

The Summoner

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ACT ONE

It remains silent at first. When the curtain slowly rises, the chatting voices of two boys gradually become louder and break the silence. Before us is a small but tidy room. The two boys, Cronus and Descartes, are sitting on Cronus's bed (which is located near the window), talking excitedly about Cronus's eighteenth birthday tomorrow. Cronus, the boy with brown hair, has clear blue eyes and smiles gently. He is always required to be well-behaved by his parents, and remains polite even if he's in front of his best friend. Descartes, the boy with curly black hair, is a little shorter and thinner than Cronus. He seldom laughs, and only smiles before Cronus. His profound thoughts seem to be hidden behind his deep dark eyes. From the bedside clock, we can see that it's already 10 p.m. on Apr.30th, yet the boys are immersed into their conversation and not ready to sleep.

Cronus: It's already ten. You've got two hours left.

Descartes: *(worried)* I don't really think I could successfully summon one. After all, I was born in a fifth class family, and my parents were never able to summon their own monsters.

Cronus: *(trying to be optimistic)* Miracles might happen! Remember Shaun, the guy in Class 8? He was born in a fourth class family. His dad only summoned a C level monster, but he summoned an A level monster and joined the nobility of the second class! It is possible for people in a lower class family to summon a higher-level monster.

Descartes: But you could not find an example of a guy born in the fifth class summoning a monster, right?

Cronus: That's true... *(with a pause)* Anyway, I'll try my best to help you no matter what happens.

Descartes: Did you tell mom and dad my birth date?

Cronus: *(without hesitation)* No, never! I promised you I would never tell them.

Descartes: Yesterday I dreamed of my birth mother. I felt so safe and comfortable in her arms. But then she suddenly disappeared, and her blood splashed onto my face. I was so scared that I immediately woke up and couldn't fall asleep again.

Cronus: *(trying to change the sad topic)* Well, mom and dad told me you were quite young when they adopted you from the orphanage. How could you remember your birth date?

Descartes: Because that month was so special. King Napo published a stupid law that gave the second class the right to dispose slaves as they pleased in order to obtain loyalty from high classes, and my natural parents died in that month. That period of history has been concealed by the first class and forbidden to talk about, but the shrill screams from poor fifth class people were deep in my mind even if I was just a baby at that time. When I was in the orphanage, I begged an old worker to tell me why my parents died, and that's how I learned my birth date.

Cronus: *(shocked)* Oh gosh! I never read anything about that from history books. I think historians are deliberately avoiding any record of the April in 7700.

Descartes: Yes. Due to this fact, I can only affirm my birth month through my memory of the event, but I'll never be able to know my exact date of birth. So I've been waiting for this whole month to see if I could summon my monster when I become an adult.

Cronus: Come on, don't be so depressed. Let's guess what my summoned monster would look like. I wish it could be small-sized so it would not take up much space. After all, our room is not that huge. *(He laughs.)*

Descartes: *(smiling)* And I believe it'll be quite kind and childish, just like you!

Cronus: *(complaining)* I'm not childish! Do not use that word to describe me again.

Descartes: Don't be so serious. Just joking. What attributes and level do you think your summoned monster may have?

Cronus: Well, I don't really care about the level stuff, but I do wish my monster could have powerful skills.

Descartes: Everyone wants that, actually.

Cronus: Let's wait and see then!

Still in Cronus's room, it's so dark all over that we couldn't see the bedside clock to know the exact time. Only Cronus's soft snores could be heard. Suddenly, the air particles in the room begin to shine like dozens of glowworms. At the beginning, the light is weak and sparkling; then it gradually grows stronger and lights up the bedside clock whose hour hand is pointing at three. The glowing particles start to gather upon Cronus's cheek, and eventually condense into a green light ball.

Cronus: What is that...smell? Flower? *(He opens his eyes, and sees a little green thing in front with a pink flower on its head)*

Cronus: Oh my God! This is ...you are...you...Gosh! Are you my summon?

Cronus raises his watch on the lefthand towards the green monster, and the watch emits a light screen showing a pure green 94 on the middle top, which indicates his summon's general attribute, ability and level. Under the 94 at the center listed other four numbers, 94-93-95-95, which respectively represent the summon's strength-wisdom-magic power-stamina. Cronus slightly shivers, carefully holds up this little green monster, hurriedly runs to the adjacent room and knocks the door.

Cronus: *(trying to keep his voice low but still unable to hide his excitement)* Descartes!

Descartes!

Descartes: *(opening the door ajar, in a deep voice)* Cronus?

Cronus: Descartes! Look! My summon! *(delightfully gazing at his summon)* I used my detecting watch to scan this little cutie, and it is a second-level summon! The watch shows a pure green color so it must be the wood attribute! I want to name it "Arbormon". How do you think?

Descartes: That's a great name, Cronus.

Cronus: I don't know its exact skills yet. We gotta go out to the yard and find it out!
(grabbing Descartes's hand) And it's... Wait, Descartes. Your eyes are... red. Have you been crying?

Descartes: *(lowering his head)*...

Cronus: *(putting Arbormon on his shoulder and holding Descartes's two hands, calling him softly)* Descartes? *(Arbormon pats Descartes with its little paw to comfort him.)*

Descartes: Cronus... *(trembling)* I... I still haven't summoned my monster. I had been trying for the whole night, imagining, breathing deeply, meditating over and over again. But nothing worked! It's already May. I will never summon my own monster. And I will be sent to the fifth-class slums, working as a slave, and dying there like my parents! *I'm so hopeless...* My fate cannot be changed..... *(falling down to the ground and crying)*

Cronus: *(kneeling and hugging Descartes)* Descartes. Wait, Descartes! Listen to me. I remember our history teacher Mr. Madriz once mentioned a place called "The Black Market". He says that the black market sells everything, EVERYTHING! Anything you want could be found there, as long as you are able to pay the price. Maybe we should go there and see if there are some products that can help you.

Descartes: *(still sobbing, with a little hope in his voice)* Really? But... Is there anything that's helpful?

Cronus: *(determined)* We have to go there and see. This is your last chance.

Descartes: *(encouraged)* Okay... Do you know where The Black Market is?

Cronus: Mr. Madriz did mention a street. We can go there first.

ACT TWO

Cronus and Descartes are on their way to the Black Market. It is still early in the morning, and the sky is gradually getting brighter. They walk through a narrow lane, and stop in front of an old wooden board with the ambiguous characters "B.M." on it. There is no one else around them, and the extreme silence is becoming pressing. Behind the wooden board are stairs leading underground, and nothing could be seen

in the darkness surrounding the lower part of the stairs. Arbormon seems to be anxious about the mystery inside the dark and curls uneasily on Cronus's shoulder. The two boys exchange a deep look and walk downstairs into the unknown.

Cronus: Are you afraid?

Descartes: To be honest, a little. *(rubbing his hands)* Did you tell your parents about our sudden leave?

Cronus: *(confident)* Yeah, don't worry! I left them a note saying we had some urgent matters to deal with.

Descartes: Well, then you should think of a good reason to explain those "urgent matters"! *(He smiles.)*

Cronus: I would, definitely. *(patting Descartes's shoulders)*

Descartes: *(staring at the torches on the walls)* It's not as dark as I thought it would be.

Cronus: Yes, but... *(taking a look at Arbormon)* Arbormon is shivering. I think it's afraid of fire, maybe because of its wood attribute.

Descartes: Well, I don't even know if I could really have my summoned monster. *(He sighs.)* Attribute is not a big deal for me.

Cronus: Come on, don't be like this! We would find a solution. Trust me.

They walk across the underground passage and enter the Black Market through an arch. Street lights illuminate the cobblestone path, and a number of odd stores are aligned neatly along the main road. Unlike the silent atmosphere in the passage, the two boys can hear several people wearing cloaks bargaining with the shopkeepers, and some summoned monsters locked in the cages making noises. They wander on the path and look around with curiosity.

Cronus: This market is so weird. I've never seen some of the products. *(He frowns.)*

Descartes: *(nodding his head)* Can't agree more. *(He suddenly points at a store on the left.)* Hey, you see that store called "Food from Heaven"? I guess you could get some food for Arbormon.

Cronus: Well, I hope I've taken enough Summin. *(taking a look at his purse in the right pocket)* I think 50 Summin should be enough. Let's go!

They walk into the food store, and notice a tall and huge shelf behind the counter, which blocks out most of the light. An old man with a ragged white beard and hook nose greets them.

The Old Man: Morning. What would you like, young men?

Cronus: I want to buy some food for my summon.

The Old Man: *(staring at Arbormon)* It looks cute. What attribute does it have?

Cronus: Wood.

The Old Man: Oh, I like wood attribute! Your summon must have a good temper.

Cronus: Umm... I agree. Arbormon is indeed quite friendly, but why is it so shy? *(He peeks at Arbormon and it hides its face behind its little paws.)*

The Old Man: Then you should hope it can be brave in battle. It's not good for a summon to be shy in a combat. *(He moves to the shelf and climbs the ladder to open one box.)* Take this. I think your summon will like dry sandworm. *(He throws a bag down and Cronus catches it.)*

Cronus: Thanks! Let's see if my summon likes it. *(He takes one sandworm out and feeds Arbormon. It happily swallows the food.)* Well, it seems that it does like dry sandworm. How much is one bag?

The Old Man: *(climbing down)* 30 Summin, but I can offer you a 10 percent discount. I like your summon.

Cronus: Wow, that would be great! Thank you so much! *(handing the money to the old man)*

The Old Man: *(putting the money under the counter)* You're welcome. What else may I help you?

Descartes: Do you know where I can buy a summon?

The Old Man: Well, I don't advise you to buy one because all the summons have been recorded by the Summon Administration Center.

Descartes: *(disappointed)* But I... I can't summon my monster. What can I do?

The Old Man: Poor kid! You may go to the store called "Black Nightmare" at the end of this street. The shop keepers Jonny and Sonny are the most famous brothers in the Black Market because they can always get rare stuffs.

Descartes: OK, I got it. Thanks! Bye!

The Old Man: Good luck, young men!

Cronus and Descartes continue to walk on the main path, and notice many precious materials and ores on sale. The prices of those commodities are terribly high, but there are still some customers buying them. A sudden and mighty bang from the end of the street catches the two boys' attention. The sound is from the last store among the left line of shops, and the boys immediately rush towards the shop. They see the name of the store "Black Nightmare" from a broken sign on the ground. A magic book rapidly collides with the objects inside the shop and smashes its way into Descartes's arms.

Descartes: *(confused)* What is this book? Why did it fly to me?

Cronus: *(observing the book)* I don't know. There's only a golden hexagram on its cover. What does it mean?

Two men with similar appearance angrily come out of the store. They bend over to pick up the scattered pieces of their goods on the ground, and keep blaming the magic book.

The elder man: *(furious)* What the hell is that book! Who sent it to us?

The younger man: I also wanna know! I didn't even realize there was a book hidden in the commodities until I opened that bag! *(He points at a huge bag on the corner.)*

Cronus: *(gingerly)* Excuse me... Are you Jonny and Sonny?

The elder man: Yes. What's up? *(He looks up and warily stares at the two boys.)*

Descartes: Uh, is this your book? *(He tries to give the book to the elder man, but it*

sticks to his arms and does not move.)

The elder man: No, it's not, and keep it away from me!

The younger man: *(glaring at the elder man and then smiling at the boys)* Hey guys, I'm Sonny and that tall guy is my brother Jonny. He's got a bad temper, so please don't mind. As for that book, we don't know where it comes from, but it has brought us lots of trouble. *(He looks at the broken pieces of the goods and sighs.)*

Descartes: Well, but it's meek in my arms. I think it's not so bad. How much is it?

Jonny: We don't sell that terrible stuff. Just take it away!

Sonny: This book is not our commodity, so you can take it for free as you please.

Cronus: *(worried)* I feel there's something wrong with this book. Do you really want to buy it?

Descartes: *(hesitant)* I don't know... It just occurs to me that I need to take it. I just know...it is mine. It's my book.

Cronus: I see. *(He turns to the brothers and bows.)* Thank you so much for giving us this book!

Sonny: You're welcome.

Jonny: Can you please leave as soon as possible? I don't want to see that terrible thing again.

Sonny: Come on, Jonny. Don't be like this. They're our guests.

Descartes: It's OK. We have other work to do. Let's go, Cronus.

Cronus: Yeah, let's go! ...But where?

ACT THREE

Cronus and Descartes come to an open grass field outside the gate wall. A few mountains are miles away, and the Sun just rises over the summit of a mountain.

Cronus: HUU~ We're finally out of the dark place! I miss the sunshine!

Descartes: Yeah! *(taking a deep breath, and looking down to the book in his arms)*

Cronus: So, what is this magic book? You said you could feel something unusual about it?

Descartes: Yes, I feel like it was attracting me toward it, and when I touched it my heart generated resonance with it.

Cronus: *(surprised)* Wow! That sounds amazing. Then can you feel what it's telling you to do right now?

Descartes: Well, let's see...

Descartes closes his eyes, and holds the book on his hands. The golden hexagram on the book begins to shine, and the book slowly flies off Descartes's hands, floats down to the ground, and opens itself. A black hole appears on the ground under the book and unexpectedly swallows it. The black hole keeps spinning, and then slowly leaves the ground and suspends in midair. It suddenly opens a pair of eyes, which shocks the two boys.

Descartes: *(opening his eyes)* The book tells me that this is a summon. Its name is Metamormon.

Cronus: This black hole is a ... summon? *(Cronus raises his hands trying to touch it, but Arbormon on his shoulder begins to shiver and squeak sharply. Cronus takes back his hand and pats Arbormon to comfort it.)*

Descartes: Yes, and the book only tells me its name. No other information.

Cronus: Well, that's really magical. *(Cronus raises his watch on the left hand towards the black hole, and the watch emits a light screen showing a pure black 99 on the middle top, and 100-99-100-97 below, representing the summon's strength-wisdom-magic power- stamina.)* 99! Descrates! This is a summon with a 99 attribute! This is a mythical summon! You've got a mythical summon!

Descartes: This is unbelievable...Mythical summon...I have a mythical summon now! I won't be a slave anymore! *(Descartes hugs Cronus and bursts into tears, his voice trembling with excitement.)*

Cronus: Yeah Descartes, we can stay together now! Let's see what skills do our summons have!

Descartes: Sure! *(weeping the tears away)*

Cronus: Arbormon! *(pattting the little thing on his shoulder)* Time to show me your skill! *(Arbormon keeps shaking, and hides behind Cronus's shoulder, trying hard to avoid facing the black hole)* Arbormon! What's wrong? Are you okay? *(Cronus tries to pull Arbormon down to his hands, but Arbormon refuses to come out.)* It looks like Arbormon is afraid of something...

Descartes: It seems to be avoiding Metamormon?

Cronus: Yeah...

Cronus and Descartes simultaneously stare at the black hole. Then, the black hole begins to mutate, and in just a moment, it becomes a new creature that looks like a doll.

Cronus: What is that? Descartes, Is that one of the skills of your summon?

Transfiguration?

Descartes: *(unsure)* I...I don't know. But I guess so.

Arbormon now comes off Cronus's shoulder, and jumps down to the ground toward the doll creature, curiously looking at it.

Cronus: Arbormon! You are not afraid anymore! *(Cronus reaches out to Arbormon. When his left hand gets close to the doll, the watch again emits a light screen showing a purple 94.5 on the middle top, and 92-96-95-95 below.)* Descartes! Did you see?

The doll is a different kind of summon! Wait, I am confused. Is this still the summon you had, the Metamormon?

Descartes: Yes, I can still feel the resonance between it and myself. The summon is still Metamormon, but I don't know why it becomes another summon...

Cronus: Emmmm. Strange, so does that mean... your summon's skill is not merely transfiguration, but something more powerful? It can pretend to be another summon. That's a pretty special skill, ha?

Descartes: I guess so.

On the ground, Arbormon is trying to put out a paw toward the doll, but the doll hits the paw away indifferently..

Cronus: *(slowly lowering his body toward Arbormon)* Now it's time for you to show us something!

Arbormon squeaks softly, and the grass below it begins to grow in a visibly fast speed. The grass grows higher and suddenly, a cute pink flower blooms in front of Cronus's face.

Cronus: *(happily taking off the flower)* OMG! This is so cool! Arbormon, you can control the growth rate of plants! I love this skill! *(Cronus pats Arbormon's head)*
(Arbormon's green little face flashes, and on its head a branch suddenly bears a small red fruit.)

Descartes: This is a very useful skill. Good job, Arbormon!

Cronus: I am so happy today, Descartes. I summoned this cute little thing, and you obtained your summon, too. I have never been as happy as I am today in my whole life!

Descartes: Me too. I have never been so relieved since I had memories.

Cronus: A wonderful day! Now, it's time to go home, otherwise mom will be anxious. You have to help me think of a "urgent matter" on the way back!

Descartes: No way, think by yourself! *(smiling impishly)*

Cronus: Well, if you don't help me, mom will blame both of us...

Descartes: Fine, fine. Forget about what I just said. I would definitely help you, bro.

Cronus and Descartes leave the open grass field and decide to return home. On

their way back, Metamormon keeps peeping at Arbormon, which seems to be frightened by the new summon's strong and pressing aura and silently hides behind Cronus. The two boys are excitedly chatting about their summons without noticing the savage look of Metamormon's eyes. They suddenly hear someone calling them, and turn their head to find their classmate Daniel, a dumpy boy whose face is covered with freckles, waving eagerly at them.

Daniel: Hey Cronus! Hey Descartes!

Cronus: *(surprised)* Hey Daniel, what's up?

Daniel: Well, I summoned my little monster yesterday. Now I'm heading to the Summon Registration Center.

Cronus: Wow, congratulations!

Descartes: *(whispering in an extremely low voice)* It's so strange for him to greet us. I guess he's just trying to show off.

Daniel: *(proud)* My summon is at the third level! Its name is Thermomon. *(He lifts his summon up, which is entirely red from head to tail. A tiny ball of fire comes out of its mouth.)*

Descartes: *(scornful, still in a low voice)* See what I said? He must think our summons are at lower levels.

Cronus: *(replying to Descartes in a low voice)* Then he will be disappointed. *(smiling politely at Daniel)* Your summon is very nice, but actually I had expected it to be at a higher level.

Daniel: *(discontented)* Oh, sounds like your summons are better than mine?

Descartes: Well, yes, they're both at the second level.

Daniel: *(shocked)* How could it be? How could these two guys have summons at the second level?! *(He suddenly realizes the inappropriateness of his words and tries to hide his jealousy with a simper.)* Oh, congratulations. So lucky of your guys. *(He leaves in a hurry.)*

Descartes: Why do we have such a terrible guy as our classmate?

Cronus: I also wanna ask that question.

Descartes: But thanks to him, it suddenly occurs to me that the Summon Registration Center is not far from here. Why don't we go there first?

Cronus: *(nodding his head)* Sure. Then we could tell our parents we successfully summoned our monsters and immediately went to the registration center! Is that an acceptable excuse?

Descartes: Yeah, and we could say we were attracted by other people's summons so it was bit of a long stay.

Cronus: You're so smart, bro.

Descartes: Thanks. You too.

The two boys then travel to the Summon Registration Center. They are required to fill out a form about some basic information of their summons. In the "name" column, instead of writing "Metamormon", Descartes chooses to name his summon "Indramon". After registration, they come home, apologize to their parents about their abrupt leave and go to Cronus's room to prepare for school tomorrow.

Cronus: I noticed that you named your summon "Indramon".

Descartes: Yeah. The appearance of Indramon is not the same as that of Metamormon, so I think it's better to give it a new name.

Cronus: At least Indramon looks more like a summon. You know, Metamormon looks like a black hole. That's kind of... weird. *(He casts a sidelong glance at Indramon.)*

Descartes: But now it looks cute. *(hugging his summon)*

Cronus: What classes do we have tomorrow?

Descartes: Let me see... *(He looks at the class schedule in his notebook.)* We have History and Math in the morning, and in the afternoon we can attend Summon Training classes since we already have our summons.

Cronus: *(excited)* That's so cool! I want to learn more about Arbormon's skills.

Descartes: Then I think Summon Combat Course would be a good choice.

Cronus: I've never wanted to go to school this much.

Descartes: Me too.

Next day, in the afternoon, Cronus and Descartes follow 8 of their classmates who have also summoned their monsters to attend Summon Combat Course. Their teacher Mr. Willis takes them to the playground and divides them into 5 groups to practice their summons' combat techniques. Descartes's opponent is Astesia, the best student in their class. She has curly blonde hair and deep brown eyes, and looks extraordinarily charming in her bucket hat. Her summon has a fluffy body, big blue eyes and extremely long ears.

Cronus: *(bashful)* I like your hat.

Astesia: *(delightful)* Thanks! I love bucket hat.

Mr. Willis: *(saying loudly to everyone)* Hey guys, listen to me! In this class you'll get to know each other's summon better by having a 1v1 battle!

All the Students: *(excited)* Hooray!

Mr. Willis: Now, please follow my order. Before the battle, you're supposed to introduce your summon to your opponent.

Cronus: Umm... Shall I go first?

Astesia: No problem if you want to.

Cronus: OK! *(taking a deep breath)* This is my summon Arbormon. It's at the second level and has wood attribute. It's well-tempered and is very friendly to others.

Astesia: *(appreciative)* Sounds nice. Do you know its skills?

Cronus: Well, I just know one skill. Arbormon is too shy to show its skills.

Astesia: Wish you could learn about the other skill in the battle.

Cronus: Thanks. I hope so.

Astesia: Now it's my turn. My summon is called Jademon. It's also at the second level and has light attribute. It's always sleepy so I have to hold it all the time. *(She stares at the sleeping little summon in her arms and sighs.)*

Cronus: It looks so cute, especially for the long ears!

Astesia: Oh, thank you on behalf of it.

Mr. Willis: After introduction, you can begin the battle. Everyone please stand in

front of the nearest white line. The winning condition is to push the other summon out of the line behind your opponent. Remember not to let your summon hurt the other one! It's very important to learn to control your summon. If any student's summon gets injured, I'll stop that battle immediately.

Following Mr. Willis's instruction, Cronus and Astesia both move to the right place. Arbormon seems to be excited about the combat and keeps hopping around. In contrast, Jademon remains sleepy and is still unwilling to open its eyes when Astesia puts it on the ground.

Cronus: *(uneasily looking at Jademon)* Shall we wait for some time because your summon looks, you know, kind of uncomfortable.

Astesia: Well, never mind. Jademon is always ready.

Cronus: OK. Then... Arbormon, Symbiosis!

Arbormon puts its paws on the ground. Several tangled vines immediately break through the soil, grow larger and higher, and rapidly approach Jademon to entangle it.

Astesia: Jademon, Whirlwind! Chop off those vines!

Jademon's two long ears start rotating like a propeller at a strikingly fast rate. With the strong lift force, it flies high above the ground to make a dodge from the attack of the vines. Then, it creates several whirlwinds towards the vines, which ruthlessly break them off. A few whirlwinds unexpectedly change direction and advance on Arbormon.

Cronus: *(flustered)* Arbormon, watch out!!!

Arbormon jumps nimbly aside as soon as the whirlwinds approach it. However, it

is still blown back a few steps and stops just in front of the white line. It becomes angry and the leaves on the top of its head begin to glow brightly. Countless branches suddenly appear in midair and intertwine with each other to form a huge “hand” that tries to grasp Jademon.

Astesia: *(shocked)* So this is your summon’s second skill?!

Cronus: *(stunned)* I... I don’t know. I guess so.

Astesia: That looks really amazing. Jademon, could you rotate faster? Try to destruct that “hand”.

Hearing Astesia’s words, Jademon rotates at a faster rate to create whirlwinds in a much larger size. Nevertheless, the huge “hand” waves back and forth to disturb the formation of the whirlwinds. Jademon attempts several times but always fails since it has to evade the the “hand”. Finally it becomes exhausted and falls down to the ground.

Cronus: Good job, Arbormon! Now use those branches to push Jademon!

Astesia: Well, I have to admit that your summon is truly an eye-opener for me. Now it’s time to end this game. Jademon, sing the holy Requiem!

Jademon opens its big blue eyes and flutters its large ears at a certain frequency. Arbormon is suddenly shrouded by a holy bright light, and Cronus hears the beautiful and peaceful melody of the Requiem. Arbormon gradually becomes drowsy and uncontrollably falls asleep. Jamemon runs towards it and pushes it out of the white line with its ear.

Astesia: *(breathing a sigh of relief)* Sorry, I’m the winner.

Cronus: *(bewildered)* ...What just happened? What did Jademon do to Arbormon?

Astesia: The second skill of my summon is called Requiem, which could make other summons fall asleep. Don’t worry, this will not last long. Arbormon will wake up

soon.

Cronus: You're such a horrible opponent. No offense.

Astesia: Yeah, I agree with you. *(She smiles.)* But Arbormon's performance was excellent, actually better than Jademon's.

Cronus: Thanks. At least I could know both of its skills now. I'd like to call the new skill "Flourishing".

Astesia: I like that name. By the way, did you hear someone shouting?

Cronus: I don't know? I was listening carefully to the Requiem.

Cronus and Astesia notices the commotion on the other side of the playground and immediately rushes over. Indramon is having a battle against Thermomon. Thermomon is besieged by shadows with its shape, and seems to be confused by those physical shadows. It becomes agitated and starts to attack one shadow, which disappears in the air when the fireball touches it. Thermomon gradually gets tired and helplessly stares at the ineradicable shadows.

Daniel : *(anxious)* Thermomon, stop attacking those shadows! Attack Indramon!

Descartes: *(excited)* Nice work, Indramon! Time to finish this game!

Indramon begins to roar loudly, and the shadows all fly into Thermomon's mouth. Thermomon's eyes become inane, and it madly scratches its body, with blood consistently dripping down from the wounds. Eventually it feebly falls down to the ground. Indramon unhurriedly walks towards it and kicks it out of the white line.

Cronus: *(astonished)* What a powerful and terrifying skill...

Daniel: *(crying)* No!!! How could you... How could you treat my summon like that?
(He runs to Thermomon and uses his coat to cover its body.)

Descartes: *(indifferent)* Because your summon is weak.

Mr. Willis: *(noticing the commotion and coming over)* What happened? *(He looks at Thermomon and gets shocked.)* Oh God! Take that summon to the school infirmary,

now! *(He asks two students around him to take Thermomon away.)*

Daniel: *(indignant)* Sir, Descartes completely violated the rules of our combat! He should be punished!

Descartes: *(scornful)* Your summon chose to attack itself. Is this my fault?

Daniel: How... How can you say so...?

Mr. Willis: *(serious)* Both of you come to my office after the class.

Cronus tries to call Descartes, but he ignores him and follows Mr. Willis to his office. Cronus wants to chase him, but he suddenly observes that Indramon's tail becomes red, which looks similar to Thermomon's tail. Indramon detects Cronus's suspicious gaze and changes the color of its tail to dark at once.

Cronus: *(mumbling)* Indramon is too dangerous. It will be disastrous if it appears to be the summon we're already familiar with. And why is it so aggressive like a monster experienced in battles? I have to tell Descartes about this.

ACT FOUR

Cronus and Arbormon come to the street of the Black Market again. The street is still silent like the last time they came, but now Cronus feels that the silence makes the whole street gloomier and darker.

Cronus: Arbormon, I actually do understand why Descartes was outraged about my suggestion to destroy Metamormon, but... Metamormon makes me feel so disturbed, so I still cannot let it go. Let's go to the Black Market where we found the magic book and see if we could find anything else about Metamormon there.

Arbormon nods strongly in agreement with its master, and the two little leaves on its head flap up and down with the movements of its small round head. Cronus pats on Arbormon's head and walks toward "Black Nightmare".. Outside of the shop door,

an old man wearing a shabby black cloak is sitting on the ground with a bowl in front of him. When Cronus walks past him, a low grunting sound comes from the old man's stomachache. Cronus hears the sound and stops. He takes out a string of coins and puts it in the old man's bowl.

Cronus: *(smiling kindly)* You must be hungry, sir. Please get something good and warm for yourself with the money. *(He then walks into the shop.)*

Sonny: *(greeting the guests with a polite smile)* Welcome to Black Nightmare. What may I help you today?

Cronus: Hi. Do you remember that my friend and I got a black book from your store? Could you please tell me more about that book?

Jonny: *(coming out)* Oh, I remember that troublesome book. But just as we have told you that day, it was not ours. It just appeared in the storage room that morning before you two came, and it knocked down our shelves, making the whole shop in a mess... It's definitely not a good thing.

Cronus: Yeah, you are right... Actually, we summoned something out of it. Have you ever heard of a monster called Metamormon?

Jonny: No.

Sonny: Me neither. Sorry, if you came here for the book, we really can't help you, but would you like a can of sandworm? *(taking down a can from a shelf and hands it to Cronus)*

Cronus: Uhh... sure. *(Cronus pays for the sandworm can and steps out of the shop.)*

Old Man: Young man, are you asking about Metamormon?

Cronus: *(surprised)* Yes, sir! Do you know anything about it?

Old Man: Yes, that's a legend my old grandpa told me many years ago.

Cronus: *(curious)* Could you please tell me more about it?

Old Man: I remember my grandpa told me that he had been the valet of a first level summoner. Before our nation was built, there was once an ancient fierce monster fostered in the ancient forest. It destroyed the civilization and swallowed many innocent lives including both humans and monsters. The only four first-level

summoners had to team up to defend against it. That great yet terrible monster was named Metamormon. Eventually, the monster was sealed at the cost of three first level summons' lives, one of which was my grandpa's master's summon.

Cronus: Yeah, I have read this part of history from the national library record.

Old Man: Yes, but the national library did not record down where the monster Metamormon was sealed. Only the four summoners and a few of their close relatives and friends knew that the monster was not sealed in the forest but in a book instead. The last first level summoner, who was the founder of the nation and the ancestor of the current royal family, brought the book back because even though the monster could not break the seal by itself, a summoner could break the seal from outside by making a contract with the monster.

Cronus: (*murmuring, with his eyes wide open*) OMG, what had we done...

Old Man: (*He overlooks Cronus's reaction and keeps talking.*) They were afraid that the monster might come out again, so they hid the book up. After the last first level summoner built this nation, the responsibility to guard the book was left to the royal family, but after a few years, the book disappeared. The royal family and the three former first level summoners secretly searched throughout the whole nation but couldn't find it. Daring to create terror among the people, the royal family did not make this incident open to the public but waited anxiously to hear about the book or the monster. However, no one had seen the book or the monster again ever since. Generation after generation, even the royal family almost forgot about the existence of the book. I guess right now in the nation, the only person who knows this ancient legend is me, a poor old guy.

Cronus: (*shivering*) Then... sir, do you know anything specific about the book? If it is opened, what will happen?

Old Man: (*sinking in thoughts*) Well... yes, I remember my grandpa told me a little about the seal. The seal can only be broken when the monster inside makes a contract with a summoner. The contract is very special. Usually when summoners summon their monsters, they are separated. Both the summoner and the monster need to practice together to strengthen themselves, yet the death or injury of one would not

affect the other. However, this contract connects the lives of the monster and the summoner. If one grows stronger, the other grows as well. But if one side dies, the contract breaks and the other side will be engulfed. That is to say, if the monster dies, the summoner would die too, and vice versa. It's an evil contract.

Cronus: *(muttering)* It truly is. Thank you so much, sir. *(bowing deeply)* You really helped me a lot.

Old Man: You're welcome. You are a nice young man. Wish you good luck.

Cronus: Thank you. *(turning to Arbormon)* Come on, we have to find Descartes now.

Cronus leaves the market under the view of a black hole hiding in an aisle opposite to Black Nightmare. It quietly stands in the aisle, watching every move of Cronus and Arbormon. The space surrounding it seems distorted. Suddenly, it's attracted by a sound from the other end of the street.

Daniel: *(furious)* F**k! How dare him! How dare that little bastard insult me and my Thermomon like that! I am sure that little bastard must have used some trick, something to stimulate his monster's power. I will buy that tool too from the Black Market, and in the next combat class Thermomon will beat Indramon harshly! *(He ignores the old man in front of Black Nightmare and steps into the shop.)*

Sonny: Welcome to Black Nightmare! Would you like a can of high quality oil for your fire attribute summon? *(taking down a can from a shelf)*

Thermomon is delighted when it hears about the oil and eagerly barks at Daniel to express its desire.

Daniel: *(impatient)* Shut up! No treat for you since you lost the battle so shamefully! *(turning to Sonny)* No, I don't want that. I want something to stimulate my summon's power, even temporarily is fine.

Thermomon disappointedly lowers its head. Sonny puts the can back on the shelf.

Jonny: Yes, I remember we have that kind of thing, but it will be expensive.

Daniel: It's okay. I can pay for it no matter how much it costs.

Jonny: Okay, please wait. I will find it in the storage room.

Jonny and Sonny enter the storage room, and at the same time, the oil can unexpectedly drops from the shelf, rolling past Thermomon toward the front door of the shop. Thermomon quickly follows the can, rushing out of the shop and eventually straying into a narrow aisle across the street, which was ignored by Daniel who was eagerly waiting for Jonny and Sonny. Soon, they come out with a little red bottle and hand it to Daniel.

Daniel: Yes! With this, I can wipe out my shame! Thermomon! *(He calls his summon loudly, but there's no response.)* Thermomon? Where are you?

Daniel puts down the red bottle and runs out of the shop. He looks around but cannot see his monster's trace. Then he notices a little red tail in the shade of a dark aisle.

Daniel: Oh, Thermomon, I see you! Don't you ever get tired of running about?

Daniel walks into the aisle, but what is waiting him is only a pool of red blood on the ground. The shocking scratches on the walls indicate the trace of a fierce fight. In the corner of the aisle, a little green leaf is lying on the ground.

Back to Cronus's home, as soon as Cronus walks into Descartes's room, the latter shouts at him angrily.

Descartes: Where have you been? Why did you take Indramon away?

Cronus: *(confused)* Indramon? I did not take it away at all! What are you talking about?

Descartes: You are lying! Indramon has never left my side since it was summoned, but just after you left in the morning, it disappeared too! What did you do to it?

Descartes is so exasperated that he starts to roar and grasps Cronus's collar. His voice is so wrathful that it sounds like he is going to beat Cronus up in the next second. Arbormon jumps down from Cronus's shoulder and pushes Descartes away with Symbiosis.. Then, a dark shadow flashes outside the door. It is too quick and too sudden that Arbormon is hit to the ground before realizing what's happening. Indramon soon jumps upon Arbormon's head and bites its leaves. Both Cronus and Descartes are astonished by the series of actions, and they quickly catch their summons to separate them, but one leaf on Arbormon's head is already bitten off by Indramon. Arbormon makes a painful cry.

Descartes: OMG Indramon, where have you been? *(staring at Indramon, and then awkwardly looking at Cronus)* Emmm, sorry I wronged you, and I am also sorry for hurting Arbormon. Indramon attacked it because it was trying to protect me.

Cronus: ...I understand. Arbormon was also trying to protect me by pushing you away. Descartes... *(staring at Indramon)* I have something to tell you right now. Could we talk privately?

Descartes: If it's about Indramon, I don't want to talk about it right now. Cronus, please go back to your own room. I am tired and I want to rest now.

Cronus: But Descartes! *(He watches his best friend turning around, leaving him the back of his head.)* Okay, I will talk to you later. Have a good rest. *(He reluctantly goes to his room)*

At the same time, in the aisle, Daniel is so stunned by the blood and scratches that he bursts into tears and starts to scream. Meanwhile, a tall man in black comes out of a store nearby and notices the noise. He walks directly into the aisle and carefully

looks over the traces.

The Man: *(mumbling)* Poor little summon. It must have been painful.

Daniel: *(skeptical)* Who on earth are you?

The Man: *(with a charming smile)* Well, a kind guy who thinks you are poor and wanna help you.

Daniel: *(indifferent)* I don't need a stranger's help. Leave me alone.

The Man: Come on, boy. Don't be like this. I'm Samuel, a private detective. This is my summon, Plutmon. *(He points at a large gray summon following him, which has six long legs and a huge nose.)*

Daniel: Wait, you're a detective? Then you must help me.

Samuel: Oh, just a few minutes ago, I remember someone said "Leave me alone".

Daniel: Forget it. I'm not in the mood for jokes.

Samuel: Fine. *(He shrugs his shoulders and his tone suddenly becomes serious.)* So, tell me, young man, what happened here?

Daniel: I... my name is Daniel. My summon and I were in the opposite store about 10 minutes ago. After I got the stuff I needed, I couldn't find my summon anywhere. Then I noticed a red tail in this aisle, so I rushed here at once, only to find a pool of blood.

Samuel: OK, Daniel. I got it. Umm... So there was nobody else here, right?

Daniel: I think so.

Samuel: And look at that leaf. *(His eyes are fixed on the leaf in the blood pool.)* Do you know its owner?

Daniel: That's hard to say. So many wood attribute summons have leaves.

Samuel: *(squatting down to observe the leaf)* This leaf did not fall off naturally. Its edge is ragged, which means it was bitten off.

Daniel: Then the summon whose leaf is bitten off should be the murderer.

Samuel: I guess so. Plutmon, could you please tell me the basic info of that wood attribute summon?

Plutmon carefully smells the leaf for some time. Then it raises its head, and a few laser beams are fired out of its eyes, forming the shapes of 3 words: second-level, A, small-sized.

Daniel: *(attracted by the laser)* What a cool skill!

Samuel: *(proud)* Yeah, a definitely useful skill for investigation.

Daniel: What should we do next?

Samuel: Go to the store you were at and have a “nice” chat.

Samuel leaves the aisle, walking past the street toward Black Nightmare. The old man is still sitting there, and happily greets Samuel as if they are quite familiar with each other. Samuel warmly smiles at the old man.

Samuel: Hey sir! Find anything new?

Old Man: No, nothing. But an interesting guy just came.

Samuel: You mean this boy? *(He looks at Daniel.)*

Old Man: Er, no. Another boy came before him and asked me about what we’ve been looking for.

Samuel: *(surprised)* Oh, really?

Daniel: Wait. You know each other?

Samuel: Sure! He’s my teacher. We all call him Mr.Hawkeye.

Daniel: Oh, sorry Mr.Hawkeye. I thought you were just a beggar.

Mr.Hawkeye: *(laughing)* Isn’t my disguise successful, Samuel?

Samuel: Of course, sir.

Daniel: Do you still remember the appearance of the guy coming before me?

Mr.Hawkeye: Sure. He’s got brown hair and blue eyes, and a bit taller and thinner than you.

Daniel: *(deep in thought)* What about his summon?

Mr.Hawkeye: I’m afraid I didn’t pay much attention to it. Maybe you could ask the shopkeepers.

Daniel: OK. Thanks anyway.

Samuel: Sorry Daniel. I've got something important to ask Mr.Hawkeye. You may go into the store first.

Daniel: Sure. *(He enters Black Nightmare.)*

Samuel: *(smiling at Mr.Hawkeye)* Now, sir, please tell me more about that boy. What exactly did he ask you?

Mr.Hawkeye: He knows the book. The magic book we're looking for.

Samuel: *(frowning)* So he also knows Metamormon?

Mr.Hawkeye: Yes, and I guess the seal of the book is already broken. But I don't think that young man's summon is that terrible monster. He's very kind and friendly, and Metamormon will not make a contract with this kind of person.

Samuel: But at least we know he must be the key to find Metamormon.

Mr.Hawkeye: *(nodding his head)* Yes, you're right.

Samuel: When King Napo required us to find the magic book, I was totally surprised since I thought the book had disappeared years ago.

Mr.Hawkeye: Well, the fact is: the book still exists and we might have to say "Hi" to the most ferocious summon in history.

Samuel: That sucks. Really. *(He sighs.)*

Daniel: *(rushing out of the store)* Samuel! I know that guy! He's my classmate. His name is Cronus!

Samuel: Uh-huh. Nice job. Tell me more.

Daniel: When I heard Mr.Hawkeye's description of him, I started to doubt if he was my classmate. Then the shopkeepers told me he bought a can of sandworm for his summon. I've seen Cronus feeding his summon with sandworm, so it must be him!

Samuel: *(taking out his notebook and making notes of Daniel's words)* OK, did they tell you what the summon looked like?

Daniel: Wood attribute, small and cute, with two leaves on its head.

Samuel: I see. Now it's time to visit your classmate.

Daniel calls the principal of his school, and Samuel asks for Cronus's home

address. They then get on Plutmon's back, and it rapidly runs to the destination.

In Cronus's house, after comforting Arbormon, Cronus decides to warn Descartes about Indramon once more. He stands in front of the door of Descartes's room, hesitates for a moment, and knocks on it.

Cronus: *(guilty)* Descartes, I'm sorry for what I said yesterday. Could you please forgive me...?

Descartes: *(He sighs and opens the door.)* What do you want, Cronus? Why can't we just pretend we know nothing and live a normal life?

Cronus: I can't answer your questions here. Please come to my room.

Descartes: OK. You'd better explain your thoughts clearly to me. *(following Cronus to his room)*

Cronus: *(carefully looking around to make sure Indramon is absent)* Descartes, how important is Indramon for you?

Descartes: Indramon is as important as my life. Without it, I'll drop to the fifth class, living as a slave, and having a miserable death just like my parents.

Cronus: ...I understand. Now I'll answer your questions. First, admittedly, I want Indramon to disappear. It's much more dangerous than we previously thought. You have made an evil contract with it by breaking the seal, and we can't afford the cost. Second, we can't pretend we know nothing. Indramon appeared to be so fierce and cruel in the battle with Thermomon, and I actually noticed that it could change its tail to be the same as that of Thermomon. What's worse, it even attacked Arbormon and bit its leaves! Have you ever thought about what might happen if Indramon pretends to be another summon and hurts or even kills other summons? We are not able to live a normal life from the moment you summoned Metamormon.

Descartes: So now you are speaking for Daniel's summon? And your own summon?

Cronus: *(anxious)* No, Descartes! Please don't misinterpret my words. I'm worried about you!

Descartes: *(sneering)* Worried about me? You want my summon to disappear even if you know your best friend will be sent to the slave camp. So "nice" of you to think so.

Cronus: *(a little angry)* I'm still considering how to figure out this problem. I really want to help you, but if you continue to hold such a terrible attitude, it will be impossible for us to communicate.

Descartes: How did you know about the evil contract? What's it about?

Cronus: I... I'm afraid I can't tell you. *(He becomes speechless.)*

Descartes: OK. Let me tell you why I feel so disappointed. You went out alone twice without even telling me in advance. You've never done such things before. Then you got some really bad information about my summon and insisted on killing it. Everything you're talking about is based on mere prediction, and you're forcing me to agree with your ideas. Cronus, don't you feel you're too selfish?

Cronus: ...I... *(He lowers his head.)*

Descartes: Admit it. You envy me. You think my summon is better than yours, so you want it to disappear. After all, how could a poor boy born in a fifth class family having a stronger summon than you do? Am I right?

Suddenly, Cronus hears someone knocking on the front door of his house. With the desire to end the unpleasant conversation, he immediately leaves his room and rushes downstairs to answer the door. Descartes goes behind him.

Samuel: *(knocking on the door)* Hey Mr.Cronus. Here's a delivery for you!

Daniel: *(in a low voice)* Why did you lie...?

Samuel: *(also in a low voice)* If I don't, he won't open the door.

Cronus: *(cautiously opening the door)* I don't remember I've ordered anything...

Samuel: *(breaking into the house and showing his credential)* I am royal detective Samuel Huntington. Please cooperate with my investigation, Mr.Cronus.

Cronus: *(astounded)* Aren't you a deliveryman...?

Samuel: Of course not. *(trying hard to hold back his laughter)* Where's your summon, sir?

Daniel: It's there! You f*king murderer! *(He angrily points at Arbormon, which is happily eating a sandworm.)*

Cronus: Er, I think you misunderstand something. Arbormon is always staying with me. How could it be a murderer?

Samuel: Oh, really? where have you been today?

Cronus: I... Today there's no school so I stayed at home all day.

Daniel: *(indignant)* YOU LIAR!

Samuel: Calm down, Daniel.

Daniel: His summon killed my summon in the Black Market! How could I calm down?!

Cronus: *(confused)* Wait... What? I don't know what you're talking about.

Descartes: *(unexpectedly joining their conversation)* Cronus is lying. He was not at home for the whole afternoon.

Cronus: *(totally shocked, with his eyes full of tears)* Descartes, why are you doing this? Why are you doing this to your best friend?

Descartes: *(avoiding his eyes)* To protect my summon and myself.

Cronus: Fine. So you all believe my summon is the murderer. What's the evidence?

Samuel: Daniel's summon was found to be killed in an aisle in the Black Market, and there was a leaf at the crime scene. We think this leaf belongs to your summon.

Hearing this, Arbormon stops eating and angrily glares at Samuel. Samuel notices the lack of one leaf on its head and takes out a tranquilizer gun to shoot it. Cronus rushes to him to stop his action, but it is too late. Arbormon immediately falls asleep on the ground. Samuel then twists Cronus's arms behind his back and clips a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

Samuel: You're under arrest, Mr.Cronus, for murdering an innocent summon.

ACT FIVE

Cronus sits in an interrogation room with a pair of handcuffs on his hands and white light illuminating his face. Two people open the door and walk in. Cronus looks

up and glares at them.

Cronus: My summon did not murder anyone! It's been wronged.

Mr. Hawkeye: Boy, I believe you are a good child, but you probably have been deceived by your summon.

Cronus: (*surprised*) Sir, why are you here? You are a royal detective? Then please trust me! Arbormon is also a good summon. There must be some misunderstanding!

Samuel: There is NO misunderstanding. I will tell you the evidence. This afternoon you were seen in the Black Market and entered Black Nightmare to buy something. Soon after you left the shop, Daniel and his summon came there too. While Daniel was shopping, his summon was enticed to an aisle opposite to the shop. Eventually, in that aisle we only found scratches on the walls, Thermomon's blood, and one of the two leaves that was once on your summon's head.

Cronus: The leaf...Arbormon's leaf was bitten off by Indramon in my house after I came back from the Black Market! And it is impossible for Arbormon to make a whole summon disappear...

Samuel: (*angry*) Stop lying! Do you think we royal detectives will believe your poor excuse? I arrived at your house not long after you left the Black Market, and just in that short period of time, that summon suddenly went mad and bit your summon? What a ridiculous coincidence!

Cronus: I wasn't lying! Indramon really...

Mr. Hawkeye: Listen boy. True, a normal summon cannot make another summon disappear, but Metamormon can use its skill to swallow a summon.

Cronus: (*muttering*) Metamormon...

Mr. Hawkeye: When Metamormon is in a feeble state, it has one way to quickly regain power – to swallow other summons. The higher the summon's level is, the more power it gains. It seems that you don't know your summon is Metamormon, because Metamormon can transform to another summon and could hardly be detected.

Cronus: (*anxious*) I don't know what you are talking about. My Arbormon is not that Metamormon thing!

Mr. Hawkeye: You know. You asked me about Metamormon in the Black Market. It means that Metamormon has been around you, so you started investigating its information. If your summon is not Metamormon, then tell me, who is?

Cronus: *(lowering his head and staring at his hands)*...What will you do to Metamormon when you find it?

Mr. Hawkeye: To tell you the truth, Metamormon is too dangerous, so we must destroy it for the safety of the nation.

Cronus: Destroy it... *(Mr. Hawkeye's and Descartes's words resound in Cronus's mind: "If the monster dies, the summoner would die too." "Indramon is as important as my life.")* No, I don't know what Metamormon is. I just read it from a history book so I became curious. My summon is not Metamormon, and nothing around me is. *(His voice is determined.)*

Mr. Hawkeye: ...Fine. Even though we don't have enough evidence to put your summon to death right now, if you have nothing else to say, your summon is still accused for murdering Thermormon and will be punished with cruel sentence.

Cronus: No! No! Arbormon is innocent! Please don't do that!

Mr. Hawkeye: *(with a serious tone)* Then consider carefully about what you can tell us if you want to save your summon from torment! We will come back tomorrow, and hopefully you will have made the right decision by then and tell us what you know.

Mr. Hawkeye and Samuel leave the interrogation room. A tear drops down from Cronus's left eye, and he puts down his head and buries his face into his arms.

Cronus and Arbormon are imprisoned in a small room in an appalling condition. There is a musty smell in the air, and the oppressive atmosphere makes Cronus feel extremely uncomfortable. Arbormon has just recovered from the effect of tranquilizer and weakly lies on the ground. A weary-looking man with a stubbly beard in the nearby room curiously looks at Cronus and his summon.

The Man: The cops are crazy. I can't believe they've caught such a young boy.

Cronus: *(with a bitter smile)* And actually I'm innocent. They just don't trust me.

The Man: *(laughing)* Nobody here is totally innocent, boy! Sometimes it's just so hard to fairly judge a case.

Cronus: *(looking around)* Is there any way to get out of here? I truly have some urgent stuff to deal with.

The Man: Well, the guard having the key to the door comes to this zone every three hours, but I don't think you could get the key.

Cronus: Why? My summon may use its skills to get it.

The Man: Did your little summon have an injection of tranquilizer?

Cronus: I'm afraid yes.

The Man: There's an inhibitor in that tranquilizer. Your summon will be prevented from using its skills.

Cronus: What...? *(staring at Arbormon)* Arbormon, are you able to use your skills?

Arbormon goes into convulsions and after a while, it vomits some green liquid with a pungent smell, which soon evaporates. Then it becomes energetic again, and creates a beautiful flower in front of Cronus.

The Man: *(shocked)* I can't believe my eyes! Your summon just removes the inhibitor out of its body!

Cronus: *(excited)* That means... Arbormon could use its skills now!

The Man: That's so miraculous. No other summon could do this, I guess.

Cronus: Where's your summon, sir?

The Man: *(He suddenly falls into silence. After a few seconds, he takes a deep breath and begins to talk with a sorrowful tone.)* It's killed.

Cronus: ... I'm sorry.

The Man: It's fine. Your summon reminds me of my summon, actually. My little one is also so cute and dogged.

Cronus: Would you mind if I ask why it's killed?

The Man: Umm... I was born in a poor fifth class family and did not have the ability

to summon a monster, so I was sent to be a slave in a second class family at an early age. One day, when I was on my way to buy some food for my master, I met a homeless summon covered in bumps and bruises. It lost its master, so I secretly adopted it in the basement of my master's house. I truly had a great time with my little summon. It was my only solace in the tough life of being a slave. Unfortunately, one day, when my master was cruelly whipping me for a mistake I made, I felt I was dying and began to cry for help. My kind summon heard my painful voice and came out of the basement to save me. It accidentally killed my master with its powerful skills, and both of us were arrested. The court finally decided to put my summon to death for killing a human. I was imprisoned for life because I privately raised a summon that didn't belong to me.

Cronus: *(wrathful)* That's so unfair!!! Your summon just wanted to protect you!

The Man: *(with tears in his eyes)* I miss it so much... It's such a lovely and brave summon.

Cronus: What's your name, sir?

The Man: Everyone here calls me Old Pete.

Cronus: OK, Mr. Pete. I'll try my best to get us out of this terrible place. After all, we're not supposed to be here.

Old Pete: *(nodding his head)* And I'll try my best to help you.

Outside the prison, in the nearest police station, people come in crowds to report cases about their lost summons. Samuel and Mr.Hawkeye are coping with the crowd in a flurry.

Samuel: Quiet! Quiet! Tell me what's happening one by one.

A Tall Man: My summon was lost! I took it to the park this morning, but after I went to buy an ice cream, I couldn't find it!

Samuel: Which park? And the exact time?

A Tall Man: The Golden Park. Around 9 o'clock.

Samuel: OK. Please write your name and contact here. *(passing him a form)* The

cases are just too similar. Where did those people's summons go? (*complaining to his teacher*)

Mr. Hawkeye: (*frowning*) I'm really worried if Metamormon killed and ate their summons.

Samuel: If that's true, Cronus, the boy we arrested yesterday, should be innocent.

Mr. Hawkeye: But we can't just let him go. He must know something about Metamormon. (*He takes out his phone and calls the warden of the prison.*) Hello Mr. Sworth, I need to talk to Cronus...Yes, the boy we caught yesterday. Please send him here as soon as possible.

The guard responsible for watching the zone where Cronus is imprisoned receives the message to take him out. The moment he uses the key to open the door of Cronus's room, Arbormon immediately uses Symbiosis to create several vines to constrict his neck until he falls in a faint. Then Cronus rushes out of the room and changes his clothes to the guard's. He finds a set of keys around the guard's waist and throws the keys into Old Pete's room.

Cronus: Hey Mr. Pete! Use this to come out! I have to go now.

Old Pete: (*grateful*) Oh, thanks, boy! Good luck!

Cronus escapes from the prison and hurriedly runs to a booth. He makes a call to his classmate.

Cronus: Hey Astesia. I've got something important to tell you.

Astesia: (*confused*) Cronus... ? Where have you been all these days? Descartes refuses to talk about you.

Cronus: There's no time to explain. I need to see you. After school, please go to the forest and I'll be waiting for you near the stream.

Astesia: No problem, only me?

Cronus: Yes. Don't tell anyone else about this, especially Descartes. By the way,

could you please bring me some food? I'm starving.

Astesia: *(stifling a laugh)* Sure. Anything else you want me to take?

Cronus: I also need a hoodie and a pair of sunglasses.

Astesia: OK, I'll try to borrow them for you.

Cronus: Thank you so much! See you later.

Astesia: Yeah, see you!

Cronus goes to the forest and hides behind a tree near the stream. He warily looks around to make sure no one notices him. He waits until Astesia shows up.

Cronus: *(waving his hand)* Here, Astesia!

Astesia: *(astonished)* Oh, Cronus! You look...terrible. And why are you wearing a guard's clothes?

Cronus: *(gobbling the bread Astesia brings for him)* I was caught. Descartes's summon is actually an evil summon called Metamormon. It can swallow other summon to gain power. After it killed Daniel's summon, Thermormon, it incriminated my summon, so we were sent into prison.

Astesia: I started to suspect Indramon when I saw its battle with Thermormon. How could a normal summon hurt another summon like that?

Cronus: Yes, and we must wipe out Metamormon, otherwise more and more innocent summons will be killed.

Astesia: Did you talk to Descartes about this?

Cronus: I did, but he refused to give up his summon. Actually we cannot just directly kill Metamormon. If it dies, Descartes will also die. Their lives are connected.

Astesia: *(worried)* Umm... That's really a knotty problem.

Cronus: Anyway, we have to do something. I think we need to set up a team to stop Metamormon. Do you know any trustful guy?

Astesia: *(pondering)* I think Ryan is willing to join us. He's always eager to help others, and his summon, Dewmon, has curing skills, which will probably be useful in a combat.

Cronus: Oh, Ryan! That handsome guy from the class next to ours?

Astesia: Yes. I had one chance to organize activities with him last year, and I think he's a nice guy.

Cronus: Then wish you could persuade him to join us. Can we meet here tomorrow afternoon, after you finish school? I'll tell you the details of my experience, and we'll figure out what to do next.

Astesia: Sure, I'll try. Take care of yourself.

Cronus: You too!

ACT SIX

In a grand palace hall, every corner shines golden and marble white lights, and an august man sits on the throne at the top of the footsteps. He is King Napo, the supreme ruler of this nation. Behind his throne, a golden dragon curls up and seems to be sleeping. But even though it has huddled up, it's still taller than the throne and is as wide as 10 men standing side by side. At the bottom of the footsteps, ministers stand by lines on two sides, while in the middle, two men, one middle-aged and one old, are standing over against the king..

Samuel: *(respectful)* Your Majesty, this week 68 people reported that their summons had disappeared, which is three times more than last week. And in the 68 summons, over half are A to A- level.

King: All done by that thing?

Samuel: Yes, your Majesty. I don't think anything else has the power to make summons disappear.

King: Have you found any trace of the monster?

Samuel: No...your Majesty. It's my dereliction of duty. Two weeks ago we found a boy who seems to know Metamormon, but three days after we arrested him, he and his summon by some means removed the injected inhibitor and escaped. We searched the boy's home, but the boy and another adopted boy of that family both disappeared.

We also interrogated their parents, but the couple seemed to know nothing about the two boys' trace nor did they know anything about Metamormon. Now we suspect that one of the two boys' summons is Metamormon.

King: (*frowning*) What a shame that a teenager and a newly-born summon could escape the royal prison! How would the citizens think of the royal authority if they know about that?

Samuel: (*kneeling down*) It's all my fault, your Majesty!

Mr. Hawkeye: Your Majesty, may I share my thoughts?

King: Mr. Hawkeye, what do you want to say?

Mr. Hawkeye: Your Majesty, I think now is not the proper time to pursue this matter. Metamormon has swallowed enough powerful summons and absorbed their strength. Now I guess it has reached a saturation of power within the limit of the ancient seal. Its next aim should be.....

King: What?

Mr. Hawkeye: Your Majesty, the nation's only A+ level monster's power can help it break the seal.

King: (*alarmed*) You mean the monster's next step is to swallow my Imperial Dramon?

Mr. Hawkeye: I am afraid so, your Majesty.

King: Ridiculous! Mr. Hawkeye, I know that your grandpa was the valet of the founding king of the nation. My father and I respect you a lot, but you are old now. How can you possibly think that a sealed monster could defeat my Imperial Dramon, the strongest breed in the nation?! I don't think the monster would ever to come to the imperial palace. If it dares, my Imperial Dramon will crush it and seal it, like my ancestor did. But this time it will be sealed forever.

Mr. Hawkeye: Your Majesty, you have never experienced the dark era. That monster's power is unimaginable. During its heyday, even four first-level summons couldn't match its power. Eventually the ancestors had to sacrifice three first-level monsters to launch the taboo magic circle to seal Metamormon, and the three summoners also lost their lives for launching the circle. Even though Metamormon's

power is now limited by the seal, after swallowing so many second-level summons, it has recovered about one-tenth of its original power. Your Majesty, your Imperial Dramon is not.....

King: *(in a grave tone)* Enough. This assembly is long enough. All of you can leave now.

The ministers and Mr. Hawkeye keep silent for a few seconds and then start quitting the palace hall.

Suddenly, there is a terrific bang coming from the top of the palace. The ministers immediately stop and look up at the ceiling of the hall. A second later, another terrific bang accompanied by the cracking of the ceiling appears, and the ceiling crashes on the floor where the ministers have just been standing. Looking through the great hole at the ceiling of the palace, they notice that a black hole is floating upon the top of the imperial palace.

Mr. Hawkeye: Black-hole-like monster...That's Metamormon!

King: *(scornful)* Ohh? That reckless thing really comes to the imperial palace? Imperial Dramon, it's your turn. Go and beat it!

The golden Imperial Dramon behind the throne raises its head, slowly stands up to be almost as high as the great hall. It then unfolds its wings, flies out of the hall through the hole, and lands on the palace roof. Two great monsters confront each other high in the sky.

Imperial Dramon moves first by tapping on a row of sculpture decorations on the palace roof, and the brown sculptures turn black. That's Imperial Dramon's one skill — The Midas Touch — turning anything into any kind of mineral. The sculptures have been turned to black diamond, the hardest mineral in the kingdom, and struck to fly up by Imperial Dramon toward Metamormon. The diamond sculptures fly in a super speed that they generate sparks on their track while passing through the air. However, as soon as the meteorite-like diamonds touch the black hole, they just

disappear like a few rocks falling into a river. The Imperial Dramon freezes for a second, so do the king and the ministers watching through the hole in the palace. Then, the Imperial Dramon opens its mouth and shoots out a dazzling beam. That's Imperial Dramon's second skill — Light Cannon. Everything will be penetrated like light passing through a glass. The white light beam shoots toward Metamormon, but again, all the light is absorbed by the black space. The Imperial Dramon is completely frozen this time, unable to believe that its most powerful skill has no effect at all on this strange monster. Suddenly, about thirty summons appear around the Imperial Dramon.

Samuel: *(shocked)* Those are...Those are the A and A- level summons that have disappeared!

The summons all pounce upon the Imperial Dramon. The Imperial Dramon releases its last skill — Shielding, creating a brilliant diamond armor that protects every part of the its body. The summons cannot hurt the Imperial Dramon through their attacks, so they are just clinging onto the its armor and biting it. While the Imperial Dramon is trying to drive the summons on his body off one by one, a black line starts to extend from the back of the Imperial Dramon's armor to its head and tail. Then, CRUSH! The whole diamond armor, the hardest armor in the world, is teared to two parts along the black line. What is also teared is the Imperial Dramon's back, followed by a terrific roar. That's Metamormon's skill — Space Crack — it could tear any part of space into two!

BANG! The Imperial Dramon drops to the ground of the palace like a stone. Blood unstopably flows out from its back like a creek. The king is stupefied. Standing beside his summon, he could feel that he is losing connection with his summon, meaning its life is diminishing. The ministers all flee away in panic..

Cronus, Astesia and Ryan are hurrying to the Royal Palace. They sit on Jademon's

two huge ears and fly in the sky. Looking down, they notice that Metamormon has turned towns and cities into ruins, and citizens whose summons have been swallowed are crying bitterly. As soon as they arrive at their destination, they immediately rush into the palace hall.

King: *(surprised and suspicious)* Why do you kids come to my palace?

Astesia: We come to defeat that monster, your Majesty.

Cronus: *(shocked by the injured Imperial Dramon)* I can't believe Metamormon almost killed the powerful Imperial Dramon! Ryan, could your Dropmon help to cure it?

Ryan: I need to know the exact condition of its body. *(calling his summon)* Dropmon, scan the Imperial Dramon!

Dropmon's eyes start to shine brightly, shooting out two beams of light to cover the Imperial Dramon. After a while, it prints out a picture through its mouth and hands it to Ryan. He looks through the picture and frowns anxiously.

Ryan: Bad news. Some parts of its gut have been seriously harmed. Dropmon could only cure skin trauma, so...I think the Imperial Dramon is unable to avoid death.

King: No!!! You must save my summon! You must... *(He faints.)*

Cronus: *(taking King Napo to a secluded room)* You'd better rest here when we fight Metamormon. *(shouting to Ryan)* Ryan, just ask Dropmon to try its best to treat the Imperial Dramon, please!

Ryan: Of course. Dropmon, Healing!

Dropmon exudes a blue fluid from the pearl on its head. The fluid flows towards the Imperial Dramon and penetrates the wounds on its skin. A few seconds later, the wounds begin to heal. The Imperial Dramon purrs thankfully.

Suddenly, a glaring beam directed at Dropmon appears in midair. Jademon immediately creates a strong whirlwind to intercept it. Metamormon slowly enters the

palace hall through the large hole in the ceiling, holding a dead summon in its mouth. It ignores the three young students and gobbles the corpse of that dead summon.

Astesia: It's eating a summon! Disgusting.

Cronus: I feel so sick. Arbormon, use Flourishing to stop it!

Arbormon produces several thick branches which intertwine with each other and form the shape of a spear. As the sharp end of the "spear" approaches Metamormon, it raises its head and lifts up its claw to touch the "spear", turning it into powder. It scornfully looks at Cronus's pale face and then continues to eat the corpse.

Cronus: How... How could it be so powerful...?

Astesia: *(in a calm voice)* Let me have a try. Jademon, sing the Requiem! Cronus, when it falls asleep, ask Arbormon to attack it!

Cronus: Wait... But will Arbormon sleep as well?

Astesia: No. Requiem could only be targeted at one object. Don't worry!

Jademon flutters its big ears to play the Requiem. When Metamormon hears the beautiful melody, it stops eating and closes its eyes. Without hesitation, Arbormon creates a huge "sword" with the branches and uses it to slash Metamormon. However, the "sword" only makes a small wound on the back of Metamormon and then breaks into two parts. Ten seconds later, Metamormon wakes up and gives Arbormon a ferocious stare.

Ryan: Why does it wake up so quickly?!

Astesia: I also feel confused. Requiem is supposed to make a normal summon sleep for ten minutes.

Cronus: There's no time to hesitate. All we could do now is to attack!

Dropmon produces more fluids to cover Jademon and Arbormon's bodies, and they

become energetic again. They continuously use their skills to attack Metamormon, but do no harm to the latter at all. Metamormon gradually turns to be impatient and irritable, and uses Space Crack to tear the space between Arbormon and Jademon. They swiftly move away, but are overturned by the strong impact force. Cronus and Astesia anxiously rush to look over their summons.

Cronus: Arbormon! Arbormon! Are you all right?

Astesia: Jademon! Please, say something!

Cronus suddenly hears someone calling him urgently. He looks up and surprisingly notices that Descartes is struggling to climb out of Metamormon's mouth. However, the huge monster uses its large claw to push its master back.

Descartes: *(helpless)* It's going to absorb me so it could live forever... Save me...

Cronus: *(indignant)* No!!! Don't kill my friend!

The Imperial Dramon unexpectedly roars loudly. It comes near to Cronus with great difficulty, and coughs out a pure, shining diamond. Cronus stares at its eyes, which are full of trust and determination. He thankfully puts the diamond into Arnormon's mouth, and the Imperial Dramon satisfactorily closes its eyes and silently diminishes. Arbormon's body begins to emit golden lights, and it grows larger and larger, until having almost the same size as Metamormon.

Astesia: *(delightful)* Arbormon has evolved! The golden heart of the Imperial Dramon contributes to its miraculous evolution!

Cronus: Now its time to fight back!

Arbormon raises its right fist, with hundreds of thorns coming out of its arm. It mercilessly gives a powerful hit to Metamormon's head, and it staggers a few steps. Arbormon keeps bashing it, creating a great many wounds on its body. Metamormon

falls down and vomits Descartes, who has become unconscious. When Arbormon tries to give Metamormon a deadly strike, it growls and jumps onto Arbormon's shoulder to bite it hardly. Then it uses Space Crack and tears the shoulder until it becomes disjointed from Arbormon's body. Arbormon wails and keeps a distance from Metamormon.

Ryan: Even Arbormon is terribly injured. Isn't there any way to kill that terrifying monster?

Cronus: There is a way. If Metamormon loses connection with its master, it will die. But that means Descartes needs to end his life. I can't... I can't let my best friend die.

Descartes: *(opening his eyes)* I hear what you said. All the disaster is caused by me, and I have to pay for this.

Cronus: *(crying)* No! It's all because of this kingdom's unfair class division! It's not your fault!

Descartes: But I can't let my best friend die either. You're my only friend, Cronus. To save you and to save everyone, I have to do this.

Descartes takes out a knife and makes a thrust at his heart. Blood runs down the corner of his mouth, and he warmly smiles at Cronus. Metamormon angrily runs towards Cronus and slaps him. It roars and becomes smaller and smaller, finally turning into an egg.

Astesia: *(worried)* Cronus, are you all right?

Cronus: ...I think my ribs are broken. Maybe my gut is harmed as well. So painful.

Ryan: Don't move. It will worsen your injury.

Cronus: I... I can't... I can't let Descartes die... Arbormon, come here.

Arbormon has already turned back to its normal size. It loses its right arm, and the wound keeps bleeding. It weakly stands by its master and puts its little paw on his hand.

Cronus: Arbormon... I don't think I could live... I'm so sorry...

Astesia: *(wiping tears)* Don't say so, Cronus.

Ryan: You were so brave in the battle. We're so proud of you.

Cronus: I still have one wish. Descartes should not have lost his life in this way. Arbormon, I feel that you're willing to save him. I shall be satisfied if our departure could bring him back.

Astesia: Wait, Cronus, what are you gonna do?!

Cronus and Arbormon are magically merged into one, becoming a film of gentle light. It flies to Descartes to cover his body, and a moment later, he breathes again and starts to cough.

Descartes: *(with a blank look on his face)* I thought I had died. What happened?

Astesia: Cronus... Cronus has saved you by sacrificing himself and his summon.

Descartes: No, no. I can't believe it. Cronus, come back, Cronus! *(bursting into tears)*

Ryan and Astesia drag Descartes out off the Royal palace. He keeps crying and shouting out his best friend's name, but Cronus will not be back. He and Arbormon have turned into Descartes' source of life and filled up his heart.

EPILOGUE

Descartes sits down on the ground, dull and desperate. Astesia and Ryan stand behind him, remaining silent with their heads down.. Everybody falls into quietness and no one notices that the ruins around them start flickering slightly, and then tiny fluorescent lights float up from the ruins and gather toward an egg in front of Descartes. The fluorescent lights soon converge to become a light ball which is so bright as a sun that everyone instinctively closes their eyes. When Descartes and others are finally able to open their eyes, they see a floating whirlpool. The shape

looks very similar to a blackhole, but what's different is — it's shining in green.

Descartes: ...Metatmormon? Or...Arbormon?

Astesia raises her left hand with a detecting watch. The light screen appears in a moment and shows its master the detecting result: unnamed, psionic, A+.

Astesia: Psionic? I have never heard of this attribute. This is...?

The whirlpool begins shining again before Astesia finishes her words. This time, it sends out a circle of green light from itself as the center. The circle keeps expanding until it covers the whole country. For every person the circle has passed through, he or she feels like being passed by a spring breeze which makes him or her forget the disaster that just happened; for every corner of ruin it has passed, debris and dust float up like small whirlpools and reform back to the shape they once were. In a moment, the whirlpool brings back vitality for this almost ruined country. And then, it slowly floats down toward Descartes.

Descartes: *(reaching out his hands for it)* ...Cronus.

The environment changes to a girl's bedroom in a small cottage. The father is telling his daughter the legend of their king and his friends.

Little girl: So that's the summon of our king, right daddy? *(The little girl is laying beside her dad on a warm and small bed.)*

Man: Yes, that's King Descartes's first level summon, named Cronus.

Little girl: Their story is amazing!

Man: Yes, it truly is. And after that, King Descartes, the only person in the world owning a first level summon, coronated and started the millennium of utopia. Without him, people would still live in the old, cruel, hierarchical society, and I wouldn't have

upgraded my summon from fourth level to third level today.

Little girl: Oh daddy, I thought upgrading summon was a common thing! So you mean it was invented by King Descartes?

Man: No, King Descartes did not invent it. Upgrading summon has long existed as long as one's summon exercises to the strongest degree within its level, but it requires various gemstones and materials to upgrade. The previous royal family and nobility were afraid that civilians would upgrade summons to be as strong as theirs, so the royal family hid all kinds of gemstones that they could find in their treasury, making upgrading impossible for any common man. King Descartes was the person who opened the royal treasury and decided to return all the previous materials back to the nation. Thus, people no longer live in hierarchy, and anyone who practices their power hard enough has the opportunity to upgrade and become nobility. King Descartes has ruled the nation wisely and led people's minds positively with the help of his psionic summon. This country thus becomes a real utopia.

Little girl: I like King Descartes! I want to summon my summon too! And exercise it so I could become a heroine like King Descartes and his friends!

Man: Okay okay! My heroine! You will! Now sleep first to find a summon in your dream! Good nigh my girl~

Little girl: Good night daddy!

Lights off. The End.