

Re:ゼロ

Re: Life in a different world from zero

から始める異世界生活

Re:ゼロから始める異世界生活 39
とらのあな限定特典
書き下ろしショートストーリー

『NO STELLA NO LIFE①』

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※**Spoilers for Volume 39 (Arc 9 Phase 1). Please read after finishing the main volume.**

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???: [——Aldebaran.]

And, that which had been called out in a clear voice, was something that Aldebaran hated.

He hated that name. In addition, he also hated the person who had called out to him. Furthermore, there were plenty of other factors he hated that could be squeezed out for argument's sake.

Anyway, his hatred could not be helped.

???: [Good grief, that is quite the displeased face you have got on there. Though, I had suggested that name thinking it would be the best thing to do for you.]

Speaking in such a nonchalant manner, that upside-down face entered his field of vision.

The reason for its inversion was plain and simple, as it was because he was lying down sprawled out on the ground. And the reason that he was lying like that was also plain and simple, it was because this upside-down person had gotten the best of him.

The fact that it was a glare charged with discontent, as well as the facial features adorned with long lashes, with composed beauty that did not waver in the slightest, could all be made out in that upside-down field of vision, which really pissed him off.

???: [Sorry for that. I myself am not particularly concerned with beauty. Though even with that said, I do sometimes pay undue worry to the fact that I have a rather thin figure compared to my friends. Looking at it comprehensively, I wonder if I'm jealous to the extent that I'd abandon it.]

Whilst saying that, the upside down person lightly put on flirtatious airs.

Their demeanor and gestures made it obvious that they wanted to say "I would do no such thing", so his feelings of absolutely not wanting to go along with that person's whims no matter what ended up winning out.

However, in response to his silence, that person giggled "Kuku",

???: [Wouldn't the fact that you are aware of the words I wanted to say but did not actually utter, if we ignore your rebellious heart to the me inside of you, mean that I had imagined the exact same words?]

Aldebaran: [That sorta reasoning's way too underhanded! Isn't that a scam that goes "the one who speaks wins"!]

Faced with logic that was far too invincible, he jumped up as if to say not to mess with him. But, that direct and genuine protest of his, did not seem to resonate with that person at all.

After all, for her, it seemed only natural to not pay mind to any verbal abuse or objections——,

???: [Underhandedness and scams and whatnot, are right off the mark. After all—— I'm an evil Witch, you know?]

Indeed, with an expression quite fitting for a Witch, one more malicious than that of cowards or comen, she smiled.

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???: [——Aldebaran.]

And, whenever that was called out in a clear voice, Aldebaran would no longer want to respond.

Even if he understood it as a name that referred to himself, he could not help but hate the things he hated. Having said that, even if he persistently tried to remain ignorant, it would be of no avail.

That was because——,

???: [Aldebaran, Aldebaran, Aldebaran, Aldebaran, Aldebaran, Aldebaran, Aldebaran, Aldebaran, Aldebaran——]

Aldebaran: [Hey, shut the fuck up! I can hear you!]

???: [That is good to hear. I was also wondering if you could hear me as I was calling out to you. It is of utmost importance that there are no discrepancies in our mutual perception. So then, have you heard?]

At the unashamed words of the Witch, Aldebaran sat cross-legged and rested his chin in his left hand.

With his lips zipped up in a frown, he demonstrated his lack of intent to answer, but unfortunately this was not a person so kind as to permit him the right to remain silent.

Aldebaran: [———]

Keeping his mouth shut, as he tried to compete against her in tolerance of silence, those black eyes trained their gaze on him silently.

Aldebaran: [~~Hk, Fine! It was about magic, right!? The thing you love and are so good at with so much knowledge worthy of celebration, yeah!?)

Witch: [So you do know? But then again, there is some room for argument as to whether I like magic or not. It seems that both myself and others all recognize that I am good at it. But, as for whether being good at something immediately locks me in to liking or disliking it...]

Aldebaran: [Don't go saying a hundred things in response to just one! I'm increasingly losing the will to talk to you!]

As the Witch immediately made him regret his careless remark, Aldebaran roughly scratched his head. Closing a single eye as she looked at him, the Witch sighed "Really now", and,

Witch: [Why do you always try to shut down the flow of the conversation like that? Even though the result will be the same you engage in this pointless resistance. It is not efficient, so I struggle to understand.]

Aldebaran: [...If you don't like it then just stop. Not like I'm asking you to do this.]

Witch: [Dislike? I had never even thought of the notion of disliking this. I had said I struggle to understand, but it is not as if I am rejecting that. Rather, as somebody who wishes to learn things that I do not know, I am more inclined to take interest in the things that are difficult. That said...]

Aldebaran: [That said?]

Witch: [Despite being of the same origin, I am seriously troubled as to why such a difference in results has been produced. An earlier or later birth, difference in environments, the scope of a sense of purpose, such various factors are conceivable, but... it does not seem practical to narrow them down to specifically one factor.]

Placing a finger to her lips, the Witch muttered and went into her own little world. As this showed signs of dragging on for a while, Aldebaran looked up to the sky feeling fed up.

Overhead, was a sky that went on and on and on, without any visible rifts. Far in the distance, the green plain that met the sky at the horizon was similarly spread out over a vast area with no end in sight. In reality, if one ventured out there without thinking about anything, they would usually get lost and die; that was the sort of place it was.

This was a dream space created by the Witch. ——He came here every time, but each time he was invited, he was shocked at the extraordinary feat of creating an entire individual world.

The Witch was capable of this much, and yet even she harbored a grand desire that she had been unable to fulfill. To try and have that completed by such a tiny individual, made it unthinkable that she was sane——,

Witch: [Unfortunately, I cannot help but say that that impression of yours is a shallow one.]

Aldebaran: [...You came back from your own world faster than I expected.]

Witch: [I was just immersed in contemplation for a bit... ah, did you refer to that as my own world? That is an interesting way to phrase it. As expected, you have ideas that I do not.]

Aldebaran: [————]

The Witch smiled in admiration, and understanding that those black eyes were projected past him onto somebody else, and praising that other person, Aldebaran spat out a “Keh” in a cursing manner.

His reaction caused the Witch to blink in surprise, and,

Witch: [Surely you do not expect me to be able to guess the emotions of others, right? Both you and I do not have the leeway to waste time in vain. That is why I deliberately ignore all of your complex feelings, but... you seem to have a misunderstanding.]

Aldebaran: [Misunderstanding? Is the Witch who can't understand people's hearts about to lecture me?]

Witch: [Logic and emotion are separate things. They must not be allowed to mix together. ——Recall that which is entrusted to you, and cannot be entrusted to me. It is an issue divorced from one's amount of strength or presence of ability. To put it tangibly, what is required is not one's qualities. It is a qualification.]

Aldebaran: [Qualification?]

Witch: [Indeed, the qualification to stand before her, it is a matter of possessing that. The reasons why I talk to you about various things, all coalesce around that one point. Did I answer your question?]

Stroking her own long white hair, the Witch inclined her head.

She had prefaced that she did not understand the hearts of people, but Aldebaran's questions were all precisely cleared up by her eloquence. It was extremely difficult to believe that she proclaimed herself to not understand people's hearts.

Perhaps it too was founded in the Witch's own logic, serving as an expression to make a show of her faults.

Witch: [I'm just mimicking. And, I don't think I'm particularly good at it either.]

Aldebaran: [————]

Witch: [After a certain amount of observation and verification, it becomes possible to systemize the flow of thoughts and actions to a certain degree. I am doing nothing more than adopting that from the people I have encountered from time to time. Whether it is often or not, I believe it is something that everyone can do.]

As expected, the Witch had accurately processed the reason for Aldebaran's silence.

And, if what she said was true, it was nothing more than a calculated result based on a vast array of patterns. However, if one began to say such things, then one could also question if free will even existed in anyone at all.

Aldebaran: [I don't think I'm especially complex, but on the other hand, I don't think absolutely everything is so simple that it can be covered by statistical data.]

Witch: [Did I hurt you? If so then excuse me. I am not denying your humanity. I am not so supreme of a living being that I could do such a thing, you know?]

Aldebaran: [————]

Witch: [We have gone a bit off topic. Shall we return to the main focus? Time here passes slower than it does in reality, but that is not to say it is infinite. Even if you use your Authority.]

It was likely not that it had become inconvenient for her. The Witch's demeanor was as if to say that she truly thought there would be no meaning in continuing, to which Aldebaran nodded "Yeah".

After all, even if it was a person he hated, and name that he hated, it was necessary for him to be here.

——For both Aldebaran and the Witch, that was where the meaning of their lives laid.

Witch: [Well then, with you lying on the ground there, you have now witnessed the effects of the four fundamental attributes. There are also the two attributes of Yin and Yang on top of that, but... let us exclude them from the candidates of things for you to learn.]

Aldebaran: [And why's that? You can't teach them well?]

Witch: [It also depends on the attitude of the one learning, but that is not why. The attributes of Yin and Yang have a conflicting relationship, so if you advance in one it will have an impact on your acquisition of the other one. And, the talent you possess for the Yin attribute, is planned to all be used for the acquisition and execution of the forbidden art you are to be taught.]

Aldebaran: [Don't make developmental plans for people all on your own...]

Witch: [After all, that sort of duty has been entrusted to me by those guys and my friends. So, what will you do?]

At the inconsiderate question from the Witch as she tilted her head, Aldebaran furrowed his brow.

Likely, he was being asked about the four attributes other than Yang and Yin—— about which of the magic attributes of Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind he wished to be professionally taught in; that is what it seemed like.

Aldebaran: [Which one, hmm...]

Until just a moment prior, in order to let Aldebaran experience the effects of those attributes, the Witch had fired off a bunch of extraordinary magic. She had probably fully intended on teaching Aldebaran at full strength with those methods, so as to allow him to narrow down his choice of magic.

In all honesty, those methods were a vivid display of how she did not have a human heart, but——,

Aldebaran: [——I'll take magic of the Earth attribute.]

Witch: [Hmm? Why did you think to want that, may I ask?]

Aldebaran: [Earth and stone and sand and whatnot, I thought that controlling those things would be the most versatile. Fire and wind are far too restrictive in the way you can use them. Water isn't too bad, but... I can't see myself mastering it. That's why earth magic will do fine. Plain yet crafty, the absolute best, isn't it?]

Witch: [————]

Having heard Aldebaran's choice and reasoning, the Witch fell silent. Closing a single eye amidst that silence, Aldebaran asked the Witch "What" in a stern voice.

Then, the Witch lightly shrugged her shoulder with a "Nothing",

Witch: [I was just admiring how your selection and reason are truly so much like Him. Whether you like it or not, you have inherited the systemized likeness of Him.]

Aldebaran: [—Hk.]

If she truly did not intend on irritating him, she must have been an expert of stepping on landmines.

Truly, flaring up with indignation at the statement that could only ever serve to put him in a foul mood, Aldebaran was seriously wavering as to whether he should attempt to lay his hands on the Witch, knowing full well he would lose.

Wavering, as he wavered, he suddenly thought of a way to take revenge.

Aldebaran: [—It is an honor, Teacher.]

Witch: [...What?]

As her cheek stiffened with a twitch, the Witch narrowed her black eyes at Aldebaran's words.

Seeing the Witch's reaction, Aldebaran wore a huge grin on his face and shrugged his shoulders,

Aldebaran: [After all, you've taught me all these things until now, and you want to teach me about magic from here on out. So then, isn't it only natural to call you Teacher with immense respect.]

Witch: [...I shall tell you this under the assumption that you do not know, but addressment of "Teacher" is something tied to exceedingly bitter memories for me. That is why...]

Aldebaran: [That's why, I'm calling you Teacher from now, Teacher.]

Witch: [—]

Called by it repeatedly, the Witch displayed a reaction of clear displeasure for the first time. Having accomplished that, Aldebaran moistened his lips in an attempt to double down.

But, that assault did not come to fruition. —The Witch's expression had clouded over. It was accompanied by a clear atmosphere of sorrow and pitifulness.

Aldebaran: [Ugh, ghhh...]

Witch: [Ah, no, excuse me. My thoughts experienced external turmoil from your heartless conduct. As I continue to go along with you hereafter, I am also resolved for pain, so——]

Aldebaran: [My bad! It was my fault! I'll apologize, so stop making that heart wrenching face!]

Even if that face meant his revenge had been a success, he did not feel good in the slightest. Rather, it seemed like he would start having bad dreams, so Aldebaran, who was supposed to be the one attacking, ended up hoisting a white flag.

Witch: [Oya, is that so? I guess you are quite reasonable.]

As Aldebaran declared defeat, the Witch instantly released her anguished expression, one that had been on the verge of tears, and spoke so in an indifferent manner.

Her unashamed fake tears—— she had not gotten to the point of actually crying, so they were not even fake tears, but having been deceived by it, Aldebaran began to tremble all over, and,

Aldebaran: [——You, this fucking bitch...!]

Witch: [What a horrible comment. Even though, I was merely just educated that if you are going to irritate others, you must have the resolve to do so. If you are going to go as far as to call me that, I would be more at ease if you would just call me Teacher, reluctant as I may be.]

Aldebaran: [Mh...]

Witch: [Of course, my impression that it is an unpleasant title will not change. Only, I am in a position to force many forms of discomfort upon you from here on. And hence, we ought to make a few concessions. Right?]

With a wink, the Witch had stood dominant until the very end, and Aldebaran knew it would be unproductive to try and argue against her.

To begin with, it was something that he was fully aware of. ——After all, ever since his birth, before they had formed this sort of relationship, not once had he managed to beat her in an argument.

Witch: [So then, about your choice... yes, I think it is a good one. You do not seem to have any talent for magic. There is no possibility except for an exceedingly mediocre one. In that case, by honing that mediocrity as much as possible, you can aim for the gaps in the armor of an opponent who has secured themselves in an iron helmet.]

Aldebaran: [If you're gonna put on airs, Teacher, at least praise me some more. This is only the first lesson.]

Witch: [You want me to flatter you with things that I have not even thought of? Well, I'm quite good at saying heartless things, but I suppose I do not wish to face you in such a way. The reason for that is... you know it even without me telling you, correct?]

Aldebaran: [That face won't work on me, you're so ill-natured.]

At the black eyes that stared up at him, Aldebaran stuck out his tongue and took a stance of denial. That instant, the Witch also stuck out her tongue as if she wanted to say "Too bad", and then raised a single finger.

And then——,

Witch: [Then, with your body... even if I say that, this is a spirit world and hence you have a spiritual body, but let us have you learn by getting hit by attacks. Either way, you will end up experiencing Death many times over from here on. Crushed, ground up, torn limb from limb, it would be good to prepare for the many ways you may lose your life.]

Aldebaran: [Oi! Is that really the right way to be going about things!? Are you sure you're not extremely angry!?!]

Witch: [Hahaha, I do not understand emotions, so I have never been angry.]

Aldebaran: [Filthy liar!!]

Right after he screamed that out loudly, the shape of the world slowly began to shift. ——Around the Witch with her finger raised, a square section began to rise out from the ground of the plain, and that cube-shaped thing floated up. That which was revolving around the Witch, akin to a beast baring its fangs, was an attack preparation.

Looking at that, as Aldebaran gulped down his saliva at the sense of danger, he simultaneously thought. ——If he had done the same thing, in what kind of ingenious way would he use it?

Witch: [That attitude, has resolve. ——You truly are Greed.]

Aldebaran: [Shut the hell up, you shitty Teacher.]

Verbally abusing the smiling Witch, he plunged into the lesson on which his life was staked.

All of it was in preparation for fulfilling the meaning for which Aldebaran had been born. ——In order to arrive at the forthcoming day he would surpass the stars, this was the start of laying the bricks that would reach the realm of a billion.

《End》