

Several months had passed since the 'Iron Giant' who had caught the Kingdom of Prairie in an unprecedented crisis was suppressed by 'Officer' Waffle, a resident of Porto Village in the countryside of the kingdom.

The Black Cats Gang, the origin of the turmoil, had been dismantled with each of the ringleaders expecting to receive severe punishment.

However, Alicia and the others—the leaders of the Black Cats Gang—having been deceived by the mastermind behind the scenes—the weapons merchant Fool—, them being personally deemed to be adequately remorseful, and another large factor resulted in there being room for extenuating circumstances to be considered, with community service work as a lesser form of punishment for them while on probation.

And that large factor was—

"I'm glad they were given probation, but I wonder if what I did was a good thing..."

It was through his own wishes that, even now, the hero who saved Prairie—Waffle—continued to be stationed in Porto Village.

Of course, anyone could see that his achievements in that case were worth a 2 or 3 rank promotion, but despite both the station and the capital city of Prairia prospering enough for him to be able to be promoted there, he declined with the words "I'm not really sure if I'd be okay with the inevitable fame,".

Instead of what was expected, Waffle made an appeal to the higher-ups of the Prairia police and royal palace.

"If you can accept listening to my selfishness, then I only have a single request... In addition to showing plenty of regret, those girls have said they would help repair the buildings that were destroyed... So, how about it?"

While there was room for the consideration of extenuating circumstances from the beginning, an appeal from Waffle, a hero, was a factor that couldn't be ignored.

As a result, the kittens of the Black Cats Gang were briefly entrusted to an orphanage, and afterwards, were able to start a life at homes that would guarantee their good behavior.

And the 3 lead sisters, Alicia, Stare, and Flare, were able to live in a house close to the police station in Porto Village, which also served as Waffle's house.

Although it was a condition that was suggested from the beginning of when they were dealt their probation, it was also a sympathetic arrangement from the king as well as the chief, who were aware of the circumstances between Waffle and the Pris sisters.

It wasn't a bad condition for Waffle and the 3 sisters, but it was an aspect of the timid young hero for his heart to be filled with anxiety when things went unusually well for him.

"I'm happy that everyone's so close to me, but what should I do about their probation? Maybe it would be better if I observed their situation... Hmm, they might've gotten more important responsibilities than I thought they would..."

Waffle turned his neck while servicing the Police Robo in his home garage.

"What responsibilities?"

Suddenly and without any warning, Alicia began speaking and revealed her face over Waffle's shoulder from behind him.

"Waah—! A-Alicia!?"

Caught off guard, Waffle panicked and a spanner slipped out of his hand, making a high-pitched noise resound inside the garage.

Alicia quickly covered her ears, but the relentlessly violent noise had already leapt into her ears.

"What're you being so noisy for, Waffle~"

"What are talking about, that should be my line... When did you get here?"

"Just now... I-I knocked, didn't I? Well, there wasn't a reply and the door was unlocked, so I thought it might've been nice to see how you were doing..."

Alicia gave a pout as she mumbled.

"Ah, sorry... I must not have noticed since I was tuning up my Robo, hahaha!"

He picked up the dropped spanner while giving a forced smile.

"If it's gonna take time to mess around with that, is it alright if I stay the other room over there?"

"Huh? Yeah, that's fine, but... Did something happen today?"

"No, I just thought we could talk a little... Maybe I could ask you something...?"

Seeming shy, Alicia mumbled further as she fidgeted.

"Really? ...Got it, I'll finish up as soon as possible."

Resuming his work, Waffle returned the parts of the Robo that he removed for its maintenance back to their original locations.

"Hmm... Well, I guess I didn't have to get all flustered like that... All right then—"

A few minutes later, Waffle, who had gotten the Robo working, came back to the room while wiping oil off of his grimy hands.

"Thanks for waiting, Alicia. What did you want to talk about?"

Alicia was looking over the photo album in the room, but when she heard Waffle's voice, she shut the album in surprise.

"No problem, ahaha... You know, I was surprised to find such a nostalgic picture."

"Oh, it's a photo from when you moved to Porto Village, isn't it?"

"Yeah, with my dad and two other people..."

Alicia's face was clouded.

Even if up to 10 years of time had passed, it seemed that there were still things she didn't want to remember.

She shook her head to shake away the sad memories that floated around in her mind and forcibly return to the topic on hand.

"No, that doesn't matter. There's something I'd like to ask you about today."

Alicia looked apprehensive with a strangely nervous face.

"O-Okay... What is it?"

Alicia's nervousness was being transmitted to Waffle as well, making his heart beat rapidly for whatever reason.

"Well... My both my sisters and the kittens are able to be relatively free thanks to your help, weren't they? There's something not right about that."

Hesitantly, she gave an embarrassed seeming laugh.

"But, all of the buildings you and the others destroyed when you were the Black Cats Gang have been repaired as promised. There aren't many people who are still mad at you and the others anymore."

Indeed, Alicia and the others put the utmost effort into cooperating with the hard work of restoring the Prairie Islands where the Iron Giant had been destroyed.

"Well... I guess it's fine if that's the case."

"Yeah, it's alright... But what did you want to ask me about?"

Alicia shook her head 'no'.

"Well, I... I think I want to get a proper job... Is it pointless to want that?"

Alicia looked up at Waffle and waited for his opinion with an inquisitive-seeming glance.

"It's not pointless! I'll help you out however I can."

Waffle nodded reassuringly.

"Really? You mean it!?"

Hoping to make sure of that, Alicia repeatedly asked for his confirmation.

"Yes, of course."

Waffle replied with a grin.

However, a question that bothered Waffle sprouted up, so he asked it just in case.

"By the way... What kind of job do you want?"

Mumbling, Alicia diverted her eyes from Waffle.

"...fficer."

Her voice was too quiet, so Waffle couldn't quite catch what she said.

"Sorry, what was it?"

As if resolving herself to make a decision, Alicia faced Waffle and responded powerfully.

"I wanna be a police officer!"

"Wha—!?"

Waffle tumbled out of his chair.

Not knowing whether she was angry or embarrassed, Alicia's now bright red face quivered.



A few days later, morning at the house in which Alicia and her two other sisters lived began with busyness.

"Stare! Where are my good clothes at!?"

"I don't know, Alicia. If it's been washed, it should be in the closet."

"Didn't you hear me, they're not there! ...Flare, my clothes! You didn't see them anywhere, did you?"

"Nnh—, I dunno~? I'm still so sleepy~"

"Flare, you have to wake up already."

"Ah—, Waffle's gonna be over soon!"

"Alicia... Are these clothes in the shower room not them?"

"That's it—! Now, did I bring a change of clothes with them!?"

With the echoing sound of the door being knocked on, Alicia froze.

"Big Sis, it sounds like Waffle's here~"

Without feeling an ounce of tension, Flare alerted Alicia.

"G-Got it! Stare, sorry but, hold off Waffle for me! Ah, and don't let him into the house! I haven't changed clothes yet!"

In front of the entrance to Alicia and her sisters' house, Waffle, dressed in a police uniform, stood firm while scratching the tip of his nose.

"Ahahaha... I can hear everything just from being out here."

With a creak, the small door opened and Stare came out from it.

"Sorry, Waffle. Alicia is still getting ready..."

She shrugged her shoulders apologetically.

"No, I'm alright with it, but... I might have to go without making a detour."

Waffle sighed weakly.

"Detour? But I thought I heard that you were going to take Alicia to see the people from the Prairia police headquarters today..."

Stare lightly tilted her head as she asked.

"Yeah, that's right, but Grandpa asked me to run an errand, so I thought I might've been able to stop by there before Alicia's report."

Sounds of noisy busyness still continued from the other side of the door.

"Well... Would you like me to go do Mr. Russel's errand instead?"

"Huh, are you okay with that?"

Stare smiled as if to say that it was no problem.

"Yes, I know where his house is located, so it's alright. So, what was the errand?"

"It's a delivery, but... it's for the wine he's always drinking."

"I've heard stories of how fond he really is of it. So, where is the wine?"

"Please wait a second, it's in the Police Robo's cockpit."

Waffle took the basket of Resaca wine out from the cockpit of the Police Robo.

"Sorry if it's a little heavy. Is it okay?"

"Yes, it's alright."

The sound of heavy footsteps came from behind the door.

The instant Stare distanced herself from the door, it vigorously came open.

"H-Hey, Waffle! Thanks for waiting, thanks for waiting♪"

Dressed in plain clothes that made her look a little more adult-like than usual, Alicia came staggering out.

"Morning, Alicia. It looks like we're running a little late, so we should get going soon... Huh?"

Standing behind Alicia was Flare, who had completely finished preparations and was ready to leave.

"Heheheh~ G'morning, Big Brother Waffle♪"

"Good morning, Flare. Are you also heading out?"

"Yeah, Big Sis Alicia's going to Prairia, isn't she? I'm gonna tag along, too~"

"Huh? But we're going to the police station. Are you going there, too?"

"Nope, Prairia Castle♪"

Waffle gave in to the carefree, smiling face of Flare.

"A-Alright. But you can't bother Mr. Cyan, okay?"

"Okay, that's fine by me♪"

Although he was slightly worried, Waffle began heading to Prairia while forcibly pushing his unease aside.



As soon as the two people who were reminiscent of raging storms left, the inside of the house had become quiet.

However, Stare did not mind this silence.

Usually, after Alicia and Flare would leave the house, there were many cases in which Stare would clear the entirety of the household chores.

And after going through the household chores, quietly reading by herself was also something Stare found enjoyment in.

Today, however, she had been asked to run an errand by Waffle.

"Well then, I should head to Mr. Russel's house soon..."

Taking the basket of wine that she received from Waffle, Stare left home.

"We've met a few times before, but I wonder if we've ever had a proper conversation..."

He devoted himself entirely to his research on ancient ruins, giving the impression that it was difficult to see much of his everyday life.

At first glance, he seemed to have a crusty-looking face, but upon thinking of when he gave a hearty laugh to Waffle, she recalled that he was an awfully spirited old man.

"That reminds me, I might not have properly apologized or thanked him yet..."

Taking that into consideration, she thought that this might be exactly the right opportunity to do so.

Relying on her memory while walking, she saw what she remembered Russel's house to look like.

Although it was a cozy little house, there was a large warehouse next to it, with machines used for excavation and storage for excavated articles.

"There's no doubt about it... It has to be here."

Stare confirmed that the handwriting on the postbox in front of the entrance door read 'Russel Ryebread' and knocked on the door gently.

"Mr. Russel, I have a delivery for you..."

However, she was not given a response.

"I wonder if he's out... Oh—"

As it was unlocked, the door came easily open when she twisted the door knob.

Though she thought about just leaving the wine in front of the door as one would expect, Stare decided to enter the house.

"I'm sorry to disturb you..."

Inside the house, mixed with the fragrance of the wine, she sensed a certain scent.

"This smell... Could it be books?"

Putting the basket of wine on a table in the middle of the room, Stare progressed further into back of the room.

"Ah, I thought so..."

At the back of the room, materials related to ancient ruins, as well as history books, research on excavation parts, and numerous small relics were all on display.

Stare picked up a book on Prairie's ancient ruins and opened up the pages.

"Could this book be related to the Iron Giant...?"

Packed with information she had never seen before, Stare was completely fascinated with the book.



"I wonder if there's many of these ruins in not just Prairie, but all throughout the world..."

"Correct, young lady. Interested in ancient ruins, are you?"

As Stare was too absorbed in the book, she hadn't noticed the owner of the house returning.

"Ah, Mr. Russel!? Um, I apologize for coming in without permission... And for reading your valuable book without permission..."

She hurriedly attempted to return the book to its shelf.

"No, no, I don't mind. You must be Stare. If you're interested in it, you should read more of what you're fond of."

"Huh!? ...Is that really all right?"

Unconsciously, Stare turned her eyes towards the treasure trove of hidden knowledge lined up on the bookshelf.

"Why yes, how about you come over and take a book any time you feel like it. And thank you for delivering the wine in Waffle's place! Gahaha!"

Russel quickly opened the cork of the wine Stare had just delivered and began tasting it.



"All right, Flare. We're going to the Prairia police headquarters. Please wait around here when you get back."

"And don't just wander around, you don't wanna get lost, do ya?"

"Okay, got it♪"

Waffle and Alicia decided to split up from Flare at the port where the capital city of Prairia's airship was docked.

With a quick pace, Waffle and Alicia headed toward the Prairia police station as planned.

Flare also quickly ran along the path to Prairia Castle.

There was no shortage of citizens walking down the road who became startled upon seeing a Felineko girl running along by herself.

This was because there weren't many Felineko in Prairia in the first place.

However, those who frequented this road appeared to be charmed by watching Flare's energetic figure run.

In other words, this meant that Flare had been coming to play at Prairia Castle quite frequently.

Sprinkling with charm, Flare arrived at the gates of Prairia Castle.

"Ehehehe♪ Hiya!"

"Oh! I see you're good spirits today as well, Miss Flare!"

The gatekeeper responded cheerfully.

Whilst waving her hand, Flare went through the gate.

Already, her popularity had granted her full admission on sight.

After that, as she passed by the various people who worked in the castle, such as the likes of guards, servants, and attendants, it did not take long for this exchange of bright greetings to become a natural scene at Prairia Castle.

Flare's innocent smile was also a technique that helped with it.

However, there was just a single person who didn't regard this scenery with fondness.

It was the captain of the Prairie Royal Palace Knights, Cyan Garland.

As Cyan approached his knight station to prepare for his patrol of the city, the metallic sound of a loud clattering and crash echoed within the station.

"W-What in the—!"

Cyan barged into the station in a hurry.

"Ah, found it~ Teehee♪"

With knight armor scattered throughout the station, Flare forced herself through the center of the armor.

Given that the armor was meant for adults, it was loose on Flare.

"Why, you— What are you doing in a place like this!?"

"Hmm, playin' knight. Ehehe~"

Flare raised a heavy-looking sword and imitated a salute.



"Hey! Knock it off!"

Cyan promptly approached Flare and snatched away the sword.

"This sword and armor is the soul of an honorable knight, granted by the king himself!"

"You can't just use it to play around!"

Shocked by Cyan's strongly intense attitude, Flare grew teary-eyed.

"Sniff... sorry."

Looking the suddenly meek Flare, Cyan also became dismayed.

"N-No, perhaps I went a little too far... However, this sword is not something for children to be brandishing. You could get injured if unskilled with it."

"This sword is so glistening and cool, though... But I understand, I'm sorry."

Looking at Flare, who usually did nothing but tease him, but rarely ever apologized so meekly, Cyan felt slightly curious.

"I see, then it's alright if you understand... Anyway, it's still too early for you to have a true sword. A wooden practice sword will do you just fine. If you want a sword earlier, you must first become a servant, train as an apprentice knight, and come to know what it truly means to hold a sword... Ah, but it's not like I'm saying you should go become a knight or anything."

"...Captain Cyan."

Another member of the order of knights nervously addressed Cyan.

"Hm? What is it?"

"That girl called Flare, did I see her exit the station just now...?"

"Wha...!? That girl~!"

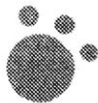
"Also, Captain Cyan..."

"What!?"

"It appears that Princes Terria has snuck out into town again..."

"..."

The knight felt as if they saw something akin to Cyan's life fade from his body.



After finishing the procedure at the police headquarters, Waffle and Alicia were on their way back.

"You did good, Alicia— Or should I say, policewoman in-training Alicia."

"S-Stop it... This feels embarrassing for some reason."

Her hopes realized, Alicia was dressed in the uniform of a female trainee police officer.

"You look professional, it's different than usual."

"...Different than usual?"

"Ah, no, I didn't mean it like that."

"That's correct! My superior never means any ill will!"

An abrupt voice came from their feet.

"You came here, Panta?"

"Of course! When I heard a rumor that this girl could be my junior, I came flying!"

"I-I see... Uh, I guess Alicia probably is your junior, isn't she...?"

"Huh~? I'm this tiny guy's junior~?"

"W-Well, since it's safe to say you're a police official as of today, you would be his junior, wouldn't you?"

She had a justified reaction, but Waffle had to remind her of the situation since she would just keep voicing her complaints if it wasn't more or less confirmed.

"I guess it can't be helped... I look forward to working with you as my superior from today on, Panta!"

Declaring those words made her feel semi-miserable.

"I-I'm so touched! Finally, my wish to be someone's superior!"

Saying that, Panta went off to get in contact everyone he was connected to as their junior with the communications device he carried on his back.

"Uh... Should we get going soon?"

"Yeah. We might run into trouble if we stay here any longer..."

"Oh? What kind of trouble?"

"T-Terria!"

In front of the police headquarters stood Princess Terria, who wore the clothes of an ordinary town girl so as to blend in, and an old man with the usual appearance of a butler.

"Princess Terria!? Why are you in a place like this..."

"When I heard that Sir Waffle was coming to Prairia today, I knew I couldn't greet you unless I got out of the castle."

"My apologies, Sir Waffle... I should have stopped her... Boo-hoo-hoo,"

The old man dropped his shoulders and apologized.

Alicia shouted at Terria so as to avoid making eye-contact with the old man.

"Terria! You haven't given up on Waffle at all!"

"Oh? And when did anybody say such a thing? Either way, must I never be allowed to want to stop and continue providing aid to Sir Waffle?"

"Grr... You've got an excuse for everything! You've got some real shameless habits for the princess of an entire country!"

"I am terribly sorry... My educating of her was nothing but unsatisfactory... Boo-hoo."

"There is no need to lament, dear butler, for aiding Sir Waffle is hardly anything I should feel ashamed of... Incidentally, what's with that look?"

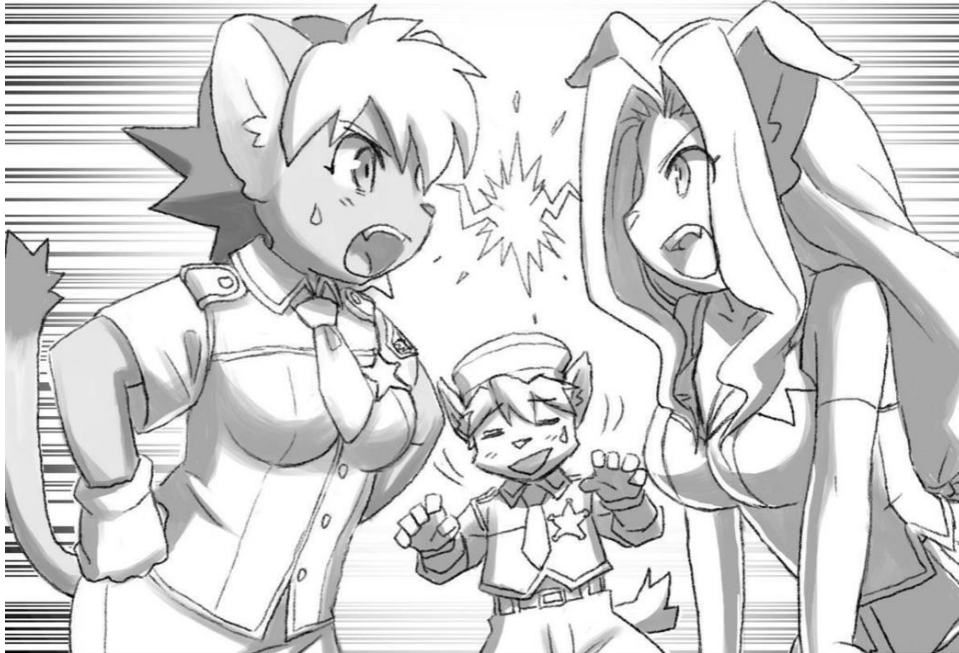
Terria took notice of Alicia's uniform.

"Heheh, starting today I'm officially a policewoman in-training!"

"Oh dear... Is this true? Sir Waffle!"

"Y-Yes... she's right."

Princess Terria puffed up her cheeks.



"How unfair!"

Princess Terria snapped a finger at Alicia.

"W-Why's it unfair?"

"You intend to spend all day with Sir Waffle as a policewoman in-training!"

"I-I don't got a clue what you're talkin' about~♪"

"Don't play dumb!"

"A-Alicia?"

With her eyes meeting Waffle's, the dismayed Alicia's face quickly turned bright red.

"No, I was telling the truth when I said I was thinking of getting a proper job!"

Then, she looked away and murmured in a voice that was too quiet to hear.

"...b-but if we did end up working together, well..."

"Huh?"

Right then, the sound of something heavy and metal crashing approached from the far distance.

"Hey wait, little girl!"

"Heheh, nah~!"

Waffle, Alicia, and Princess Terria all simultaneously raised their voices in surprise,

"Flare!?" "Cyan!?"

Taking notice of their voices, Flare and Cyan also displayed the same reaction.

"Big Sis Alicia, Big Brother Waffle!"

"P-Princess Terria! Are you unharmed!!?"

Princess Terria picked up her long skirt with both hands and began to run away in a hurry.

"Enough, Cyan! I am not a child!"

"Princess, wait~!"

"This is most improper, Princeeessss~..."

The old man also chased after Princess Terria, though it seemed slightly harsh on his aged body.

"Ms. Alicia! Leave this little contest to me! Sir Waffle, I bid you farewell♪"

Princess Terria displayed a surprisingly energetic run.

The old man, riding in Can's Robo, likely wouldn't be able to catch up.

"...Heheh, lucky♪"

Flare had went unnoticed, hiding herself behind Alicia.

"What's with that wooden sword, Flare?"

"It was given to me! I look like a knight with it, right!?"

She proudly showed it off to Waffle.

"R-Right... Haha..."

Waffle apologized to Cyan in his mind.

"It's about time. Why don't we head home, Waffle? Stare's must be waiting with some lunch she made."

"Achoo! Oh, is it time already?"

Though there was no way for Alicia to have known, Stare was still reading books at Russel's house.

"Alright... From tomorrow on, let's do our best, Alicia."

"Right! I'm looking forward to your guidance as my superior, Waffle!"

Appearing bashful while she gave a salute, it appeared Alicia would still need a considerable amount of time.

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