

Chapter 160 - It seems to be Emedra's Story

What looked as if it had been spit out by the Miasma Forest was evidence of the few survivors of the first attack wave.

The dragonoids' abilities are extremely high compared to humans, elves and beastmen. It should be possible to say the same about the ability to sense presences, but apparently no one noticed the approach of those military forces until they were visible by the naked eye.

Even so, the city close to the Miasma Forest had adopted a stance of being always prepared for emergencies. The counterattack was swift, but being put into an inferior position due to the scale of the enemy troops that went beyond their assumptions and because of the number of casualties in the first battle, the dragonoids wanted to retreat. However, they had already been surrounded. The dragonoids managed to somehow break through the siege while paying a heavy toll.

The information of an attack by a monster army was spread to the other cities, but the speed of the monsters' advance was abnormally high. The dragonoids were forced into battle while still not having prepared interceptive measures and a coordination between the cities.

Falling into the dilemma of being crushed one-by-one, close to half of their territory was easily occupied by the monsters.

<It might also have been our arrogance. Saying that we will somehow deal with the likes of inferior monsters. However, it's also true that it was an invasion of unforeseen scale.> (Emedra)

Emedra deeply breathes out while resting her huge body in front of the cave.

'Very likely it was a sigh, but the long breath released by Emedra's huge body had too much power, and I'm pretty sure it's somewhat difficult to describe that as a sigh.

"The invasion speed was too fast, you say?" (Lepard)

The members except for Renya and Shion were woken up by Renya from their sleep. Among them, Lepard expresses his doubt.

Normally, if you were to speak of a monster army, their main forces would consist of orcs and goblins. Those only travel by foot.

Each of the continents on this world is considerably vast. You could say that anyone would harbor doubts if they were told that half of that land was invaded.

<It probably means that the demons are finally going at it for real. The lower-ranked monsters seem to march with bloodshot eyes. And, in addition to the confirmed sightings of demons, there are even evil dragons with them.> (Emedra)

The telepathic communication of Emedra was adjusted by her so that everyone could hear her reply. That fine adjustment was apparently something making Emedra feel proud as it didn't suit her huge build.

"Some weird term popped up once again, huh? What are evil dragons?" (Renya)

Renya asks about the word he hears for the first time.

He didn't know whether that might be common knowledge in this world, but there's no way for Renya to know something like that.

<They are the descendants of dragons who escaped to the dragon continent after having lost in a strife between dragon species in ancient times.> (Emedra)

"It's a story at the level of being a fairy-tale among us humans..." (Shion)

Shion supplements the polite explanation of Emedra.

"Are they black-colored or something?" (Renya)

Emedra slowly shook her head at Renya who asked that based on the prejudice that most of the bad guys are black-colored.

<Originally they were dragons no different from us, but...at the time they ran away after their defeat, they were cursed by the Four Greater Dragons, causing their bodies to be dyed purple. Back then, the dragons, which possessed the most power, were called purple water dragons. All of the existing evil dragons are descendants of those dragons.> (Emedra)

"You're saying that they are participating in this time's invasion?"

<We basically don't concern ourselves with the world, but if the evil dragons have come forth, we cannot ignore it any longer. But, there's also something I can't understand. Until now the evil dragons never came attacking while supporting the demon king.> (Emedra)

"If it's war between fellow dragon tribes, it had taken place several times, but the situation of dragons actively starting to attack other races has absolutely never happened as far I'm aware of it," Emedra says.

That was a reality stemming from the knowledge that the beings called dragons are completely different from the other races, no matter whether they might be normal dragons or evil dragons.

<People never intervene in the turf wars of ants, right?> (Emedra)

"The example is bad, but I get it. If it wasn't you, I would have turned you into sashimi by cutting you into three pieces." (Renya)

Even when they were compared with insects by the dragon, Shion and the others didn't really think anything of it.

Everyone understood that dragons are beings standing on a different level in the food chain, but only Renya alone glared at Emedra, obviously feeling slightly offended. Emedra's face cramped up and she averted her eyes.

<I'd like you to understand, umm, that it's just an example.> (Emedra)

"I do, so continue with the story." (Renya)

<Since the evil dragons plunged into battle with us, they didn't cause any damages to the dragonoids, but a share of the losses caused by the evil dragons beforehand has left traces. Moreover, even if it's just a means, they are taking on the role of moving the monster army which has apparently resulted in raising the invasion's speed.> (Emedra)

"A monster army invading with the speed of dragons, huh? What a pain. But, evil dragons, eh...? Hey, Shion." (Renya)

"Yes?" (Shion)

Suddenly being brought up in the talks, Shion replies with a high-pitched voice as if squeaking.

"Are there no evil humans that escaped to the demon territory to oppose humanity?" (Renya)

"There aren't. Someone like that..." (Shion)

"...would definitely turn into prey or a playtoy at the moment they entered the demon's territory, right?" (Rona)

Shion shakes her head, and Rona interjects while placing a hand on her chin.

"I guess that makes sense," Renya turns his eyes in Lepard's direction next, but he provides a reply before Renya even opens his mouth.

"There ain't any such beastmen. I mean, something like evil beastmen wouldn't be funny at all!" (Lepard)

"Renya-san, if we limit it to the beastmen, there's no one among them who would consider running away to the demon's territory just because they lost in battle. They would probably fight until they win or give up." (Kaede)

Kaede provided a very beastmen-like way of thinking as answer.

So far as it goes those replies were just as Renya had expected, but while wracking his brain why these race have never been destroyed at least once, Renya turns his eyes towards Croire.

"Eh? Don't tell me that you're really going to ask whether there are evil elves or such?" (Croire)

"No, in the case of elves, they would be called dark elves, I think?" (Renya)

Once Renya mentioned a word that had somehow managed to stay in a corner of his memory, Croire stared at Renya with a slightly surprised expression, and then spoke after a short moment.

"That surprised me a bit. For you to know about the elves' minority groups." (Croire)

"Ah, so they do exist." (Renya)

"They are different from what you're expecting, Renya, but a tribe called dark elves does exist. Their traits are skin colors ranging from dark brown to black, hair color ranging from silver to platinum, and red eyes. But, it's not like they are actually an evil tribe. You can perceive them as mere elves with different colors. And their most prominent trait is..." (Croire)

At this point Croire clears her throat once and continues with the rest while straining herself to keep a calm voice.

"Many of their men have small builds, the women have...umm...large builds, and their b-b-breasts

are..." (Croire)

"Ah, they are huge, you mean." (Renya)

Once Renya, who guessed what Croire is trying to say from her expression as she struggled to voice it out, said the words without any hesitation, Croire's eyes became glazed, as if a switch had been flipped over.

Hanging her head in shame with such stiff movements that it looked as if creaking sounds could be heard from her neck, Croire replies with a subdued voice while paying attention to not let her emotions tinge her words.

"Those are already...so big that it makes one wonder whether a person's head could be crammed in-between them." (Croire)

"It's a tribe with low numbers which was once persecuted due to an unfortunate misunderstanding. There are some wildly enthusiastic people among us elves. Nowadays that tribe is kindly sheltered because of their work. Their temperament is gentle, but they excel in covert action like me. They are also called natural assassins." (Grün)

Grün explains while speaking quickly as if to tell only the facts before Croire's words are taken as statement mixed with her own opinion.

'What are those reformist doing?' Renya ends up thinking, but as their hobby of admiring big boobs and the benefit of sheltering a rare tribe matches in this case, he believes that it might be fine to leave them to their own devices.

As for the problems that might originate from that; Renya doesn't care.

<I will answer before being asked, but even something like evil dragonoids doesn't exist, I believe?> (Emedra)

"Even though there are evil dragons?" (Renya)

Renya unhappily responds to Emedra who said so as if it was her turn next anyway.

<The tribes that received dragon elements are dragonoids. They worship the dragons. There's no way that they will admire dragons that became evil after losing in battle. Such dragons won't create a tribe by granting their own dragon elements to others either.> (Emedra)

"Ah, I see. Then I will change the topic." (Renya)

Renya looks up into Emedra's face and asks,

"What's the reason for you to have flown around in such place?" (Renya)

<I was scouting. As a matter of fact...even our side is disappointing in the battle against the evil dragons.> (Emedra)

Emedra casts down her eyes.

'A pronounced fatigue is clinging to her telepathic messages after all,' everyone including Renya focused their looks on Emedra's face reflexively.

<Probably because we didn't involve ourselves with worldly matters overly much, our way of fighting was insufficient compared to the evil dragons. We are surpassing them in numbers, but we found out that we are inferior to them in individual fighting strength. ...There have been not few losses.> (Emedra)

In addition to the unfamiliar combat, not negligible losses among her brethren. The battle against fellow dragons seems to be the reason for Emedra's strong feeling of exhaustion. However, this was apparently a story that didn't earn any sympathy from Renya's group.

"It's only natural for there to be victims in a war, isn't it?"

Lepard frequently nods and Renya tilts his head to the side in confusion, wondering what the problem might be.

"War without any victims ain't possible, you know?" (Lepard)

"It's sad, but that's how reality works."

"That's reality for you."

Shion and Rona say as if rubbing salt into the wound.

<You guys...> (Emedra)

"If you lose heart with only that much, wouldn't it have been better to have stayed in the Dragon's Den without participating in something like a war in the first place?"

"Or rather, the Four Greater Dragons are outside the norm anyway, so wouldn't it be the best to have them do something about it?"

Lepard's words are more than reasonable.

When Renya asked what to think of this idea with his eyes, Emedra dropped her shoulders in a skillfully, crestfallen manner.

<If the Four Greater Dragons were to leave their den, it will spell the end of this continent.> (Emedra)

"Ah, so they can't leave even if they want to because of their excessive destructive power, you say...?" (Renya)

<The whole matter would probably be finished in an instant, but...probably no one would be able to live on this northern continent anymore. At least the Dragon's Den would be safe, but the rest would be beyond hope.> (Emedra)

Each of the Four Greater Dragons packs a ridiculous punch. The geographical features would change with just a single breath attack of them.

Just how much damage they would cause if all of them departed to attack to their hearts' content is something that's difficult to imagine, but all present somehow understood that nothing remotely

decent would result out of it.

"Putting that aside, what do you plan to do from now on?> (Emedra)

Being asked that, Renya ponders.

'It seems like the situation doesn't differ much from what I predicted before coming here. Shion repeatedly and reservedly nudged the side of Renya's abdomen as he thought, 'As long as I know that, it doesn't matter whether I know the rest or not since it's the dragonoids' problem.

"You said that we will confirm the whereabouts of the dragonoids' hero-san for the time being. Did you forget that?" (Shion)

"Now that you mention it, we talked about something like that, didn't we?" (Renya)

If asked whether he has forgotten it or not, Renya has clearly forgotten about it.

<Albert, was it? If he's alive, he should still be fighting at the front line.> (Emedra)

As might be expected of a hero, even Emedra apparently knew his name.

"Front line? Where's that?" (Renya)

<From here...I don't really know how far away by human feet it is, but for me it's a city in a distance that takes a short flight. Over there the dragonoids' main forces are fighting against the monster army. The battle between us and the evil dragons is taking place over there as well, though.> (Emedra)

"Monsters vs. dragonoids, and evil dragons vs. dragons, both fights at the same place, huh? Then it's a free-for-all-fight, I guess." (Renya)

Renya doesn't want to head into the direction of a place that's overly chaotic.

That's because battlefields, where many different sides fight each other, always have the tendency for something unexpected to occur.

Those are his sentiments if it was just himself, but in the present situation of his comrades being with him, that won't work.

"I wonder what we should do?" (Renya)

"What we should do, you ask...we don't really have the option of not goin', do we?" (Lepard)

The eyes of Lepard, who said so, are sparkling with anticipation for some reason.

No matter how you look at it, a part of his battle mania, his bad habit, is peeking through on his face.

"I'm not all that eager, but as that's the only lead we have, turning our back on it is wrong, isn't it?" (Shion)

Those are the words of Shion who looked sullen.

Next to her Rona nods, obviously assenting.

Next to Rona, Kurz, who held the fox-eared priestesses in his arms on both sides, calmly slept with a happy face, apparently having lost out to his drowsiness again, despite looking awake for a while.

"If us elves can lend our help in some way since we honor the dragons quite a bit..." (Croire)

Once Croire said so, it was similar to the opinion being approved of by the majority.

"In that case I suppose we will try going to the front line city." (Renya)

<If you have decided for it to be like that, I will carry you until the city.> (Emedra)

Due to the sudden offer by Emedra, the elves looked surprised and the human team dumbfounded. The beastmen don't even try to hide their joyful looks.

While thinking, 'The thoughts are indeed different for each race,' Renya asks Emedra,

"Is that fine? To carry us so readily." (Renya)

<It will likely be to our and the dragonoids' benefit if I take you along. Since that's the case, my workload is nothing worth mentioning.> (Emedra)

Closing one eye really skillfully, Emedra winked at Renya.