



THE COMBAT BAKER AND AUTOMATON WAITRESS

VOLUME 7

Story by SOW
Art by Zaza



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Tockerbrot

“What’s
going on
here?”

THE COMBAT
BAKER AND
AUTOMATON
WAITRESS 7



CHARACTERS

LUD LANGART

The former soldier and owner of Tockerbrot who was attacked by the burglar. In court, he is caught between Sven and Mary.

MARYVILLE MEHL

The beautiful defense lawyer. A survivor of the tragedy at Lapchuricka, she holds a grudge against Lud. She is a talented woman with many faces—lawyer, reporter, and author.

MIROSLAV

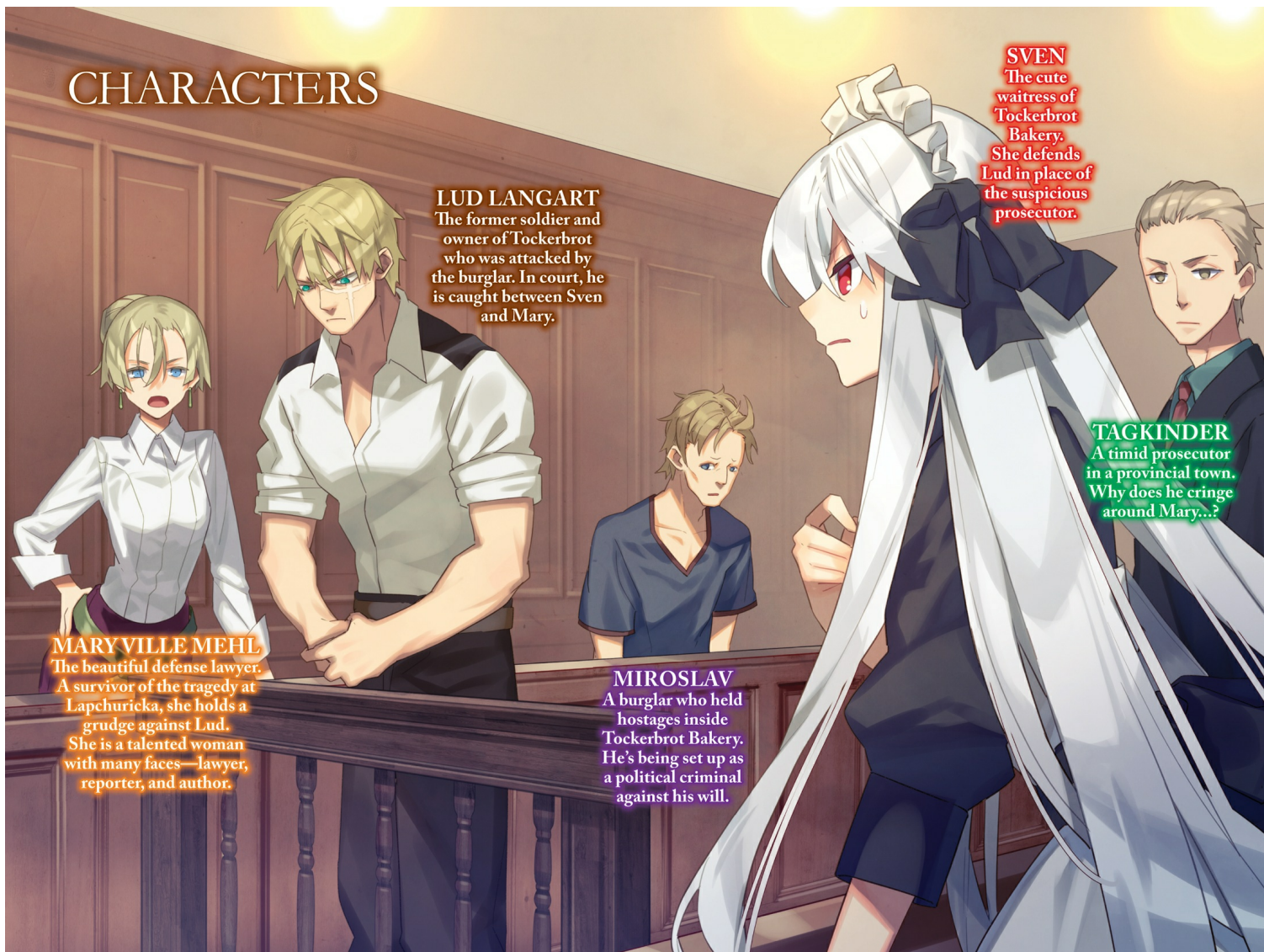
A burglar who held hostages inside Tockerbrot Bakery. He's being set up as a political criminal against his will.

SVEN

The cute waitress of Tockerbrot Bakery. She defends Lud in place of the suspicious prosecutor.

TAGKINDER

A timid prosecutor in a provincial town. Why does he cringe around Mary...?





“Lillie...
How do you
manage to
follow me
every single
time?”

“Let’s see...
Maybe a
good way
to describe
it would be
the power
of love!”

HILDE

A former
member of the
Schutzstaffel,
she has changed
schools six times.
Lillie’s close
proximity has
caused her to fear
for her chastity.

LILLIE

A humanoid
Hunter Unit
prototype who
previously
had an
underdeveloped
heart.
Her love for
Hilde changed
that and now
she never leaves
Hilde’s side.

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Prologue

I don't think I'll die a good death. I have killed many people. I have made many people sad. Because that was my job? Because it was my duty?

I suppose a court would find me innocent, but that doesn't mean I should be forgiven. Above all, I can't forgive myself. It was a time of war, and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed killing. I was deluded into thinking of myself as a god for my ability to kill and dispose of others as I chose, and I was drunk on carnage. I wasn't a beast. But I was a fool drowning in power. No matter how much I regret it now, I cannot turn back time and my sins will not disappear. So I'm pretty sure I won't die a good death.

And if someone kills me..... No matter how atrocious my death, it will surely be what I deserve. It will be retributive justice and a fitting death.

So if there is someone who loves me..... Please do not hold a grudge. Do not hate the one who kills me. Because that person probably...

Chapter 1: That Was an Introduction to Everything

‘You never know what life will bring.’ More than a few people have said this. Since the inception of the race, human beings have surely repeated it countless times. For example, when they experience unexpected good fortune. Or when they learn of a strange twist of fate. Or when they go out for a bit and return to find a burglar holed up in the shop where they work.

“What’s going on here?”

Svelgen Avei, also known as Sven, asked in amazement upon returning to Tockerbrot Bakery, a small shop in the mining town of Organbaelz.

“Come out with your hands up! We’ve got you completely surrounded!”

Police were crowded around the shop, surrounding it so tightly that no space remained for even an ant to crawl out.

“I’m outside the bakery now. The last suspect, Miroslav, has been inside for an hour.”

Newspaper and radio reporters from the central region, and out of place in this rural town, had gathered around the police.

“What in the world happened?!”

“It’s a burglar from Ponapalas.”

“I heard he has a bomb!”

Local residents had gathered nearby.

“What is going on...?” Sven muttered again.

There had been no sign that something unusual would happen today. At dawn, bread was baking at Tockerbrot as usual, and the apprentice Milly arrived and joined in. By early morning, the bread was ready and customers started visiting the shop. Many people wanted bread for breakfast, and the miners stopped by before going to work. Sven had welcomed them with her shining sales smile.

Before noon, she went to the mine and the local schools to deliver bread. By that time, Marlene, the nun from the church atop the hill, came to help, as did Jacob's mother, Charlotte. Jacob showed up in the afternoon after school, and as if he were replacing her, Sven then headed out with Charlotte to sell bread in the nearby towns in a truck remodeled as a mobile shop. As usual, it was a busy but fulfilling day at Tockerbrot.

"S-Sven... What's all this about?"

Charlotte had returned from the sales outing and now trembled as she stood beside Sven.

Because of her painful and complicated history, Charlotte's face used to look sad. But her life improved and she had become a little happier and was starting to smile again. Furthermore, she was quite pretty. During sales outings, she served the local men with a unique charm, unmatched even by Sven, Marlene and Milly, and those men now formed an unofficial fan club.

Aside from that...

"Jacob... Is my son safe?"

Charlotte knew that Jacob always helped at the shop around this time of day.

Tockerbrot's owner needed someone to serve customers at the shop all the time. Jacob was just over ten years old, but he was a good-natured and clever boy, so he was a precious resource for the shop.

"I'm not sure... I don't know what's going on..."

Rope barriers surrounded the shop so no one could go near.

"First, we should find out. Hey, you!" Sven addressed a police officer walking by.

"Huh?! What do you want?! I'm very busy!" The police officer answered arrogantly.

Sven hadn't seen him before so he wasn't a police officer stationed in Organbaelz. Perhaps he had been called in as part of reinforcements.

"Sorry. I'm a waitress at Tockerbrot. My name is Sven. What happened at the shop?"

She decided to forgive his first instance of rudeness and asked her question politely.

“Huh? You’re from that shop? I told you I’m very busy! So be quiet and stay back!”

However, he replied condescendingly once again.

Arrogant police officers aren’t rare. There are always those who mistake significant authority for their own power and conflate maintaining the public safety with assuming everyone is a thief.

However, Sven had no time to deal with such matters right now.

“Hey, don’t say that! This woman, Charlotte, might have family in there! Can you at least tell us if everyone is safe?”

Sven forgave the officer his second instance of rudeness.

“I’ll give you some change.”

She plucked a copper coin from her pocket.

“Huh?”

Using only her forefinger and thumb, she bent the coin in front of the policeman’s suspicious gaze.

“Yikes!”

The policeman raised his voice in surprise as he watched Sven, who looked like a pretty but weak young girl.

Sven wasn’t human. The Principality of Wiltia was the world’s most technologically advanced nation, and Sven was an android, a humanoid Hunter Unit. The genius Daian Fortuner, also known as the Sorcerer, had poured all his wisdom into creating the Hunter Units. He was the head of the Royal Weapons Development Bureau, which served as the nation’s brain.

Sven was strong enough to bend a copper coin with two fingers. With five fingers, she could break a human’s neck.

“Now will you tell us?”

Sven asked with a smile, but she also gave off an air of menace. She had

forgiven the officer's rudeness twice, but she wouldn't a third time. He needed to choose his next words carefully or he might lose his life. This angel's smile issued a devil's warning.

"Um, I don't really know that much!"

Sven had successfully delivered her warning to the police officer, but his reply wasn't what she hoped to hear.

"Then take me to someone who does!"

"No, but... um..."

As if having reached her limit, Sven yelled at the befuddled policeman.

"Hurry up!! Or would you like to find out how far your neck can bend?!"

"Y-Yes, right away!!"

Just as Charlotte worried about her son Jacob, there was someone inside the shop who Sven cared about more than her own life. And that was Lud Langart, Tockerbrot's owner and her beloved master, to whom she had sworn to dedicate her entire body and heart.

At a security station in a corner of the Royal Weapons Development Bureau in Berun, the royal capital...

"Ugh! I'm exhausted!"

Sophia von Rundstadt, the captain of the guard, was carelessly lying on the sofa. Her casual posture while on duty was questionable for a major in the military and a lady of House Rundstadt.

"Finally, I can get some sleep! No, I want to take a shower first."

However, none of her subordinates were present to scold her. She wouldn't usually behave so heedlessly. At least, she would never do it in front of her subordinates. However, she had just completed four continuous days on duty. She had only slept five hours over the past four days.

Recently, during Genitz's rebellion, the Royal Weapons Development Bureau was attacked and lost many workers, especially guards. Naturally, the bureau

had increased the workforce, but the newcomers were still unfamiliar with their jobs. As captain, Sophia had to stand at their head and lead them.

“Good job, Sophia.” A man spoke to her in a relaxed voice.

Daian Fortuner was the director of the Royal Weapons Development Bureau, a genius scientist, a super weirdo, and a man on Sophia’s list of “Creeps Who Are Particularly Annoying When They Talk to Me When I’m Tired.”

“.....”

Sophia ignored him as she buried her face in the sofa. Why was he here? This was a security station. Even the director couldn’t enter without permission. She had many such objections that usually she would yell at him. Unfortunately, she didn’t want to waste her strength on that right now.



“I heard a state of emergency was declared? Talk about going overboard! I guess it’s understandable, though, since it hasn’t even been six months since Genitz’s dustup.”

“.....”

Sophia had decided to ignore Daian, but he seemed to find this fun and kept talking.

“What was all the fuss again? Some terrorists crossed the border and entered the royal capital? And one spouted nonsense at the front gate before setting off a suicide bomb?”

“.....”

Somehow, Daian had already obtained information that was only given to the press one hour ago. A radical terrorist group posing as revolutionaries had entered the royal capital, clashed with the police, and managed to avoid capture for several days. Because of that, the royal capital was on high alert.

The Royal Weapons Development Bureau had fallen under attack not long before, so it feared being targeted again. For that reason, Sophia had assumed command until the state of emergency was removed.

“The police might have been uncooperative because of gripes against the military. And jurisdictional disputes aren’t pretty!”

“.....”

Even after his death, Genitz still greatly influenced Wiltia. One example was the discord that existed between the military and the police, which felt like an especially big problem to Sophia.

People outside the military saw Genitz’s rebellion as mere internal fighting within the military. Yet it had endangered the citizens of the royal capital and greatly damaged the police. Furthermore, it was the job of the police to maintain peace in the royal capital, but they had yielded to military force and were temporarily at the military’s disposal. And that hurt their honor.

“That’s why you didn’t know the number of terrorists, their aims, or the type of weapons they had, right?”

Without knowing the enemy's numbers, plans and weaponry, there was no way to prevent them from hiding in the city with the goal of sabotage. As a result, the military in the royal capital had to keep security at the highest level, and the development bureau had to remain on high alert to prevent the worst from happening. After the police received numerous requests and arrested the criminal, they learned that it was one man in possession of a crude bomb, meaning it had been much ado about nothing.

"They said the bomb used black powder explosives, didn't they? And it's pitiful how impure it was. The explosion was weak and only singed his hair and gave him minor burns."

Black powder is an incredibly primitive explosive made from charcoal and sulfur. It produced a lot of smoke but had little explosive force, so it was taken out of use in weapons over a century ago. Its main use now was in fireworks.

"He probably removed the black powder from commercial fireworks and packed it into a steel pipe. Talk about failing!"

It was a pathetic story that would only bring a wry smile to the face of a weapons developer.

"....."

As Daian spoke, Sophia fidgeted in silence. Perhaps she was thinking about the military's feud with the police over the last few days.

"I understand the military's reasoning, but if it's ham-fisted in clamping down on terrorists, they'll become martyrs."

If the military used armed force to subdue someone espousing a certain political philosophy, whatever it may be, many would consider that suppression of thought. Furthermore, if the military wasn't careful, it might not take the criminal alive. And that would create many more problems.

Whatever the cause, death led to martyrdom. A second and third troublesome individual might then appear. One death could become a source of trouble lasting hundreds of years. Thus, the police found it necessary to take the terrorist alive without mobilizing the military. Which was understandable.

Sophia understood, but she was frustrated that it hadn't worked out a little

better.

“Anyway, those terrorists... Well, we’re calling them terrorists, but they’re actually just small-time crooks robbing banks to survive. And now they’ve finally disappeared from the royal capital.”

“What?”

At last, Sophia reacted to Daian’s words. She couldn’t afford to ignore them. If the terrorists had disappeared from the royal capital, it meant they were still alive outside the royal capital.

“Oh... Taken an interest now, have you?”

Seeing her reaction, Daian grinned and chuckled. He had come to furtively slip Sophia information she wanted under the cover of small talk.

“Why you...”

Sophia glared at him hatefully as she finally raised her face. Her cheeks were blushing faintly from embarrassment at Daian seeing inside her.

“There were six criminals. Three disappeared before they crossed the border. Two others were captured before reaching Berun. The last was the cause of this disturbance.”

In other words, three criminals remained in Pelfe.

“That’s bad. The remaining three might come to retaliate.”

Sophia pulled herself up and shrugged off her exhaustion with a grave expression. The terrorist’s crime had merely involved brandishing an ineffective weapon, but it might have killed someone. Sophia’s professional duty was to protect the lives and assets of the citizens from all possible threats.

“And about that... Here’s where it gets even more confidential.”

Daian was enjoying talking to Sophia now that she was on the hook.

“The three who disappeared before crossing the border were basically errand runners given membership to swell the group’s ranks. They didn’t have a falling out. It would be more accurate to say they got scared and fled.”

In many respects, the terrorist world was a hard one, and one hardship was

securing funds for their activities. World-wise and deft terrorists might extort money from organizations by promising not to target them, or by harassing their adversaries. But terrorists lacking these negotiating skills might work incessantly as day laborers, live frugally, and then use what little money they had to procure the paltriest of weapons. Since their budgets were so limited, black market arms dealers would take advantage of them, so many could only get shoddy bombs like this one made from fireworks.

“To quickly obtain funds for their activities, they plan to rob banks. But they don’t have enough people, so they hire local thugs.”

“So they didn’t just go their separate ways or have a falling out?”

“It appears they simply got scared and made off. Two have already turned themselves in. We learned the structure of the criminal group from their statements.”

“Ugh...”

As if Daian’s words had cast a fresh bout of exhaustion over her, Sophia covered her eyes and pressed her face into the sofa.

“So a group of six third-rate terrorists manipulated the royal capital?”

It wasn’t even funny. It was just a nuisance. But it was not without effect.

Simply put, terrorism creates nuisances that draw attention to a political cause. Terrorists plant bombs, set fires, steal and kill in order to say, “We do these things because the system is bad.” And if that causes confusion, they make use of that, too. They use it as fodder, saying, “Look! We had to do this! They’re the bad ones!”

To stop that, even if the opponents were two-bit crooks, the bureaucracy and military would have to take action. And that wasted manpower, funds, time and resources.

Just thinking about it made Sophia’s head hurt.

“Um... wait. In other words, there’s still one left?”

Sophia realized that one pitiful thug—a thug roped into joining the terrorists bearing a supposedly lofty mission—hadn’t crossed the border and was still

wandering around out there.

“Well, it seems they found that last one and it’s causing excitement here and there.”

Almost all of the information Sophia had concerned the royal capital. Daian, however, possessed special channels and had obtained further information.

“It seems that one thug showed up in the country town of Organbaelz.”

“What?!”

Organbaelz. Hearing the name, Sophia was speechless. That was the town where a man who was like a younger brother to her—a man who had once been her subordinate—owned a bakery.

“So what’s going on?”

Back in Organbaelz...

With repeated threats... Or rather, plying careful but persuasive techniques, Sven was frowning in a meeting room at city hall that had been established as an emergency headquarters.

“Um, Miss? Let’s see...”

All the police officers on site were commanders of considerable rank. They were all over forty or fifty years old, and they were usually strict in handling their subordinates. However, they withered before Sven, who looked about seventeen or eighteen years of age.

“The press has gathered around, and... um... even worse, politics are involved.”

One officer looked particularly important. He was the chief of police, the highest-ranking officer, and he was wiping sweat from his face as he answered Sven.

“The criminal took hostages! And two of them are children! What does politics have to do with that?!”

The chief of police’s reply came through a forced smile, but Sven mercilessly

cut him off.

According to eyewitness accounts, there was only one criminal. That man had occupied Tockerbrot and taken three employees hostage, two of them children. Those hostages were, of course, the shop's owner Lud, and Jacob and Milly.

"You look thirsty. Would you like some water?"

Cases of water bottles were stacked along the meeting room's walls. Sven removed a glass bottle from one.

"Hyah!"

Then, she swiftly lopped the top of the bottle off with a sharp hand chop.

"Have a drink."

"Agh!"

The chief of police cried out when he saw her hand chop cut more cleanly than even the fine knife of a skilled craftsman. However, no one laughed at his discomfiture. Because they were all trembling. There was only one explanation for why they cowered before Sven. They were frightened of her, like children scared of an ogre.

"The bakery you work for... Tockerbrot, was it? We suspect the hostage-taker was connected to the terrorist incident in Berun a few days ago."

Two of the six terrorists had been apprehended, two had given themselves up, and one had been seized after a failed suicide bombing. The last of them had eventually escaped to Organbaelz.

"So what? Isn't it time to immediately send in a special unit?! If you want, I could head that op for you!"

"Don't be ridiculous!"

The silver-haired girl's offer astonished the police chief.

"Although you do seem capable..."

He was at a loss, but Sven's confident demeanor suggested she could succeed where he and his subordinates had not.

"That's not the point. I mean... if we could solve this with force, we would

have done so already.”

The chief of police put a hand to his forehead as he replied.

“As I told you before, tons of reporters have gathered. And they’re not just from Wiltia and Pelfe. They’re from Greyten and Filbarneu, too!”

Both nations had been enemies of Wiltia during the recent Great War.

“If our opponent was an ordinary criminal, there’d be no problem. Like you said, kids are among the hostages, so this is a situation that requires immediate action. However...”

“Oh, I get it.”

Finally, Sven understood what the chief of police was trying to say. The criminal was indeed a bank robber, but his comrades were terrorists with a political agenda, so as part of their group, the authorities would categorize him as a political offender. If the police used force to arrest him, some would interpret that as a crackdown on freedom of thought. Even worse, what if the foreign press took notice?

“Right now, Wiltia is getting world-wide attention about the international sports competition to be held in a few years. And the royal capital recently had a rebellion. For many reasons, this requires careful consideration.”

“I understand that.”

Before Sven became an Autonomous Humanoid Hunter Unit, she belonged to the Wiltian military as an Anthropoid Hunter Unit, a military weapon. She wasn’t human like the police chief, but she felt a certain sympathy for him as someone devoted to the nation.

“But how are you going to handle the rescue?”

“Um...”

The chief of police crossed his arms and pondered Sven’s question. He was in charge here. However, a national problem was beyond his responsibility.

“We have to wait until we know who will be stuck holding the bag.”

A fierce game of Old Maid was underway among the upper echelons of the

Pelfe police to decide who would be culpable in this matter. Until that was decided, he couldn't take any action on his own authority.

"The idiocy of it all!"

Sven gnashed her teeth at the stupidity of bureaucracy.

Inside Tockerbrot, the eye of the storm...

"Heeelp!!!"

The criminal was crying and shouting and desperately begging for forgiveness.

"Um, just calm down for a second."

"Don't get any closer! I said no closer! Please! Stay back! If possible, don't even look at me!!"

Lud Langart, the owner of the shop, was trying to calm the criminal, who was panicking.

"W-What are you gonna do with me? Are you gonna kill me? Or eat me?"

"I'm not going to eat you."

The criminal was trembling in terror at Lud's face.

"Calm down, Mister. It's all right. Lud looks scary, but he'd never hurt anyone."

The criminal had a gun pressed against Jacob. Nonetheless, the boy attempted to soothe him.

"R-Really?"

"Yeah! He looks scary, but he's a gentle and kind man! So don't worry!"

Milly, an apprentice at the bakery, laid down verbal supporting fire.

"Th-They're right," Lud added. "I have no intention of harming you. So please... calm down."

As if to reinforce the children's words, Lud gave a smile—or rather, what he thought was a smile. And the man's immediate reaction was...

"Gyaaah! What a gruesome face!! Are you gonna kill me?! Are you?! Are you

gonna skin me, butcher my meat, and grind my bones?!”

Lud had only further terrified him.

“Lud, that isn’t necessary!”

“It’s all right, Mister! Calm down! Take a deep breath!”

Jacob and Milly quieted the criminal, whose legs were shaking and whose nose was running as he sobbed.

“What kind of mug is that?! I’m certain he wants me dead! That’s gotta be it!!”

“No, Mister. It may be hard to believe, but that’s just how he smiles.”

“Well, it’s the kind of smile that scares people into never starting wars again!”

“I know how you feel.”



This wasn't at all a typical conversation between a criminal and his hostages. And hearing it depressed Lud.

Lud Langart had a frightening face. It was so frightful, he had almost lost his shop because his features scared away customers. That's why he rarely appeared in the storefront. And that's why this situation had arisen.

"Argh! I thought only women and children would be in here! I wasn't expecting an ambush!"

"This isn't an ambush!"

Lud spoke sadly to the criminal, who was crying in remorse.

The whole wall of Tockerbrot facing the town's main street served as a large show window. As a result, customers in the street could see the shop's products and its clientele, thereby encouraging them to come inside. However, if Lud was standing there with his fierce mien, it would keep everyone away. For that reason, he usually stayed in the oven room while others tended the storefront. But the hostage-taker didn't know that.

"Hey, Mister? Why don't you give this up? If you do it right now, wouldn't it lighten the charges against you?"

Jacob, one of his hostages, recommended the man turn himself in.

"He's right. There isn't any way for you to escape."

Milly seconded the suggestion from her spot in a chair behind him.

"Y-You all seem so relaxed..."

The hostage-taker made a face as if the serene children either impressed or shocked him.

"Not at all!"

"Well... kind of."

The children looked at each other.

Jacob and Milly were definitely children. However, since they made friends with Lud Langart, they had been through some dangerous times. They had been swept up in the commotion in the royal capital caused by Genitz's rebellion.

And they had developed the guts not to panic at a single amateur hostage-taker.

“Yawwwn...”

The kitten Ellis, curled up in a corner of the shop, yawned unabashedly and went back to sleep. At Tockerbrot, even the cat was relaxed.

“What’s with this place?!”

The hostage-taker was confused. After all, he had a gun. It was an old model and shabby, but it still held bullets.

Since the hostages knew that, the children and the cat weren’t doing anything to upset the criminal. They remained still and spoke softly.

“For now, you should lower your gun. After all, it’d be dangerous if it went off.”

“Y-Yeah...”

To the criminal, it was ironic that Lud, the man with the scary face, was the most flustered among them. However, Lud’s disquiet was like that of a mother trying to calm a child waving a knife.

“Let’s see... My name is Lud Langart. The boy you’re holding is Jacob. The girl behind you is Milly. And the cat is Ellis.”

“Okay...”

“What’s your name?”

“Milag... Miroslav Milag.”

“All right.”

Trying not to agitate the man, Lud asked, “Why are you doing this?”

“I’m a bank robber.”

Lud and the others didn’t know that Miroslav had been hired by the terrorists who were now a political issue between Wiltia and Pelfe.

“The economy’s bad, right? I don’t have any money or a job. I was down and out and they invited me in on a chance to score big.”

The Great European War had ended three years ago. War is the largest consumer activity, so at the end of the war, every area of industry suffered a large decrease in demand, despite inflated production.

And when the balance of supply and demand collapses, massive deflation occurs. Then, goods don't sell unless prices are drastically lowered, but there was a limit to how low costs could go.

Employers had greatly reduced labor costs—in other words worker paychecks—or simply laid off their employees. In short, there was widespread unemployment, and even those who had jobs received meager pay. It was difficult to live according to the law so it wasn't strange that people committed crimes.

"But I didn't know what kind of job it would be... I had to raise funds for terrorists!"

"I see..."

Apparently, Miroslav hadn't been prepared to become a political criminal.

"But I did it because they told me I'd just be the driver and would only face minor charges if I was caught."

He hadn't even been prepared to be a robber. He had committed crimes without much forethought in the hopes that it would reap large amounts of money.

That's the horrible thing about poverty. Poverty encourages crime for survival, and it greatly disrupts society. When peace and order are upset, economic activity stagnates, generating more poverty. Then more people engage in crime, setting off a chain reaction.

To stop that cycle, it was necessary to stimulate demand through consumer activity, but nothing had been found to replace the war, thereby causing a recession whose outcome was uncertain.

"Urgh! How did this happen? How?!"

Despair and anger overwhelmed Miroslav. He was not a very rational person.

"Arrrgh!"

He erupted in rage, picking up a nearby chair and hurling it at the window. There was a loud crash as the chair flew through the glass.

“It’s all because I’m poor! It’s not my fault! It’s society’s fault!!”

“Don’t cry.”

Indeed, some things are beyond one’s control. Nonetheless, Jacob looked amazed as Miroslav released his frustration by breaking the window of someone else’s shop.

“Another broken window...”

Lud, the owner of the shop, quietly sighed at the thought of the repair cost. This might be the third or fourth time that Tockerbrot had suffered a broken window.

Showing no concern for what might be happening inside the shop, the crowd outside was thrilled and the newspaper reporters clicked their cameras in lieu of shouts for joy.

“Argh! This isn’t a show for your entertainment!”

The sight of them must have grated on Miroslav’s nerves, because he pointed his gun outside in a fit of anger.

“No, Miroslav! Don’t shoot!”

“—?!”

However, he stopped when Lud shouted.

People don’t always stop because they are told to. To be precise, they might not even hear the command. However, no matter how chaotic the circumstances, a person will often react immediately when hearing his or her name. That was why Lud had asked their captor his name earlier.

“Don’t shoot. If you do, they’ll add attempted murder to your charges. If you want to shoot, shoot at the sky. Then it’s only a threat.”

A gun is a tool for harming people. Putting a finger on the trigger and aiming at someone is a declaration of intent to kill.

“Yeah, all right...”

Miroslav could sense from Lud's eyes and voice how serious he was, so he obeyed.

"You're..."

The look in Miroslav's eyes said that he had noticed something.

"You know how to handle... Or how to use a gun! I knew it... You're..."

"Yes, that's right."

"You're a bloodthirsty killer!"

"No, that's not right!!!"

Lud had thought Miroslav recognized him as a former soldier, but instead he had insulted Lud again based on his appearance.

"Don't kill meeeee!!!"

"I won't!!!"

Again, Miroslav sobbed and screamed and begged for his life as Lud insisted on his innocence.

"It's time for you to surrender, Mister."

After listening to the two of them, Jacob heaved another sigh.

Outside the shop...

"It looks bad in there."

In the upstairs of a house across the street, Sven muttered to herself. The police had temporarily commandeered the house's second floor, so officers were monitoring the situation inside Tockerbrot through a surveillance telescope.

"Oh... you can see inside?"

The house was opposite the shop, but the distance was at least ten meters. And it was already night. The lights were on inside the shop, but it would have been difficult to see with the naked eye.

"Don't worry about me. Just do your job!"

“Y-Yes, Miss!”

Without turning her head, Sven chided a police officer engaged in surveillance. With her functional specifications, the distance and darkness were no problem. However, what she saw was a big problem.

It's unknown how many bullets are in the criminal's gun. Judging from the way he moves, there could be three or four left.

He moved like an amateur. Like a street thug or an even lesser punk. It was possible for Lud to defeat him despite the man's advantage in having a gun. But Lud couldn't make any careless moves because of Jacob and Milly.

Still, his chance of winning is over 90 percent. Come on, Master...

Even with a 99.99 percent chance of success, he would never take the risk if even a slight chance of harming someone else remained. Her master was that kind of man. His compassion for others was a big part of Sven's deep affection for him. She respected and loved him from the bottom of her heart. But she also wanted him to value himself a little more.

At this rate, the worst could happen—but in a different way. Of all the possible scenarios Sven could see, danger to Lud's life was the most likely. He might die protecting someone. And she had to stop that from happening. No matter the cost.

Again, back inside Tockerbrot...

A few hours later, the sun had set and it was near bedtime, but the police and the media were still surrounding the bakery.

“Urgh...”

“Are you all right?”

Lud asked this question of Miroslav, whose eyes were bloodshot. The criminal's nerves—and only his—were reaching their limit. The man had already lost the presence of mind to control his hostages. Jacob and Milly lay asleep in a corner of the shop.

“Shut up! Keep your mouth shut!”

Now that he was surrounded, there would be no escape. Miroslav was in extreme stress and was clearly beginning to lose his mental equilibrium.

“You should rest, even for a short time.”

“Urgh...You just want to escape while I nap! Or turn me over to the police!”

“I wouldn’t do that.”

Miroslav had run through the mountains and camped out in the open for days before reaching Tockerbrot in Organbaelz. By the time he got to the shop, he was exhausted.

“Why don’t you at least eat something? I mean, we have plenty of food to eat. Or rather to sell.”

“Urgh...”

Although Miroslav had barricaded himself in the bakery, he had yet to taste the bread. And that wasn’t because he felt bad about eating without paying. He simply didn’t have room in his mind to pay attention to such things. He was so focused on the police outside the window that he couldn’t see the bread lined up just beneath his line of sight.

“Very well, just a little.”

“All right, wait a second. How about this one?”

Lud showed rye bread to Miroslav, who nodded hesitantly.

“I’ll use a knife to cut it. Is that all right?”

“Sure...”

Since he could use the knife for defense, Lud declared his intention beforehand to avoid further stressing Miroslav.

“Rye bread has a dry texture so spreading something on it makes it taste better. It goes well with juicy marmalade and sour cream. Here.”

Lud spread cream cheese on a thin slice of rye bread and handed it to Miroslav.

“It’s delicious!”

Miroslav exclaimed softly after taking a bite.

“Would you like something to drink? I can make coffee or tea.”

“Um... coffee, please.”

After a while, Lud returned with a pot of coffee and a cup.

“Here.”

Lud gave Miroslav a cup that he had warmed with hot water, then poured in coffee.

“We usually have a waitress serve coffee. She can make better coffee than this.”

Lud spoke as he handed over the cup.

“.....”

Miroslav remained silent. The warmth of the cup had somewhat calmed his shaky fingers.

“Hey, why don’t you call this off? If you keep this up, you’ll damage your health.”

Lud spoke when he noticed Miroslav’s tension easing. He was maintaining the appearance of caring for Miroslav. But in fact, Lud genuinely cared about the man at this moment.

Miroslav wasn’t a good man to anyone. But he wasn’t a deplorable, worthless man either. He was just a small-time crook confused about what he wanted. He had time left to redo his life. But more than anything...

“You said my bread tastes good, right? So I won’t stand for any more moping!”

“But...”

“It’s all right. If you throw down your weapon and go outside without a fight, they won’t shoot you.”

Ironically, throngs of journalists had come because they believed Miroslav was the last of the terrorists who had disturbed the royal capital. The police wouldn’t shoot him in front of the media.

“And I’ll testify at the trial that you weren’t violent toward the children. You were just confused and pushed into a bad spot. After all, you didn’t shoot anyone, did you?”

“No...”

If Miroslav didn’t fire a shot, that alone would lessen his sentence.

“Don’t worry. You can still do your life over.”

Lud patiently attempted to convince Miroslav, but his effort didn’t bring him any closer to his objective.

“How am I supposed to survive after getting out of prison?”

Miroslav mumbled bitterly.

“It’s over. At this stage, I’m already in checkmate. There ain’t no second chance in life!!”

He shouted and pressed the gun in his hand to his temple.

“No, Miroslav!”

Lud raised his voice to stop him. However, calling Miroslav’s name didn’t have compelling force this time.

“Sorry for all the trouble... I should’ve done this a long time ago!!”

Miroslav had chosen to kill only himself. It was the least he could do to repay Lud. His hand was trembling, his fingers shaking. However, his finger was still capable of pulling a trigger.

“Stop!!”

Lud jumped toward Miroslav. As the two men struggled, a gunshot rang out.

“Huh? What?”

“Lud!”

Jacob and Milly, who were asleep, jumped at the sound. And then...

“Master!”

They heard another voice. The silver-haired girl, Sven, flew down from the ceiling.

“Sven? Huh? How did you get in here?!”

“I jumped onto the roof, ripped it away, and snuck into the attic!”

Sven explained as though it was nothing special.

After sneaking into the attic, she looked for a chance to rescue Lud and the others. But before that happened, she heard a gunshot and plunged in without further thought.

“Master, are you hurt?”

Lud and Miroslav had been struggling, but now they weren’t moving. More accurately, Lud had suppressed Miroslav, covering and immobilizing him.

“W-Why? Why?!”

Miroslav was stunned and spoke weakly. Blood was pooling beneath them.

“No...”

Sven was speechless.

That wasn’t Miroslav’s blood. It came from Lud, who was struck by the bullet when the gun accidentally went off as he tried to stop Miroslav.

“Master?! Noooooo!!”

Lud’s injury was a trillion times more painful to Sven than her own death would be. Even worse, Lud had fallen and wasn’t moving.

“Ouch...”

Or so she thought... but then he slowly rose.

“Miroslav, are you all right? You mustn’t be hasty!”

He reproached Miroslav, but blood was streaming from his body. The criminal was more important to him than his own wound.

“Master, we have to stop the bleeding! We’ll treat you! Sterilize it!! Medic!! Medic!!”

Lud was calm, but Sven was panicked and perplexed enough for two people.

“You... Your injury... Are you okay?!”

“Uh... yeah.”

Lud finally noticed.

“It didn’t hit a vital organ. So it should be no problem.”

“No, no, no...”

Blood had drained from the confused shooter, making him paler than Lud, who was actually bleeding.

“Why... you... Why are you being so kind to me? I damaged your shop!”

Miroslav found it hard to understand Lud’s behavior.

“Well... it’s hard to explain.”

As if embarrassed, Lud scratched his head.

“That rye bread you ate will be sweeter and tastier after a few days.”

“Really?”

People assume bread tastes better immediately after baking, but some bread gains flavor with time.

“And while I don’t have the ingredients right now, if you make a sandwich with salmon, onion and an olive-oil sauce, it’s absolutely mouth-watering. And I can make better coffee.”

Lud wasn’t good at smiling. Even now his face looked angry. However, his tone was like a parent talking about a child he had lovingly raised.

“I want anyone who says my bread is delicious to be able to say it’s delicious again. So, for my sake, please don’t do anything reckless.”

“All right...”

Miroslav dropped his gun as if he had lost all his strength. The sound of metal dropping on the floor resounded throughout the shop.

“Grah! I don’t care about you!! Move outta the away!”

However, this waitress who loved her master more than anything didn’t care one whit about that.

“Oof!”

She kicked Miroslav away and lifted Lud's large frame more than two heads taller than her own.

"S-Sven? Huh? What are you doing?"

"What do you mean what am I doing?! You have to see a doctor! So we're going to the hospital!"

"No, it isn't that serious."

Lud was a former soldier. His job had once been on the battlefield, where bullets constantly whizzed back and forth, so he had suffered gunshots more than once. Based on his experience, he determined that the injury from a shell of this caliber was no threat to his life. And he was correct.

However, that wasn't the issue for Sven. Even if the wound had been no bigger than a hair's width, it was a tragedy that her beloved master was injured.

"Graaah!"

Mary Ville froze at Sven's question. Which meant she was spot-on. Mary Ville was only a girl during those days in Lapchuricka, and she had developed a crush on Lud, who was still a boy. She had imagined a joyful future in which she and Lud ran the shop together.

"That was... a long time ago."

Mumbling, Mary Ville tried to deny it, but Sven stayed on the attack.

"And you still love him, right?"

".....!"

Turning beet red, sweating and trembling, Mary Ville was at a loss for words. She had argued and engaged in a fierce clash with Sven, but now she was speechless.

"I understand. After all, I've got it bad for him, too. That's how I can sense the same thing in you."

During the trial... No, even before, Sven had noticed. She had sensed a different light deep in Mary Ville's eyes, which burned with intense anger and hatred. And it was the same as what she felt herself.

"At first, I didn't understand. But finally I did. The human heart is complicated and easily breaks in two. It can love at the same time that it hates."

That was a quality of the heart that she never thought of when she was a Hunter Unit. But that's the way Sven's heart was now. She wanted to bring home yet another rival—in addition to Sophia and Marlene—for the affections of her dearly beloved master Lud.

But that was what she felt compelled to do. She couldn't just abandon Mary Ville. This woman loved the same man Sven loved and was confused by her own heart.

"....."

Mary Ville didn't answer, but her silence said more than words.

"So come with us!"

Sven held out her hand. But Mary Ville didn't take it.

“Thank you.”

Instead, she expressed her gratitude. When she raised her face, she was smiling with tears in her eyes that she had never shown before.

“But it’s out of the question.”

“Why?!”

“I told you. You’re right. I still love Lud.”

When she had learned he was still alive, Mary Ville had been angry, thinking, “He was a Wiltian soldier?!” Simultaneously, however, she had been happy.

“But I also hated him so much I couldn’t forgive him. If it hadn’t been for my grandfather’s words, I would have tried to destroy him!”

In court, she had meant it when she said she would plunge him into regret and humiliation. The human heart is complicated. Human beings are capable of hating and loving at the same time.

“I envy you for loving him properly.”

Mary Ville spoke with a sad smile, then rose to her feet. On the platform, a station attendant announced the imminent departure of the train to Alohz.

“Mary Ville... are you sure?”

“Of course not. That’s why I hate him.”

Mary Ville answered Sven’s question with her back turned. Perhaps what Mary Ville hated most about Lud was that he made her hate what she loved most. But she clasped the paper bag she had received from Sven to her chest—with the marguerite inside—as if it were important. That was all she could do.

“Then at least work at loving that dummy!”

Leaving those words behind her, Mary Ville boarded the train without looking back.

“.....”

Silently, Sven saw her off. She watched for a long time after the train moved forward, left the platform, and disappeared from sight.

Mary Ville stayed in her seat, without speaking, gazing out the window. For hours, without thinking anything, she just stared at the passing landscape.

A lot had happened. Over a few days, she had faced her past and confronted her own heart. And she remembered that she had smiled during her conversation with the silver-haired girl.

Before long, Lud will probably start smiling, too.

But it wouldn't be the smile he had used to make the people of Lapchuricka let down their guard. It would be a joyous smile that celebrated being human.

It's too bad...

She felt a slight regret. If she had gone to Organbaelz at Sven's invitation... If she could have lived in that small town as a baker..... She would have been happy. She would have smiled more.

"Sheez... Why did I ever fall for a guy like that?"

Laughing wryly, she picked up the bread by her side.

The bread was a marguerite. It was given that name because it looked like the flower. In the language of flowers, it meant "secret love," so no bread was more fitting for her at this moment.

"Hmf! Wouldn't flowers have been more appropriate for a farewell?"

As she said this, she tore off a piece of bread corresponding to a petal and popped it in her mouth. The soft texture and the gentle sweetness of the wheat and rye spread through her mouth.

"Hey, this is pretty good!"

As Mary Ville murmured these words, the train crossed over a bridge. The sky was tinged with blue. It would soon be dawn.

Epilogue: No Expectation of Recovery

A little earlier...

About the time Sven and Mary Ville were conversing on the train platform, a man was reeling around the entertainment district on the outskirts of Ponapalas.

“Warrrrgh!”

He had been drinking, pouring cheap alcohol down his throat, but his anger hadn’t eased one bit. The man’s name was Tagkinder. He was the prosecutor who had behaved inappropriately in court and was removed from Miroslav’s trial. Then his organization had forsaken him.

Today, he would receive his new appointment. He would be transferred to a remote branch office of the Justice Bureau in a Wiltian colony on another continent. Supposedly, this transfer wasn’t punishment for his connection to the Peace Faith.

But he wasn’t allowed to refuse. If he did, he would have to quit his profession as a prosecutor. In other words, this was a kind of legal harassment—exile because he held dangerous ideas against the government.

“Argh! Urgh! Argh!!”

Screaming, he kicked the wall and collapsed by the side of the road.

“Pardon me.”

“Who’re you?! Stop starin’! You’re buggin’ me!”

Tagkinder began to chew out the man but closed his mouth.

“Y... You’re...”

“Oh, you remember?”

The man wearing a black coat answered with a smile. It was the same man who approached Tagkinder the night before the trial and gave him the evidence

to win the case in a single blow.

“Why didn’t you use the information I provided?”

“Well, um... the information wasn’t reliable enough. You can’t use that in a court of law! That’s the only reason!”

“Hmm...”

The man in black answered without interest and pulled a pistol from an inside pocket.

“What the—?!”

“It was my mistake for failing to notice your relationship to the Peace Faith. You have my sincerest apologies.”

The pistol had a silencer. Despite the many people around, no one would notice the sound of the gun in the noisy entertainment district.

“W-Wait!”

“I truly am sorry. If I had known, I would never have approached you.”

The man had misunderstood when he researched Tagkinder’s background.

Tagkinder himself wasn’t the kind of person to adhere to a rigid ideology. However, his younger brother had been a member of the Pelfe Militia.

The Pelfe Militia were military volunteers who showed loyalty to Wiltia so it would merge with Pelfe. Its members had been sent to a particularly dangerous battlefield on the Western Front. By standing firm despite the brutal onslaught, they proved Pelfe’s loyalty to Wiltia.

Wiltia had sent the Pelfians to avoid endangering their own soldiers. As a result, the number of casualties in the Pelfe Militia had been higher than in other units, with half said to have died.

Tagkinder’s younger brother had been a member of that group.

“Don’t worry. I’m sure your brother is waiting for you.”

“No, don—”

After reassuring Tagkinder with a smile, the man in black pulled the trigger.

Pshmp! Pshmp!

A dry sound rang out several times, but no one noticed. Tagkinder fell to the ground and spoke no more. His heart stopped and he ceased breathing.

“What a shame... Because your brother showed loyalty to our nation, you guys get better treatment than the citizens of Haugen. And that’s a problem.”

He put away his gun as he muttered.

“Being kind to inferior people just makes them uppity. It truly is a problem.”

The man in black wasn’t really smiling. He was without feelings, so the smile simply hung on his face. And it hid fierce contempt.

“Now for one more. The woman.”

The man in black—Agent Belger of the Security Department—continued muttering as he tucked away his gun.

The next morning at Central Station in Ponapalas...

Lud and Sven were in the waiting room before boarding a steam engine from Ponapalas to Organbaelz—or, to be more accurate, to the town next to Organbaelz where the rail line connected.

“What’s the holdup?!”

Sven was fuming as she sat on a waiting room bench.

“It seems there’s been some sort of trouble.”

Lud was sitting next to her and answered as he watched the tumultuous scene of people waiting for the train.

“Forget about our train. It seems the train before ours hasn’t arrived either. I wonder if there was an accident.”

“Just when I thought we’d handled everything here and were on our way home!”

They had been waiting for almost an hour, but there was no expectation of leaving. At this rate, they might not get home that day.

“And we left our lodging, so it’ll be hard to find a place to spend the night.”

“Then we’ll just have to wait this out! Master, I’ll go buy something to drink.”

Inside the station, eager vendors were selling fruit, sandwiches, and drinks like coffee and tea—as well as newspapers and magazines, and even playing cards to help travelers pass the time.

Sven exited the waiting room, and just when she was about to call out to one of the vendors, she overheard two station attendants talking.

“It was the last train yesterday, right? Haven’t they cleaned that up yet?”

“Well, I heard it was a bomb or something.”

“Seriously? I heard there was a terrorist bombing incident in Berun, too. I hope Pelfe doesn’t get attacked!”

They were talking softly, but it was clearly audible to Sven with her superhuman hearing.

“Hey! You!”

Without thinking, she called out.

“Did you say the last train yesterday?! The one to Alohz?!”

“Huh?! Um...”

The station attendants were flustered. Apparently, they weren’t supposed to reveal details to the passengers yet.

“W-What are you talking about?!”

“It’s all right, just tell me!”

An attendant was nervously trying to fix the situation, but Sven grabbed him by his coat lapels and questioned him.

“Oh... did you overhear us? It’ll cause an uproar, so please don’t tell any other passengers, all right? You’re right. There was an incident involving the last train last night, the train bound for Alohz.”

“How bad was the damage?!”

After leaving Sven last night, Mary Ville had boarded that train.

“Well... just before dawn, the bridge collapsed. They say it was a bomb.”

“A bomb?!”

“It seems all the passengers... everyone died. Clearing away the debris has been difficult. We still don’t know who was on the train or how many passengers there were, but there are no reports of survivors.”

“Oh no!”

Sven’s face paled.

It couldn’t have been a coincidence. There was no way such a bombing would accidentally occur at that precise time. Mary Ville Mehl had been liquidated.

“Waaaaaaaaah!”

Sven wailed loudly.

She should have stopped Mary Ville from leaving, by force if necessary.

Mary Ville loved Lud but she also hated him? Who cares!

Sven should have dragged her along by force to see Lud again. That alone might have been enough to change her mind.

Mary Ville could have helped Lud bake bread at the small bakery in Organbaelz. She had been articulate and would have been a better teacher for the apprentice Milly. She might have joined the fight between Sven and the nun Marlene over Lud. They might have become surprisingly good friends. And Jacob, who was crazy about beautiful women, might have unsettled her with smooth talk surprising from a ten-year-old boy.

As the days passed, she might have smiled—not the sad smile Sven had seen when they parted, but the bright smile she had been capable of until ten years ago. And the sight would have pleased Lud more than anything.

But now that would never be. Because Mary Ville Mehl had died.

Postscript: The Saint

Just before dawn, on a steel bridge spanning the Zidle River, a few kilometers from the port town of Alohz, there was an explosion. The bomb wasn't made from black powder like the bomb in the terrorist incident in Berun. It used the newest plastic explosive, which even the military had yet to officially adopt. It was resistant against both heat and cold, capable of exploding even when wet, and extremely powerful. That power had completely destroyed one of the bridge's supports, its blast derailing the train that just happened to be crossing above. It was a horrific tragedy, leaving no possibility of survivors among the crew or passengers, but the man who had pulled this act of sabotage was still cautious.

"All right, everyone. We have about thirty minutes until the Railway Safety Department arrives. Make sure there are no survivors."

The man issuing instructions to his subordinates was Agent Belger of the Security Department. His subordinates were highly trained special ops soldiers, so their footfalls were silent as they entered the accident site.

"If anyone is still alive, kill them immediately. And if their wounds are light, finish them off just to be sure."

His crisp commands sounded more like those of a trained janitor than a covert operative. But he actually was a kind of janitor. As ordered by Hitzinger, and for the nation's justice and safety, he cleaned up any trash that soiled the nation.

Today he was fulfilling his duty to handle matters efficiently. He was eliminating the misguided people trying to reveal the slaughter of Lapchuricka that Wiltia had covered up. He would kill anyone involved, because it would teach a lesson so that no one would attempt to make the massacre of Lapchuricka public in the future. This was actually compassionate and would save others who disobeyed from being killed.

"Mr. Belger, we found the woman."

“Oh? Was she dead?”

A subordinate reported that the real target of this sabotage had been discovered. One woman.

“No, she’s still breathing.”

“What?!”

Belger purposely made an expression of shock.

“Well, she survived Lapchuricka, too. She’s very lucky.”

The woman Belger had attempted to eliminate was Mary Ville. She had lost consciousness, but she was alive. While many of the deceased had been damaged beyond recognition, she had only suffered abrasions, so she was lucky indeed.

“Well, well... She amazes me! I’m glad we checked just to be certain.”

Belger pulled a pistol from his inside pocket. Just as when he killed Tagkinder, Belger’s gun had a silencer. It wouldn’t be a problem if a gunshot rang out here, but Belger’s custom was to avoid slipping up and making noise. He was always cautious.

“Then if you’ll excuse me...”

He would finish her off with his own hand so he could deliver a report of her certain death. He pointed the gun at her head and prepared to shoot from a distance that made missing impossible. But...

“Hm?”

He had pulled the trigger, but the gun didn’t fire.

No... that’s not quite right. He had tried to pull the trigger, but his finger hadn’t moved. So no wonder no bullet came out.

“Hmm...?”

Why didn’t his finger move? At first, Belger didn’t understand. But he soon did.

“What the...?”

His right arm, gun still in hand, fell to the ground with a plop.

“Huh...?”

Instead of feeling pain from the wound, he experienced a sensation as if he had split apart at the molecular level.

“We can still use this woman, so I’m taking her.”

Belger turned toward the voice. And the moment he did, he saw a scene even further divorced from reality.

Belger had come with at least ten subordinates. They were all exceptionally well-trained agents. But in a moment—truly in one moment—they had all been killed. They were transformed into perfectly cubical chunks of meat, as though they were made of a gelatinous substance pushed through a sieve.

Belger supposed the woman he was looking at had done this. There was no other possibility.

“How did you... kill them?”

He truly wanted to know.

Belger had undergone intense training, acquired great knowledge as a specialist with heightened perception and analytical abilities, but he had no idea what just happened.

“Oh...”

The next thing he knew, the woman was standing right in front of him. Then, an instinctive desire to fall and press his head to the ground coursed through Belger. But not to beg for his life. He wanted only to serve the being before him.

“Oh. Are you still here?”

But his offer of servitude was not accepted. In the next moment, Belger’s consciousness disappeared. Because he was dead. Like his subordinates, he had been diced. The last image that burned itself into his eyes was of a beautiful young woman—genuinely beautiful, as if she had stepped from a myth—with violet hair and red eyes.

Afterword

This is SOW. Thank you for reading volume 7 of The Combat Baker and Automaton Waitress!

This time, it was Mary Ville who stood in Lud and Sven's way. Originally, her middle name—Ville—was actually to be Lud's name. But right before the release of volume 1, we needed to change it in a hurry for various reasons.

Lud Ville... Can you guess the origin of this name? It comes from the Grimm brothers Ludwig and Wilhelm, because their names have similar pronunciations. Since the novels are set in a world similar to the German-speaking world, we drew upon the names of very well-known Germans.

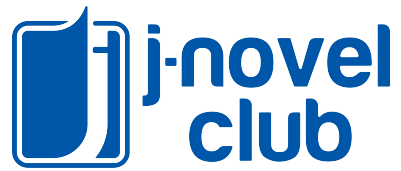
The Grimm brothers, who were famous authors, included the eldest brother Jacob and the middle brother Wilhelm. Ludwig, the youngest brother, was in charge of illustrations. He was not well-known for a long time, but in recent years a reevaluation of his contributions has led to his addition as an author.

And yes, Jacob Rosso is named after the eldest brother. So, that's the story behind their names.

Now all three brothers have appeared. But that doesn't mean all three characters are related by blood, okay?!

Now it's time to say good-bye. I extend heartfelt thanks to everyone involved with the book—and special thanks to the illustrator, Zaza, who I troubled yet again. And to everyone who picks up this book..... Thank you very much! I hope from the bottom of my heart that we will meet again.

SOW



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The Combat Baker and Automaton Waitress: Volume 7

by SOW

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