this happen to you?”

Aah, and now my daughters are interested! But they’ve never asked me stuff like that before...

“Are they? Now that you mention it, there were berries at home that had something in them that increased breast size, and I ate those a lot. Maybe that’s it.”

She said something I couldn’t ignore.

“Halkara, we’re going to go pick those berries next time!”

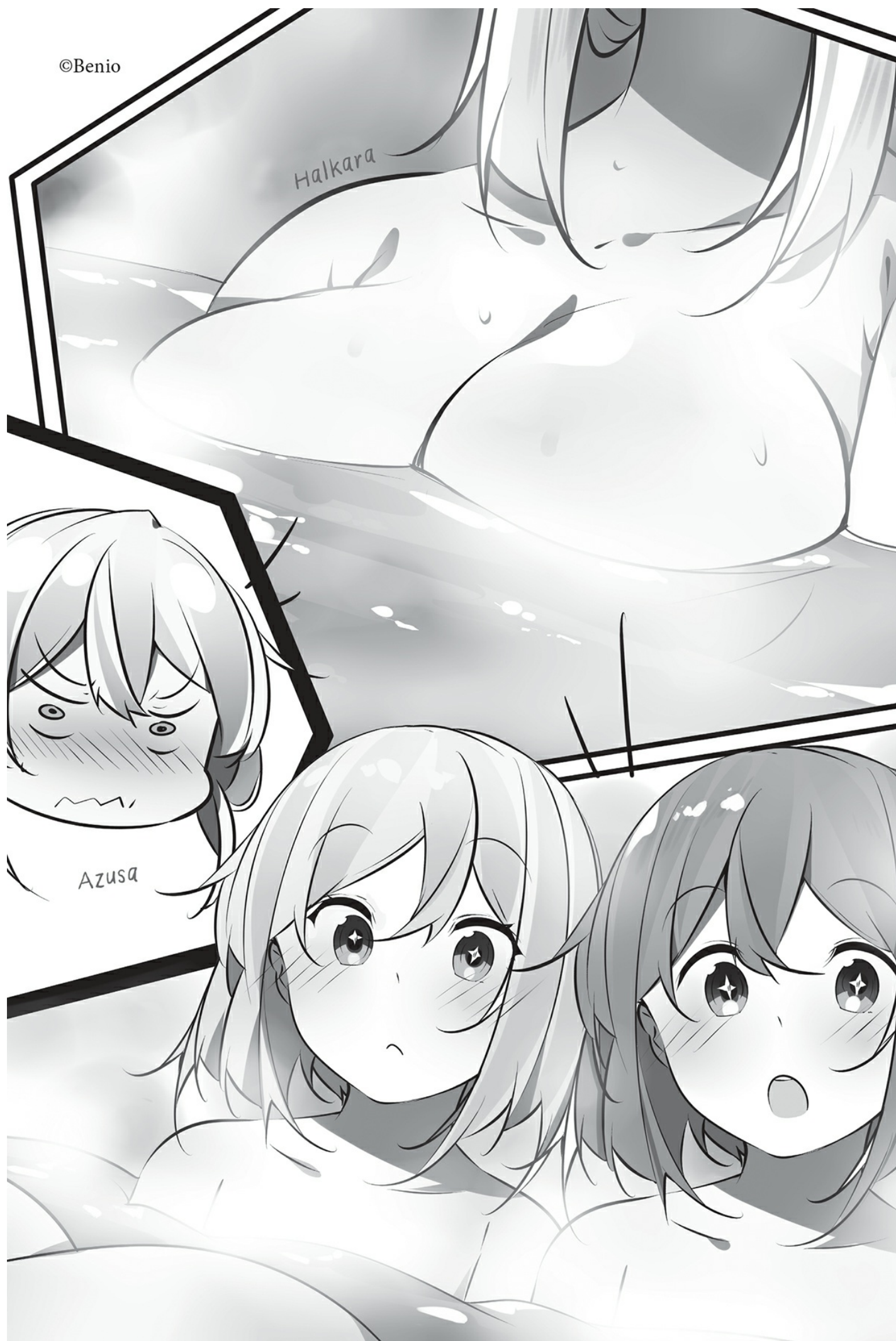
“Huh?! Really, Madam Teacher?”

“Really, really! If I can get this strong defeating slimes for three hundred years, then I’m sure the effects would be incredible if I ate those berries for thirty years!”

—And putting that aside.

“Ooh, the water was so nice!”

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We changed after we got out of the bath and left the dressing rooms. What I wore wasn't my usual clothes but my pajamas.

Well, I'm not Flatorte, but I guess I should cool off somewhere. Still, the spring was in a volcano, so it was hot even outside the bath.

Then, to the left of the changing room exit, a door that said GAME ROOM on it caught my attention.

"Game room? Do they really have games here?"

I guess hot spring inns in the suburbs often had old shooting games in them. Maybe it was the same here. But there probably wouldn't be any arcade cabinets.

"Games? Yay, sounds fun!"

Falfa opened the door right away.

Sitting there wasn't an arcade cabinet, obviously, but it was still something I recognized well.

It was a table with a net in the middle.

Could this be...?

"Oh, it's a pin-pone table," Laika said.

"I knew it was Ping-Pong!"

"Pin-pone is a very well-known sport among the dragons. Blue dragons play it a lot, too," Flatorte said.

I didn't know why, but there was no question that dragons played Ping-Pong.

"You may not know about it, Lady Azusa, so I'll explain the rules. We use this pin-pone seed that's hollow on the inside as a ball, and both players hit it back and forth with rackets. So when you serve, you bounce it once on your side of the court, then hit it with—"

"Oh yeah, I get the gist of it. Actually, you could say I'm experienced."

It matched the rules for Ping-Pong one for one. I didn't know if it totally matched up with world conference regulations, but the basics were exactly the

same.

“It sounds like you know the game, Lady Azusa, so why don’t we have a match while we’re here? Both rackets and balls are in the basket.”

Laika brought over the Ping-Pong equipment (*I’m just going to call it Ping-Pong*) from the corner of the room.

“All right, let’s do this! Hot springs and Ping-Pong always go hand in hand!”

“No, Lady Azusa, it’s pin-pone.”

She corrected me, but I was just going to stick to Ping-Pong.

The racket was exactly the same as a regular Ping-Pong one. There was even a rubberlike substance stuck to it. But it seemed like all they had were the double-faced ones.

The first match was between Laika and me.

“I won’t lose, Laika! I’ll show you the dignity of the head of the house!”

Laika was the first to serve.

I may not look it, but I was once a part of a Ping-Pong club called Curve that made it its goal to play Ping-Pong at hot springs. The name came from the curved arc the ball went in.

It would be cheeky of me to count myself as an experienced player, but I wasn’t exactly a beginner.

Laika tossed the ball in the air. It was coming straight to my side of the court.

I went at the ball with my racket.

“Ha!”

But the ball flew straight past the table and into next week.

“Wha...? This is pretty tough...”

“The first point goes to me. Let’s go again.”

The ball flew at me once more. I swung my racket.

This time the ball went straight into the net.

“...Hey, Laika, you’re putting a spin on the ball, aren’t you?”

“Yes. Adding a spin to your serve is a basic tactic, of course,” Laika said, her expression suggesting it was the obvious thing to do.

Aww, come on. Isn’t it mean to take hot spring Ping-Pong this seriously? Aren’t we supposed to be exchanging lighter hits?

Which, by the way, I couldn’t do.

“I’m sure you may have your own thoughts about this, but I will not go easy on you. That would be much too rude to my opponent.”

She was as sharp as always, but to have Ping-Pong at a hot springs be the motivation for it...

“Oh well. I guess I’ll just have to step up to the plate now, huh?”

1–11

I got my butt handed to me.

There wasn’t much I could do anyway, since my opponent got all the points when it was her serve. When I got lucky and got the ball in her court, it was high and easy to hit, so she just struck it way far out...

All my serves had high bounces, so she hit them straight back to me with a strong arm.

I remembered when Beelzebub took all the games seriously when we were playing at Pondeli’s place. Sure, it wasn’t good to go easy when playing cerebral games, but when it came to sports, it wouldn’t be a good game without a handicap...

“All right, would anyone else like to play?”

Laika seemed to be having fun. *That’s not very grown-up at all! Well, body size doesn’t make her an adult, though.*

Afterward, Falfa and Shalsha stepped up to the challenge, but since they didn’t even know the rules, they lost without taking a single point.

Rosalie, who was a ghost and couldn’t even get in the hot springs, also easily lost. I mean, she couldn’t handle the racket well enough to hit the ball, so what

could she do? I wanted to praise her just for managing to play a game.

Halkara was also a beginner, so she wasn't very good, but there was a bigger problem with her.

Her bosom looked like it was going to pop out of her pajamas whenever she moved, so I stepped in during the middle of the match.

"Okay, stop! This is too risky! I can't say for sure that a male guest isn't going to come into this room at any time... You should be more discreet about that..."

"I'm sorry. My chest is in the way, which makes it hard to use the racket."

I was getting extremely irritated by my own personal feelings.

In the end, Laika was undefeated.

It felt cheap, like a member of the Ping-Pong club was playing with a bunch of casuals.

"All right, perhaps I should switch with someone soon."

"Wait! One of us hasn't tried yet—Flatorte!"

Flatorte stuck out her right hand and stepped up to the challenge.

"Very well. Actually, I believe this match will come to a quick conclusion."

"My strategy was to tire you out by making you play against everyone else."

Flatorte was petty, too!

"I'm sorry, but it's impossible to return my serves with the spin I put on the ball."

"Then go ahead and try. I have a secret technique."

Whether she actually had any secret techniques or not, there was no questioning Flatorte was raring to go.

"Here we go!"

Laika tossed the ball up high and brushed it with her racket.

She put a spin on it this time, too!

Then, Flatorte—

“Roaaaaar! Here it comes!”

—practically smashed the ball back into Laika’s court.

Laika couldn’t even begin to match that energy. To think Flatorte was starting out ahead!

“Wow, amazing!” “You did it, Miss Flatorte!” “That was a full-body hit.”

My daughters and I yelled practically all at the same time!

“I—I see! She can deal with the serve by adding even more of a spin on her return hit!”

Halkara sounded like an expository character when she spoke. But it was an easy-to-understand explanation.

“I, Flatorte, don’t really understand that stuff about spins. But a spin naturally occurs when I swing my racket. I’m overwriting Laika’s spin entirely with my own!”

To me, it sounded like a technique that just used force, but it was effective, so I guessed it was fine.

“Impressive. But I haven’t even started yet. You didn’t think I was just planning on winning through my serves, did you?”

Oh, the color in Laika’s eyes changed.

This is gonna be an intense fight...

“All right then, come at me!”

Their match quickly turned into a melee.

It was hard to tell if it was skill or just pure energy, but whenever Laika served, Flatorte would always hit it right back.

Of course, that didn’t knock Laika off her game, and she was fielding it well.

And Flatorte was keeping up, always smacking it right back with an aggressive stance.

This is getting exciting...

Flatorte’s attack sometimes failed and Laika earned a point, but there were

also plenty of times when it entered Flatorte's court and then shot straight past Laika.

The game was complicated right up until the last phase.

16–16

A deuce wouldn't settle the matter.

How will it turn out...?

We watched with bated breath to see where this was going.

"I see sweat on Miss Laika's cheek that wasn't there at the beginning. I believe she might not have much left in her."

Halkara was right at home explaining to the audience, wasn't she...?

"Big Sis Halkara, is Big Sis Flatorte at an advantage?"

"It's not that simple, little Falfa. This is a hot springs in a volcano. With the high temperatures, a blue dragon like Flatorte will be at a disadvantage when it comes to long battles. In actuality, she's been making more mistakes since the second half started."

It was a mystery as to why Halkara, who supposedly had never played this game before, could provide such an accurate analysis. My mind was on the match, but now it was also on that...

"This match will come to an end soon."

Halkara the explainer's opinion became reality.

"Hey, Laika, let's get rid of the two-point advantage and say whoever gets the next single point wins."

Laika would be serving next, so Flatorte offered a suggestion.

"Are you sure? Don't blame me if you regret it."

"You're the one who'll decide if I'll catch this one."

Laika nodded slowly.

A drop of sweat fell to the floor.

"Very well. I'll end this with my next serve."

“Heh, and I’ll return it!”

Then, Laika grinned.

“Actually, I have a secret serving technique that I haven’t shown once yet.”

“Whatever serve it may be, I, the great Flatorte, will send it right back! Even if your technique is better than mine, my game sense isn’t to be underestimated!”

Things were getting heated. This didn’t feel like hot spring Ping-Pong...

“Technique versus instinct—a clash of dragon pride. Now, what sort of serve will we see next?”

“Halkara, Laika should naturally have the advantage, since she’ll be using a new move here. What do you think about that?”

“Well, at this point this is a battle of pride, so it’s hard to say how much of an effect it’ll have. Flatorte would be able to push back against a tricky serve with her power!”

For some reason I really wanted to read a sports manga, whether about Ping-Pong or tennis or something else. Unfortunately, they didn’t exist in this world.

“Then this serve will end it all! I will never allow you to receive!”

“Enough talk—just hit the ball!”

The ball slowly rose into the air.

Then Laika moved in a way I had never seen before.

She was holding the racket vertically, like she was going to chop the ball in half.

“Here we go!”

Laika swung the racket at high speed!

And without even touching the ball, it sliced through empty air.

The ball plopped down.

“I—I—I... I won!!!”

Flatorte took on a victorious pose in celebration. Something about this felt

unfinished, but there was no questioning she won.

“I beat a red dragon! I beat a red dragon!”

Logically, that was correct, but that phrasing made it sound like it meant something different!

“W-wait! Deciding the winner like that will only leave a bad taste in both our mouths, so we should just do it normally with a two-point advantage!”

Laika, you’re sounding childish!

“Hmm? The great Flatorte won fair and square. No need to play anymore!”

Flatorte was smug as sin. She could look as smug as she wanted today. She had won convincingly.

“Then, then... One more match! Let us have one more match!”

Laika was such a sore loser! She really did take everything seriously.

“No. Actually, I’ll never play with you again. That way, Flatorte’s victory will forever remain etched in history!”

And Flatorte was really petty about this stuff!

Afterward, since the two of them worked up quite a sweat, we all went back into the baths for another soak.

In the water, Laika was still asking Flatorte for a rematch.

“Sheesh, will you cut it out already? No need to obsess over something so trivial!” I scolded.

“How dare you! I have my regrets!”

Next time, we’ll stay at an inn without a Ping-Pong table...

I made a vow to myself as I soaked in the water.

BONUS: ROSALIE WAS STUCK IN A WALL

In the morning, as always, the family gathered in the dining room.

Today was Halkara's turn to make food, so there were generally lots of vegetables.

In cooking, everyone's personalities showed themselves. Laika used a lot of eggs in her cooking, and Flatorte always made rich meat dishes, even in the morning.

When I cooked, I thought my meals were comparatively balanced, but I wasn't actually sure.

At the very least, it was much better than the *orange juice and done!* kinds of breakfasts I had when I was a corporate slave. Whether it was "feminine" or "masculine" wasn't the issue; it was just hard on my humanity.

"Oh, Rosalie isn't here today," Halkara said, gazing up at the ceiling.

Even though she was a ghost and didn't eat anything, Rosalie was usually floating near the ceiling, just enjoying the company of her family.

"Lack of sleep? But I suppose *sleep* isn't really a thing for her."

Since she was dead, Rosalie led a life without what we'd call our three basic needs. It must be hell for a ghost to see such tantalizing food without being able to eat it like she wanted, so I thought she was doing well in that department.

I decided to call for her.

"Rosalie, where are you?"

It was like calling out for a house cat, but Rosalie was much easier to lose track of.

No response.

She wasn't above me or below me.

I peeked into the rooms on the first floor and the wide shared space in the wooden extension that Laika built, but she wasn't there, either.

Her absence started to worry me...

I headed for Rosalie's room on the second floor. Rosalie wasn't disadvantaged by having to physically go upstairs, so she used the second floor.

The door opened with a *clack*, but she wasn't there.

Her personal stuffed dogs and cats were there, and that was all. She liked stuffed animals, so she would save up her allowance and buy them sometimes.

"Huh? If she's not here, then where did she go...? I mean, she can go to Flatta or Nascúte or wherever..."

And when I was about to leave the room— "Big Sis, Big Sis! I'm here!"

I heard Rosalie's voice.

But it sounded a little different than usual, almost slightly muffled.

And I still couldn't see where she was.

"Hey, Rosalie, where on earth are you? I can't tell where you are when you just say *here!*"

She was definitely close by, so I gazed around the room.

That's when I noticed it.

At one spot on the wall, the wooden textures looked like a ghastly face.

"*Aaaah!* It's haunted! Like something from a horror flick!"

Monsters and spirits and stuff didn't scare me after all this time. Demons came by the house pretty often, after all.

But I could *not* handle hauntings and unexplained phenomena! It gave me the shivers! And goose bumps!

I have to run! I have to get out of here now!

"Big Sis, wait! It's me!"

Rosalie's voice echoed around me again. And it somehow sounded like it was coming from...

“Hey! Don’t scare me like that! That’s you, right, Rosalie?!”

“Yes... I had a little accident...”

I guess once Rosalie got caught in the wall, a terrifying visage appeared. Was this another part of a ghost’s power...?

“Whatever, just come out right now. This is terrible for my heart.”

“Well... I can’t...” The wall sounded embarrassed.

“Huh? Isn’t it a piece of cake for a ghost to slip through walls?”

“Actually, I was just sitting here for a bit. Then, for some reason, I got caught and couldn’t move...”

Was something so bizarre possible? But, I guess it was happening in real life...

I had no idea what to do about this on my own, so I called the whole family in (except Halkara, who had gone to work at the factory).

But no one could think of a quick fix.

Not only was it the rarest of cases, but none of us had been ghosts before.

Shalsha brought in dictionaries from her room and started looking up words.

I didn’t think that would solve anything, but it would be bad for her education if I told her outright that it wouldn’t work, so I just watched.

“I learned that *stuck in a wall* was an old idiomatic expression.”

“Huh, and what does it mean?”

Was it maybe a phenomenon that had happened a lot in the olden days? Ghosts themselves had been around forever, after all.

“It means—nothing can be done. To be at a loss. A situation where giving up is the only solution.”

“Okay, that’s not helping!”

Whoops, I ended up shooting her down...

“As the one who built this part of the house, I’m loath to suggest it, but why don’t we break the wall here? Rosalie may be able to get out then.”

Laika offered an aggressive, dragon-like solution.

Before I could say anything, Rosalie resisted. “That’s scary, so don’t do it! I might be cut into tiny pieces!” I couldn’t say for sure there was no risk, so I agreed.

“What if you space out again and end up slipping out? That’s how I, Flatorte, have lived life so far.”

Flatorte’s ideas didn’t deviate much from one another...

But sometimes things just come off by the time you’ve forgotten about them, more often than you think. Like when you go back to open a lid on a bottle and it comes right off even though it was stuck the first time.

“By the way, Rosalie, how do you feel right now?”

“If I had to describe it... Nothingness.”

Her response sounded vaguely religious.

“It’s been a while since I died, but this is the emptiest I’ve felt. Futility, maybe, or nihility... I want to get out of here soon...”

I guess we couldn’t just leave her.

“All right! Falfa will push you out!”

Falfa rolled up her already short sleeves— —breathed in slowly—
—and rammed right into the wooden wall. *Bam!*

Whoa! That was a full-bodied blow!

As a result of that...

“Waaah, ow, oww! My arms feel tingly...”

I saw it coming, but Falfa just got hurt.

“Aww, Falfa, you should think carefully about doing something before you do it, okay?”

She was still a child, so I wanted her to be more thoughtful at times like this. I looked at Falfa’s arm.

“Are you bleeding? There’s no blood. Good, good.”

I stroked Falfa's arm.

"This'll make the pain go away. Pain, pain, go away!"

"Wow, Mommy, that's incredible! I think it actually hurts less! You're like a magician, Mommy!"

I've been a witch for three hundred years, by the way.

Whether or not it actually had any effect, Falfa stopped crying, so that was good enough for me.

—But then, I got an idea.

I slowly stood before Rosalie (and the wall she was in).

I gently brushed the wall, stroking it back and forth with my right hand.

"Ah-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!! Stop, Big Sis! That tickles!"

The voice came from the wall in response.

It was working, but it was unclear if it would help her get out.

"You know, I noticed we hadn't touched the wall at all. Since you melded with it, I wondered if it would tickle you if I touched it," I said as my hands continued to stroke the wall.

Anyone just looking on might think I was being perverse, but I was super serious about this.

"Gyah! Ee-hee-hee... Ah-ha-ha-ha-ha... Stop, stop! I'm gonna die...!"

"You're fine! You're already dead!"

Her reaction was promising. And it was getting more and more effective.

Wouldn't giving the wall a good rub like this bring her out of it?

If she didn't—well, we'd cross that bridge when we came to it! We had nothing to lose!

"Everyone, pet the wall with me! Like you're tickling it!"

My two daughters, Laika, and Flatorte all lined up with me and started lightly touching the wall.

“Yaaa-haaaaaaa! Wah-ha-ha-ha! I can’t do this anymore! This is hell, hell! Eeeeeee! Yaaaaaaa!”

Rosalie sure was cracking up. *Now come on out!*

“I can’t take it anymore!!!”

Then, suddenly, Rosalie popped out from the wall.

Her eyes were watering, even though she was a ghost. Maybe it really was ticklish for her.

“Sheesh! You guys went way too far! I’ve never been tortured like that before!”

“But we succeeded in getting you out, right?”

Rosalie looked around to see where she was.

“Oh, you’re right... I didn’t think that would work...”

And so Rosalie’s ensnarement in the wall was solved peacefully, and she never spaced out in a wall again.

We all needed to be careful not to trap ourselves between a wall and a hard place.

BONUS: LAIKA CAUGHT A COLD

When I woke up in the morning, breakfast wasn't ready yet.

I checked to see if it was my turn that day and I forgot, but it wasn't. I thought that maybe Halkara had a drink before bed and ended up sleeping in (which had happened in the past), but it wasn't her day, either.

Right. It was definitely Laika's day.

I repeatedly knocked on the door to Laika's room.

After a little while, Laika flew out of the room in her fancy pajamas.

"My apologies, Lady Azusa! I will start breakfast at once!"

From the looks of it, she overslept.

That was unusual for her, but people did oversleep at least once or twice in their lives. It wasn't like she was late for work or anything, so it wasn't a big deal.

"Oh, no rush. No one else is up yet but me, so take your time getting ready."

"No! One's routine will fall apart if one makes too many allowances! I will begin my preparations right away!"

Still in her pajamas, Laika stood in the kitchen cutting the ham, whisking the eggs, and starting her breakfast.

She would insist on doing things her way when she got like this, so I read a grimoire as I waited.

"All right! This is ham and eggs with a drizzle of ketchup on top!"

"Oh, it's a simple meal, but Falfa and Shalsha will be delighted to eat it." My daughters were children, so they liked things sweetened with ketchup. "All right, I'm going to dig in, then."

"I am so very sorry for making you wait!"

Hmm, it sort of felt like she was prioritizing diligence a little too much again.

It probably wasn't actually that big of a change, since it depended on the personality, but I just decided to mention it.

"Hey, I'm not a guest, so you don't have to be all fired up about this. Why not take it easier? It's harder to break something flexible."

"B-but there's a difference between that and skipping my— Ha, ah, ah, ah..."

Then, Laika's mouth opened in an odd way. And just as it occurred to me, *Hey, her expression is really strange—*

"Choooooooooooooooooo!!!!!"

An explosive tempest of a sneeze came from her mouth.

The plate that I was about to eat from almost flew away, so I managed to just catch the plate itself. The food scattered all over the table, so I put everything back on the plates as fast as I could for the three-second rule.

That aside.

"Uh, Laika? You weren't sleeping in because you had a cold, were you?"

Anyone would think so if they saw that sneeze.

I guess I could also be thankful that flames hadn't come out of her mouth.

"Oh, no, I'm just a little under the weather... Ah, ah, ah..."

Since I'd borne the brunt of it just now, I used my experience to get right up close to Laika and cover her mouth with my hand. I somehow made it in time.

"Mumble, mumble..."

Oh, it'd be hard for her to breathe if I kept it closed all the time. I drew my hand away.

"I—I'm sorry, Lady Azusa..."

"Stay put. I'll take your temperature."

I put my hand right onto Laika's forehead.

"Ack! That's a real fever right there! It's *way* too hot, actually! I'm surprised you're still alive..."

The sensation was like holding a cup filled with hot tea.

“I think that’s because I’m a red dragon... My body temperature is high to begin with...”

Okay. I guess we go with the dragon rules instead of the human rules here.

Even so, it was a sure thing that she had a cold.

“Laika, go back to your room and sleep. I’ll take care of everyone’s breakfast.”

“B-but...”

I scooped Laika up to carry her in my arms.

“I *really* hate it when people who aren’t healthy force themselves to work. It’s dangerous if it gets any worse, it’s inefficient, and if someone unwell can’t afford to take a shift off, then the guy who put the shifts together is incompetent! Now sleep!”

I carried Laika and forced her into her bed.

Then I put ice and water and cold towels and stuff on her, but they all dried up very quickly. Her temperature was really high...

“Let me ask just in case, but are there any life-threatening illnesses that only dragons can catch?”

“Dragons are hardy, so no... *Hachoo*, I think I got too cold while I was sleeping... The highlands are cooler than the volcano, after all...”

For me, the highland air was refreshing and felt great, but it sounded like Laika’s thoughts on the matter were different.

“Then rest a lot today. You can help out as much as you want once you’ve recovered. I will *really* be upset if you force yourself up or if you pass your cold on to any other family members. Right now, your duty is to recover from your cold, okay? That’s all!”

If I didn’t decisively tell her to rest, then she would leave her room again.

I could dote on her after she’d slept for a while. I had to be Laika’s substitute for the day.

I asked Shalsha about Laika’s symptoms when she woke up, and she told me it

was an illness with the very straightforward name of “dragon cold.”

“It’s not serious, but the greatest symptom displayed is a sneeze strong enough to blow things away.”

“Yep, I’ve experienced that. I guess it’s pretty typical.”

Then all we had to do was make sure she got better.

“Madam Teacher, times like these call for Nutri-Spirits, don’t they?”

“No! We can’t have her feeling like she wants to work anymore!”

I shot down Halkara’s idea.

That being said, she did have a brain for medicine, so I guess I could ask her to help.

“Halkara, can you take today off from the factory?”

“Yes. I’m the president, so I may do what I like.”

“Go out and pick several kinds of herbs. In the meantime, I’ll watch over her.”

It was times like these that the whole family working together could make a difference.

“Flatorte, make some ice. Rosalie, Falfa, Shalsha, do the cleaning in Laika’s place today.”

Now that I was done assigning jobs, I put my heart and soul into nursing Laika back to health.

Laika’s forehead was still burning up, so it felt like she was gravely ill, but it was just a cold. The room was stuffy from the heat, but sweating was good for you when you were sick. That was probably no big deal.

What I needed to be careful of was that her sweat didn’t cool her down too much when she slept.

“Okay, we’re changing clothes, Laika.”

“I—I’m sorry, Lady Azusa...”

Every two hours or so, I would have Laika remove her clothes and put on new ones.

She was sweating way more than a human, so I had to take thorough care of her.

“These sorts of colds typically go away within the day, so you don’t have to worry so much...”

“Huh. Perfect, then.” I looked at her with confidence. “You ask for whatever you want today. Laika, you’re always trying to do things on your own, you know.”

Laika’s face was already red from her fever, but it looked like it got even redder.

“Understood...”

I knew that Laika was really a spoiled girl. But her education hid that by cultivating the parts of her that made her a stable individual. Think of a businessman whining, “Mommy, it’s too stifling...,” and not getting on the train to work in the morning. Everyone ends up molded into proper people.

But being proper all the time was definitely too stifling.

A balloon continually filled with air would burst. The act of depleting some of that air was necessary.

Before long, Laika was sleeping soundly. It didn’t seem like she was having a nightmare, so maybe she was getting better.

But then, she murmured something in her sleep.

“Elder Sister...”

Her big sister had gotten married. I know I said it before, but I had to be her pseudo—big sister.

Working so expeditiously for my younger sister...made me sleepy, too.

I sat on the bed and figured a five-minute snooze should be okay. *Yeah, five minutes will be fine...*

I woke up when I realized someone was petting my head.

It was Laika, sitting up in bed.

“Oh! Lady Azusa... You’re awake?”

She was surprised when I opened my eyes. I sat up.

“Sorry, I guess I fell asleep while I was watching over you. I hope I didn’t get in your way, though.”

“It was not a problem at all. Thank you for looking after me. It seems like my fever has gone down as well.”

“I see. This is all because of your *big sister’s* care.”

I deliberately emphasized *big sister*.

Laika’s right hand gently covered her mouth. Her ears were red, so that probably meant she was embarrassed.

“Ever since your big sister, Leila, got married, you’ve had less people you can lean on, right? I decided on the day of her wedding that I would take her place. You laid your head on my lap that day, didn’t you?”

“Y-yes... I remember it well...”

It sounded like Laika still remembered that. She quickly nodded.

“From now on, you can be the little sister you want to be, as much as you want to be. Growing up doesn’t mean you have to stop depending on others. If you need to lean on me, then do it. If you don’t, then I’ll indulge you myself.”

“Growing up does not mean discarding all dependencies... There is weight to those words. I will make a note of this later.”

She was probably planning on avoiding the whole thing by saying something so stiff.

But I guess that was fine. My feelings got through to her anyway. She was my little sister, after all.

“But why were you petting me?”

My memory was hazy, but it felt like she had run her hand over my hair a number of times.

Laika’s expression grew hesitant, and she looked away.

Wait, is there really a problem here?

“Well... Lady Azusa, you looked very cute when you were sleeping... Like a little sister...,” she said, still averting her eyes.

“I wanted to be the older sister, but now I’m the younger one?!”

What was up with that? My scheme had lost the plot!

“Certainly, you’re normally like my...a big sister, Lady Azusa. But your sleeping face looked much younger than I thought... And if you look younger than me when you are sleeping...it’s very much like a little sister tired out from caring for the sick then falling asleep...”

She’s not following along at all!

*Could it be that I was the only one who was planning on being the older sister?
Am I getting complacent...?*

“I’m sorry! You are very much like an older sister to me, Lady Azusa! I don’t often think of you as a younger sister!”

But you do sometimes.

“Then the next time I catch a cold, you’ll take care of me, right, *Big Sis Laika*?”

“Please do not tease me like that, Lady Azusa!”

“Big Sis Laika, you don’t have to speak so formally to your little sister.”

“Please, stop with this!”

Afterward, I created a bitter medicine from the herbs Halkara picked. When I made Laika drink it, her cold got all better.

The End

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AFTERWORD

It's been a while. This is Kisetsu Morita!

There is a lot of information I need to announce since the second volume, so I'll start with that!

First, we've decided to put out a drama CD! Ta-daa!

Of course, I can't announce the voice-acting cast, but the on-sale date has been decided. It will be January next year! So, in six months. I would be very happy if you sit tight and wait patiently!

Also, since there are a great number of characters in this work, no matter what, having every character appear won't happen unless I turn into an oil magnate and invest a lot of money into it. So I'm thinking about doing a story with a scene after the festival that happened at the beginning of Volume 2.

Next, serial publication of the comic version has begun in *GanGan GA*!

I would be delighted if you would enjoy seeing Azusa's world drawn by Yusuke Shiba-sensei! I am incredibly excited to see how the author will develop things in the future!

This is especially so, since Shiba-sensei previously drew a comedy about a witch. I think he is the perfect casting choice for *I've Been Killing Slimes for 300 Years..., etc.*

Also, in *GanGan GA*, where the comic version is being published, I've started serializing a spin-off story about Beelzebub!

As of now, the starting schedule hasn't been set yet, but I think it will start either just before or right after this book comes out.

I know it's a little late to say this, but *I've Been Killing Slimes for 300 Years...* is written from the first-person view of the main character, Azusa.

So I can't show what the characters are doing in environments that Azusa isn't present in.

And so, it was the perfect opportunity to focus on the life of Beelzebub, who is in the position of agriculture minister—essentially the minister for agriculture and forestry. As anyone could imagine, she had a lot happen to her before she became minister...

I'm hoping to dig deeper into the stories of Beelzebub and her subordinate leviathans, Fatla and Vania, since they aren't talked about much in the main story.

Regarding serialization, we are planning on publishing twice every month (which is the general rate for *GanGan GA*. And each one will be about four times the volume of main stories published in *So You Want to Be a Novelist*).

I hope you will read this, too!

I'll pop the *GanGan GA* URL here!

<http://www.ganganonline.com/contents/slime/>

All right, now we can finally talk about Volume 3!

That being said, it's a little pointless for someone who's already read it...

I introduced a lot of new characters in Volume 3. Flatorte (who was already around, but she got a picture in Volume 3), Fighsly, Eno, Pondeli. When I put them all together, I noticed they're all problem children... But I would be delighted if you showed these girls some love, too.

I wrote about this back in Volume 1, but this story is about a slow-paced life that centers on Azusa.

Azusa is living a laid-back life her own way, but I think a hundred people would have many different ways to take it easy.

I'm hoping to represent all those different kinds of relaxing lifestyles through different characters.

Those reading the serialization in *So You Want to Be a Novelist* might already know this, but these characters will pop up again here and there and start getting involved with Azusa and her family. I want to write about a world slowly

becoming linked by friends from all sorts of different lands.

And this time also includes three bonus episodes! I hope you've enjoyed getting to see the appeal of some characters who I haven't been able to show in the main story!

Now, I have nothing but thanks for Benio-sensei, who has breathed life into so many characters. I am so happy to see the cuteness coming out of the characters, even when they're deformed!

Especially Flatorte, who's oozing with that cuteness unique to dumb little kids. It's great. I would love to do nothing but make fried rice and *yakisoba* and stuff and give it to girls like her (weird desire, I know).

And I give my deepest, deepest thanks to all those who've purchased this third volume. To express how I feel in one word about a story I started out writing as a pure hobby now being turned into a comic, drama CD, and various media like this, and then getting spread to people—pure joy. And the whole reason this has been possible is because of everyone who has been purchasing these books. Thank you so much!

Also, *The Mysterious Job Called Oda Nobunaga* is on sale at the same time as this book! It's a battle tale that's of a different breed than slimes, so I hope you'll take a look at that, too!

I'll see you again in Volume 4!

Kisetsu Morita

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