身の丈を越す巨大な剣を背負い、つよい鉄の義手をつけた、全身黒ずくめの剣士。ガッツと名乗るその男は、闇の歴史の支配者。五人のロッジを求めて、旅を続けていた。押しかけ相棒のエレーブと共により悪名高かった町は、恐怖に支配されていた。「邪教徒狩り」の名のもとに、領民を次々と惨殺する伯爵に、ガッツはただ一人戦いを挑む。

三浦健太郎

カバーデザイン/ZEN CORPORATION
タイトルデザイン/ADOX
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THE GUARDIANS OF DESIRE, CHAPTER 2

THE GUARDIANS OF DESIRE, CHAPTER 3
THE GUARDIANS OF DESIRE, CHAPTER 2
A BEHELIT?!

Y-you know what this is?!
GUTS... STOP!

EEEK...

IT... IT'S NOT MINE!

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

WHERE'D YOU GET THIS THING?

IT'S FROM THE CASTLE... I STOLE IT FROM THE COUNT!

I-I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH!
TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

...!

MY NAME IS VARGAS. I USED TO BE THE CASTLE PHYSICIAN.

...BUT AT LEAST HE WAS STILL HUMAN.

IN THOSE DAYS THE COUNT WAS A DIFFERENT PERSON. HE WAS CRUEL...
...the count changed!

But seven years ago, after getting hold of this thing...

"Slicing them open, chopping them up, violating them, and then eating them."

"He began to treat people as if they were mere playthings, dissecting them alive..."

"His inquisition of heretics became nothing more than an excuse to acquire more bodies."
I couldn't bear to be a part of the Count's diversions, so I secretly fled the castle with my wife and two sons.

But on our way out we were caught and thrown into prison.

"Even now the image is seared into my memory!"

Then the fiend hacked me up...

And right before my eyes, he took my wife... and my sons!
...I WAS...

MORE THAN ANGER OR SORROW...

MORE THAN CONCERN FOR MY WIFE AND TWO SONS...

...I WAS NOTHING BUT A PRISONER OF FEAR.

I USED A DRUG THAT I'D CONCEALED TO FEIGN MY DEATH.

AND WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY AROSE, I SLIPPED OUT OF THE CASTLE, TAKING THIS THING WITH ME. IT WAS A MIRACLE.
Since then, seven years have passed. During that time, I've tirelessly researched every aspect of religion and the occult.

But I could never uncover a single clue about the nature of this thing.

...This thing... What in the world is it?

That key opens a portal to another world that overlaps our own...

It's a key that summons demons from another dimension that have manipulated the dark side of human history since ancient times.
THE FIVE MEMBERS OF THE GODHAND.
LORD ZONDARK!

I'LL KILL YOU!

KILL!

EEEK!

LORD ZONDARK, CALM DOWN, PLEASE!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

...H-HIS MAJESTY! IT'S...

I-IT'S LORD ZONDARK'S CONDITION.

WHAT'S ALL THIS RACKET?!
BLACK SWORDS-MAN!
I'LL KILL YOU!

THIS IS DANGEROUS. MAY I SUGGEST YOU RETURN TO YOUR CHAMBERS?

EXCEL-LENcy ...

B...

BUT...

HAVE EVERYONE VACATE THE ROOM AT ONCE, DAHL.

WHAT?

I SAID AT ONCE...
YOU DESPISE HIM, DON'T YOU, THE BLACK SWORDS-MAN?

...!

VERY WELL, THEN...

I'D DO ANYTHING! ANYTHING... TO KILL HIM!

YES!!

...HA HA HA...
I'll grant you your wish.

EEE...

...!
MY DAEMON.

TAKE IT INSIDE OF YOU...

LORD DAHL!

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT?!

AND DON'T FORGET WHAT HAPPENED THIS AFTERNOON. NO MATTER HOW MANY FOOT SOLDIERS WE SEND AFTER HIM, IT'S UNLIKELY THEY'LL BE ABLE TO STOP HIM.

WE LOSE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IF YOU SEND TOO MANY MEN TO KILL HIM.

EXCELLENT! TAKE THIRTY TROOPS ALONG WITH YOU AND--

I HAVE A BETTER PLAN...

YOUR EXCELLENCY! WAIT...
ZON-DARK!

The time has come for you to wreak vengeance to your heart's content.

It's really well made.

Wow!
IT'S ART. YEAH... ART!

BUT IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY, IT'S KINDA GOT A NEAT-LOOKIN' FACE.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT. IT WON'T BUDGE AN INCH.

WHHEW!

IT'S NOT ARTWORK. THAT THING'S ALIVE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT BEFORE I TOUCHED IT, YOU BIG JERK?!

LET'S SAY IT'S A KIND OF A TOOL.

WELL, IT MAY BE ALIVE, BUT IT'S NO DANGER IN ITS CURRENT STATE.
WELL, HOW DOES IT SUMMON THE GODHAND?

STUPID! I WOULDN'T BE GOIN' THROUGH ALL THIS TROUBLE IF I KNEW THAT!

HOW DID THE COUNT FIRST GET HOLD OF THIS THING, ANYWAY?

I FORGOT TO ASK YOU SOMETHIN'.

HM?

-GULP!
"ALL THEY SAID WAS THAT THEY FOUND IT IN A TOWN BAZAAR SOMEWHERE TO THE EAST."

"EVEN THE MERCHANTS KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT."

"HE HAPPENED TO BUY IT FROM A CARAVAN OF MERCHANTS THAT STOPPED BY THE CASTLE ONE DAY."

"BY CHANCE."

"BY CHANCE? HMMM..."

"LOOK AT THIS. IT'S A LAYOUT MAP OF THE CASTLE."
I WISH I COULD GO WITH YOU, BUT WITH THIS BODY OF MINE... I'LL ONLY BE A HINDRANCE.

THERE'S A SECRET PASSAGE USED FOR ESCAPE FROM THE CASTLE THAT ONLY A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT. BESIDES THE COUNT HIMSELF. IF ALL GOES WELL, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH THE INNER COMPOUND UNDETECTED.

I BEG YOU....

I'VE WAITED FOR THE DAY THAT A MAN LIKE YOU WOULD APPEAR!

FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, I'VE WAITED FOR THIS DAY!
YOU'RE MY ONLY HOPE!

PLEASE!

AVENGE ME!

DON'T TOUCH ME!!
HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!

GUTS?!

LISTEN, YOU....!!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LOOKS LIKE A MONSTER.

DONT YOU EVER TOUCH ME LIKE THAT AGAIN. UNDERSTAND?!

YOU MAKE ME SICK...

HAVE YOU SEEN YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR LATELY?

AT LEAST MAKE YOURSELF A LITTLE MORE PRESENTABLE!
How come you're always pickin' on people like that?!

Y-you jerk!!

I-it's okay... I don't mind...

Old fella...

...I don't care what you say about me...

If only you kill the count...

Spineless bastard.
I WON'T AVENGE YOU. BUT I'LL KILL HIM ALL THE SAME.

SHH! QUIET...

WHAT'S WRONG?

......
YOU AGAIN?
TOUGH BASTARD, AREN'T YA?

THE GUY FROM THIS AFTERNOON!
NOW I GET IT. YOU'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN ANYMORE!
FOOL... I'LL HACK YOU TO PIECES!

GUTS!
I'll chop you into mincemeat!
THANKS.

HIM...

-OMAH-

HEY OLD FELLA, ARE YOU OKAY?!

...MORE OR LESS...BUT YOU'RE THE ONE I'M WORRIED ABOUT, LITTLE ONE.

HEH HEH...

WH-WHAT A HORRIBLE MONSTER... GOD SAVE US!
IT'S TOO FAST FOR THE HUMAN EYE TO SEE!

HE'S SWINGING THAT BATTLEAXE AROUND LIKE A WHIP!

...IT'S TOO FAST TO SEE...

WE'LL ALL BE CHOPPED TO BITS!

AT THIS RATE...

BUT THE THING IS...

BUT GUTS IS BLOCKIN' EVERY SINGLE BLOW...
HE'S INCREDIBLE!

...

HE--

BUT... BUT NOW I REALIZE THAT...

I ALWAYS KNEW HE WAS TOUGH, BUT IT SEEMED LIKE HE WAS JUST SWINGING HIS SWORD AROUND WILDLY.
...He
...He's a
MASTER
SWORDSMAN!!
HALF HIS HEAD'S CHOPPED OFF AND HE'S STILL--?!

EWW!!

WELL DONE...
BLACK SWORDSMAN!
FOR A MORTAL, THAT IS.
TH-THE COUNT?!

...!

IT'S...

VARGAS

LONG TIME NO SEE...

...!
SO IT IS YOU...

JUST YOU WAIT. AFTER I TAKE CARE OF HIM, I'LL BE DELIGHTED TO CONTINUE WHERE WE LEFT OFF SEVEN YEARS AGO.
YOU’VE HONED YOUR STRENGTH AND SKILL TO THE UTMOST.

...NO HUMAN, THAT IS.

TRULY IMPRESSIVE...

SURELY NO ONE CAN DEFEAT YOU...

THE FACT THAT YOU’RE MORTAL...
...IS YOUR DOWNFALL!
GAA..?!

ウオオオ

ドドドド

～UIGHH!!～

カリカリアァーン
HEY! OVER HERE!

HURRY!
HMMMM ...
I WONDER IF HE’S DEAD?

N AH, IT’S NOT THE COUNT.
...THE COUNT?

W-WAS THAT...

IT WAS MORE LIKE HIS DAEMON.

~YECH!~ THAT’S YOUR IDEA OF AN ESCAPE ROUTE?

STINKY...
C’MON. THINK OF IT AS DOWN PAYMENT FOR KILLING THE COUNT.

THE BEHELIT.

THAT THING’S OF NO USE TO YOU ANYWAY.

... THERE’S SOMETHING I WANT FROM YOU.

ALL THAT REMAINED WAS HIS DESIRE TO KILL.

IT WAS FEEDING OFF THAT GUY UP THERE, IN TOTAL CONTROL OF HIS MIND AND BODY.

BUT BEFORE I GO...

THIS IS WHERE WE PART.
LATER.

HEY...

I WILL.

AND YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO, LITTLE ONE.

HEY!

GUTS!

OLD FELLA...

.... TAKE CARE OF YERSELF, OKAY?
AT FIRST I THOUGHT YOU WERE KINDA CREEPY, BUT...

YOU'RE A GOOD PERSON, Y'KNOW THAT?

LIH... OKAY.

BYE.

NOW GO.

THAT'S OKAY...

OH... I'M SORRY!

...PEOPLE NEED TO KEEP LIVING.

I THINK THAT... THAT...

OH... UM... ONE MORE THING...
...I DON'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT LIFE, BUT...

...BUT LIVING FOR THE FUTURE IS MORE IMPORTANT...

I GUESS.

Y'SEE, I...

...THAN TRYING TO Avenge THE PAST...

WHAT AM I SAYIN'?

I GUESS I'M JUST MIXED UP.

SEE YA!

HA HA!

NO, YOU'RE RIGHT.
SUCH A DEAR ELF...

...I CAN'T JUST STAND AROUND HERE FOREVER.

WELL...
-EEEK!!-

IT CAN'T BE!

WHA-

...!
THAT'S SO RUDE!

JUST TAKING THE BEHELIT AND WALKIN' OFF LIKE THAT.
AT LEAST YOU COULDA SEEN HIM OFF SOMEWHERE SAFE.

LISTEN, GUTS!

I COULD'VE DONE THOSE THINGS MYSELF.

WELL, EXCEPT FOR THIS, WHICH IS MUCH APPRECIATED.

... SCOUNDREL!

SO MUCH THAT I WOULD'VE TAKEN IT BY FORCE IF NECESSARY.

WH-

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!

HE SAVED YOU, Y'KNOW! HE SHOWED YOU A SECRET PASSAGE INTO THE CASTLE TOO... HE EVEN GAVE YOU THE BEHELIT!
YOU'RE ALLIES, AFTER ALL!

B...
BUT...
BUT...

...BOTH OF YOU WANNA DESTROY THE COUNT, RIGHT?

I CAN'T BE BOTHERED BY SOME GOOD-FOR-NOTHIN' BASTARD ACTING LIKE WE'RE FRIENDS.

HA-HA-HA!

ALLIES?! ME AND HIM?!

....!

EVEN WHEN HE BEGGED ME, I TURNED HIM DOWN. THAT MAGGOTY CREEP.

HE'LL END UP DRAGGIN' ME DOWN WITH HIM.

HMPH!

HOW COULD YOU?!
That goes for you, too...

...bug.
ANOTHER EXECUTION?

WHAT IS IT?

I know, but they say it's a friend of that fellow who caused all that commotion at the execution grounds.

I hear it's supposed to be a warning to him.

But there was just one yesterday!

Is it true?

Yes.
HEY, WAIT!

GUTS!

GUTS ?!
I WON'T ASK YOU AGAIN!

AWRIGHT, THEN!

OKAY, I CAN TAKE A HINT!
HE SLICED THEM UP, CHOPPED THEM OFF...

...AND THEN ATE THEM!

I WAS... I WAS NOTHING BUT A PRISONER OF FEAR.

...HE TOOK MY WIFE... AND MY SONS!

BEFORE MY EYES...
WE MEET AGAIN, VARGAS.
WHAT HAS IT BEEN, SEVEN YEARS NOW?

WHAT ARE YOU GLARING AT?

HO HO!

YOUR MAJESTY, THE OBJECT YOU MENTIONED IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.

NORMAL, WE'D NEED TO GIVE YOU A PAINSTAKING INTERROGATION... BUT I'VE DECIDED TO GET IT OVER WITH AND EXECUTE YOU RIGHT AWAY. YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL.

SO THE BLACK SWORDS-MAN HAS IT...

I SEE.
OLD FELLA!

OOOH! WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO?

GUTS!

GUTS!
I KNEW YOU'D COME!!

THERE IS SOME GOOD IN YOU!

SO, WHADDYA GONNA DO?
YOU BETTER HURRY UP OR THE OLD FELLA'S GONNA...

...TO WATCH HIM DIE.

I JUST CAME TO WATCH...

HUUH?

...YOU GOT IT ALL WRONG!

YOU...

....!
IT'S A TRAP. AS SOON AS I APPROACH THE EXECUTION STAND, HUNDREDS OF TROOPS WILL BURST OUT.

IN THE SHADOWS PAST THE CASTLE GATE...

LOOK.

YOU THINK I'M SO NOBLE THAT I'LL JUST WALK RIGHT INTO THEIR TRAP?

IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED ABOUT IT...

...WHY DON'T YOU SAVE 'IM?

::GULP::

BUT...

BUT...
"...I couldn't possibly do that alone..."

"Then shut up."

"An average person..."

"A misfit who can't even swing a sword. It's ridiculous for him to think he can defeat that monster."

"But..."

"The same goes for him."
Ambition comes with a price attached.

Of course, that price comes too high if you die for nothing.

Not... not again! Like before...

...his emotions are pouring into me!

...is self-destruction!

The reward for ambition too great...
DARK AND VIOLENT EMOTIONS, POUNDING INTO ME! SELF-HATING, DESTRUCTIVE...

IT BURNS!

BURNING LIKE BLACK MAGMA!

IS THIS...

...THE SOURCE OF GUTS' STRENGTH?!

IS THIS...
A rat should live like a rat.

He should've known his limits.

Old fella...

Guts....

...are you afraid?
WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?

YOU ARE AFRAID...

...FIGHTING ENEMIES HE CAN'T POSSIBLY DEFEAT.

...AFRAID OF HIM, AREN'T YOU?

YOU DON'T WANNA ADMIT THAT YOU'RE JUST LIKE HIM...

THE OLD FELLA...

...WELL THEN WHY'D YOU COME HERE?!

WELL...
WHERE DOES AN ELF LIKE YOU GET OFF TALKIN' LIKE A HUMAN?

YOU TALK TOO MUCH, Y'KNOW THAT?

IF YOU REALLY DIDN'T CARE, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE AT ALL! IF YOU HATED THE OLD FELLA THAT MUCH...
YOU ...

BOP-BOP-BOP-BOP...

YOLO!

YOU LITTLE BRAT!

YOU BIG ASS ASS ASS ASS!

SELFISH BASTARD! CHICKEN!
SHOULD I FEEL...

...COMPASSION?

DAMN BUG!

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!!
FEAR, ANGER, SADNESS, GUILT...

THE HYSTERIA OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, SWIRLING AROUND INSIDE OF ME!

MY HEAD IS SPLITTING!

OLD FELLA!
SHOULD I...?

-LIGHT-

SHOULD I...?

-ULULUGH!!-

ジン
THAT IDIOT!

THAT LITTLE FELLOW!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? GET ON WITH IT!

YES SIR!!

STUPID ...

DEATH WILL BE PAYING YOU A VISIT SOON ENOUGH!

IT'S A SHAME...

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

ALONG WITH THE HUNDREDS OF VICTIMS YOU'VE KILLED WHO'LL DRAG YOU DOWN TO HELL WITH THEM!

...THAT I WON'T BE AROUND TO ENJOY THE SIGHT OF YOU CHOKING IN YOUR OWN BLOOD.
I beg of you!!

Black Swordsman!!

Finish him off.

Hold up this Devil's severed head before us, once and for all!

Hold it up before us!
ウオオオオオオ
HOLD UP HIS SEVERED HEAD BEFORE US!
DIDN'T SHOW UP AFTER ALL, DID YOU, BLACK SWORDSMA? WELL DONE.

OR MAYBE...
DAMN! HOW COME WE GOTTA DO THIS CRAP?!

THINKIN’ HE COULD TAKE ON THE COUNT.

WHAT A FOOL!

FORGET ABOUT IT.

NOT THAT I CARE, BUT THE CORPSES ARE PRACTICALLY POURIN’ OUTTA THIS PIT.
LET'S FINISH OUR WORK AND GET OUTTA HERE!
I WON'T FAIL...

THE LOOK IN YOUR EYES...

...FILLED WITH VENGEANCE.

...LIKE YOU.
I'M IN PAIN...

PAINNNNN!

I WANT MY HEAD BACK!

GIVE IT BACK TO MEEEE!

MY LEGGGGG!

IT HURTS...

IT HURTSSS!

I CAN'T SEEEEEEEE!

MY EYESSSSSS!
WE WANT THE COUNT'S HEAD....!

TOGETHER....!
WE WANT REVENGE....!

WHOAH!!

REVENGE....!

REVENGE....!!
NOOO!!

TOGETHER ...

REVENGE ...!
YOU AND I GOT NOTHING IN COMMON!

GET AWAY FROM ME, CARCASSES!!

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT WORTHLESS SCUM!

YOU'RE DEAD, ALL OF YOU!

THIS IS MY FIGHT!

MINE, A PERSON OF FLESH AND BLOOD!
THAT'S RIGHT!

I'LL KILL THE COUNT WITH MY VERY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD.

I'LL DO IT MYSELF!
ヘルセルフ
欲望の守護天使 (3)
THE GUARDIANS OF DESIRE, CHAPTER 3
OLD FELLA.
I couldn't do a thing to save you.

...not a single thing.

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO ME...

...now?
FATHER...

EH...?

STILL AWAKE, THERESIA?
FATHER?

HM? I JUST HAVE A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YOU.

WHAT IS IT, FATHER? WHY ARE YOU COMING TO SEE ME SO LATE?

IS IT REAL?

WELL, DO YOU LIKE IT?

YES.

...AN ELF?
AREN'T YOU LONELY HERE, THERESIA?

THANK YOU, FATHER.

I COULDN'T POSSIBLY LET YOU OUT INTO THE IMPURE WORLD, OVERRUN BY FILTHY HERETICS.

BE PATIENT, MY DEAR.

THERESIA...
...YOU'RE THE ONLY...

...WON'T LET ME TOUCH YOU?

YOU STILL...

......!!

AAAAH!!
NOTHING.

SO BE IT.

IT'S GETTING LATE. GOOD NIGHT.

FORGET IT.

FATHER...
EXCELLENCY...

GO AWAY...

WHY...?

......

......

GO OOOO.

LEAVE ME BE!
THERESIA...

ALAS!

HEH... HEH...
HE HAS COME...
YOU'RE A STUBBORN BASTARD, Y'KNOW THAT?
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU...

...BLACK SWORDS-MAN!!
YOU'RE MUCH PRETTIER THAN THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.
NO MORE GAMES. THIS TIME THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN!
...I'll just keep on regenerating myself!!

It's futile. No matter how much you chop me up!

No matter how much you hack up this possessed body...

...unless you cut off my head...

Over and over again!!
THANKS FOR THE TIP...
NOW I'LL FEED...

......!!

...OFF YOUR BODY!
I'll be waiting for you...

Don't think it's over yet.

...upstairs.
DAMN...
LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD.

I CAN'T GIVE UP...
I'll skewer your damned head on my blade of steel!

-AAAAAA!!-

Just wait and see!

I'll skewer you!

AHH...
UH... I'M NOT VERY TASTY. E-ELVES AREN'T VERY GOOD FOR YOUR DIGESTION, Y'KNOW... NOT TO MENTION WE'RE HIGH IN CALORIES.

I WON'T HURT YOU. YOU CAN COME OUT.

I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE LOCKED UP IN A CAGE.
I understand why you don't trust me... I'm his daughter, after all.

You're just saying that now so you can eat me alive when I come out.

That day?

...since that day.

Father's a different person...

That day mother died...

Seven years ago.
One day they kidnapped mother and threatened to kill her if father didn't let them practice their pagan worship freely.

In those days there was a sect of heretics at large who opposed my father.

But this is what father told me...

Father, of course, couldn't allow that without permission from the king, so he refused their demands...

...and they carried out their threat.

I was just a baby then, so I don't remember anything.
AS AN OFFERING TO THEIR EVIL GOD.

HE MAY HAVE BEEN HARSH, BUT THAT WAS SO HE COULD DEFEND HIS KINGDOM AGAINST NEIGHBORING ENEMIES. HE WAS TRUSTED AND LOVED BY ALL...

MOTHER WAS SACRIFICED ALIVE...

FATHER WAS A GREAT RULER.

...EVEN AS A FATHER.
_CHANGED...

...BUT...

FATHER...

NOW, IT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE ANYMORE WHETHER THEY'RE HERETICS OR NOT!

LIKE A MAN POSSESSED, HE STARTED HUNTING DOWN HERETICS.

IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE ENJOYS HURTING PEOPLE...!!

BUT...
...ALMOST AS IF...

SOMETIMES I FEEL....

...HE'S NOT HUMAN ANYMORE.

THERESIA...

I'M SCARED...
Hey, don't joke like that. At this castle, that's not even funny.

Heh heh... on a night like this we should just take off.

-Ugh... strangely humid tonight.

Huh?

Hey... over there... what's wrong?
ガシャアァ
WE KNEW YOU'D BE COMING, AS WE KNEW YOU WERE IN LEAGUE WITH VARGAS.

THIS IS AS FAR AS YOU GO. SURRENDER QUIETLY...

MOVE.

...OR I'LL HAVE YOU KILLED AT ONCE.
YOU'RE IN MY WAY! MOVE!

FIRE AT WILL!

ARCHERS!

F-FOOL! YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE ON FIFTY TROOPS YOURSELF?!

FIRE!!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR!! ATTACKKK!!!
GERICO...

COME ON! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

GERICO!!
YOU ALWAYS BRAGGED ABOUT BEING STRONGER THAN ZONDARK!

GET HIM!

SHOW US YOUR STRENGTH NOW!
W-WAIT! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, FOOLS?!

COME BACK!

I'M WARNING YOU!

AAGH!
NO PROBLEM! I'LL LEND YOU MY SHOULDER!

I Couldn't stop myself from crying, it's been so long since I've talked to anyone.

...TO FLY?

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE...

HEE HEE...

...YOU FLY, DON'T YOU?

TELL ME, PUDD...

DO YOU HAVE A NAME?

THE NAME'S PUDD!
WELL, I GUESS IT'S A BIT EASIER THAN WALKING. I MEAN, HALF OF IT IS JUST UP TO THE WIND.

NORMAL, I GUESS.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

Hmm...

THE SAME AS FOR BIRDS OR BUGS.

IT'S JUST AN EVERYDAY THING FOR YOU ELVES, ISN'T IT?
Father doesn't let me leave this room.

......

Theresia, you haven't been in here all this time, have you?

He won't let anyone from the city or anyone even remotely connected to the city near me.

He thinks there are still heretics lurking about the city, even now.

For seven years?
OUTSIDE THIS WINDOW, MY LITTLE PIECE OF SKY.

THIS IS MY WORLD.

SUCH SOBER EYES... NOT THE EYES OF A CHILD.

WHAT'S GOING ON?
Theresa, I've gotta go!

Huh?

It's a burglar! An intruder in the inner compound!

What is it?!

Guts!!

Y-you can't go! It's too dangerous!

I'll be all right! I'm pretty quick!

But...

Don't worry, don't worry! Seen my share of battles, I have!

That burglar they're talking about... it's someone I know!
I'm sorry...

NOOOO!!

...it's natural that you would worry about your friend.

Well, he's not exactly my friend...

Of course...
GO ON, THEN.

AHH...

THERESIA...

I TOLD YOU I KNEW WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE LOCKED UP IN A CAGE, DIDN'T I?

THAT'S BECAUSE I AM.
WELL...
O...OKAY.

SEE YA.

......
-Um-... Somethin' I forgot to say.

WH... WHAT is IT?
ALRIGHTY THEN! SEE YA SOON!

EH?

AND THEN I'LL TAKE YOU OUTTA HERE.

FOR SO LONG NOW I'D EVEN GIVEN UP EVEN DREAMING ABOUT IT.

...THIS ROOM?

TO ACTUALLY LEAVE...
...OUT-SIDE?!

AND HE HIM-SELF...

FOR REVENGE ON THE HERETICS WHO ROBBED HIM OF THE WOMAN HE LOVED?!

IS THAT WHY THE COUNT ACQUIRED DEMONIC POWERS?

HE SUMMONED THE GODHAND...

...BECAME A DEMON?!
COME NOW AND TEST ME. LET'S SEE JUST HOW FAR HUMAN POWER WILL GO!

WELL DONE, BLACK SWORDS-MAN.

IMPRESSIVE THAT YOU MADE IT THIS FAR.
NICELY COUNTERED.
I now grasp the extent of your skills.
...must take this fight a little more seriously.

-WHOOPS!- I flew out all right, but I forgot to ask where the Count's quarters are.
NOW YOU UNDERSTAND...

HEH HEH...

HEH...
Each time you cut them off, my body becomes stronger!

---

It's futile. No matter how many times you chop off my arms and legs!

---

A mere sword can't possibly destroy me.

---

It grows bigger and bigger!
THE DOOR IS...
WHERE ARE YOU?!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT VIGOROUS ONSLAUGHT OF YOURS?! DID YOU FINALLY REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE NO CHANCE OF WINNING AND DECIDE TO RUN AWAY?!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WHERE ARE YOU, BLACK SWORDSMAN?!
DAMN!

JUST A SURFACE WOUND!
IT'S IRRATIONAL TO THINK THAT YOU CAN DEFEAT ME. I, WHO AM BEYOND HUMAN.

THE BRAND ON YOUR NECK ...

IMPOSSIBLE! TO THINK THAT SOMEONE CAN SURVIVE WITH THAT BRAND CARVED INTO THEIR FLESH.
But of course you'll never win, a mere mortal like yourself.

Revenge. Is that it?

That's right...

You see. You can't even stand up after a single strike from me.

It's not worth being constantly hounded by demons, chopped to pieces...

You should put an end to it now. I will release you from your suffering.

...It's a meaningless fight!

...There's no need for you to continue your war of pain and fear.
BACK TO WHERE YOU BELONG. YOUR FINAL RESTING PLACE IN HELL.

I WILL DISPATCH YOU, ONCE AND FOR ALL.

IT WAS ALREADY PRE-ORDAINED THE MOMENT THE BRAND WAS CARVED INTO YOUR NECK.

...!!

...BY MAN'S EFFORTS.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE CANNOT BE THwarted...
You can die proudly now, knowing that at least you inflicted one blow upon me.

Look out!
-GAAGH!!-

-AAAAH...-

-UGGHHH...!!-
KYAA...

AHH... STILL WON'T PART WITH YOUR SWORD. I SEE.
TO BE CONTINUED