

Prologue: —The Beginning

—A very heavy atmosphere was spreading inside the dragon carriage.

[???: ——]

The atmosphere was not heavy because of nervousness or caution; it was just plain awkward. To feel like it was reality with her skin, the girl softly pulls up the blanket that was on her body.

The dog carriage was not being pulled by an earth dragon, but a large Liger, and it was not being shielded by divine protection. The passenger carriage had a rough structure, and so it shook noisily. They weren't really good circumstances, but since they weren't in a position to spend all they wanted, they just had to deal with this.

[???: ——]

They already didn't even have too much travel expenses left anymore. Once their lives were at risk, they also had to use the money that they were hesitant to use at first because of guilt. Still, even if they temporarily pulled through their difficulties, the problem of money would always follow them around unless it was solved fundamentally.

Plus, money wasn't the only problem they had. There was an even more serious problem.

That was—

[???: A wife...but you look like you just had a nightmare, certainly.]

A voice suddenly calls out to the girl at the corner inside the cramped carriage. When she looked back with just her eyes, she saw a small—no, a figure that was too small. It was maybe a child, or something smaller.

He had white hair and a lovely dog face—it was a beast man kobold.

[???: I can see why you'd be cautious, but I don't mean any harm, certainly. I was just curious, certainly.]

[Rem:Thank you very much for your concern. But...]

The girl stiffened up, but the tone of his voice made her relax. He probably just had good intentions. However, the girl's heart wasn't 'strong' enough to allow herself to be spoiled by his good intentions.

If she wasn't tense, she'd become more and more corrupted. That was terrifying.

[???: You're practically glass, certainly.]

[Rem: Like glass.....?]

[???: Glass is hard, but fragile, certainly. That's what your guys' hearts seem like to me, too, certainly.]

His point truly made her heart crack like glass.

By 'You guys', it felt like he was saying that she wasn't all alone. A black haired boy was cuddling next to her in a blanket, sitting up and sleeping. She was leaned against him, and they were sharing warmth.

And so, this boy was the true reason why there was a heavy atmosphere in the carriage.

[Subaru:I'm sorry...I'm sorry. I'm...so weak...so...everything's my.....]

[Rem: ——]

Every now and then, feelings of shame leaked from the lips of the boy having a nightmare. The passengers felt something serious from his voice and tears that made it seem as if he carried the guilt of everyone in the whole world, and they couldn't move an inch.

[Rem: Don't talk about other people's situations so bluntly.....]

[???: Seeing everyone as a threat now is something you probably couldn't avoid, certainly. It may have been unavoidable, but you can't just never do anything about it, certainly.]

When she looked down with their arms linked, the beast man just looked like white fur. The fur that spoke as if she knew them irritated her just a little bit. She just didn't want to make a big fuss about it.

Seeing her conflicted like that, the beast man gets a hat that he'd been hiding, and he took something out of it. And then, when he smoothly put his hand straight in there,

[???: Take this and go to Banan town. A friend of mine will help you out, certainly.]

[Rem:Why...are you doing this?]

His voice sounded like he had good intentions. There was a place and a person's name written on the paper he forced her to take. It seemed this

beast man's name was also included in the few lines. She didn't know why he was doing this.

The beast man smiles with a "It's obvious, certainly", in response to the girl's question and says,

[???: People should help out each other in times of need. As an adult, even more so when it's a child. "The more bonds you make, the more good bonds you get." That's the Kararagian way I believe in.]

He tells her that kindly, and the girl grasped the scrap of paper tightly. After that, she brought her knees together, put her head on the shoulder of the boy next to her, and she let out a sobbing voice.

The beast man stares at the girl and the boy with kind eyes, and he patted their heads.