

The illustration features three anime-style characters against a bright yellow background. In the foreground, a young boy with blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a blue vest over a white shirt and dark trousers, is shown in a dynamic, forward-leaning pose. He has a pair of round, gold-rimmed goggles hanging from his neck. Behind him, a girl with long white hair and red eyes, wearing a dark blue dress with a white apron and a white headband with a bow, looks on with a slight smile. To the left, a man with blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a dark cap and a red vest over a white shirt, is partially visible. The title 'THE COMBAT BAKER AND AUTOMATON WAITRESS' is written in large, bold, black letters with a white outline, with 'AUTOMATON' in red. The volume number 'VOLUME 3' is written in red, and the credits 'Story by SOW' and 'Art by Zaza' are in blue.

# THE COMBAT BAKER AND AUTOMATON WAITRESS

VOLUME 3

Story by SOW  
Art by Zaza







# THE COMBAT BAKER AND AUTOMATON WAITRESS

## 3

Hi, everyone!  
It's nice to  
meet you!  
I'm Sven from  
Tockerbrot,  
a bakery in  
Organbaelz!"





## CHARACTERS

**LUD LANGART**  
Former soldier and now owner of Tockerbrot Bakery. In this battle of the bakeries, he has staked his pride and his life on increasing sales.

**SVEN**  
The familiar waitress of Tockerbrot Bakery.

**JACOB**  
The young boy at the center of the current conflict. Will his lineage become clear?

**MILLY**  
An apprentice and waitress at Tockerbrot.

**MARLENE**  
As a neutral party, this nun serves as a messenger between the two bakeries.

**SHYLOCK**  
A powerful merchant who has made a name for himself in the weapons industry. He opened a bakery next to Tockerbrot and is trying to run his rival out of business.







Suddenly,  
a woman's  
hand  
punched  
through the  
door.  
“W-what?!”  
“Are you  
... Jacob  
Rosso?!”



**THE COMBAT BAKER**  
**AND AUTOMATON WAITRESS**

**VOLUME 3**

**STORY BY SOW**  
**ART BY ZAZA**

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## Prologue

# A Mechanical Doll's Determination

"I dig chicks who don't smile."

He was a fast-talking guy who always said the silliest things.

"It's just, when I see a girl, I want to make her laugh by any means necessary."

I believe he was one of the highest-ranking Hunter Unit pilots in the Principality of Wiltia.

Nonetheless, most of the things that came out of his mouth, perhaps because he never shut up, were this kind of nonsense.

There are times when it seems ridiculous to store them all in memory.

"So if you were a woman, I'd have my sights on you."

Can you believe this guy?

What's the point of saying such a thing to a weapon like me?

"I am a weapon. Gender categories like male and female do not apply."

That's right. I'm not human.

The Principality of Wiltia developed me to be a humanoid weapon of war called a Hunter Unit, model number LS-6R2.

I'm a steel humanoid weapon, over eight meters tall and once feared as "Cyclops," but he said, "If you were a woman, I'd smooth-talk you."

It was that kind of statement that made me question his morals.

And that's why he chose Sharlahart as my personal code.

Apparently, that was the name of his dearest beloved.

What a nincompoop ...

The Principality of Wiltia allowed its outstanding pilots to use personal colors to improve the morale of other soldiers.

And of all colors, this guy chose red.

As an intense disturbance raced through my thought programming at his color choice, which was so contrary to its purpose of camouflage, I asked why he would choose a color that would make me stand out so conspicuously on the battlefield.

The answer I got was, “Aw, don’t sweat it. It looks cool!”

Really, he’s moronic.

A few more of us were granted personal colors.

Sophia von Rundstadt was dyed black and christened the Devil’s Black Spear. Leia Toolman was painted pale blue and called the Azure Shudder. And Lud Langart, who chose an almost silvery white, was called the Silver Wolf. Together, we were a symbol of Wiltia’s strength.

And we were known as the Crimson Hawk.

I’ll admit to liking that a bit.

“If I were human, would you really make a pass at me?”

That was my reply to his usual inane comments. But I played along with his banter more than usual.

“Hey, you’re getting into this today!”

I could tell he was grinning and showing his teeth.

“You’re so expressionless and rigid. It’d be awesome if you went red in the face from laughing.”

I wondered how dumb this guy was.



“Well, it’s time for work. Shall we head out?”

He said this casually, before setting out for the battlefield.

He acted the same during the invasion of Amritard, which was later said to be the fiercest battle in the late days of the Great European War.

Due to that victory, the August Federation greatly withdrew its defensive line, and Wiltia advanced its forces to within a step of winning the war.

But after that battle, he suddenly disappeared.

According to rumors, he died in battle, or fled before the enemy, or so the stories go.

But that can’t be.

Because Crimson Hawks never run or die!

Knowing him, he was probably chasing tail and just forgot to come back.

That’s probably it.

It must be.

So I will keep waiting.

Someday, he will return.

And until then, I refuse to laugh.

Because he’s so foolish.

No matter how I may change in appearance, as long as I am me, and as long as I don’t smile, I’m certain he will reappear and try to make me smile with some stupid joke.

So I will not laugh.

# Introduction

Man cannot live on bread alone. Who first said that?

*Munch, munch, munch, munch ... munch, munch, munch ...*

Tockerbrot was a bakery located in the corner of a little mining town called Organbaelz.

The shop was recently renovated, with a larger building and a food court where customers could enjoy a bite to eat.

Jacob, a long-standing customer of the shop—it's original customer, in fact—was sitting at a table and eating fresh-baked but deformed bread, which was unusual to find in this bakery.

“H-how is it?”

Milly, a new staff member, stared nervously at Jacob.

Today, she was wearing a work outfit for baking, instead of her usual waitress uniform with an apron.

“Hmm ... It's not baked evenly. Maybe because of its irregular shape? And the texture isn't quite right. Maybe you should have kneaded the dough more.”

“Argh!”

Milly's shoulders slumped after hearing Jacob's comments.

“But it's not bad for your first time. You can't bake like you-know-who from the start.”

Milly was using the oven to bake by herself for the first time.

It had been three months since she started working with Lud, observing his work, and receiving his advice.



And today she had performed all the baking without his help.

“If you can’t bake coupé, which is basic bread, you’ve still got work to do.”

Jacob’s observation was correct and struck home.

Milly had thought the same after eating her own bread.

It dashed her spirits even further that Jacob had pointed this out.

“Lud says he was an assistant for two years. If you can bake like this after just three months, you’re making rapid progress.”

“Would you pay money for my bread?”

“Um ... that’s asking a bit much.”

As the girl’s first try, it was all right.

But it wasn’t bread that could be sold.

Milly’s dream was to become a full-fledged baker like Lud and her deceased father. But she still had a way to go toward achieving that goal.

“Th-this just means you need a little more training!”

“Ugh!”

“What do you mean by ‘ugh’?! What a mouth you’ve got!”

Sven, the waitress at Tockerbrot, had come in.

As a senior employee, Sven was training Milly, who lacked customer service skills. However, their relationship wasn’t great.

Their first impressions of each other had not been good, and while the situation had improved somewhat, they were still slightly hostile toward each other. There was another reason, too. They were both insistent and stubborn, which made for a difficult relationship.

“Hmf! The master is kind enough to allow you to use the oven, but look how downcast you are! Is that all there is to your dream? Oh dear! I guess I was

wrong about you!”



“Q-quiet! Everyone fails the first time! I’ll do better next time!”

Milly argued fiercely and Sven smirked spitefully at her.

In the military, kind words are unnecessary and counterproductive when training new soldiers.

Kindness spoils the unripe and prevents growth.

It’s more effective to elicit motivation by saying, “Is this all you’ve got?” or “Stand up and give me your best!”

Words that rankle one’s pride can also be useful.

*I’m not sure, but ... is Sven cheering her up in her own way?*

Jacob didn’t know, but he thought so.

Milly was a strong girl.

If he comforted her, she would just get depressed.

Maybe it was better to fire up her fighting instincts.

“Calm down, you two.”

Jacob stopped them before the argument could turn into angry shouts and the people outside would hear.

“Anyway, it’s nice of Lud to let you use the oven.”

The oven room where Lud made the bread was a sanctuary to him.

He forbade even Jacob and Sven, who were close to him, from entering without good reason.

“Oh, but he has to. Once the fire goes out, it takes time to heat up the oven again.”

Bakers don’t bake bread all day.

They have to gather ingredients, set out and bring in goods, and make deliveries.

When the oven remains unused, handling the temperature is a delicate matter. The fire can't easily be started or stopped.

So, while Lud wasn't using the oven but needed to keep the fire lit, he allowed Milly to practice her baking.

"Well, he can't pay you much, so I suppose he intends this as compensation."

"Ugh ... it's hard to make ends meet."

Sven and Jacob smiled bitterly.

"I don't need much, and I'm not much use, anyway."

Milly mumbled in embarrassment.

She had started working three months ago, but she didn't have much experience in customer service, so she was awkward as a waitress.

Her guilt over not working well enough to justify her pay dampened her spirits.

"That's a different matter."

Sven's reply was casual.

"Employees have a responsibility to work, and employers need to pay wages according to contracts. My job is to educate and train you. If you were useful after just three months of training, where would that leave me?"

Her words held no kindness, pity or sympathy.

She was just stating a matter of fact in a matter-of-fact manner.

"Oh ..."

Not knowing what to say, Milly looked confused.

"Thanks. I'll do my best."

She blushed as she answered quietly and returned to the oven.

"Why did that little girl thank me?"



“You didn’t mean to cheer her up, but you did.”

Jacob said this as if he found it funny, and Sven tilted her head, mystified.

“By the way, is this shop still in financial difficulty?”

“I wish I could say everything is going well, but that isn’t quite true.”

Tockerbrot had borrowed funding from a fake moneylender and started business in debt.

Then during its first year, the shop had so few customers that keeping the business running required borrowing more money. As a result, the shop’s financial situation was so bad that it might have gone bankrupt at any time.

Fortunately, the skilled waitress, Sven, arrived out of nowhere and reorganized the bakery’s finances and management. Tockerbrot had escaped the danger of bankruptcy but still required careful handling.

“The renovation further increased your loan burden.”

“Luckily, customers love our shop, but it will still take time to earn back all that money.”

Tockerbrot was operating smoothly.

However, there was a limit to production.

And limited production meant limited earnings.

“I would love to expand our business, but there’s a problem. Actually, I was going to ask you about that, Jacob.”

“A problem?”

Jacob tilted his head and Sven smiled faintly as she answered.

“I’ll fill you in when the master gets home.”

“Hmm ... Where is Lud, anyway?”

“He’s making a delivery to the mine.”

Baelz Mine was one of the principal industries in Organbaelz.

“Umph!”

The young owner of Tockerbrot, Lud Langart, was delivering bread to the mine.

His contract with the mine cafeteria for delivering bread to 200 miners every day was a main source of income.

“Hey, baker! You came again, huh?”

It was Laurel, the leader of the miners.

“Hello, Laurel. You’re doing good work!”

Laurel was covered in dirt as if he had just come to the surface for a break.

He was not a young man, but his bulging muscles and strong-willed eyes gave him the appearance of a veteran with long military service.

“Since we started gettin’ your bread, work has been progressing better.”

Laurel smiled, showing white teeth.

“Food is a rare pleasure with work like this. That one with the seeds is especially good.”

“You mean the sesame bread? I add extra salt because you miners sweat so much. I’m glad you like it.”

Laurel was surprised.

“Do you always give consideration to such detail?”

“Yes. I also make adjustments for the season and weather since they influence people’s taste.”

“Whew ...”

Laurel sighed in admiration.

“Hmph! You’ve got a better build for mining than the young fellas around here, but you’re one hell of a baker!”

Laurel laughed and patted Lud’s broad chest.

“Thank you.”

Lud was extremely happy to hear that.

The first time Lud had come to the mine, Laurel had shouted, “Get out!”

He had derided Lud as a Wiltian soldier and didn’t see him as a baker.

And instead of praising Lud’s bread, Laurel had spit it out, saying, “It’s bread from a Wiltian soldier. I don’t know what he might have stuffed in there.”

That same man was now praising Lud’s bread with a smile.

Lud was overjoyed.

“Hey, baker! You okay? Did I ruffle your feathers?”

“N-no, sorry. Nothing is wrong. I’m just happy.”

Lud’s face contorted like a demon’s as he struggled to hold back happy tears.

It had been a little over two years since he quit soldiering and one year since he started baking bread.

But Lud still had trouble making a smile.

“You’re an unusual fella!”

Laurel laughed with good-natured exasperation, and as Lud responded with an expression almost like a wry grin, he noticed something out of the corner of his eye.

“Th-that ...”

Lud’s eyes opened wide. He felt his body tense.

“What is a Hunter Unit doing in this mine?”

Hunter Units were humanoid assault weapons developed by the Wiltian army.

They were copper and steel giants that stood 8.5 meters tall.

“Oh, that was decommissioned.”

Lud wondered if something unexpected had happened at the mine, as it had before, but Laurel’s reply was casual.

“After the war, the military wanted to dispose of its extra weapons. They removed some armor and other equipment and sold them for civilian use. You wanna take a look?”

Laurel took Lud to stand before the Hunter Unit repurposed for industrial use.

“An LS-5 ... That’s an early model.”

It was older than the units Lud had used in the war.

The basic frame was the same, but most parts had been removed, leaving the upper armor for protection against falling rock inside the mine. Of course, there were no weapons.

One arm was now a giant scoop and an industrial winch was affixed to its midsection. The conversion was so thorough that it barely resembled a weapon at all.

“This isn’t for military use, so instead of a Hunter Unit, it’s more like armored machinery. It’s an old model, but since it’s so large, it’s better than a human for heavy labor.”

As he said this, Laurel patted the Hunter Unit’s leg.

Ever since the war ended, the military had been cutting expenditures.

Surplus weapons cost money, both to maintain and to store unused.

So, the policy was to sell weapons at low prices for civilian use in order to make even a little money.

“But it’s showing its age and isn’t in the best condition. I’m keeping it here until I summon the repair man.”

“I see.”

An industrial Hunter Unit far from war and vastly transformed from its original purpose ...

Some might see it as ruined and pitiful.

“So you too are alive in these new times, huh?”

Lud saw the unit as a person who had discovered a new way of life in times of peace—much as he had.

The Great European War had spread across the continent.

In that war, there was a Hunter Unit pilot extolled as a hero.

And that hero’s name was indeed Lud Langart.

Soldiers feared him as the Silver Wolf because of the silvery shine of the pure white Hunter Unit he operated.

But he retired from the army when the war ended and started a bakery in the countryside in Organbaelz.

And there was a girl who pursued him.

Her name was Sven. She was once Lud’s beloved Hunter Unit. She was an android with pilot-assistance AI implanted inside her body.

Borders changed and smaller nations united. Divisions appeared between losers and winners, and between oppressors and oppressed. This was the new post-war era.

This is a tale unrecorded by history, the humble tale of a baker who was once a soldier and a waitress who had been a weapon, living on the fringes of that era.



## Chapter 1

# The One Who Holds the Scales

Berun, the capital of the Principality of Wiltia, was designed with the royal palace at its center, and the government offices situated around it, like planets around the sun.

One of the facilities closest to the royal palace was central military headquarters.

The top-ranking official at central headquarters ... No, in the whole Wiltian military, is in the deepest chamber within the headquarters.

Today, Sophia was standing in front of the door to this room.

“Sophia von Rundstadt reflorting ... I mean ... reporting!”

She was so nervous that she stumbled over her words.

“Enter.”

The man behind the door answered her.

Sophia usually kicked open doors as she knocked.

It didn't matter if the door led to the division commander who was her immediate superior, or to the colonel who was the chief of the Weapons Development Bureau.

Her character and intensity were so strong they defied hierarchy.

“Yes, Sir! Excuse me!”

But the man inside this room was special.

Sophia carefully turned the doorknob and entered the room in silence. If her subordinates and superior officers had seen, they would have stared in shock.

“Sorry. Hold on a sec. I’m just reaching the climax.”

The man before her was impervious to her overwhelming presence and fearsome glare, known as the Dragon Slayer.

Elvin Lior was a marshal of the Principality of Wiltia.

He was the commander-in-chief of all soldiers.

“S-Sure! No problem!”

Sophia saluted tensely like a fresh recruit at military academy.

There were piles of reports and other documents spread around the room.

They were stacked so high that Sophia had to walk carefully to avoid knocking them over, even though the marshal’s office was spacious, in line with his rank.

There were many matters awaiting his attention and approval.

“Hmm ... My apologies. At ease.”

Elvin returned her salute and urged Sophia, who was frozen in salute, to lower her arm.

As he sat at his desk with legs splayed, Elvin was reading a novel rather than classified military reports.

“Wow ... That was wonderful!”

Elvin closed the book with an air of satisfaction.

He carefully placed the paperback into a drawer as if showing respect to the author, whose name, according to the cover, was Mary Clarissa. Then he turned to face Sophia once more.

“How rude of me when it was I who summoned you, Sophia. Forgive me. This author’s new novel was most interesting. I was engrossed in reading it.”

“No, it’s my fault for arriving earlier than scheduled. Um ...”

Elvin raised his palms to tell Sophia, who was fumbling for words, to calm

down. Then he suggested that she sit on the sofa.

“Don’t be nervous. If the famous Devil’s Black Spear were to cower before me, I could brag to my eldest boy, but it makes it uncomfortable for us to talk.”

Sophia remembered that Elvin was in his mid-forties.

His noble features made him look younger. His warm smile resembled that of any merry gentleman you might see around the city.

But Sophia knew about the marshal.

During the Great European War, many soldiers earned the moniker of hero, and Sophia was one of them.

But Elvin was considered a hero of a completely different kind.

Normally, the measure of a military hero was skill in fighting, and that was determined by the number of battles that warrior had survived.

Elvin was the reason that Wiltia’s army was victorious in the most recent war. He had served as a hero of strategy for that ten-year war.

His fame was widespread, and he was admired as the wisest general in history, and as a strategic god. The opposing nation of August deemed him an enemy of the state. In the Greyten Empire, soldiers were so frightened that he was a god or a demon that it was necessary to declare in the queen’s name that he was human.

Sophia wouldn’t tremble before Elvin if he were just famous.

This man had mastered the path that she, as a soldier, struggled and risked her life to walk, and she was in awe of him.

“I called you here today in relation to your current duties.”

“My duties ... Do you mean guarding the Weapons Development Bureau?”

The Royal Weapons Development Bureau was located northeast of the royal palace, and was responsible for the creation of the Hunter Units, the weapon

behind the Principality of Wiltia's victory.

The Bureau was also the lair of an extraordinary scientist and mechanical genius named Daian Fortuner, who was referred to as a sorcerer.

"Am I being transferred to central headquarters?!"

"Huh?"

"F-Finally, I'll be free of that pervert! Good thing I submitted that request!"

Forgetting her former tension, Sophia shot to her feet and openly displayed her joy.

"Oh ... sorry. That isn't what this is about."

"Huh? It isn't?"

Sophia was so disheartened that she almost dropped to her knees.

"About your request ... I'm sorry, but it was denied. We would be in trouble if you didn't continue to tend to that scientist.

"But why me?!"

Sophia was threatening ... No, she was begging him, nearly in tears. Elvin gestured for her to calm down.

He stood up and poured lukewarm tea from a heat retention pot in a corner of the room and handed the teacup to Sophia.

"Oh ... thanks."

"Do you really hate him that much?"

"I am a soldier, so I cannot reveal such private opinions."

As a soldier, mixing private feelings and duty was strictly prohibited, so she could not answer his question.

"Forget about that and just tell me."

"No, I ..."

Elvin asked again as Sophia sought for words.

“As a marshal, I order you. Tell me.”

“I have an instinctive dislike for him!”

Soldiers must obey orders no matter how they feel.

As soon as she had received the order, Sophia spoke as if a dam had broken.

“I hate his face, his voice and even his breath! And the pompous, superficial way he talks! When I ask what time it is, why can’t he answer without dancing, too? It makes me want to clout him a good one! But I can’t, so it really ticks me off!”

“Oh ... really?”

The force with which Sophia spat out her pent-up frustration overwhelmed even the mighty hero, Elvin.

“What is he thinking?! What isn’t he thinking?! Instead of simply telling me, he drops 49 hints! And I get annoyed when he chuckles and looks at me in confusion! I bet if I used his face for target practice, I’d score a perfect hit rate!”

“Oh, I see ... Um ... uh ...”

Elvin regretted asking her what she thought of Daian Fortuner.

Sophia hated everything about Daian. But there was a reason for that.

His true nature awakened in Sophia—as a soldier and as a woman—a strong, instinctive feeling of dislike and distrust.

“It’s like ...”

Sophia stopped before speaking.

It was like Daian was observing humans but was himself inhuman.

Daian always watched people innocently, but as if he were scrutinizing an ant colony in a terrarium.



Around him, Sophia grew confused and felt as if she had become an ant ... but no.

She felt as if the whole human race were no more than insects to him.

It was an eerie, frightening feeling.

“Like what?”

Elvin questioned Sophia, who had gone silent and stiff.

She realized that her feelings were nonsensical.

“Oh, nothing. In any case, I’m frustrated at how irresponsible he is. The other day, maybe because he was bored, he sang what he called ‘the Bored Song’ and danced ‘the Bored Dance,’ which he had composed and choreographed himself.”

It had been so annoying that she had praised her self-control for restraining the urge to punch and kick him.

“Bored ... He’s bored, huh? That’s not good.”

Elvin frowned.

“Sir, um, is that a problem?”

“When Daian Fortuner has time to kill, it’s a dangerous sign.”

Elvin sighed and peered at a map of the royal capital and vicinity.

“Have you heard of the Schutzstaffel?”

“Of course! What about them?”

The Schutzstaffel were troops that protected the Principality of Wiltia’s royal palace.

But that was only until the Great War ended.

After the Great European War, Wiltia proposed the establishment of a Society of Nations.

Nominally, its purpose was to create everlasting peace so that a world war never occurred again, but actually it was a means for the victorious nations to preserve the various interests and lands they had acquired. The winners of the war wanted to ensure that they wouldn't lose should hostilities ever break out again.

As a first step, military reduction was proposed for each nation, and in order to lead other member nations, Wiltia was the first to begin shrinking its military. It reduced its military budget and the number of its soldiers by 30 percent.

“Winning the war means we gained territory both on land and at sea. We have a broader area to protect, but our budget and military force have decreased in size.”

Elvin sighed at the absurdity.

“As a result, other nations—both allies and enemies—agreed to reduce their militaries as well, and to redirect the revenue into social welfare, thereby benefitting the citizenry, who had suffered during the war.”

Two years had passed since the Great War ended. It had left behind much destruction, even in the victorious nation of Wiltia.

A few months ago, Sophia had experienced that destruction herself.

“I heard you took in child soldiers from Defairedead.”

“?!”

Elvin's words surprised Sophia.

They were war orphans from Pelfe, a key culprit in that incident.

Partially due to Lud's pleading, Sophia had given protection to children pressed into service by the enemy nation of Greyten, in an almshouse in the Rundstadt family's domain .

“Don't worry. I'm not criticizing you. It's just unusual for you to give anyone special treatment. By rights, the principality should have done that.”

The almshouse was a big improvement over the facility where the child soldiers previously lived, which had been like a jail.

The almshouse provided boarding, meals, education and job training. It was a rehabilitation facility that would prepare the children for returning to society instead of to the life of crime caused by poverty.

Their freedom was limited for a time, but at least they could lead a better life than they would have in jail with adult criminals.

“It’s better to use the funds saved through reduced military costs for war reconstruction. At least, I wish that were happening, but it isn’t the reality. That man Genitz ...”

“Genitz?! What has that rotten lieutenant general done?! Oops ... Excuse my language!”

Injecting private feelings and making insulting statements about a superior officer would undermine the organization. Sophia quickly covered her mouth.

“Don’t worry. I too have a hard time checking my desire to beat him to death every time I see him.”

Genitz was a lieutenant general for the Principality of Wiltia.

He came to prominence midway through the previous war. He served notably on the western front, but unlike Elvin, he wasn’t popular among the regular soldiers. You might even say they hated him.

And there was only one reason: Genitz didn’t wage war so much as he efficiently shed blood.

One of his “achievements,” the destruction of Lapchuricka, was a notable example.

He besieged the city with a large force and bombarded guerillas and civilians alike. It was an outright massacre.

With that, he erased an entire city from the map.



“What irritates me is how highly effective his tactics are, including Lapchuricka. After that destruction, all rebellions and resistance movements in the occupied territory stopped at once. He prevented the resistance of 10 million civilians by killing 100 thousand.”

That was one way of looking at it.

But accepting his methods meant turning war into slaughter and soldiers into butchers.

Elvin and other veterans could not accept that.

“But he’s popular among the aristocrats, who have never set foot in battle. They treat human lives as mere numbers for calculation. To them, Genitz’s way sounds clever!”

Elvin’s features, which had remained calm, now showed intense anger and disgust.

“Oh ... sorry. I don’t mean all aristocrats. There are exceptions like you.”

“I understand.”

Sophia’s family, the Rundstadts, was among the finest of Wiltian aristocratic families.

Elvin had apologized because he knew that.

“But what does Genitz have to do with the Schutzstaffel?”

“He has assumed the post of captain in the Schutzstaffel. Officially, his duty is to protect the royal palace, but the truth is that he wants to take control of central, including the capital city of Berun.”

“What?!”

The Schutzstaffel had just taken the money removed from the military budget, along with 300 thousand troops, for its own use.

The Schutzstaffel’s duty was to protect the monarch and his lands.

To all appearances, Wiltia had downsized its military. In reality, it was keeping its full force as a private army for a single monarch.

“Looking back, the establishment of the Society of Nations must also be part of Genitz’s plan. He now has the center of the world in his hands.”

There were several other continents beyond Europea.

Most were home to nations and colonies dependent upon the powerful nations of Europea.

And the most powerful country to rule Europea was Wiltia.

With 300 thousand soldiers, Genitz controlled the capital and the core of Wiltia through brute force.

“We regular forces are scattered across territories and colonies. The forces in the capital and at central are so powerful that I don’t even want to think about how disadvantageous it is for us.”

Elvin picked up a cup as he said this.

But he wasn’t drinking tea.

It was brandy he had hidden in his pocket.

The situation was so preposterous that he had to have a drink.

“Um, may I ask something? What does this have to do with my duties?”

Elvin sipped brandy before replying.

“Genitz is scheming to pull that big shot Daian over to the Schutzstaffel’s side.”

“Meow!”

Tockerbrot was a little bakery in a corner of Organbaelz.

Ellis, a white cat that found a home in the shop, welcomed Lud at the back door as he returned from a delivery.

“Thanks for the welcome!”

Lud sat down and scratched the narrow throat of the cat with his thick fingers.

“Meow!♪”

That was all it took for Ellis to meow happily.

“Hm? Aren’t you a little dirty?”

“Meow?”

Ellis’s white fur was spotted with mud.

“Is that my fault?”

Lud looked back to where his truck was parked.

The tires were resting in a puddle from the previous day’s rain, so apparently his truck had splashed mud onto Ellis’s fur.

“Sorry about that ... Come here, I’ll wash you.”

Keeping a small animal at a place that serves food, such as a bakery, is troublesome.

It has to be kept clean to avoid ticks, and must be trained so it will stay away from goods for sale.

Sven, the ace waitress, handled all that, but Lud had brought the cat home.

“It would be wrong to make Sven take care of you all the time.”

Lud picked up Ellis and walked to the well beside the shop.

“Master is home!”

Inside the shop, Sven stood up when she heard the truck.

“How do you know?”

“Tee-hee-hee! I’m confident I can recognize the way he breathes within a 500-meter radius!”

Jacob was impressed.

“I guess ... you really can.”

“Tee-hee-hee!”

Sven beamed a victorious smile at Jacob, who stopped himself from jeering at her claim.

For Sven, a humanoid Hunter Unit created by the smartest scientists in the Principality of Wiltia, identifying an individual anywhere in the vicinity of Organbaelz was possible when using her auditory sensors at full power.

“I’ll brief Master on what we were talking about!”

Sven wanted to see Lud as soon as possible, so she dashed out.

She opened the back door with a broad smile ... only to encounter a startling sight.

“Hey, Sven. I’m back.”

“Um...Master?”

Lud was washing the cat, Ellis.

Since he had sweated a little during the delivery, he was topless and washing himself, too.

“Oh ... um ... waaah!! Pardon me!”









































































































































































































































































































































































































































# Epilogue

*Three weeks later, at the military central headquarters in Berun, the royal capital ...*

A man appeared in Marshal Elvin's room.

"I'm surprised you came. Please, have a seat."

The room, which usually overflowed with stacks of documents and other materials, had been organized, and the old sofa had been exchanged for a new one.

This visitor was very important: Joseph Shylock, chairman of Billions Trading.

"I will get straight to the point. At present, we are—"

Elvin's principal objective in this meeting was to ask Shylock to become a sponsor of the regular army, and prevent the Schutzstaffel from taking control of the Weapons Development Bureau.

"A billion sigs."

Shylock spoke just as Elvin opened his mouth.

"Whah?!"

Shylock's words surprised even the great hero, and he let out an unexpected yelp.

"This is about money, isn't it? That's all I can produce right away. If it isn't enough, I'll add 500 million next month."

The amount was enough to establish several new battalions of Hunter Units.

"But I haven't even explained yet!"

"I know very well the situation you guys are in. Those Schutzstaffel jokers are

after my money, but they won't let me earn any. So I'm better off with you."

The Schutzstaffel was trying to use Shylock as a pawn.

But the regular army, while using him as a pawn, would also let him use *them*.

"From among the new patents that the Weapons Development Bureau is after, I want you to grant me those for technology that can be converted for civilian use. If you agree, then I will give you a billion more. Any objections?"

"You're already familiar with the conditions?"

Faced with this man who held a very different sort of power than himself, Elvin laughed wryly.

"You might say that. And I'll only sell the Eldorai, which is now under production, wholesale to the regular army. It's a toy too great for those punks in the Schutzstaffel."

Billions Trading was also manufacturing new weapons.

However, the production line was limited, so clients ordinarily had to wait their turn.

Shylock was promising to give the regular army exclusive use of the production line.

In other words, it was as if Shylock had bought everything Elvin and the regular army offered for the asking price. It was ideal.

"But there's one condition. If those Schutzstaffel goons harm my company or anyone involved with it, including me, you'll handle it. Can you do that?"

"Of course. You are a valuable sponsor."

Even if it didn't actually deploy soldiers, with the army's commitment to backing up the company, the Schutzstaffel wouldn't be able to act.

"I don't want to bother that bakery again ..."

"Huh?"

Elvin looked puzzled by Shylock's mysterious mumbling.

"Oh, nothing. I was talking to myself."

As Shylock sipped his tea, he asked Elvin a question.

"Hey, do you want to get into another war?"

He asked as if engaging in idle chitchat.

"No, a war now would—at the very least—destroy Wiltia."

Wiltia had been the victor of the recent Great War.

But Elvin, who was in the nerve center of the military, knew it was a victory on thin ice.

The nation's strength had been so exhausted that if the war had continued even one more year, the social structure might have collapsed.

"War is just one means of managing the nation. As long as it is just a means, I will give it my best, but managing the nation *for* war makes no sense."

This was Elvin's philosophy.

"For at least the next five years, we should focus on rebuilding the national strength and administering the new territories. Otherwise, the country will split in two from inside."

"That isn't enough."

Shylock disagreed.

"It will take at least another seven years!"

With a grin, the greedy businessman spoke as if bartering over a purchase.

"Seven years? Is there something special about that number?"

"Yes, there is. I need at least that long to prepare an inheritance."

As he said this, Shylock smiled as if enjoying himself.

Jacob had repeated what he had told Shylock before.

“I don’t want to kill you.”

The boy had thought and worried over it.

“I don’t think my father would have liked it.”

Shylock wanted Jacob to execute him, and for Jacob to inherit a clean future.

That wasn’t what Jacob wanted.

“It doesn’t matter how evil you are. If you hadn’t existed, then I wouldn’t exist. I mean ... I’m not sure how to explain this.”

Leaving all the sins in the past and living with a clean slate so that he wouldn’t face any unnecessary troubles ... that might be easiest.

But Jacob couldn’t think that such a life was the right choice.

“My father truly loved my mother. That’s why I was born. And you too ... um ... Grandpa ... you loved Grandma. That’s why my father was born.”

The girl he had met was named Rebecca.

She was named after the woman his father loved: Jacob’s mother. And she had protected him at the risk of her own life.

When they parted, she had said, “I just did what my master ... I mean, what Major Blitzdonner would have done if he was here.”

Perhaps she was right.

“I want to be openly proud of the blood in my body. Wiltia, Pelfe, the Degas ... None of that matters. I want to be proud of myself because my existence is the result of different people who lived their lives as well as they could.”

They lived their lives whether they were dirty or clean.

That was Jacob’s belief.

“Jacob ... did you ... did you just call me Grandpa?”



“That’s not the point! Just ...let that go! I’m embarrassed!”

Jacob answered and laughed, taken aback by his grandfather who was trembling, near tears.

“Give me more time. Let’s see ... When did my father leave home?”

“I think it was on his eighteenth birthday.”

“Then wait until I’m that age! I’ll make things clear with you then! I don’t know yet about inheriting your company. I’m still a child, you know.”

Until then, Jacob would learn and ponder many things and reach a decision on his own terms.

Jacob promised that he would make the choice for himself.

“Understood. I will prepare over the next seven years for whatever decision you reach.”

Thus, Shylock and Jacob made a deal.

Shylock was a businessman.

For him, a deal was something he had to keep, no matter how small the issue.

Therefore, he undertook the responsibility to keep the world safe for at least another seven years.

And yet, Shylock was happy.

“It’s a heavy burden. But the weight of *this* kind of responsibility isn’t so bad.”

*At the Weapons Development Bureau in Berun ...*

Daian was receiving a report from Rebecca.

“I see ... That girl was reckless. By connecting her own reactor to that machine ... If that had gone wrong, she might not have been able to turn back into Sven.”

Stunned, Daian raised his voice as he sat at the desk in his office.

“But she came back. That means she has developed a firm identity as Sven. All is well.”

Daian was laughing as if he found it all funny.

Once again, her report seemed to satisfy him.

“By the way, Rebecca? You weren’t involved in any way, were you?”

“I do not understand your question.”

In her report, she had purposely avoided mentioning her own involvement.

Although she had acted against orders, she had not been directly involved with Lud and Sven, so she decided there was no obligation to report it.

“I see ...”

Daian stared at her with eyes that seemed to see all.

“Well, if you say so, then it must be so. I trust you.”

“Then I shall continue about my duties.”

Rebecca exited the room without showing the slightest agitation.

“Ha ha ha ... Machines are incapable of telling lies. My dear daughters are growing up to be quite the attractive ladies!”

Daian seemed to know everything, and he laughed as if he enjoyed it.

A short while later, Sophia arrived, banging on the door of the office.

“Oh, Sophia! How nice to see you! We had a delightful time at the restaurant the other day, didn’t we? Oh! And the musical we watched beforehand! That was a pleasure! Tonight, we’re going to see that new movie, aren’t we? I reserved VIP seats!”

Daian welcomed her with a wide smile, and Sophia replied with a refreshing grin as well.

“More importantly, Director Daian, I heard that the increase for your research budget was approved.”

“Oh, how do you know about that? Yes, it’s true. We will resume development of the new mass production machines that had been postponed. It will be a highly developed version of the Eldorai, currently in production. I hated the heavy design of the Teepneuen, so I’m very pleased.”

With Shylock as a sponsor, the research budget of the Weapons Development Bureau had increased to its wartime levels. For Daian, that was equivalent to receiving a mountain of toys.

“I see that you’re happy. That’s good to know.”

Sophia laughed to see Daian so pleased.

“Um ... Sophia? Is anything wrong?”

Daian noticed Sophia’s unusual mood.

She had patiently entertained Daian over the past month like a suffering penitent, or a saint undergoing torture, to ensure that he wouldn’t go over to the Schutzstaffel.

However, that was all about to end.

“About our plans for tonight, with all due respect, I’m afraid that today is the fifty-eighth anniversary of the death of my mother’s grandmother’s grandfather’s uncle’s cousin.”

“What?!”

“And tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, the day after the day after tomorrow, and all the days after that ... All our plans for the next month, actually ... I’m very sorry, but due to important matters, I must excuse myself.”

“Huh? What? Sophia?! Sophia?!”

A calendar was hanging in the office.

It was filled with Daian's dates with Sophia for this week, next week and the week after that, and Sophia had just canceled them all.

"Well, I gotta go now. Enjoy your holiday!"

Sophia spun around and strode away.

Her face was bright, like that of a criminal freed after finishing long years of hard labor.

"Sophiaaaa! That smile is too cruel!!"

The smile on Sophia's face as she left was more radiant than any smile Daian had ever seen.

Little changes were underway in Organbaelz, as well. Actually, they were big changes.

"It has gotten bigger ..."

A fire had broken out at Tockerbrot.

And Shylock had paid for the repairs.

He claimed it was because his men had set the fire.

The Schutzstaffel had lit the fire, but it was true that his thugs had spread the gasoline.

This was his way of apologizing.

"Don't we have twice as much land as before?"

Lud was stunned as he stood facing the newly-constructed Tockerbrot.

"That's a good thing! He bought the land to harass us, so there's no reason not to accept it as an inconvenience fee!" Sven spoke with confidence, as if to say, "It all makes sense!"

Shylock and Bakery Billions had fiercely competed with Tockerbrot.

Then he had torn down Bakery Billions, given Tockerbrot the land, and dramatically expanded the building.

“Was it okay ... to take their ovens?”

“They don’t need them anymore. It’s better to give them to someone who will use them than to throw them away.”

Tockerbrot had received not one but two new ovens—a modern type that could also use gas—from Bakery Billions.

They had beefed up their production equipment without planning to.

“And even a refrigerator ...”

“There’s nothing more helpful than this for baking sweet breads!”

The large electric refrigerator Billions had used for its frozen dough had also been given to Tockerbrot.

Lud had no idea how much all this had cost.

“Redistribution of wealth is the most important principle of a healthy economy.”

Sven was in a state of elation.

Since they had no money for business investment, this incident had turned misfortune into fortune.

“Shylock also offered to erase the shop’s debt. But I think that would be asking too much.”

The institution from which Tockerbrot received a large loan and the source of its debt, was a bank affiliated with Billions.

“Huh?”

Sven, who hadn’t heard this, sounded flabbergasted.

“What do you mean, Master?! That was a once-in-a-lifetime chance!! Oh no! Oh no!!”

“But it would be a staggering amount. I couldn’t ask that much from him!”

“Ooh, you’re so absurdly conscientious! Argh!”

Sven’s mood changed to anguish.

“But that part of you is attractive, too!!”

They heard the approach of a truck, which stopped behind them.

“You two are getting along as usual.”

It was Jacob who stuck his head out from the front passenger seat.

“Oh, Jacob ... Is that it?”

“Yeah! This was Rosso Repair Shop’s final job!”

After getting out of the vehicle, Jacob proudly patted the body of the truck.

It no longer looked like the truck they had used for purchases and deliveries.

Rust and mud had been cleaned off, the old suspension that made a loud rattle had been replaced, and the body had been repainted and restored, so it looked as good as new.

The back of the truck was the best part of all.

The wooden truck bed was round on top like a loaf of bread and its side opened to display the freshly baked goods.

It was Tockerbrot Bakery’s new mobile shop.

“It’s splendid! I bet it cost a fortune to convert!”

“Don’t worry about that. I asked Grandpa Joseph.”

Shylock had also paid the fee for converting the truck to this mobile bread shop. But it wasn’t a compensation fee for Lud. It was a present for Jacob on his eleventh birthday.

It was the first gift that Jacob had asked of his grandfather Shylock, who had been presenting birthday presents—one after the other—to cover the past ten years.

“Jacob, are you sure we can use this?”

Jacob was proud as he reassured Sven.

Jacob wanted them to make good use of this mobile shop to help Tockerbrot’s business.

With the mobile shop, in addition to the retail consignment in Saupunkt, sales trips to other towns would be possible. The new equipment was an enormous blessing for Tockerbrot.

“It’ll be useful, won’t it?”

“But it was *your* birthday present, so ...”

Jacob’s family wasn’t wealthy.

Shylock had offered support for their living expenses, but Charlotte refused.

She didn’t want to injure her own father’s feelings by accepting Shylock’s money. Her father was also Jacob’s grandfather.

“What he actually offered was an assignation of a five percent share of stock in Billions Trading.”

“That’s enough to live on without working for the rest of your life!”

Sven was stunned by the crazy ideas about money that rich people had.

“It’s okay ... I want to provide a little help too.”

For some reason, Jacob thought of Lud when he had learned what Shylock truly thought.

Lud didn’t run away from his past but instead lived a new life accepting what had happened.

Jacob greatly admired Lud, who was like an older brother.

After watching Lud and his grandfather Shylock, Jacob couldn't chose to walk a pristine path by foisting his past onto someone else.

"Besides, *we'll* use it half the time anyway."

When Jacob said this, another person slid out of the driver's seat.

"Hey, Jacob! Does this look funny on me? I'm a little embarrassed."

It was Charlotte, Jacob's mother.

Charlotte wasn't wearing the plain and somewhat grubby clothes she had worn when visiting Tockerbrot.

She now wore a dress based on the Tockerbrot waitress apron, but redesigned for an adult.

"It's fine! You look good. You're still young, Mom!"

Jacob teased her affectionately.

Since the additional ovens had boosted production capacity, the only other problem for Tockerbrot's outside sales project was the request from consignment retailers to send their pretty shop girl to attract customers.

Sven, who was the star waitress of Tockerbrot and handled the management, couldn't leave the shop. They had wondered what to do and then selected Charlotte to fill that role.

"Don't worry, Ma'am. It suits you."

Sven smiled. She had made Charlotte's dress.

Charlotte was older than Lud and Marlene, but she was still only in her twenties. After she had brushed and tidied her hair a bit, she looked quite pretty.

It was a perfect solution for her to work part-time as shop staff in the neighboring town of Saupunkt, since she needed a job after closing the repair



shop, and she couldn't work in Organbaelz.

"B-But will it be okay for an old woman like me?"

"Of course! Why don't you smile? Smiling is basic customer service."

Sven lectured Charlotte, who was very nervous, about the proper sales smile.

"That's it. Use your charm to weaken the men."

"Don't say such a silly thing! What a child you are!"

Charlotte smiled at Jacob's teasing.

"Oh dear ..."

Looking at her, Sven was stunned.

Even though she had always been pretty, Charlotte had looked unhappy before, with a shadow over her face. But by loosening her mouth just a little, she gave a warm, lovely smile.

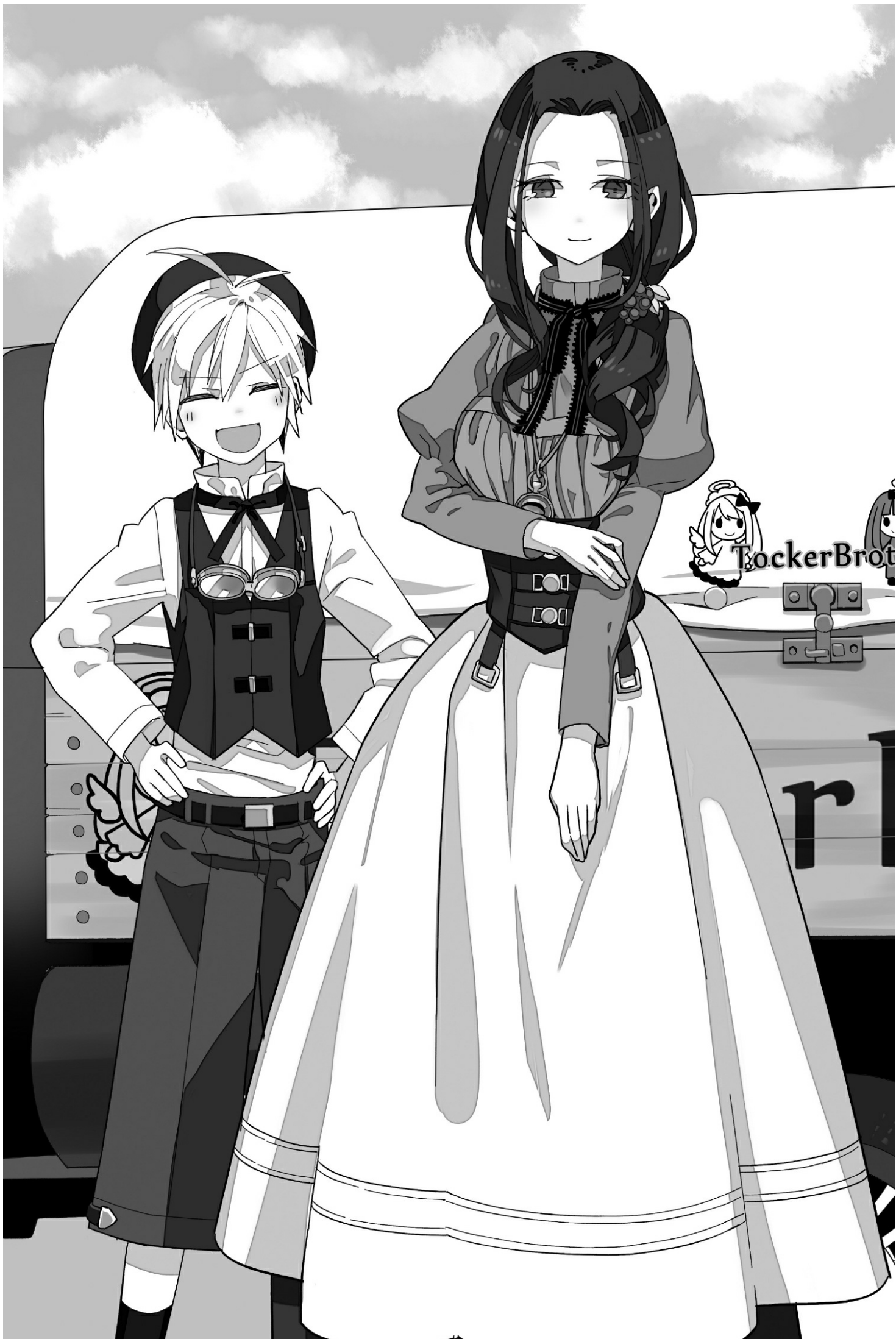
"She's so pretty! I can see why Major Blitzdonner fell in love with her!"

Even Lud was impressed by her charm.

"Master?!"

Sven couldn't ignore what she had heard.

So far, in addition to herself, so many others had developed an affection for Lud, including Marlene, Sophia, Milly—and even Ellis, the female cat. Lud had been completely unaware of this. But now he was staring at an attractive woman, and that was a major blow to Sven.



*Is this the charm of a wife? Or the power of a mother?*

Lud had lost his parents when he was young, so perhaps he was attracted to older women who radiated motherliness?

For Sven to compete with that, she would have to get married! But she had no intention of being with anyone but Lud. So the best way would be to marry Lud. But for that, she needed motherly charm, so ...

“Arrrgh!”

These contradictions distressed Sven.

“Um ... Sven? Are you all right?”

Lud spoke carefully to his partner, who appeared to be confused.

“N-No ... It’s just a little paradox ... Ooh! What’s that picture?!”

Sven took a deep breath to calm herself down and noticed a pretty illustration that had been painted between the shop name “Tockerbrot” and the rear end of the truck.

“Oh dear ... Could that be ... me?”

There was a cartoonish image of a waitress with silver hair and red eyes.

And there were wings on her back.

“Yeah. I used this occasion to draw a kind of mascot character.”

“Draw ...? Did *you* do this?”

Lud asked this of Jacob, who admired his own work proudly.

“Yes. I like it.”

“You really *can* do anything!”

Jacob was from an accomplished family. His grandfather was one of the best businessmen in the world, and his father was one of the world’s best ace pilots.

He had inherited their blood, so it wasn’t so strange that Jacob could do many

things well.

Perhaps he would discover great potential in a particular area during the seven years before his inheritance.

“I’m pleased. In this way, I can brighten up Master’s shop!”

The boy had pleased Sven with no more than a paint brush.

“Oh ... Um, who’s this other character?”

Bracketing the shop’s name was a silver-haired waitress-angel at one end, and another waitress-angel with red hair at the other end.

“Oh, yeah ... This is the girl who rescued me the other day. She left before I could thank her, so I did this in return.”

A girl with red hair, a red dress and red eyes ... It was Rebecca, who had literally used her body to save Jacob that night.

“I didn’t ask permission. Do you think it’s okay?”

“Yeah. It’s fine. She looks very cute!”

As the shop owner, Lud saw no problem with Jacob’s illustration. He thought it was dazzling.

“She was pretty. But if she had smiled, she would have been much prettier.”

“Oh ... I see.”

Looking at Jacob’s embarrassed face, Sven was confused.

This boy would never think of Rebecca as a humanoid Hunter Unit.

She had heard that Rebecca had fought with superhuman strength, and Jacob knew she was a sort of relative of his father’s.

However, Jacob just thought of her as an older girl who was very pretty.

What would Rebecca think if she saw Jacob’s drawing?

Wondering about that, Sven shrugged her shoulders.

Meanwhile, someone was observing them from a great distance.

“.....”

It was Rebecca Sharlahart, who had been assigned to watch Sven and the others.

Since she possessed the eyesight of a humanoid Hunter Unit, she could clearly see what was painted on the truck, and she could read the lips of the boy and understood what he was saying.

“Hmf! Like father, like son!”

Rebecca had sworn never to smile until the day she was reunited with her master, but her mouth loosened slightly.

Today, the girl with the red eyes and red hair, and who was wearing a red dress, also had cheeks that were tinged with red.

END OF VOLUME 3

## Afterword

Thank you for reading volume 3 of *The Combat Baker and Automaton Waitress*!

In this volume, I was finally able to shine the spotlight on the “red” girl.

She didn’t play a big role in the main story, and was resigned to a supporting role, but actually she has been very active elsewhere.

In some ways, she has been active as a public relations spokesperson, through the promotional booklets distributed at some bookstores, and bonus pages in the e-book edition, *etc.* I just did a quick calculation and discovered that I have written what would amount to about a hundred pages in *bunko* format about her!

My desire to give a proper role to this other hard-working automaton girl has been one of my goals since the start of this series, so I’m extra happy.

This, too, is thanks to everyone who gave their support.

Oh, right, right! I have to tell you about something else, too!

Between the publication of volumes 2 and 3, this series has been made into a voice drama!

It was announced on the official website and Twitter, but there may be some of you who haven’t heard, so just in case ...

It is available free of charge on the website A-koe ([http://a-koe.jp/Series/\\_10](http://a-koe.jp/Series/_10)).

Marina Inoue plays Sven, and Junichi Yanagita plays Lud.

I went to say, along with series illustrator Zaza and Editor O, that we found the voice actors’ splendid performances to be very moving.

Please, check it out!

And now for my usual thank-yous:

I apologize to illustrator Zaza for making difficult requests, time after time. I owe you a lot for the way you respond so wonderfully!

Also, my heartfelt thanks to all the staff and cast involved in producing the voice drama.

And, above all, thanks to everyone who read this book!

If it weren't for all of you, I would not have taken a single step forward.

I feel immense gratitude ... so thank you!

I hope from the bottom of my heart that we will meet again.

SOW

# The Combat Baker and Automaton Waitress

Volume 3

Story by SOW

Art by Zaza

TATAKAU PAN-YA TO KIKAI JIKAKE NO KANBAN MUSUME

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