

DRAGO THERME



IN THIS WIDE, WIDE WORLD, THERE ARE
STILL MANY UNKNOWN PLANTS.

MY NAME IS DR. SALVATORE PLANTON,
AND I AM A BOTANIST.

TODAY I AM RUNNING AROUND THE FIELDS
AND MOUNTAINS, WHIPPING MY OLD BODY
IN SEARCH OF UNKNOWN PLANTS...

THE OTHER DAY, I WENT TO THE FOOTHILLS OF
DRAGOTHERME, A FAMOUS HOT SPRING RESORT,
TO INVESTIGATE.

(TO MY SURPRISE, THERE ARE REPORTS OF
SIGHTINGS OF THE FANTASTIC HONEY POT
MUSHROOM AT THE FOOT OF THIS MOUNTAIN!)
I COULDN'T FIND ANY HONEY POT MUSHROOMS,
BUT I DID COME ACROSS SOME RELATIVELY RARE
PLANTS THAT I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU.





OH, SHIT.
WHAT ON
EARTH IS
THIS?

THIS IS THE
"DRAGON FOREST," WHERE
EVEN TOWNSPEOPLE
ARE NOT ALLOWED TO
ENTER WITHOUT
PERMISSION.

THE VEGETATION IN THE
SUNLESS CAVE DEEP IN THE
FOREST WAS A SUBSPECIES
OF MOGAKI-KAZURA,
A COMMONLY KNOWN
ENERGY-DRAIN SPECIES.
THIS PLANT SPREADS ITS
TENDRILS CRAWLING ON
SUNLESS CAVES AND
ROCK WALLS, WAITING FOR
ANIMALS AND DEMONS TO
PASS BY AND CRUNCH THEM
LIKE THIS.

THIS YOUNG MAN IS LEO HATFIELD,
A NICE YOUNG MAN WHO BELONGS
TO THE LOCAL HEROES' ASSOCIATION.
HE SAID IT WAS TOO DANGEROUS
FOR ME TO GO ALONE, SO I ASKED
HIM TO COME WITH ME.

"I'VE NEVER SEEN A FLOWER LIKE
THIS BEFORE," HE SAID,
CURIOSLY TRYING TO SMELL
THE PLANT, AND WAS ATTACKED.

"I'VE NEVER SEEN A FLOWER
LIKE THIS BEFORE," HE SAID,
CURIOSLY TRYING TO SMELL
THE PLANT, AND WAS ATTACKED.



READERS MAY THINK THAT HIS BEHAVIOR IS INADVERTENT, BUT THE POLLEN OF THE MOGAKIZURA HAS THE ABILITY TO MAKE PREY SMELL IT. INCIDENTALLY, IT IS ALSO WELL KNOWN THAT IT IS THE ENERGETIC YOUNG WHO ARE MOST LIKELY TO FALL FOR THE TEMPTATION OF POLLEN.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MR. HATFIELD'S ARM STRENGTH COULD PULL OFF THE PETALS, BUT HE DOESN'T LET THAT HAPPEN, WHICH IS WHY THE MOGAKI-KAZURA HAS SURVIVED.



GYAH!
!?

A

THIS IS THE EFFECT OF POLLEN. THE FAINTEST WHIFF OF IT IS ENOUGH TO AROUSE MY CURIOSITY, BUT WHEN I AM EXPOSED TO IT HEAD-ON, I AM INSTANTLY CAPTIVATED BY THE MOGAKI-KAZURA.



TO MR. HATFIELD'S CREDIT, THE POLLEN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN INEXPLICABLE ESTRUS AND EJACULATION. IF I HAD BEEN 300 YEARS YOUNGER, I WOULD HAVE BECOME THE SAME WAY.

HE WAS DEPRIVED OF ENOUGH ENERGY FOR THE MOGAKI-KAZURA TO SURVIVE FOR THE TIME BEING, AND WAS MADE TO EJACULATE 10 MORE TIMES BEFORE BEING RELEASED, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND READERS THAT THE ENERGY REQUIRED BY A MOGAKI-KAZURA IN A YEAR IS ABOUT THE SAME AS THAT REQUIRED BY A HUMAN TO TAKE A 10-MINUTE WALK, SO IT IS NOT A LIFE-THREATENING PROBLEM.

(SINCE IT'S NOT LIFE-THREATENING, SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO LOSE ENERGY ON PURPOSE.)



