

## Castlevania: Ricordanza of the God's Abyss

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A certain day in January 2037  
[Garden]

I had come to destroy evil.

A spectacled vampire hunter confirmed this as his duty.

In front of him is a [grotesque creature] whose dreadful power can be felt. The creature appears human but the instant he looked at it, all of his body's cells cried out in terror.

"The timing is bad, church person."

Whilst listening to the words said by the [grotesque creature], the young hunter kept on reminding himself.

----I am ..... I ought to be a vampire hunter.

He gripped his weapon and fiercely glared at the [grotesque creature] in front of him.

From the point of view of the youth, the [grotesque creature] seems to be laughing silently.

"You have managed to come here alone..... looks like you have confidence in your ability. Perhaps, you might be able to surpass me."

"....."

"But..... Have you ever experienced killing human beings?"

"..... tch!"

About 10 people lined up on both sides of the laughing man.

These are not the pitiful villagers who were captured by the vampire nor were they puppets being commanded ----

They confronted the vampire hunter with a clear mind.

----I ..... I .....

Surely these are human beings in front of him.

With that confirmation, the vampire hunter's mind stopped working at once.

[It is not about your ability to distinguish between justice and crime, but it is between believers and heretics..... Isn't it a given that you only distinguish between both humans and demons?]

Those arrogant words were said but scorn was not felt. Even if the creature had a certain respect for his enemy, he could never forgive him and damned words were said.

"That will be the cause of your defeat."

At the next instant, a shock fell on the hunter's body.

The hunter's body was soaked with something that was not the vampire's cursed fangs, nor its bloody claws, nor with magical flame-----

It was by the hands of humans who fired dozens of bullets from their guns.

It is certain that humans can kill each other with far more violence than a vampire's fangs.

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The Vampire Dracula

And the symbol of his magic, Castlevania

[That] thing of fairytales and legends is in fact true. The church and a group of the country's top officials had confirmed it as a fact a long time ago.

Ever since the Middle Ages, every 100 years, this legendary castle would rise together with its master Count Dracula ----- And whenever it happens, it is said that a clan of vampire hunters will seal it.

Several hundred years have passed with battles with the [dark lord] Dracula.

When suddenly, an end to it all has been foretold.

1999----- Thanks to the power of a clan in Japan, Dracula's castle was sealed inside a [solar eclipse] to disappear forever.

However, in this world, there is no such thing as forever. [They] had understood that Dracula's regeneration cycle ought to have ended. Indeed, people have prepared for this but will it still exist? The castle is the symbol of the chaos within humans and as long as people exist, it will not be completely sealed.

2035

During a solar eclipse in Japan, Dracula's castle appeared in this world once more.

Then slightly a year later, in 2036, a religious cult has planned the resurrection of [the castle and its dark lord].

Like the event that happened before, the castle reemerged, but with the help of the church, it was resealed. Though amongst them, there is but one conjecture and they have to use everything they have to be prepared.

-----Sooner or later, the castle would return.

That is why the [church] has continued to keep watch on any information that passes through their network.

And for a while, time passed by-----

Due to suspicious satellite images, some influential people were worried and it was up to Curtis to investigate, however-----

Somehow, that suspicion has passed into certainty and it is slowly changing into a nightmare.

And it's 2037-----

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Half a day earlier [Somewhere in Japan]

"Well, Soma-kun..... see you ~"

"Ah, see you."

This young man said farewell to his childhood friend and watched her climb the stone stairs towards the shrine.

There is nothing peculiar about this youth. He has the features of an ordinary college student living peacefully in Japan. However-----

When he can no longer see her, he suddenly sharpened his vision and turned around to see darkness forming behind him.

".....Hey? What do you want from me? You seemed to be sneaking around for a while."

He noticed that he was being observed by something since a while ago.

And he saw that it was probably not human.

-----An thought.....no need to think

Feeling tension in his heart, the youth ----- Soma Cruz prepared to silence his breathing.

He only sees himself as an ordinary Japanese living an ordinary life. But he has seen all types of monsters and can surely attest that they exist.

He is the object of surveillance of cults since he has something that cannot be found in other human beings.

-----Dracula's soul.

It can be thought of as an absurd fairy tale but-----A lot of [misfortune] happened to him and his destiny had been completely changed.

Dracula died in battle in 1999. That is the truth.

However----- his soul did not sink into chaos. Instead of losing the memory of his past self, he was reincarnated as a human being with the power of dominance over monsters.

That is the existence of Soma Cruz.

If in essence, he is the new Dracula, he should have reigned over the castle but with the help of the vampire hunters' Genya Arikado, Julius Belmont and Yoko Belnades, as well as the previously mentioned childhood friend, his connection to chaos was severed.

Afterwards, due to his [power of dominance], he got involved in trouble but now he is sticking to living as a human being.

But his soul had scanned the past and even he cannot forgive that.

While deciding to prepare himself, Soma again concentrated on his surroundings.

-----This sign.....from where.....

This ominous vortex of magic was similar to what he felt in the [demon castle]. Among all the magic Soma knows, this particular type of sophisticated [power] belonged to-----

“.....I know I am being rude.....”

Faster than he can remember, that husky voice rang in front of Soma-----

From the shadow of the forest, a large shadow emerged.

“.....tch!”

When he grasped the identity of the shadow, tension ran throughout Soma's body.

A giant skull wearing deep blue rotten robes appeared. However, there was no sense of madness and savagery. Even the atmosphere was filled with an indication of intelligence.

“Impossible..... why here..... tch!”

Death

Formerly this diabolical being with immeasurable power stood in Soma's way twice.

Except for the time when he was able to erase Death from existence by possessing Dracula's [power of dominance] over the souls of monsters, his condition right now with his disregarded power and not even having a weapon was no match for his enemy.

“Cough.....”

While Soma had to quickly search for something that could be used as a weapon, Death took action-----

That giant scythe that he held in his hands was thrust out in front and laid on the ground.

“.....?”

“.....I will not be hostile towards you.....”

He might have a husky voice filled with ominosity, though he seemed to pay his respects towards Soma.

Thinking about this, this was Soma's first time to have a conversation with this monster. It was not just [Death] that is in front of him but having a decent conversation with any monster has almost never

happened in the past.

Death looked at Soma understandingly and mumbled with the same tone as before.

“Hmmm.....with that look, you seem to know nothing of this matter.....”

“!? What are you talking about?”

However, Death did not answer Soma’s question. Instead he asked him another.

“Would you still not want to return to the castle and be my master?”

“.....Ah, I have no plans of becoming the dark lord.”

Hearing Soma’s unwavering answer, Death still not changing the tone of his voice, dryly said.

“Thus.....It is none of your business. No harm will happen to the young lady you are thinking about.

Continue to live your life in peace as a human.”

“Hey, answer my question.....!”

“.....Right now, you are not my master. I have no obligation to answer your question.....”

And Death vanished into the darkness without a word-----The giant scythe that was placed in front of Soma also vanished like a puff of smoke.”

Confirming that the presence of magic in his surroundings has disappeared, feeling the cold sweat in his back, Soma opened his mouth.

“Don’t say..... that castle again.....?”

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The next day somewhere in Eastern Europe

Sprinting

Charging through never ending streets, a woman rode her horse.

She looks like she is in her early 20s.

The rider is an elegant woman with a firm face pushing forward towards the bosom of darkness.

A third of the 21st century had passed and yet her clothes and appearance gave a feel of an unknown place in the past.

Her clothes combine artistic design with ease of movement. A long sword and a dagger were bound on her waist. A leather bag slung around the side of the horse was crammed with lanterns and holy items. Much more than her presence, the surrounding scenery had a sense of age. Not one building from the modern age can be seen.

Or rather, in the darkness surrounding the mountain path, there were no traces of humans.

The horse’s rough breaths turned into white clouds that flowed towards the back.

Even if she felt the chill of the night throughout her body, she used the moonlight to stare into the dark and firmly clasped the reins.

“Curtis.....”

In between the sound of hooves and muttering the name of one man, she lightly bit her lip.

There was this regret that was felt between her words.

A remote gorge appeared hovering between nothingness and chaos -----

----- towards Dracula’s castle

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This gorge is a place where only a few humans would dare enter.

Half a day earlier, 2 strangers—a male and a female, arrived at a village near this gorge.

Curtis Lang

## Michelle Dynasty

These 2 were the advance party dispatched by the [church] whose mission was to investigate the area. Curtis is the official member of the church, while Michelle is an outsider who chose the path of a vampire hunter. Both of them had met several times before in other assignments.

On one hand, Curtis, raised as a member of the church studied under the well-known strongest vampire hunter, Julius Belmont

On the other hand, the outsider Michelle, except for some resistance during their first meeting, naturally became partners with Curtis and this time was no exception.

The subject of the investigation is a small gorge, about 10 kilometers away from the village.

A few days ago, due to a partial solar eclipse occurring in that area, the ground observing satellites of several countries gave a strange image. That gorge was covered in black fog and nothing can be reflected out of it.

Most people accepted that it was just some sort of satellite malfunction. However, there was a group of people who suspected that the [solar eclipse] had something to do with it. A few days ago, the church picked up this suspicion.

Dracula's castle was sealed inside a solar eclipse.

Strangely, that area once belonged to the region of Wallachia where Dracula's castle formerly existed.

From the reports of the wrong satellite images and the suspicion of the church, and the church's reputation rested on Curtis' investigation. Though-----

Somehow, the certainty of this suspicion is slowly turning into a nightmare.

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[A village in Eastern Europe]

From the time they stepped into the mountains, Curtis and Michelle felt malicious intent in the air.

Even though it is still far away, their bodies seemed to squeal [run away].

There was definitely no room for doubt. It is certain that the [castle] exists at the back of the mountains.

The church's greatest vampire hunter, Julius Belmont must be contacted. However, the conversation jumped into the matter of the disappearance of several village children.

".....If we go now, we might make it."

From the time he heard that story, Curtis immediately started preparing his equipment and headed towards the castle.

With his self imposed mission, he insisted that it does not deviate from their investigation. Thus they brought only their essential monster fighting equipment.

Even if Michelle said that they ought to wait for Julius and the others, it was her priority ever since they were children to assist Curtis.

Usually, Curtis is a vampire hunter who thinks things over but deep in his heart, it can be understood that he is driven by passion.

Since working together in the recent years, Michelle knew that the Curtis now is unstoppable.

"If you really have to go.....I'll join you."

Preparing herself, Michelle offered to join him to the demon castle.

Curtis was silent for a while-----before long, he gave a breath that said I give up. He adjusted his glasses and talked to Michelle.

"I'll give you a minute to prepare. And then we have to leave a message for Julius and the others."

"Ok. I'll start preparing -----"

As she was going to her pack, she turned around.

Then she felt a shock at the back of her head ----- Her consciousness rapidly fell into the darkness.

“Sorry.....”

She heard those last words of Curtis, but she was not able to answer back since she drifted into unconsciousness.

When she woke up, she realized that she was hit by a knifehand strike on her nape.

Then----she saw that Curtis was no longer there and so was the bike with the attached side car.

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[In front of the castle gate]

“.....”

About an hour of galloping through the mountain path, she finally arrived at her destination.

“Here’s..... Dracula’s castle.”

Magnificent

That’s the first impression regarding the [castle].

It can be thought of as a medieval castle, a gigantic artwork that exudes the silhouette of [an elegant castle set up as a showcase of a king’s wealth and power].

However, it was never intended as a tourist spot ---- It feels like it was imprinted on this world.

The castle’s perimeter is surrounded by a moat making it an isolated world.

Even if it is in front of her, it seems that she is inside in a painting away from reality.

Michelle’s body was entwined by miasma that oozed out of the castle continuously inviting her in.

“Curtis.....”

A side car was parked on this side of the moat.

He must have gone off road and with such reckless run, the side car’s body showed contortions all over.

It is in a condition that might not be safe to ride later.

But it is certain that Curtis reached this castle.

Michelle looked around and noticed that aside from Curtis’ side car; there was one military jeep that was parked.

The engine was already turned off and there was no one inside.

Aside from us, who would come to this castle.....?

Thinking of that question, what if someone from mountain patrol decided to come here due to his concern about the children.

“Hurry..... inside.....”

Michelle landed on the ground and the horse backed away from the castle and shook itself.

“.....I’m sorry, I brought you to this place.....”

She gently stroked the back of the horse that she borrowed from the village. Michelle then faced the castle.

A drawbridge suspended from the main gate is seemingly welcoming Michelle’s arrival.

And her body was telling her [do not go] as her leg muscles were petrified like stone.

“Oh, come on.....it’s just this.....”

While warding off the miasma leaking out of the castle, Michelle braced herself and stepped forward on the drawbridge.

Before taking that step, she did not know that there might be something.

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A few minutes ago [Chapel]

At a glance, this place gives out the illusion of being inside a cathedral.

Magnificent stained glass colored the walls, from the starlight soft moonlight flooded the area. The spacious chapel was constructed in stone and a large pipe organ was placed in the center. If this were a normal place, its atmosphere could purify hearts.

However, as part of [Dracula's castle] this was far from being holy.

Proof of this is simply the number of monsters in this place.

There are stalking headless armors, squirming skeletons with spears or firelocks.

At the stairwells and in empty places, grotesque forms made of stone grew textured wings ----- gargoyles flitting by.

And below ----- swords, flails and other countless weapons emerged in the air slowly moving while waiting for a victim.

Animated by poltergeists, they are the monsters that belong to the weapon [family].

A giant black sword in the center of several weapons drifted by, a definite sign of death that is sweeping the chapel.

However, there is one man who is completely oblivious to the diabolic things inside the castle.

"Haaa.....As usual, this castle ~ is a gloomy place~. If Yoko-san were here, I think wherever I am, I'll be in heaven!"

"Gahaha," a lively laughing sound rang through. It became a clear timbre as it permeated the chapel walls.

"Hmm.....wait? Yoko-san and me inside the castle, in a place where a couple would take their oaths.....? Aa!! Hey, wait! What are you doing? Don't be shy!"

How long since I've stepped into this place? -----A bald man wearing a military uniform embarrassingly patted his head. Despite the situation of his surroundings, he started writing on a piece of paper.

"It's too bad that the castle's contents did not change much eh. I thought of giving Yoko-san a map and she'd be pleased but in this case, there's no meaning. I don't know much about the demon's castle; perhaps, I'll read the castle's atmosphere....."

Completely infatuated with Yoko, immediately after calling out her name, he was overcome with emotion.

The weapon group dancing in the air reacted to the loud voice of the man. They headed out with violent momentum towards the living target.

However-----

The man avoided the flail's dash towards his body and seized the hilt.

The power controlling the weapon still wanted to move even though it was held down and the surrounding weapon [family] rushed and swept around the man wearing a military uniform.

Several metal sounds rang, swords and spears were shoved, crushed and thrown to the chapel's stone pavement where they just stayed unmoving.

The black sword in the center might have judged that it was at a disadvantage. Wrapping itself with some weapons, it rose higher into the sky above the chapel and vanished.

Deciding not to pursue that object, the bald man started picking up these weapons that fell on the floor.

"Good, good, I can sell this after a few repairs."

While murmurs permeated the atmosphere, those unmoving weapons were placed inside his bag one by one.

Something must have noticed the sound and skeletons and armors are seen moving towards this direction.

In front of the attacking gargoyles, the man sighed and shook his head.

"Really, you guys are an unsociable bunch. Soon enough and those maids would act affectionate. After properly greeting, they would start kicking....."

After the man said those strange things, those monsters held up their weapons in their hands.

Immediately----- the man raised an axe and climbed up the great armor, then in a split second, lifted the

armor's head into his shoulders.

Flinging it towards the armor and skeleton group ----- He grimly smiled and mixed in his complaints. "Hmm.....since I don't have the hobby of getting flying kicks nor hitting women, and eventually, I would end up running anyway. I don't know if it is here today."

Protesting that he had been here before, the man cracked his hand.

After observing the scattered armors and bone, he placed the armors and axe inside the bag----- ignoring the atmosphere, this soldier optimistically spat.

"Now.....I'm done drawing this area's map. Should I at once return to the entrance?"

He walked a step forward and once more surveyed his surroundings----- He tilted his head a little and said.

"But, this castle.....the atmosphere is somehow different from before.....after all, maybe because Yoko-san isn't here....."

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[Castle Entrance]

After crossing the drawbridge, Michelle saw a proper gorgeous outdoor garden.

However, the garden is filled with an atmosphere that will not heal visitor's hearts. The bustle of things living there was somehow wishing for something.

----- The sign of monsters.....is still thin.

But, this is not the place to enter with common sense.

This thought Michelle placed in her heart. She has to find Curtis and peered out using the moonlight.

She already thought of going inside the castle, breaking into a run, then-----

At the corner of her eye, there was something out of place.

That is, a red peculiar dot.

It ought to dissolve if she rolled her eyes but it did not vanish.

Why does she see this red mass? She realized it in a moment.

-----Could it be.....

The reflection of reality at the corner of her sight was clear and her eyes could not lie. She cannot accept reality, thus she strongly fastened her heart.

She felt her back ooze with sweat regarding that red peculiar dot-----

She suddenly fell into a pool of blood, turned and looked at the figure of a man wearing those familiar clothes.

"Curtis!....."

Instantly, she knew he is really Curtis. She frustratingly kicked the ground, had she paid more attention to her surroundings she wouldn't have run up towards his body.

Curtis' body was full of wounds and it was not known which wound was worse. Based on the quantity of blood that pooled over the area, the thought of his survival was hopeless.

"Curtis! Hang on, Curtis!"

Michelle's body went numb.

She cannot find his pulse.

She also could not confirm whether he is alive or dead.

Over and over, she tried to drown out the voice inside her head that kept on saying [it's too late]. All she could do was ----- cry.

"Cu.....Curtis!"

".....uh.....cough....."



“!”

Instantly, all her senses returned to her.

He still breathes.

From the moment his groan was confirmed, for a split second, her face showed a deep sense of relief, however, that was immediately changed.

Curtis' face is pale and his breaths are extremely weak.

It is clear that at this point his life is in the balance.

She attempted to close his wounds, but -----

The young man covered in wounds suddenly stood up.

“Eh.....?”

Not understanding what just happened, Michelle's eyes widened.

The youth headed towards the main door of the castle dragging his bleeding leg----- and ignoring the presence of Michelle.

“!?! Cu.....Curtis! N.....no! You should not move!”

“Cough.....”

His body either stopped moving or he heard Michelle's voice, Curtis collapsed and dropped on his knees.

“No! There is no reason for you to walk! First, if you don't stop the bleeding.....”

It seemed that he fainted due to the loss of blood and Michelle's voice did not reach his ears.

Curtis increased his breathing, fixing his eyes on the front door of the castle.

At this rate, Curtis would die from excessive blood loss. Even though it was impossible, Michelle tried to hold back Curtis' body, then -----

Suddenly, there was a splashing sound and some kind of liquid substance rained down on Curtis' body.

“!?”

Imagining a monster attack, Michelle reached for her equipment at her waist and followed the direction of the thrown liquid with her eyes.

However, instead of an awful monster ----- she saw a middle aged man there.

“Oh missy, are you guys ok?”

This big man with a bald head, beard and wearing an army jacket stood in front of her.

He carried some kind of bottle in his hands and its contents are the same type of liquid that was splashed on Curtis' body.

“Be at ease. The liquid that I doused him is a potion since I saw that things here seemed to have gone wrong and his wounds seemed more serious than to disinfect with vodka, right?”

This military uniformed man with a scary face said those friendly words in an inappropriate place such as Dracula's garden.

“Potion.....?”

Mumbling her suspicion, Michelle watched the situation of the soaking Curtis.

Then----- comparing his condition now to before, it is clear that his bleeding stopped and his breathing had gone better.

“It is better to drink it but.....at that time, it was impossible.”

Frankly, that man is suspicious but it is certain that he saved Curtis.

“Though----- it is surprising. Did you come across other people here that are not your acquaintance?”

“.....”

Michelle kept a little part of her heart cautious but she did say thanks to the man in front of her.

“Thank you, you've been very helpful. You are.....?”

“Hmm? Me? Ah----- To say it simply, I run a general store. If there are items you want like information or medicine, I sell them for a cheap price.”

“.....?”

For a moment, she did not understand what the man was saying. While supporting Curtis' body, she

asked the man with a troubled expression.

“Selling.....That.....You, do you know what this place is?”

“Ah Dracula’s castle, right?”

“.....”

“Was I ripped off pretty bad by an alchemist? That chap said that this potion can heal any type of injury. But ah, this time, I am not here to make money. But just to be sure, if you want to buy something next time, you have to pay me ok?”

The man shook his head and said those words casually.

“After all, with that injury, it is not appropriate to make a business out of it. Here.”

With those words, the big man tossed some kind of book in addition to medicine.

“These are free samples. Next time, I have to receive payment, ok?”

“.....ah.....thank you.....”

While saying thanks to the man in front of her, Michelle brought a potion to Curtis’ mouth.

Finally, Curtis was able to sense Michelle’s presence.

Gradually suppressing his rising breathing, for a moment, he turned towards this side, but-----

Without a word, he reached for a small bottle with trembling fingertips and drank the liquid contents off.

“Are you ok.....?”

“.....”

His injuries are healing faster than before thus it can somehow be said that the military man’s potion is real.

With that, they were able to slip out of crisis mode and once again, Michelle said words of thanks.

“Thank you so much. I’m Michelle, he’s Curtis.....and you are?”

“Me? I’m Hammer. As I’ve said before, I run a general store. I have goods from newspapers until rocket launchers.”

Michelle suspiciously stared at the man that was openheartedly talking.

“What was your purpose in coming here.....? I doubt that your true purpose is just to sell goods, right?”

“Ah----- What was my reason..... from your look, you are a party sent by the church, right?”

“Y, yes.....We are just the advance party though.....”

For a moment, she hesitated to talk about the truth with him but since she felt that the man in front of her has no malicious intent, she immediately talked about their current situation.

The bald military man showed a slightly serious face and said in a lowered voice.

“Do you mean..... Of course, Yoko-san would also be coming here right!?”

Suddenly hearing an acquaintance’s name, Michelle tamely answered.

“Eh? If it’s Yoko-san, she’d probably come here but.....”

Then the man clenched his fists, gave a wry smile and shouted “Yes!”

“Damn, I had confidence in believing the rumor about Dracula’s castle! My hunch was that if the castle appears again, Yoko-san would absolutely come! Banzai!”

Not knowing how to respond, Michelle remembered to say one thing.

“She ought to meet up with Julius-san. I think it would take quite a while.....”

Immediately after hearing Julius’ name, Hammer placed his hand on his face, looked up to the sky and with an exaggerated voice said.

“.....Argh-----! With that grandpa again!..... Working with that guy..... Perhaps, it is destiny that chance brought me here several times! Why, you also think that way, right?”

“By chance..... You mean, you came here because you thought that you’d meet Yoko-san.....”

“Gahahahaha! Don’t pay attention to that little detail!”

With that man’s hearty laugh, Michelle for a while forgot her current situation.

-----Hammer

-----Come to think of it, he seems to have heard from Yoko-san and the others.

-----Putting himself in this perilous place, this weird soldier.....

While supporting Curtis' body, Michelle asked a surprising question.

"Do you really plan to set up shop at this place?"

"I'm just a guy with items. Since I am collecting loads of items, money and jewels from those monsters, why not take the opportunity and earn some more money, right?"

By the way he talked, Michelle thought that he somehow understood this place.

"You've got an amazing business sense....."

"That's why, please come again, come. In order to meet Yoko, I'm willing to go through a lot of trouble! The next time you'll buy something, I'll give you a discount."

Michelle did not say anything more to the grinning Hammer. She would have to continue nursing Curtis when -----

Curtis once more stood up.

"Ah.....don't stand!"

"....."

His face is no longer hollow and both of his eyes had the light of a strong will.

However, he did not fully react to Michelle's voice. He faced her with frozen eyes and said.

"Sorry, but.....My memory's gone."

"Curtis.....?"

Not understanding the meaning of his words, Michelle called out his name without thinking and ----- she just invited confusion.

"Curtis.....? Yes, my name is Curtis....."

"Eh.....?"

"I can't remember your name right now. I could only recall the name Curtis."

----- What.....

-----At this moment, this joke.....

Curtis' eyes prove that this was not a joke.

Still Michelle cannot accept this fact.

"Hey, say something....."

"Although I understand what I must do."

Drowning out Michelle's words, Curtis viciously glared at the castle in front of him

"Must destroy.....this castle"

After muttering that, he faced the castle and stepped forward.

On the other hand, Michelle not knowing what had just happened, and not knowing what to do, just stood there paralyzed and in a daze.

"I don't understand the situation but are you confused? Sometimes in battle, getting hit with a shock can cause memory loss."

When she heard that other person's voice, Michelle's confidence returned and hurriedly faced Hammer.

"Ah, thank you very much! I'll surely give a formal thank you to you later.....!"

"Your thanks is enough. Just buy something later. Besides, I'm thinking of hanging around here. Hurry run after your boyfriend!"

Michelle once more said her thanks to Hammer who is now patting his head and laughing heartily. She then turned towards the castle and started to run after Curtis.

While watching those two, Hammer was still grinning.

"It's good to see a such young man and a young woman. Would I also experience the same type of chasing from Yoko-san.....?"

Suddenly, Curtis who just entered the castle noticed his leg gave way again. He then saw a jar that

Hammer rolled on the ground.

“Weird, huh? You have used that much potions so you should have recovered by now, but.....oh, oh, what if we took a bad product?”

Hammer still surveyed his surroundings, saw Curtis down and saved him ----- he raised his brow and muttered.

“That guy, live well.....”

[Illusionary Shrine]

Located at the top most part of Dracula’s castle, this area of exceptionally elegant interiors is probably the place where visiting guests are entertained.

The castle’s interiors gave out fantastic scenery where visitors might forget that they are in an area of Dracula’s castle.

But give it a while -----and the fantastic scenery would immediately change into a nightmare where fanged creatures are seen inviting guests.

So-----inviting guests?

At the top of this area is a room-----with a giant fireplace in the center where numerous small dolls are curled up.

There are 5 to 6 children wearing clothing that don’t match the room’s magnificent interior and they don’t seem to be the masters of the castle.

Perhaps, they might be the children who were said to have disappeared from the nearby village.

There are some of them who were in tears while the others look really pale and they do not seem to be aware of their current situation.

Even if they are not restrained, it was just that they have gathered in a corner of the room.

They must have thought of running away from this room but they cannot----- However, there exists a person who seemed to be able to run away.

Although he just sat at a blue sofa in the middle of the room.

He is swirling a wine glass filled with a deep red wine in his hand.

This man who was wearing magnificent clothes looked like a nobleman ----- And it can be assured that the children do not know the situation they were in.

That he is not human.

There was nothing special that was done.

Just by his presence, there was a great pressure for sickness to take its hold on the children.

The man did not try to do anything but sit on the chair----- He then started a soliloquy.

“Let’s talk about the old days. A story about 2 years ago”

At that point, he stopped talking and sipped his wine----- briefly rolling it on the top of his tongue then swallowed It down his throat.

The impression of its taste did not show on his face. His ice-like eyes stared into the sky and continued speaking.

“Once.....countless heads have adorned this room. Females, males, young and old.....even the heads of kings and slaves.....all were part of that demon’s collection.....”

Lining the walls are luxurious shelves but nothing was placed on them, thus taking a very blank impression.

If the children imagined what could have been displayed on the shelves, their unease might have increased.

At the next instant, their unease would change into terror and despair.

“I felt that guy seemed familiar, from somewhere, but..... I could not understand that hobby of his.

After killing them, those human heads were displayed on the shelves side by side without distinction.”  
The man, who was still sitting, slightly lifted his hands and snapped his fingers. A sound rang.  
“Dead human heads.....stop screaming.”

Then, a black sphere appeared at the tip of his hand.

It is a sphere, but the children understood that it has [holes]. Even if it was illuminated by the flames of the fireplace, it did not reflect all light. It can be said that it is a sphere of darkness.

From its center, dozens of flame wrapped skulls flew out----- They seemed to know their places from before and started packing into the shelves. One side of the wall was changed into a patterned layer of skulls.

“Hic.....”

At the instant, one of the children let out a scream and the wall of skulls laughed together.

They do not have voices and they just banged their jaws on the shelf. With that action, their mouths gave out a sound.

Chatter chatter chatter chatter chatter chatter chatter

Guffaw guffaw guffaw guffaw guffaw guffaw guffaw

Chatter chatter chatter chatter

Guffaw guffaw guffaw guffaw kekeke ke

Ke ke

Ke kekeke keke keke ke ke

“Aa.....Aa Aaa AAA aaaa Aa!”

Overwhelmed by the sight, one of the children finally screamed

Like a chorus, the other children joined in----- the room echoed with the screams of the young.

The man must have felt increased pressure caused by the children’s fear. Upon reflex, one of the children stood up and ran towards the door.

However----- the man wearing nobleman’s clothes was already standing in front of the door.

“You guys were invited as guests. So until my business is over. Be obedient.”

The man was ought to have been sitting a few moments ago. He just stood there and----- it seemed that even before this room existed, it could be said that he had already earned his position.

“I just think.....that the areas outside this room are more dangerous.”

The man remained unexpressive and lowered his eyes to the boy. His unexpressive eyes seem to pierce anything -----he just stared at the boy who was looking down on the stone floor.

“A person who deserts his comrades is hated, right? ..... Return.”

At this point, the boy already lost control of himself. Normally, it would just seem that the boy had lost his consciousness, but those words that the man spoke seemed to put a command on the boy’s soul.

Moving like a broken doll, the boy returned to his former position. Then the boy fainted and his body wilted into the floor.

The group of skulls already faded and the children barely contained their screams and fears at the back of their throats.

The man already returned to his seat. And his appearance was as before.

The world that the children believed in had easily crumbled----- They no longer cried and they just continued to curl up in their places.

Even the sweet hope of someone coming to save them was no longer there.

A little bit further from that place, the room’s door suddenly opened and a group of males who clearly appeared human entered.

They carried a gun on their waist and came to the center of this fantastic room.

The hearts of the children for once, had a glimmer of hope, but-----

At the next moment, that group of males driven by despair served the man wearing nobleman’s clothes.

“What’s happening?”

“.....Well, we followed the soldier, and there are now invaders inside the castle.....”

“.....Is it Alucard?”

For an instant, the man's face held a tinge of color from emotion but for the children, that name had no significance.

“No, well, there was a girl who said she is the advance party of the church.....”

Then, the man's face at once lost its color and he dully returned these words.

“If that's the case, if you come across her by chance, you can dispose of her. But you can just leave it to the monsters of the castle to get the church's spy.”

“But.....”

With that vague response, another man with a gun continued the report.

“That girl is together with.....the hunter that we shot to death.....”

XX

[Ruined Corridor]

“----- .....”

A zombie with an arrow struck on its rotting face returned to the ground.

Passing through the center of the castle, this corridor's distance seemed longer in the mind. Even though it is named a corridor, it has some complex twists and turns in some places----- Fundamentally, it is the backbone that leads to different areas of the castle.

And presently----- In order to be properly called the corridor of Dracula's castle, this huge passage is packed with countless monsters----- Rather than calling it a den, it should be called a monster's paradise.

From the time Curtis and Michelle stepped foot into the center of the castle, immediately the appearance of monsters became thicker----- with the latest one coming from underfoot.

Countless corpses are vigorously rising up from the ground. These zombies travel within the ground and are coming out pouncing.

“Th.....These.....one after the other.....”

Driven by impatience, Michelle loaded her bowgun with bullets, shooting each and every corpse that appeared.

Soon, those corpses are joined with numerous giant vampire bats heading their way.

Michelle kicked the ground, ran up the zombie's shoulders, entering the state of a superhuman feat of agility, she grabbed the lamp that was overhead----- and dangled on the ceiling with one hand.

Her ancestor fought against monsters using acrobatics.

She believed that [fairy tales] had all too soon entered this world-----she gained the use of her agility as a means to fight against monsters just like her ancestor.

With her free hand, she positioned her bowgun and continued on shooting each and every bat and zombie that came their way.

Probably the wounded Curtis is becoming a lure for these monsters.

With that thought, Michelle continued shooting with her bowgun.

From the back of the corridor, a giant eyeball monster was seen floating towards them.

----- A peeping eye!

This giant eyeball made Michelle recall that in the past, alchemists have confronted their summoned objects.

It was a monster that belongs to a comparatively weaker class but its appearance in the natural world is

impossible, thus it is logical that it came from the demon world.

While knocking off the zombies, Michelle inhaled deeply and prepared herself-----to find a foothold for her landing.

Those creatures living in Dracula's castle is not just the lord of the castle, Dracula.

Michelle had promised herself to use Julius', Yoko's and other predecessors' quest records as a source of information to improve her knowledge on those things.

As a start, the castle has an infinite supply of zombies and drawn by the castle's magic, numerous other monsters appeared, perhaps their existence is allowed by a part of the magic that governs the original Dracula's castle.

Perhaps, people who sought to resurrect Dracula had called upon those countless monsters.

Among the usual monsters, there are other beings with incomparable power and it has been told that extreme caution must be exercised when facing them.

The dark lord Dracula's confidant, Death

His two demonic subordinates Slogra and Gaibon

The demon with a fear inducing gaze, Balore

With numerous [things] gathering in its body----- [He is many, he is one] ----- Legion

The demon with mastery over time, Zephyr

The cursed king of dolls, Puppet Master

And from the ancient times, the 4 pillars that guard the castle-----Medusa, Frankenstein, Mummy and Giant Bat

Other monsters that are too many to list also guarded the castle and it was said that they were ranked by their prevailing magic powers.

They were the ones who first stepped foot into that territory.

Michelle has teamed up with Curtis several times in the past in order to vanquish monsters.

However, it is clear that the crisis they are in right now is of a different level.

Even with that knowledge, she still came here. Even when Curtis succumbed into confusion, she vowed in her heart to continuously protect him.

Just like old times.

Then-----several bodies of zombies sank to the ground and headed straight to the standing Curtis.

"Cu, Curtis!"

From her position, her arrow would have gone through the zombie and hit Curtis.

She released her hand from the chandelier, hit the eyeball of the incoming peeping eye and landed on the ground.

Curtis right now could not handle a weapon.

Hammer was right. He may have been confused. With that judgment, Michelle strongly kicked the ground; hit the zombie that threatened Curtis at the back with a shot, but-----

At that instant, the zombie's head popped out and flew.

".....!?"

By the time Michelle made it in the ground, its rotten body had already collapse into the ground and from that shadow, an unexpressive Curtis appeared.

"Curtis! Are you ok!?"

"I'm not hurt."

Curtis dryly answered. He struck his right arm out and Michelle did not understand what he was doing. Maybe he used magic that made the wind slash the enemies. Curtis was close to Yoko so he could have managed to learn some degree of magic.

Michelle judged that even in his state of confusion, his instincts still remembered what to do. She then looked that the zombies that surrounded them.

Then, Curtis showed his moves.

He just gently stepped on the ground and with a flowing motion, slid between the zombies with a knife. Then something happened----the bodies of the zombies were slashed one after the other, without even the time to groan, returned to the ground.

“Did you see Michelle? .....I broke through in one burst.”

Curtis muttered this with cool-headed eyes. Michelle was certain that his memory had not returned. Nevertheless, since they had come so far, she understood that forcibly retreating had no meaning.

While reluctantly running through the demon castle together, Michelle noticed her partner’s discomfort and inquired about it.

“Curtis..... what happened to your whip?”

“.....well”

“Perhaps a monster could have carried it off.....”

The whip was a part of Curtis’ equipment. It is similar to the holy whip, Vampire Killer, having the ability to strike evil and it could have made a big difference in the previous battle.

However, looking at his current state of magic and ability, it seemed that there is nothing to worry about. Even if his memory was lost, his ability has greatly improved since the last time.

----- In this short time, he has become stronger.....thanks to Julius’ training.

-----But, for Curtis to incur such amount of injuries.....what type of devil is lurking in the castle? ..... In order to get over that unease, Michelle thought deeply but could not find any single abnormality.

Just a few minutes from the time Curtis moved his leg ----- to the time the zombies were disposed of, his return to his usual stride might be an abnormality.

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10 minutes after [Demon Castle Library]

Passing through that group of monsters, Michelle and Curtis finally had the time to catch their breaths----then they noticed that the surrounding area had a foreign sight.

A mountain of books are jammed from floor to ceiling, each and every book spine had all the colors of the world. Viewers would be overwhelmed by this peculiar sight.

It could be said that each and every book published in this world is collected here in this luxurious library, however----this is still a part of Dracula’s castle.

When Michelle confirmed that zombies have not gathered in this place, she then talked once more to Curtis,

“Even so, it’s surprising.....I was worried about your shaky memory, but, it seems that your body still remembers.”

“.....”

“However, I did not think that you could use such a high level magic! The one that slashed the zombies earlier, was it Gale Force, or something else? Did you learn it from Yoko-san?”

“Yoko.....”

Judging from his reaction, he could not even remember her name, so Michelle said another.

“.....Um, anyway, Yoko-san and ..... can you recall Master Julius?”

then, he showed a bit of reaction and with a firm expression said.

“Julius.....Julius Belmont?”

“Yes! Did you remember!? Well, what about me?”

“.....Sorry”

Hearing his apology, Michelle dropped her shoulders significantly.

But in order not to show sadness, she tapped her cheeks with both hands, put on a serious face then continued the discussion.



“Ah it’s ok. Even if your memory is gone, I think your power is enough to pass this castle. Anyway, let us make rescuing the children our top priority.”

“.....What I ought to do is to destroy this castle, and then everything will end.”

“We should leave that to Julius-san and the others. It was said that even if Dracula no longer exists, the resurrection of the castle..... would also mean that there is a big possibility that [Death] was also resurrected.”

He is in a state of confusion but is Curtis really this reckless? With that in mind, Michelle started talking about the danger level of the castle.

“The monster Death serves as Dracula’s confidant and he was said to be a terrible enemy since this guy is intelligent and is good with words, thus he can easily deceive people.”

“Oh.....”

“It was told in the literature that his appearance is pretty horrifying. If we are able to rescue the children and escape before we meet him, then it is the best way.”

“If that’s the case then it is just not our mouths but our legs have to move too.”

Even with his memory loss, Curtis still held a clear mind and he quietly stepped forward.

The youth moved forward without hesitation, while Michelle hurriedly caught up behind.

“Wa.....Wait! Curtis! Even if you do not recall anything, at the very least, listen to other people.....

Hey! You still have not changed that part of yourself even with your amnesia!”

-----He did not change at all.

Michelle clearly understood that those words were not just a wish.

Not paying attention to the shattered pieces of her burning heart, she just continued on following the man in front.

The hunter himself does not remember who he was. As it was, she feared in her heart that he would never remember her at all until he died.

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After 1 hour ----- [Clock Tower]

It is said that the giant clock tower is a symbol of Dracula’s castle. Within it are crushing giant moving contraptions and gears that are several times the height of a human.

Curtis and Michelle continued on climbing up and up.

Relying on the few scattered scaffoldings, they attacked the medusa heads and monsters that crowded their surroundings.

Although they have been through various places of the castle, they still have not caught sight of the children. While defeating numerous monsters, up until now Michelle had not doubled her speed.

From the first monster that she saw and defeated, it is certain that she had developed far more experience in actual battle.

It was said that there are areas in the castle where teleporters instantly allow you to return to the entrance even from the farthest side of the castle. It was then discovered that the castle exists on top of another dimension.

While moving through the different areas of the castle, they realized the extent of their power but----- Curtis must be observed.

Michelle thought that they both grew through those battles but even so, it can be said that Curtis grew stronger with extraordinary speed. He was not just getting stronger but it can be better said that he had recovered from his injuries.

Memorizing the paths of the countless flying medusa heads, Curtis shot each and every one that was in their way with the dagger that he picked up in their journey.

When a harpy sent out its blade like feathers, he approached the harpy by weaving his way through the feathers and used magic that made a wind blade that slashed through its wings.

-----But, surprisingly.... Is Curtis that strong? .....

Even before arriving in this place, they have already met most of the monsters that were said to be strong.

And most of the time, Michelle did not have to exert effort since Curtis was able to perfectly coordinate his movements to drive through the bodies of any monster,

With that, Michelle sometimes found herself staring like an audience.

And ----- that strength caused her to plant seeds of anxiety in her heart.

----- Curtis..... vaguely.....

-----You really seem like a different person.

“Curtis, are you ok?”

After finishing a violent attack on the monsters, Michelle asked Curtis again while walking through the next zone.

“.....I’m not hurt.”

With his reply, Michelle’s feelings once more dropped in shadow.

-----After all ... Curtis’ memory still has not recovered.

According to her, Curtis does not speak in a stiff manner as he was doing now. The fact was that Michelle felt a deep trench between her and Curtis.

From the start of the battle against monsters, she thought that his poor motivation is contradictory and not to mention his memory still has not returned.

And in addition to the slew of strong monsters before----- there might be new monster born in exchange of Dracula ----- Between herself and Curtis, there is a possibility that they could die before she could recapture their connection with each other through his memory.

At the same time, Curtis is continuing to heartlessly butcher monsters. This was far from the man she knew and this fact contributed to the deepening trench between them.

Before they neared the library, it was possible for them to pass through the border but slowly, their actions started becoming impossible.

Then hearing the sound of wings, the previously defeated harpy started to attack once more

And the still expressionless Curtis attacked the enemy with indifference using the same wind magic which minced the enemy’s body.

-----I am.....

Before falling, the harpy got stuck in a gear. Even with this tragic sight in front of him, Curtis did not even bat an eye. There was a fog behind Michelle and with a shudder from the cold, she ran through.

-----Am I now.....afraid of Curtis?

With that inconceivable thought, she did not withdraw her gaze on Curtis.

Due to that, she once more overlooked one detail.

That harpy that was struck in the gear----- even during the time its wings were cut, and even when it died, it did not even let out a single scream.

### **[In front of the castle gate]**

“This is.....”

“Its appearance had not changed since 2 years ago.....That jeep, did the person named Hammer come to this place again?”

“Could it be that Soma might have come here too?”

Those conversing in front of the castle are an elderly man with his hair bound behind his back and a young woman. They seem like a parent and his child.

“Arikado said that Soma-kun was visited by [Death] yesterday. It would seem that he could have come here too.....so before he arrives, we should end this.”

“Yeah, but, I am worried about Death showing himself.....”

The castle in front of them did not emit any miasma. It just held a majestic appearance and it can be said that these two are veterans.

“Let’s hurry. First, let’s save the children and search for the culprit behind this castle.”

“You are not worried about your pupil?”

“He and Michelle have both prepared themselves and risked their lives by coming here. Needless to say, they do not need help and I have no intention of sowing seeds of anxiety.”

Julius Belmont

Yoko Belnades

They are the distinguished vampire hunters that are the pride of the church and they have both descended from noble families within the church.

However, even with their distinction, they still continued on their study and training ----- They became the objects of longing and awe within the church.

Moreover, in the battle of 1999, Julius was the hunter that finished Dracula and he is the expert when it comes to anything related to this [castle].

“It is tough as ever.....Oh well, I’ll look for the children. While you, Julius, may search for the culprit behind this.”

“Ah. Ok. If you see Curtis, please tell him to take it easy.”

“..... I would not tell him to return, right?”

“He is young and he’s my pupil. I did not raise him to be easily defeated by monsters.”

That expression surely included confidence in Curtis’ ability. ----- They headed to the castle to carry out their mission.

However----- when Julius and Yoko entered the castle, they started sensing some things that seemed out of place.

Set on top of the castle gate is a thing that resembled a surveillance camera. And on the side of the garden is a pool of blood surrounded by numerous empty cartridges.

-----Perhaps it was some sort of training to defeat monsters?

There is one suspicion that rose in Julius’ mind.

Even in the past, there were dark priests who came to this place and performed sacrifices with the intention of resurrecting the castle, but -----

The castle seemed to have involved far too many people than what he had thought.

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10 minutes after ----- [Demon Castle’s Top Floor]

“Earlier.....I felt a strong stream of magic.”

“.....”

“Could it be that the kidnapped children are there too? .....”

Opening a new door in front of them after leaving the clock tower, they entered an old room that was constructed out of stones.

Comparing it to the dance hall or the illusionary shrine, its appearance seemed much older and there is a rising maliciousness informing them that this is not a usual place.

It was said that no matter how many times Dracula’s castle appears to have changed, this is an exceptional area whose appearance does not change.

This is the area where the castle lord's throne is located and that is probably the section where one pillar of the castle is at.

Sourcing from literature that was left by their predecessors, a long staircase would lead to the master's chamber.

Michelle prepared herself as both she and Curtis opened the door in front of them, but-----

“.....Eh?”

The view that stretched out in front of her was different from what she had imagined.

Clearly according to the literature, this tower that existed at the top of the endlessly long staircase is the master's chamber.

However, what differed from her expectation was ----- that which is waiting for them.

Michelle drew her bowgun as she opened the door and saw guns in each person's hand without the presence of magic.

In other words, they are regular human beings.

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[Underground Water Vein]

“What ..... is this place?”

While searching for the whereabouts of the kidnapped children from the village, Yoko saw a mysterious sight at the lowest layer of the underground water vein that made her knit her brows.

She saw clear stagnant water flowing with magic created a vast area and in front of her are----- corpses of humans that are jammed throughout the water vein.

Numerous corpses of men and women of all ages were facing down ----- judging from the quantity of the flowing blood, it could be concluded that they probably just died before she reached this place.

Strangely, all of them has slit their throats with the blade they held in their hands. Yoko is fearful that they would turn into monsters thus she hurried towards them in order to fully verify the situation.

By the time Yoko stepped forward, she noticed something moving in the shadows at the corner of her eye.

There was a dying young man who is struggling to move his mouth.

“! Are you ok!? Hang on!”

Yoko ran up to the man and supported his failing body but-----

The man did not see Yoko, with blood gushing from his slit throat, breathing weakly, barely spoke these words.

“Must.....offer.....so.....ul.....”

“.....?”

“Master.....Gra.....ham.....resurrection.....near”

He was not able to say his last words when his power left his body leaving him like a broken doll that lost its strings.

At the next moment, a light shot towards the wall of the water vein, and a magical pattern emerged on the entire cave.

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“.....Is that so.....”

Julius, who was searching the castle by himself, said those words while strongly gritting his teeth.

He noticed something was out of place.

Whenever Dracula's castle appears, it essentially changes its form. But this castle bears a striking resemblance to the one that appeared in Japan 2 years ago from its outside appearance to its interior

decorations.

He felt like questioning that point, but-----there is another thing that worried him. That was the presence of human beings inside the castle.

And then those signs immediately diminished.

“Come to think of it..... Even the monsters are acting strangely.....”

While he was speaking, he discovered an unusual thing. There is one part of the castle that was different from before.

And in front of that unknown part, at the center of the underground area, he found-----

He saw an extremely large room.

The hall’s walls, floors and even the ceiling is wrapped with an eerie magical light----- that room is entirely constructed out of countless bodies.

“.....Legion.....”

There is an object floating in the center of the room. It is giant sphere of gathered bodies.

Made out of many, acting as one

A collection of countless corpses functioning as one special monster

He had met this creature several times in the past but the thing that is floating in front of him is among all the legions he had encountered, a mass of the highest level.

In fact, while floating in the air, it grew several [arms] made out of entangled corpses that cut into the walls that are also made up of the same material.

But this legion’s distinguishing point is-----

The corpses that constructed it are not just made out of humans but also included numerous remains of monsters.

From the sight that expanded in front of him, no matter what conclusion it led into, at once, Julius left this large room.

Legion did not appear to attack Julius. Rather it did not even notice that it exists.

“Definitely.....this castle is not Dracula’s castle.”

“In order to dispose that guy..... I must make sure those kidnapped children are safe.....”

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And time slowly moved forward

Julius was not the only one who had questions regarding this castle----- Within the monsters, there was one who also had the same question.

That monster’s name is-----

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A few hours ago [Dance Hall]

“This..... What happened here.....?”

Arriving a little bit earlier than Curtis and Michelle was a monster wearing rotten robes----- Death

When Death awoke, he noticed that he did not exist inside the castle.

The castle appeared in a state without a master and this time is different from the summoning of cults----- That he is completely awake.

Vividly waking up between the moon and the sun, the monster had one thought-----

-----Why, have I awoken?

The emergence of Dracula's castle

That was the most possible thing, but why did I not awake inside the castle?

Although this was not the first time that this happened, he understood that perhaps this time is similar to that time when only the castle was resurrected while waiting for Dracula to rise.

"What could have happened..... I must investigate....."

And first of all, Death----- went to the source of the [soul] whom he swore eternal allegiance.

Even if his master was reborn and he was bound to obey, but he had remembered that there was something different.

If he had awoken, then the castle ought to have emerged. However, he could not feel the sign.

Death silently started moving towards the center of darkness.

He swore allegiance to his master in the distant past.

Now, he has to carry out his allegiance and in preparation for that, he allowed himself to fill up with darkness.

And after Death met with Soma Cruz in Japan----- He was confident that his existence had nothing to do with him, yet he still had suspicions on the emergence of the [castle].

Without wasting time, he diffused his magic across the world, following the traces of magical current; he finally arrived at the castle.

However, what he saw there are-----

Humans

Dozens, no, hundreds of human beings are climbing. He then stalked the monster infested [castle].

He already knows the story of what will happen but ----- mysteriously, the castle's zombies and skeletons and even other monsters are not showing any behavior of attacking those humans.

It is as if they did not see each other. The monsters are just prowling the castle and the humans are just slipping by in between.

Death briefly watched the situation but, suddenly, he saw some monsters that he knew in the dance hall.

One of them is a demon knight with the head of a bird and a body of a man----- Slogra. The other one is said to be the king of gargoyles, a stern winged demon knight----- Gaibon.

"Slogra, Gaibon, what happened....."

He showed himself in front of his subordinates, planning on doing some questioning but-----

Death immediately noticed something odd from the 2 monsters.

Their bodies are certainly theirs, but, inside them is just distorted magic and he could not feel their souls.

Moving by magic, these monsters resembled dolls----- That was the impression that Death got.

"What is this....."

Then, [something] appeared in Slogra and it faced Death thrusting the spear in its hand. Joining that, another [something] appeared in Gaibon and from its mouth a fireball was expelled.

"..... Insolent!"

Death did not move from his place and numerous scythes appeared around him.

A scythe was able to catch Slogra's spear, another violently revolving scythe was able to snuff out the incoming raging flame.

The remaining scythes flew out to the 4 corners and with their momentum; they were able to surround the 2 monsters.

He drew out his unfailing death scythe ----- instantly slashing those soulless dolls.

They burned out without shrieking, those [things] that resembled his subordinates.

".....What ever happened here? ....."

At that instant he said that, the surrounding air buzzed -----

Together with the sign of a much darker soul, a dry clapping sound rang out the dance hall.

“As expected of the castle’s guard, the devil’s confidant, born from chaos as a god of death while being undead.”

Standing behind him, wearing purple nobleman’s clothes, is a tall man with an unusually pale skin.

Those nobleman’s clothes were a cross between a military uniform and a majestic design. Recognizing that, Death spoke his name with a small astonished voice.

“The master…… Olrox? ……”

Once serving under Dracula, this noble vampire was appointed one part of the castle.

Personifying the dead seafloor and existing to overwhelm the surrounding light. It would not be strange if just by looking at him, an ordinary person’s heart would be devoured.

Seeing Death in front of him, he emotionlessly said.

“It was within my assumption that you would be resurrected but…… I wasn’t expecting that you would be like your old self. Now that the castle has lost its dark lord, I thought that your soul was driven out of chaos as a magical beast, but, was it because of my haste that this happened?”

Olrox spoke with a tinge of admiration. He walked up without a sound in his steps towards Death.

With those words, Death once again understood.

With the emergence of the castle, he had deep concerns regarding the vampire in front of him.

----- The reason why he woke up still knowing himself was this.

Death was convinced of this fact and he asked about those [somethings].

----- Must evaluate that

“I see, the master now, the one that controls the castle’s magic, the one who intends to inherit Lord Dracula’s name is ……”

Hearing those hoarse words coming from Death, Olrox’s expression dimmed a little and then foolishly preached to Death.

“…… Speaking the losing dog’s name is unnecessary now.”

“……What……?”

With Olrox’s arrogant answer, Death’s voice flowed with a tinge of darkness.

Wanting to know the reason of the change in emotion, Olrox dared to continue speaking.

“The magic I received from the castle will not be used to bind humans to chaos and other similar things. I would like to equally gain control over both humans and chaos.”

“You…… did nothing but to insult Lord Dracula…… Are you denying the existence of the [castle]?”

“Oh Death, there is no need to be so loyal and respectful to that dead human, right? …… Oops, that guy was not human, he was somehow a vampire.”

With Olrox’s provocation, Death just kept silent and asked about his attitude.

“If …… you become Lord Dracula’s successor, do you not have any intention of inheriting his power……?”

Depending on the next answer, there is a possibility that Death would have an absolute intention to kill him.

On top of understanding that condition, Olrox still calmly answered.

“I had said it before. I do not intend to bind the world with chaos.”

“…… If so, why did you take power away from the crack in the eclipse’s seal? If you just intend to imitate like a monkey, isn’t your own power enough?”

Those were the emotionless words of Death.

In response, Olrox laughed his bold answer.

“As I’ve said, I would equally gain control over the human world and the source of Dracula’s power, chaos. I do not intend to obey someone else’s mind aside from my own. That includes you who were born out of chaos.”

“.....”

“You should be glad though to know yourself. Just by stealing power, my shameful monotonous time is over..... Even before Alucard appeared, just because I showed up and declared war on him.”

Olrox’s voice was mixed with a tinge of thin delight. He respectfully bowed to Death who completely killed his emotions.

“I would end the reincarnation cycle of this demon castle. I who understood and was spun out of the stains of chaos, swear to rob that power with my hands. Now, yield.”

With Death’s reply, an explosive murderous intent rose.

Two bronze colored scythes much larger than usual appeared; it advanced to the space in between the two men with an intention to cut off Olrox’s head.

Kill the distance-----

Kill the sound-----

Just, faster, soon, die.

It can be seen that the blades have certainly caught Olrox’s neck, but----- that is only an after image and the vampire is already at Death’s back.

“.....die.”

That was said by the enemy who called on his servants.

From the surrounding space, a group of purple bats rose, passed by Olrox’s arm with the speed of a bullet, attacking Death.

However, Death did not show any gesture of avoiding them. He simply faced Olrox and sprayed out numerous scythes.

The bats and scythes cancelled each other out and the entire dance hall sparkled with blood.

Some rebounding scythes broke the window and moonlight softly lit the bloody castle interior.

Olrox, without changing his expression, shook his head a little, floated up in the air, went out the window without a sound and fled.

“If only I could meet you in a better place, but unfortunately, I’m very busy.”

“..... don’t flee.”

Death just crushed the emotions that rose up inside him and flew outside the castle in pursuit of Olrox.

However-----

When he was near the castle’s entrance, Death noticed another unusual incident.

He saw a gathering of humans in the center of the garden.

“.....?”

A question formed in his mind, and a few minutes later -----

[That] formed

A huge magic pattern is spread in the center of the garden. Its interior has human beings drawing out something.

“His being busy was a lie. It was unexpected and he was bored.”

Olrox gave a slight smile----- Sensing the presence of dozens of humans located in the center of the magic pattern, he went there.

“Thanks to you humans”

In the center of the magic pattern are men and women of all ages and even combatants are gathered there.

And their hands are grasping black colored knives-----

At the next instant, all of them pierced their throats at the same time.



“.....tch!”

At the same time, there is a black light that wrapped the magic pattern----- The blood that flowed out of the humans’ throat gathered in the air creating a giant red arm.

“This is ..... !?”

From a part of the giant hand, numerous arms extended like tendrils, expanding and swallowing the body of Death.

Then----- convergence

“Cough..... Olrox..... you!”

Death who was wrapped in the giant bloody hand felt the blood of humans eroding his body.

Olrox stayed floating in the air while looking at Death whose movement was sealed----- then in a calm voice said.

“You who were referred to as the undying symbol of death, it might as well be said that death has extended his arm on you.”

Death whose body was being eroded by human blood, confirmed that the blood was magical and had also absorbed other servants----- he shouted.

“Aha.....! You, including other monsters.....!”

Not answering his question, Olrox just told his goodbye.

“Having your magic, I do not intend to control your soul. Crumble and fall into nothingness.”

“Ol.....ro.....x!”

Death’s magic completely flowed into the [castle]. When that thing that was inside the giant blood sphere was confirmed to disappear ----- It then landed on the ground.

At the same time, the floating blood arm sank into the ground and disappeared, even those dozens of corpses that ought to roll in the ground also disappeared as if nothing happened.

“With this, the castle is nearing its completed state.”

With Olrox’s words, the people that are outside the magic pattern gave out an expression of joy.

Then----- suddenly, the atmosphere settled, and his eyes turned towards the humans at the front gate with guns on their waists.

Olrox gazed behind them and he saw one human being.

“This..... What is this.....”

By the looks of his clothes and the whip he is carrying on his waist, he is probably the church’s advance party. The whip’s holy powers can be felt but its threat was not the same as the Vampire Killer.

“Death and vampire, why did they fight.....and also..... why are humans here.....?”

In front of the confused youth, Olrox said in his expressionless voice.

“The timing is bad, church person.”

Then, numerous gunshots rang in the garden.

XX

Several hours later [Demon Castle’s Top Floor]

“Eh.....?”

Not understanding the scenery in front of her, Michelle removed the finger that was on her bowgun’s trigger.

The men were clothed in a military like uniform but they don’t seem to be the companions of Hammer. They also could not be an army dispatched by another organization to destroy the castle and their eyes showed hostility.

“What are.....you guys.....?”

Hearing Michelle’s words, one of the men could not hide his anger and said.

“.....Still not accepting your doom, eh, you dogs of the heretic church..... Do you intend to rob us of our standard.....”

“.....you guys.....”

Listening to the words that man spat, Michelle somehow understood who he was.

In the past, there were countless groups of human beings plotting for the resurrection of Dracula.

Needless to say, there were dark priests who served Dracula and witches who were attracted by infinite magic. Then in recent years, there were stories about 2 religious groups that were planning for the resurrection of Dracula.

One of them, was a cult called [With Light] headed by a priestess named Celia. And another was a religious group founded by Graham Jones who called himself the [reincarnation of Dracula].

Instead of using strong sorcerers whose numbers have fallen, these new groups even if their founders were already dead, still had lots of followers.

Perhaps, at the very least, it was certain that they are enemies of Michelle and Curtis.

“.....”

in that tense situation, Curtis stared silently at the men. The men looked at him and threw suspicious words at him.

“But.....How did he recover from that situation? He was not able to take any miracle drug when we shot him to death. He was not even wearing an outfit that could nullify that amount of bullets.....”

The men glared at Curtis.

“Eh.....?”

Michelle was hit with a slight confusion.

Their words with double meaning gave her a shock.

The first is not about Curtis being struck by monsters, but rather about his defeat by [humans].

The other one is----- his injuries were caused by numerous bullets that showered his body.

Michelle initially thought that about one or 2 bullets probably hit him and the rest of his wounds came from the monster’s claws or blades-----

A human rising from receiving a volley of shots from assault rifles was unthinkable.

“Curtis.....?”

Her feelings of anxiety rose.

However, it was not yet time to check on those feelings.

The men having lost their patience at the silent Curtis, held their stance with their guns and decided to take aim at Michelle and Curtis-----

A sound of explosion rang and a flash slashed through the dusk.

XX

A few seconds after that intense flash, Michelle does not know what happened and she prepared to die, but-----

She slowly opened her eyes making sure that her sight had gradually recovered from the flash.

Then—she saw the men in military uniform laying on the floor. And a large bald man is retrieving their guns.

“Yo.”

“Ha, Hammer-san!?”

Surprised at seeing that man when they parted ways several hours ago, Michelle confusingly asked.

“Um.....what happened.....”

“Oh, I followed you guys and I saw that the situation was dire so I threw a stun grenade. Afterwards, I took the opportunity to hit them strongly and shut them out.”

Hammer happily told his story while flinging the opponents equipment in his bag.

“Anyway, I got rid of monsters and as for human opponents, I just always hit them. With this amateur lot, I could defeat them even with my eyes closed. Oh no-----I was not able to show Yoko-san my cool moves. Gahaha!”

Hammer said that with pride and Michelle said her thanks with amazed eyes.

“Thank you. Because of you we were saved. Perhaps we have not fought against other humans.....”

“Is that so? I had to do what I must. So, that young man was apparently killed off?”

“Eh?”

Michelle unconsciously gave out that sound after hearing Hammer’s words. She looked behind, and-----

Looking at Curtis’ eyes, she understood that Hammer’s words were true.

Curtis’ eyes are cold, if Hammer had arrived a little bit later-----he would be similar to a zombie.

With that thought, the light that filled Curtis’ eyes became dark, sharp----- and absolute.

“.....” “.....”

“Oh, it does not matter much. Here, here!”

Hammer sensed that the air between the two suddenly felt heavy so he laughed out while holding a weapon.

It was a whip that was soaked in blood in some places.

“I picked this up at the garden and I believe this is yours, right? Old man Julius also uses a whip. I came here just to deliver this to ya.”

Whoosh, receiving the thrown whip, Michelle noticed that it was the magical whip that serves as Curtis’ weapon.

“That’s great.....! Curtis! With this your power-----“

In order to shake away the confusion she had a while ago, Michelle raised her voice, but-----

“Sorry, but..... with my current self, I could not handle it.”

“.....? What are you talking about? Curtis.....”

was he still confused, Michelle made him grip his whip.

Snap, some kind of popping sound rang and Michelle felt a light shock in her arm.

“Uh.....!?”

What happened, she directed her eyes on the origin of the shock-----

A part of the whip’s handle had a rotten like disintegration-----

A part of Curtis’ hand was burned, and that skin immediately returned back to as before.

----- No way.....

“Curtis.....?”

“.....I am currently weak at holy magic.”

“Eh.....”

----- What did ..... he mean by that?

She is still confused as she was before. She wanted to say something she had to say but-----

“Are you..... Curtis?”

Unconsciously it came out, it was stupid but at the same time it was accurate.

“.....”

Based on his silence, Michelle instantly plunged into a deep despair.

“It is..... a lie..... right?”

Thinking about it, from the start there were a lot of things that were out of place. Normally, she would have noticed those at an early stage. But because of the thought [I want Curtis to be safe], and that [safe] word clouded her eyes.

However, even with his memory loss, his actions and behavior are unwavering. And thinking about this place, there is only one hypothesis that can be arrived at.

“Truthfully..... you are..... You are.....?”

Not knowing what she should say-----

Just by knowing that Curtis was repulsing holy magic and his previous cold hearted kills, she strongly drew her bowgun and asked once more.

“You are..... not Curtis..... Who..... Who are you.....? Answer me!”

Upon her reply, she pointed her bowgun. And that [something] within Curtis and answered in a clear voice.

“.....There is no need to respond. But, it is not about you..... You are not my enemy tonight.”

He climbed up the staircase and glanced back at Hammer who was standing a few steps back.

“I could not say thanks, but.....accompany this girl out of the castle. Beyond this, there is nothing you guys desire.”

“Cu, Curtis?”

The youth’s eyes had an icy color but he did not look down on the person he was talking to. It was just that he told the genuine truth.

After a moment of silence, Hammer felt something from those words and he let out a sigh.

“That’s a good idea. But remember to return and repay me for bringing the whip, ok?”

Apparently that remark differed from the atmosphere of the moment----But for Hammer, that was his expression of a joke.

“.....Am I not that terrible?”

“I do not fully understand what you meant but right now you are not the enemy right?”

Hammer gave an extremely concise answer to the question that was unexpectedly raised by that [something].

“Why should I be scared of the person that is not my enemy?”

Hammer cracked his neck and laughed, wanting that [something] that used Curtis’s face to also smile.

Then with shrugging shoulders, he returned to the interior of the castle.

“Well, I have to search for Yoko-san for a while. If you meet her first, please tell her “That Hammer is an extremely nice guy” ok?”

“.....I thought that he and the librarian are the same but it seems that I should reevaluate him.”

He said this while watching Hammer’s retreating form. Then that [something] that was controlling Curtis’ body made his way slowly to the castle’s lord room, when-----

“Wa.....Please wait!”

Michelle shouted with alert eyes and poked Curtis’ body with the spearhead of her bowgun.

“Refusing that whip means.....you have been tainted with dark magic..... But, I could not think of you as a doppelganger or an incubus, nor a zombie or a puppet. So..... what are you?”

“.....”

The body in front of her was really Curtis’ but she cannot think of that [something] that possesses him.

Already knowing that the thing in front of her was not an [enemy], Michelle yelled at him with both hostility and hesitation.

“Please answer! And ..... release Curtis’ body right now!”

“.....”

That [something] that was using Curtis’ face slowly looked back at her and there was silence for a moment, when-----

Suddenly Curtis’ right hand moved and without further notice, he let his dagger loose.

“tch!”

In a moment, she decided not to avoid the attack and she prepared to die.

However, her body did not fall in shock. In exchange, something rang out with a slashing sound at the top of her head.

In a panic, she looked up-----

There was one giant shadow.

“No way..... that’s.....”

Michelle looked up on the top of her head, there was a giant skeleton wrapped in rotten robes. Stuck on

his forehead was the dagger that Curtis threw. He then pulled it out easily with his bony hand and threw it down the side of the staircase into the abyss.

“That is..... Death.....!”

Michelle saw that monster that is in front of her and it is certainly Dracula’s confidant.

“A.....”

She saw an overwhelming amount to scythes swinging with the despair of death that headed towards Michelle’s body.

Even if she shoots those with her bowgun, she could not be able to hit all of them.

At last that moment came when despair took hold of her body-----

Then a shadow stood with blocking hands in between her and the scythes.

“.....Stand back”

“Curtis.....?”

-----No, its different.

It is certainly that [something] that took Curtis’ form.

He stood silently in front of Death who was floating and the approaching scythes disappeared in the air.

With that scene, Death was also silent and he extended his hands to create more scythes.

Then at the same time, Curtis’ body leaped.

“.....return.”

While muttering that strange word, he extended his hand above his head-----

At that instant, Michelle clearly saw.

Within the hand, a scythe larger than Death’s body appeared, and with a flash, Death’s body was cut in 2.

Michelle doubted her eyes but-----by the time Curtis’ body landed on top of the staircase, the huge scythe and Death’s form already disappeared.

However, the [magic] that wrapped Death did not disappear.

.....What is.....the meaning of this?

The vast magic that she felt emanating from the skeleton a while ago is also emanating from Curtis’ body now.

-----And.....that scythe.....

-----That, that’s as if Curtis.....

Ignoring Michelle, that [something] that possessed Curtis’ body with vast magic turned around and glared at the room overhead where the castle lord sits.

He started climbing the stairs as if nothing happened. He then faced the woman that was walking behind him and told her.

“You are named, Michelle, right?”

“Eh.....”

“Forget about tonight, live in peace.”

“That was the last wish of the owner of this body.”

XX

Several hours ago-----[Garden]

“Uh.....aa.....Mi.....chelle.....”

That really is no doubt an obsession.

The youth had more than 28 holes penetrating his limbs and body. His heart is already starting to fail and he is desperately trying to say something amidst the darkness.

“Only..... protect..... you.....-----“

When he said those words he must say, the man’s soul already left his body-----becoming one of the

floating spirits that wander the halls of the castle.

However-----

Fate did not allow it.

For those people who are involved with the demon castle, even the loneliness of death seemed half hearted-----

The man's soul is pierced by a small scythe that flew in from somewhere. That scythe did not exist physically. It was a diabolic blade created by some magic and possessed a strong soul.

He understood that something is flowing inside him.

The quantity is small but he realized that this hot magma like thing is eating away his existence. But, in his state it is hard to differentiate whether he is losing control over his boy or his spirit.

Still not understanding what is happening to his soul, Curtis just felt that he would soon fade away no matter what he does.

-----That's ..... enough.....

-----I.....don't care.....what happens anymore.

Curtis threw away all his feelings, and just wished.

-----I just want her.....to live happily.

Even if he can overcome pain, fear and despair by himself, his soul can only wish.

And----- his wish reached god.

However, that god is such in name, but his existence is far from Curtis' faith.

XX

Several hours later [Castle Lord's Room]

".....You came."

Awaiting the visitor in the castle lord's room is not the demon king with a pitch black cape-----

It is the vampire wearing purple nobleman's clothes who is similar yet not similar to Dracula.

Sitting on the throne with his legs crossed, he saw the vampire hunter that should have been shot to death in front of him.

But the vampire with one look saw that inside his opponent is an entirely different thing.

Towards the spectacled youth approaching without hesitation, the vampire-----Olrox calmly said.

"There is no way you came through that state."

His voice was filled with slight admiration. However, that is not intended for the youth who was shot to death.

That praise was for [Death] who is inside.

"I intended to completely erase your soul but"

"....."

Death stood there silently, and Olrox calmly rose from the throne.

"It's useless to converse with you, hmm?"

Still with an emotionless expression, Olrox silently fixed his eyes on his opponent-----

Moving at the speed of sound, he swung his sword sideways.

The tip of the sword ejected magical winds acting like invisible blades that swooped in towards the youth's body.

However, at that moment the youth held out his right hand-----dozens of scythes appeared in the air, acting like numerous shields blocking the winds.

At the same time, countless scythes appeared to attack behind Olrox, but the vampire left his after

image and fled to the top of the throne room.

While looking down on the youth below him, Olrox calmly formed his words.

“However, it will be always the same no matter how many times you come. Since, the souls of those people who sacrificed themselves earlier are still wandering the halls of this castle.”

Snap, his fingers rang, and at the same time----the castle lord’s room’s red carpet moved, transforming itself into the shape of a giant hand coming to attack the youth’s body.

That was not the carpet----it was the bloody arm that robbed Death’s magic earlier.

The blood film hid itself as the carpet. The castle lord’s room’s floor also had the same magic pattern written on it as the courtyard. A distorted light shot off as the bloody arm sent off magic.

Thinking it would reconstruct the event that happened in the courtyard but-----

When the youth was swallowed in the interior of the dark red curtain, a red scythe flew----- it was able to slash the liquid bloody arm without a sound.

Then, like a water balloon the bloody film burst, and the splattered drops sank into the stone floor and disappeared.

“Ho.”

Olrox narrowed his eyes at the youth who emerged unscathed and said.

“Of course, come to think of it, the reason you entered the body of a human after you recovered your power was.....in order to prevent the bloody hand from touching your soul. Using a living thing as a shield?”

“.....”

“But, if that body dies, it’s the same.”

While glaring down at Death who still kept his silence, the vampire said these provoking words.

“Must the human body you are using as a vessel vanish along with your magic and pride?”

There for the first time, Death spoke.

“..... Absurd. Thinking those words came from someone who is the king of an imitation castle that used humans.”

“It was not my wish to imitate the previous castle. It was the product of the delusions of those foolish humans.”

A dark sphere floated up from Olrox’s right hand. He commanded those numerous ghosts that resided within to attack. On the other side, Death not moving from his place, just used his devastating magic to create countless blades-----returned those ghosts into nothing.

Risking his life in exchange, Olrox gracefully opened his mouth and continued his conversation with his opponent who was ready to kill.

“Did I tell you about Graham? That pitiful man who thought of himself as the reincarnation of Dracula..... His followers still blindly believed that truth even when he died.”

“.....”

“Those pitiful lots believed that when Dracula’s castle is completely restored, their founder would also be resurrected.”

Olrox’s expression did not change but there was pity that can be felt in his voice.

The youth did not show any emotion towards that truth and he calmly asked his previous question.

“.....The sign of humans, a large number of them seemed to have vanished from the castle.”

“Ah.”

Regarding that question, his answer was relatively calm.

“A part of them that remained seemed to have committed suicide.”

Those who adhered to Graham Jones were those who were obsessed with the thought of an impactful end.

The world would soon perish. For their fallen neighbors, they would change themselves.

In order to become the body of [god] destroying this unclean world in order to create a new world

together with [god].

That kind of thinking influenced this group of fanatics.

Their founder was born on the time that Dracula died and had received a degree of [power]. That was the man named Graham Jones. He had a charisma that attracts people and was practicing real magic. He as the real dark lord and ----- also as a [fallen] human----- sought to create a paradise [Genesis] which was blindly believed to be possible.

And that blind belief still continued on unchanged even after their founder died.

It was just their story.

“Dracula’s castle, in other words is the embodiment of Dracula’s magic, a part of his soul and body, their belief in them being [fallen] and a part of [Genesis].”

“.....”

“.....Then, they waited. Once they arrived at the land called Wallachia, a partial solar eclipse happened.”

“Since.....the moon did not completely eat the sun, calling forth the castle should not have been possible.”

“Yes. That is why, instead of calling the castle----- from the partial shadow of the solar eclipse, they called forth a massive amount of monsters.....2 of which are strong.”

XX

“Yoko. How are those children?”

“.....I saw them on the illusionary shrine. Though there seemed to be nothing left there now, they seem to be very scared.....”

Yoko was contacted by Julius through their special communication device.

Knowing that the children were safe, he expressed relief but he cannot relax just yet and he sent instructions to his partner.

“.....Can you escape with all of them?”

“It is difficult to protect all of the children while escaping outside the castle, there are too many monsters.”

“.....”

While Julius is quietly thinking, Yoko continued her report on a particular situation.

“No matter how many times you knock them down, they immediately revive. These monsters’ numbers seem to be more than those of the previous Dracula’s castle.”

“Why is that so?”

“?”

“It is because we still have not defeated a particular monster.”

With that reply, Julius quietly cut off their communication and focused his eyes on the monster in front of him.

[That] has a body the size of a tennis court and is a puppet. But it looks like a distorted human from its giant head with numerous arms sprouting from it.

Its back has a human face and with imagination, it looks like a magnificent spider, its exterior looked eerie.

Its face is a patchwork of wooden texture. Its eyeballs are larger than a carriage wheel and that part seems like another living creature eerily rolling slowly.

Puppet Master.

The said cursed king of dolls hanged by the magical thread surrounding it and commanded an



unthinkable number of [dolls].

Puppet master created those monsters that abound in the castle which were moved by both their soul and magic. And it adores only high quality dolls that move as if they were alive.

[That] giant head saw a figure in front of it and launched into a distorted smile-----screaming.

“Yyyyoouuuurrrr fffffaaaatttee iiiissss ttttoooo bbbbeeee aaaa ppppuuuuppppppppeeeetttt.”

For Julius, the answer is clear. Not showing any fragment of fear nor hesitation, he flung up his holy whip that he held in his hand.

“Sorry but..... the curtain falls on this puppet play.”

[Demon Castle Top Floor]

“For some reason or another, everything came from your wit, Olrox.”

Matching his question, Death shot his red scythe in the air.

Olrox thought that he avoided this single shot but----the point of the scythe grazed his cheek.

However, the vampire did not move even a single eyebrow and in a calm tone opposed his words.

“I just merely gave an advice. I lost hope of eternity together with the master and I cannot stand mourning people.”

Olrox sensed that the dolls that were imitating the monsters inside the castle were acting weird. He silently continued on speaking.

“Those who killed themselves believed that afterwards, as part of the newborn world, they would become a pillar of divinity. They are not just asking for eternal life since they are asking for a seat as a god of that new world. Human desires are terrible.”

The fact was that the believers seriously believed in [our convenient eternity] as truth.

This is a world where religion falls as civilizations grow. And that was why Graham’s miracles were not a trick and when his eyes were hit with the true monstrosity that was Olrox, the shock he received was immeasurable.

Strangely, the believer’s hearts are split in two, with that, he guided them to the same goal of building a castle.

“Those believers who worshipped Graham as a god, directed their blades towards themselves seeking a new paradise..... Those believers who knew that guy’s nature, had brought guns in their hands asking for eternal life by swearing loyalty to me. That’s that.”

Those countless scythes that were overhanging in the perimeter disposed a group of bats. Olrox made an effort to entertain by continuing the story.

“The peace after death and an immortal body, while equally asking for eternity, the difference was their disposal. Humans are really interesting things.”

While the ghosts are rising in the perimeter, the vampire bearing the attitude of a long time friend, asked Death.

“What about you? Lurking in the body of a human and assimilating his soul. Did you understand anything from humans? What did you see inside that human?”

Death with emotionless words, answered.

“We were born out of the chaos in humans. There is no use in understanding each and every individual human being.”

“I have not thought of hearing those words coming from someone who has continued to taste pain from that [individual] named Belmont.”

Olrox prayed, and instantly a large miasmatic vortex welled up from the ground and an image of a giant skull appeared in the air.

Death avoided a close call while Olrox started happily talking from somewhere.

“I am different from Dracula. I like humans, the emotions of forgotten humans. They are interesting and there is one more desire I wish to understand.”

“.....”

“If I could control the even heart that is the root of humans.....Would the chaos that is born from them no longer exist? I have no interest in tranquility but it could be fun to challenge that.”

“That jest.....!”

The magic on Death’s hand seemed to swell and took aim at Olrox who created the giant skull.

Like the momentum of a cannon ball flying through the giant skull, the vampire did not even avoid it.

The vampire concentrated magic in one hand, and the magic struck without hesitation.

The colliding magic briefly made the space between them warp and the entire castle howled with distorted vibrations.

Then after the warp faded, Olrox did not change his countenance even if his right arm was torn.

“What’s the matter? Was that your full power?”

Those words certainly did not seem like a bluff, however, Death was silently planning his next attack, then-----

Suddenly, he felt something behind him and he looked back.

There was----- Michelle standing at the bottom of the staircase.

Death concealed his eyes from Olrox and spoke with emotion towards the sudden intruder.

“There is nothing to gain.....I must have told you that.”

“Ho, you are the human with Death?”

Before responding, Michelle grasped her bowgun and slowly opened her mouth.

“.....Where are.....the children?”

“They are in a room at the illusionary shrine and it seems that your companion had contacted them earlier.”

Michelle’s eyes widened with those words. The word companion would probably mean Julius and Yoko.

However, was it alright to trust those words?

It seems that the children had been rescued and Olrox was not fazed.

Olrox must have felt Michelle’s suspicion. He kept a watchful eye on Death and spoke.

“I took those savages as a failsafe and only waited in case of an emergency; it would have been troublesome if the castle is hit with tactical weapons before it is filled with magic.”

“! ..... You were saying that missiles or bombs can be used on Dracula’s castle?”

“You need not know that.”

Michelle’s whole body tensed up while hearing his answer----- She turned to the consciousness of the spectacled youth.

That form is truly Curtis’ and Michelle’s heart intensely shook.

But she dared to shake off her throbbing heart and prepared to ask one question.

“Is Curtis.....dead?”

“.....Have you not notice it from the start? From the time you saw him in a pool of blood at the garden.”

“.....Even so, I would not admit it.”

“His soul’s wish was no less than your peace. Go back.”

From the manner of Death dragging those words, Michelle silently shook his head.

“On top of abandoning Curtis on his own, leaving and escaping alone, there is no peace that you have mentioned.”

Fixing his eyes filled with power on the woman, Olrox spoke words of admiration.

“I see, you are then prepared to die.”

Then-----

“Well, you were rude to my tolerance.”

Olrox wielded his magical blade on his right hand towards Michelle with momentum.

“.....tch!”

With the blade threatening to hit her, Michelle prepared to take a little damage, but----- the blade did not reach her.

Turning faster than a split second, the youth that held Death’s soul used his own body to take the attack.

“Curtis!”

Even if she knew he is different inside, Michelle unconsciously shouted that name then, Death who is in that body said in a low voice.

“Stand back.....that man, is my enemy.”

With blood flowing from his arm, Death one more produced countless scythes in the air and Olrox gave an expression of surprise.

“That is surprising, you are protecting humans. Had I heard of a human controlling 2 souls earlier..... like an Alura Une?”

Even hearing those words filled with scorn, Death did not show negligence in his eyes. Rather, with those words, he felt some sort of pity on his enemy.

“I am just part of the magic of this [castle]. For chaos to spin my body with it, my spirit exists to obey the lord of this castle.”

“All the more so, why are you now holding the shoulders of humans?”

A just question. For Michelle behind him, it had a mysterious point.

“I am not holding the shoulders of humans. I only made this body’s duty be a shield against you.”

“Duty, huh? You are saying strange things as ever. You who should have been most distant from human, sometimes you have this dreadful similarity to them. Why, what drives you to be that way?”

However, Death expressed not a single fragment of regret towards his actions, and he spoke in a natural way.

“.....Now the [castle] does not have a master. Inside this false castle, there is nothing that can bind my soul.”

The number of scythes that flew in the air, all too soon exceeded a hundred, a thousand, and a deep green magic tinted the castle lord’s room.

“This [castle] existed far back in the past. The master of the castle had changed but.....neither the body nor the heart.”

Then----- death flowed in.

“My soul will only fulfill its duty as a loyal servant of the master.”

Drawn swords are dancing

Drawn swords are dancing.

Those sharp blades slashed even the air and that twinkling created another world inside the castle.

“That master refers to Dracula? Or the swirling chaos underneath thin ice?”

“The same.....Dracula’s name has no [individual].”

Those blades swept of death in order to give death.

“A person that can shoulder the call of chaos is appropriate to continue Dracula’s name----- The one that inherits his name and power as the lord of this entire castle, will forever be my master.”

Those scythes constructed by magic did not turn towards Olrox or Michelle, every scythe then gathered near the youth’s body.

Then, those numerous blades made from magic overlapped with each other and with a powerful atrocious magic constructed a Death scythe in Death’s arm.

“This false castle.....You shall fall into chaos as a thing that denies the existence of the [lord]..... [death] shall pass judgment on your sins!”

Sensing the overwhelming existence of [death], Olrox again realized that the youth in front of him is [Death]-----laughed out loud.

“interesting..... So, death really exists! Thus I’ll use all my power..... to shatter that thing called [death].”

At the next moment----something unusual happened to the entire castle.

The castle’s interiors which were ought to maintain their current magnificent form, gradually showed their true form.

Starting with the gorgeous paintings and furniture, the marble and stone patterns disappeared.

A hard layer of numerous corpses formed from the bottom created a building that is a symbol of chaos and madness.

The [castle’s] true form was hidden by Olrox’s magic-----

Those summoned monster corpses deprived of magic, together with the human corpses of Graham Jones’ followers, created that structure-----

The castle became one very large Legion.

“This is ..... the castle’s true form..... !?”

Noticing herself standing on top of millions of corpses, Michelle unconsciously knitted her brows.

All of the magic that Olrox used returned to him and that incomparable magic entered his body.

A thick vortex of magic surrounded his body. A portion of the corpses detached from the floor and one after the other integrated in front of Olrox.

Those corpses became a monstrous lump, the scent of death mixed with magic enveloped the entire castle lord’s room.

The numerous bodies of monsters which were deprived of magic swelled. Then in front of Michelle there was a giant corpse doll mixed with human souls. And her heart was on the verge of entering madness and despair.

“This is..... the vampire’s magic.....?”

Olrox floated above the head of the corpse king and with a joyful expression looked down on Michelle and Death.

“No more conversations? Fine.”

“! ..... Foolish”

The next moment ----- Death made his way through by reaping the magic that controlled those [dolls] giving them liberty-----

The 2 types of magic collided and if an ordinary human was standing there, his life would be taken by the atrocious magical vortex that was created.

“Ho..... to take part in this.....!”

Earlier, the sparsely emotional Olrox seemed to enjoy the situation where his life was on the line. He gave life to the corpse’s head, laughing, laughing, laughing.

“Gwaha.....Gwahahahahaha! I’m pleased, Death! It has been a long time since I realized that I existed in this world! I have experienced pleasure once more since the time I crossed blades with Alucard!”

“Said by you who forgot about death, have you remembered any type of respect for our master.....”

The perimeter where Death drew his giant scythe projected a giant shadow made by thick magic. That giant monster was made from numerous bones.

Using every characteristic of each living thing that lived on earth, it did not resemble any living thing----- the monster’s body is wrapped in shadow, and Death paid his respect towards the creature’s pure power.

Olrox also did the same thing giving admiration to the pure power that swelled up from the center of

the creature.

Respect and hostility. With those 2 conflicting feelings inside them, these two diabolic beings understood the situation at the same time.

If their guard is dropped even for a split second, everything will be over.

Death remembered the wave like movement of an eternal soul sleeping in a land distant from human beings-----

At once, he poured words in his mouth and paid respect towards his master.

“For my master..... I will eat his soul!”

Then----- the curtain was opened on the supreme battle of evil and infinite death.

The 2 types of darkness moved intricately, as if trying test each other's chaos.

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[Demon Castle's Top Floor]

The giant corpse doll was minced by the countless scythes. And from the corpse's wound flew groups of purple bats on their way to attack Death.

In an instant, 2 swinging red blades appeared in front of Death, instantly mowing down those bats.

However in an unguarded moment, the corpse doll's mouth spat a fireball that headed towards Death, burying through the numerous bodies constructing the [castle].

In the next moment, a giant scythe appeared on the youth's hand, slashing both the surrounding air and the flame.

-----I.....

Michelle saw the scenery that was way beyond human intelligence and she was still petrified.

-----I..... what should I do?

This was not the type of battle where she should meddle. The only human she knew who had stepped into this dimension is probably only Julius.

-----I.....what was my purpose in this castle?

She grasped her bowgun and took a deep breath.

The rotten scented air filled with deep magic filled her lungs and petrified her body.

But, Michelle concealed her displeasure and fear of the impossible and took a step forward.

Curtis wished for her own happiness.

The monster residing inside him told her so.

However, what is happiness for her?

Does it mean turning her back on the [castle] and escaping alone to enjoy her life?

-----No.

Since she chose this path-----from the time the demon castle emerged out of the chaos in human beings, she ought to have prepared for this.

The castle is a symbol of the chaos of humans and there are those who chose to face it----- turning her back and being happy is not an option.

-----Now.....the thing I should do is.....

-----To destroy this castle and fight evil.

Even if I have to team up with the monster that robbed Curtis' body

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The exchange of magic seemed endless.

Death is able to peek through Olrox's guard but, with his enemy dancing in the sky and the giant corpse doll standing between them, the opportunity can't be seized.

"....."

However, this waiting game put himself at a disadvantage because he is using a human body.

-----Must bait.

Strongly clasping the giant scythe in hand, Death once more released his magic and Death's scythes appeared all over the room.

Acting in agreement, Olrox raised his hand and made thousands, millions of bats.

For moment, the view that entered those human eyes, Death saw-----

One human being who seemed to have stood there petrified.

A few seconds after-----

Continuing the strong magic exchange with Death, Olrox did not notice.

Just concentrating on fighting back his opponent's magic-----Olrox discovered that there was a shadow threatening him a little too late.

That was a human and----- that attack originated from an impossible angle.

Something came.

The moment he noticed, it was already too late-----

Driving out a group of bats,

Slashing through the vortex of magic,

One silver arrow flew towards Olrox's heart.

".....!?"

He opened his eyes wide with astonishment. The arrow pierced through the center of his nobleman's clothes.

He was able to quickly evade thus he did not sustain major damage to his vital organs but----- he did not know what just happened and traced the origin of the arrow.

Then, there is-----one female human.

-----No way.

That height is impossible for a human to reach just by jumping. There is also no trace of flight magic.

There is no sign of any use of magic nor secret religious art, that woman should have been every inch a human being.

However-----that woman had one thing that differs from other humans.

Inheriting her ancestor's natural ability, she caught those numerous [scaffoldings] dancing in the air, and pushed herself close to the ceiling.

Those [scaffoldings] that were dancing in the air were extremely dangerous and brittle, but they were numerous.

-----She, used Death's scythe as a springboard!

Olrox understood.

When he waivered for 0.1 of a second, that is the case of his defeat.

When he let down his guard, he knew that his opponent below him is not a fool.

Then-----cutting through the air, the youth grasping the giant scythe in hand appeared in front of him-----silencing Olrox in one hit.

Humans are still good.

The vampire boldly smiled and brought down his high speed blades-----

The giant skeleton created by magic bit his body.

The scythe did not stop in its momentum and cut the corpse doll in two-----

Even slashing the false castle and the castle lord's room, ceiling and walls came crashing down.

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[Ruined Castle Corridor]

"It's ok here, I'll soon be able to accompany the children in escaping."

Conversing through their communication device, Julius who was behind had his voice sound with worry.

"Hmm.....There ought to be some monsters a little bit in front of you, are you sure you're going to be ok?"

"If I were alone, it would have been difficult but.....I was able to bump into Hammer earlier and he is willing to help me."

"Oh, yo! Well, Yoko-san can leave everything to me. Please slowly go about your business!"

".....That's a reassuring conversation."

"Anyway, since everyone's safety is assured, I will now dispose of Legion. This is exactly the right rehabilitation for my aching bones."

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[Demon Castle Top Floor]

The wind flowed from the cracks in the collapsed walls. Due to it, the stagnated magic and the stench of death vanished from the castle lord's room.

A collapsed Olrox was on the floor with a straight cut from his shoulder to his waist and his entire body was crunched by the magic skeleton. In front of him was Death who lowered his blade and Michelle.

"Our powers were equal."

Olrox silently laughed.

"Death, it was not by you..... I was defeated.....by a human."

Olrox showed a satisfied expression. Death silently answered.

".....So it was."

Once he recalled those numerous unfolding battles----with a bitter smile exchanged words.

"Humans are..... strong. But, it is a fact that Dracula's castle can be summoned from the chaos that are within them."

"Indeed.....surely.....that power.....might be suitable for Dracula....."

Olrox's body had collapsed but he answered Death with a fearless smile.

"The inheritor of Dracula's name might emerge..... or might not..... You however will..... forever roam as the servant of the night.....no matter how many times humans strike you down. As long as humans exist, you being unable to perish.....would you still continue to roam this world?"

Olrox seemed to laugh and took pity on the existence that is a contradiction. Death did not despise the loser and he just replied.

"When all the reasons for my existence and when my loyalty comes to an end, dying out or living forever, those for me are all trivial matters."

"I see..... that is the root of your soul....."

Olrox gave a short laugh towards Death's unwavering voice.

"Cough cough.....I would still.....not go out of existence....."

With his body cut into two, half of the vampire's body was slowing turning into ash. Even so, he still spat out words.

"I am not begging for chaos or any other thing..... I will by my own power would once more return to

this world. Gwahaha.....gwahahaha.”

Without regretting his previous actions, Olrox loudly laughed.

“Sooner or later somewhere, after a break..... I would show myself one more..... Gwahahaha..... Gwahahahaha! Gwahahahaha!”

That loud laughter permeated and resonated deeply into the center of the castle, and Olrox’s body turned into ash and vanished into the darkness.

And----- one last monster is standing next to Michelle.

“.....My lady, what do you plan to do?”

With Death’s words coming out of Curtis’ mouth, Michelle pointed her bowgun without hesitation.

“.....Release Curtis’ body..... Even if it’s a corpse.....I would not allow you to have his body at your disposal.”

“Hu.....Your temper is stronger than I thought. However..... be at ease since the true castle did not appear.....my job as a guard is truly over.”

In the recently concluded battle, he seemed to have lost his strength. It can be felt that Death is quickly losing his hold on the youth’s body.

“Also..... It seems that one Belmont is coming. I don’t know if he would understand the reason behind this. Anyway, it seems that I no longer have the power to manipulate this body.”

Somehow, his voice gradually became weaker. Michelle is concerned about one thing, even if it is impossible to think of but she dared to ask.

“.....Is there no way.....Curtis can be saved.”

“What have you misunderstood? I am Death. Human death only comprises a part of chaos. They can come back again as zombies or skeletons, but without a soul, dead bodies cannot be revived. And ----- there is no reason to perform that.”

“So.....”

While Michelle refrained herself from breaking into tears, she gave words of offering to him.

“When you used Curtis’ body, I was not completely convinced, but.....to my dearest who is a member of the Church, I would like to express my gratitude. Thank you.”

“I had just told you not to misunderstand. As the castle’s guard, I am not to be condemned as a traitor.....You guys are still my enemy.”

Death who still was in the form of the youth gave a simmering laugh-----

Just before he returned to the darkness, he spat out his last words.

“When the castle is summoned once more by the chaos in human beings..... When that time comes, I would show myself.”

“Do not give.....any allowances.....”

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A few minutes later, Yoko who was able to let the children escape from the castle, saw in the castle lord’s room.

“Michelle, you were safe!”

Yoko came rushing when she saw both Michelle and Curtis.

“.....Curtis?”

What she saw was a downcast Michelle with a grim expression and Curtis was lying in front of her. After seeing that, Yoko’s happy expression clouded over and she faced Michelle.

“Curtis is.....already.....”

Michelle continued on repressing her emotions and there for the first time, tears dropped from her eyes.



She wanted to explain the whole story even though she felt tense, but-----

[-----]

She heard a voice.

“Eh?”

Not knowing that it meant, she turned around in a panic.

“.....Mi.....chelle.....?”

“!”

Michelle saw Curtis slowly standing up in front of her.

“What happened..... to me..... here.....?”

“Curtis.....?”

She did not know what happened.

She realized that corpses could not be revived.

If this was permitted, the past battle with Dracula or perhaps the existence of the demon castle itself would be meaningless.

However, for Michelle now, there was no time to think about those things.

-----Why.....?

-----Are you not.....dead?

-----What?

After popping several questions, Michelle’s heart wafted briefly into the void.

But by looking at the light behind the youth’s eyes, it proved that he still is the same old Curtis.

“Curtis.....!”

The young woman with flowing tears, threw her arms around the youth’s body. while the youth just opened his eyes wide with shock.

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[Wallachian Valley]

At the same time Michelle and the others escaped, they were able to receive word that Julius has defeated Legion.

With the light of the morning sun, those monster and human bodies which were used by the power of the vampire----- turned to ash just like him.

High above the gorge looking down on the number of corpses flowing down the river-----Michelle thought that they were finally summoned by [death].

What were the wishes of Graham’s followers, what bound them----- she did not know. However, at the very least, with this [death], Michelle hoped that they were free from the spell.

And with their death, she found out that the god wearing the crown of death arrived here----- For the first time, she has respect for the monsters that were ought to be her enemies.

When Yoko arrived at the top floor, she heard [Death’s] words behind-----

[Did it seem that Death is..... good in deceiving humans with his use of words?]

Those were her words about [Death] that she remembered from the library.

That voice rang with feelings from behind her and now she did not know what to make of it.

She was over thinking things and that made her laugh a bit.

She silently thought while looking at Curtis standing behind her.

Corpses can't be revived.

That is an absolute unwritten rule.

It cannot be gained neither by the amount of magic one has, nor by holy magic.

That meant----- when Curtis was possessed by Death, was he not yet dead?

And----- she remembered a legend passed down from her ancestors.

Once, there was a man whose body was changed into a monster by Dracula's hand. He was only able to recover his human body with the help of one from the Belmont family.

Perhaps, Curtis' body was on the verge of death, when Death made him a monster. Was it that his body was stubbornly clinging to life?

Using his own body as a [shield], living as a human and combining his strength as a monster

Then, when the magic had completely left, would he have recovered his human body?

That was Michelle's guess, but the person who can answer that question is no longer around.

Still, is it possible that Death's soul was still left in his body? Or is it that his soul had completely cut off and disappeared into the darkness?

The questions flowed but there are no answers.

Even until now she does not know how far human hearts can be shaped from the mind? How far souls can be commanded?

Maybe the answer can be found when the true Dracula's castle appears; including the soul that resides inside Curtis if it is truly his.

And when the answer comes, even if Death is met as the enemy----- she swore in her heart to fight without hesitation as a human being.

With that she thought that noble monster is honest to a fault and is most polite up until the end.

The sun lit up the forest as if nothing had happened and the entire nightmare faded into the clear stream.

Wallachia's falling melt water beautifully sparkled with the play of sunlight through the trees.

The flow that chases both life and death must be understood-----in order to play a new canon of reincarnation.

## **The End**

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Translator's notes:

Thank you so much for reading!

I hope this light novel answered some questions regarding Castlevania. However, I do believe that it raises far more questions than it answers. Hehehe.

This was a fun translation although it took me 70 hours over one and a half months just to do the first translated draft. Then several hours more were given to typing it out and editing. I know translating these things puts a heavy burden on the shoulders of the translator. I just hope that I am able to deliver.