

Chapter 167 - It seems to be a Dragon Breath

"This seems to be headed for an unexpectedly easy conclusion, doesn't it?" (Shion)

Shion, who looks down on the battlefield from Rubydra's back, says to Renya, but he doesn't answer.

Shion believed that to be odd, but since Renya's back to which she's clinging remains stiff, she realizes that Renya is watching the situation while still retaining a certain degree of tension.

"Renya?" (Shion)

"The enemy army is too brittle. Besides, even though the three heroes expressly made a flashy entrance, the bigwigs haven't come out." (Renya)

"Renya...don't tell me..." (Shion)

Renya looks over his shoulder with partly closed eyes due to the trembling voice of Shion. At the end of his look, Shion stares at Renya with an expression as if having seen something unbelievable while tightly grasping his shoulders.

"Did you possibly perceive my words as it being a strategy of luring out the bigwigs by using the heroes as bait?" (Renya)

"You probably have the intention to attack the heroes alongside the big wigs, while at it, don't you?" (Shion)

Being told that with a serious expression, Renya's face twitches.

Shion, who saw that, quickly glued herself to Renya's back for some reason.

Renya guessed that she did that to avoid a light spanking from him, but even if he tore her off, there would be no way to attack Shion who's right behind him.

"Just who do you think I am?" (Renya)

"Isn't that a sound and simple method?" (Shion)

"I'm not that much of a villain that I would use my friends as bait." (Renya)

Shion reveals a relieved expression towards Renya who looks slightly hurt.

As for Shion, her having a tinge of worry left although she knows that he won't do it can't be helped even though she understands that it's bad to think so.

Precisely because that would be just the usual with him, she can't erase the possibility completely.

As for Renya, he does understand those circumstances one way or another, but it's not like he won't feel somewhat hurt if he's actually treated like this.

"The heroes made an entrance from the start because the battle progress is too disadvantageous for the dragonoids. I judged that it's necessary to go with excessive fire power, even if it's an overkill, to promptly overturn the situation." (Renya)

"And while at it you probably thought that it would be nice if the bigwigs showed up because of the war situation seemingly being reversed, eh? Sorry, that was a bit mean." (Shion)

Shion smiles wryly due to Renya's tone which somehow sounded as if he's trying to make excuses. She made that suggestion with the plan of teasing Renya a bit, but now she regrets as she apparently stabbed deeply into a soft spot inside Renya against her own intention.

"Don't worry about it. You're probably harboring such impressions because it's me after all."
(Renya)

"No, umm...Renya, are you possibly sulking!? Can't you cheer up!? I just wanted to tease you a bit, really!" (Shion)

Shion visibly started to panic due to Renya's remark that was mumbled softly as he turned to the front while dropping his shoulders.

Ignoring Shion, who shakes his shoulders from behind, Renya watches the surface with a serious look, which is in contrast to his tone.

Honestly spoken, even Renya, as human, possessed a heart that could be hurt.

Not to mention that him being doubted whether he used his friends as bait could be called him getting his just deserts, but in the end it was still painful.

Nevertheless, it's not like Renya, who has exceeded an age of 90 years if limiting it to just his mental age, has such a weak mind that it would break from just that much. Him acting slightly depressed and sulky was something like an appeal towards Shion.

That doesn't mean that he's asking her to comfort him since his feelings got hurt, but it was the kind of appeal of getting her to stop with such suspicions since they are painful.

<It's great that you're getting along well, but could you not kick up a fuss on my back, please?>
(Rubydra)

Seemingly believing that things won't progress no matter how long she waits as long as she leaves the panicking Shion and Renya, who pretends to be depressed, alone, Rubydra sends a telepathic message to both of them while feeling fed-up.

Shion completely changes her attitude from her previous flustered state, and becomes meek, seemingly feeling ashamed.

Renya, who wasn't depressed to begin with, asks Rubydra while tapping her body,

"Isn't there anything you can sense?" (Renya)

<No way. The demons should be somewhere, but they are hiding themselves quite skilfully.>
(Rubydra)

No matter how powerful the demons might be, there's no way for them to be strong enough to face the three heroes who are the combat forces for the final battle against the demon king's army.

'The demons have chosen the method of hiding themselves to deal with the suddenly appeared heroes. Very likely they are holding back while analyzing the combat power and the fighting style of the current heroes to repel them if possible, and if not, to choose retreat,' Rubydra guesses.

"Are they going to run away...? I suppose that can't be helped either though?" (Renya)

The current objective is to confirm the dragonoids' situation to begin with. As far as Renya would say, the subjugation of the demons is no more than taking the opportunity if it presents itself. Since you could say that their goal will be achieved if they make them retreat after causing some damage to the monster army, Renya thought that there might be no need to unreasonably look for the demons, but Rubydra denies Renya's thinking.

<No matter how many monsters are defeated by the heroes, it bears not much of a meaning.>
(Rubydra)

"Why?" (Renya)

<It's easy to replace them. If it's monsters from goblin to ogre class, it's simple to prepare the numbers.> (Rubydra)

The monsters slaughtered by the heroes on the battlefield have a high breeding ability due to their brimming reproduction urge, and moreover, they grow up fast.

"Even if their numbers were to be decreased by hundreds or thousands, they are capable of making up their numbers even beyond what they lost in little time," Rubydra says.

<Those guys are really spawning in swarms...> (Rubydra)

"So you're saying it won't be a serious blow even if we decrease their numbers here, huh?" (Renya)

<If you're trying to force back the area under their control, it's indispensable to kill the demons.>
(Rubydra)

Being clearly told that by Rubydra, Renya pondered for a bit and then,

"Rubydra, can you tell the heroes to fall back?" (Renya)

<No problem.> (Rubydra)

Responding to Renya's request, Rubydra sends a telepathic message to the heroes fighting on the ground.

After the three heroes looked up for an instant, they immediately fall back close to the city's wall as instructed.

While watching how the monsters close in on the city again in exchange for the retreated heroes, Renya hurled an instruction at Rubydra.

"Rubydra, prepare your breath!" (Renya)

<Sure, but...my breath won't be able to cause damage on such a vast range?> (Rubydra)

Renya starts pouring his own mana into Rubydra through the mana supply path that was still connected to her as she began amassing mana in her mouth.

<Eh? Ah, yeah. That is, if you add that kind of mana, the power of my breath will rise as well, but...hey, Renya?> (Rubydra)

Without answering to Rubydra, Renya continues to pour mana.

Even at the time when he threw more than a thousand fire lances at the ancient dragon Renya remained calm as if not feeling any significant burden, but this time his forehead started to sweat faintly, and even his palms, which are pressed against Rubydra's back, began to become damp. Shion, who was clinging to his back, seemingly believed that something absolutely no-good is going to happen judging from his state, and thus wrapped her arms around Renya's waist and clung to him with all her power. Emedra, who sensed something, hurriedly leaves the area by raising her altitude.

The three heroes, who looked up from the ground, exchanged some words and quickly evacuated into the city by climbing over the wall behind them.

<Hey, listen to me! What's going on with this!? What are you planning!? Jeez, how about an explanation!?!> (Rubydra)

Rubydra complains, but Renya stays silent.

While feeling sweat starting to run down along his chin line, he continues to inject mana. Even Rubydra might have spit out the mana inside her mouth once she sensed an unusual phenomenon, but she was confused by the vast amount of mana compared to the mana she usually uses. At the time she realized what's going on, she had already fallen into a situation where she didn't have any means to spit it out as breath due to her work to control and compress the mana inside her mouth so that it doesn't go out of control.

<Impossible, impossible! I'm telling you, it's impossible, Renya! I don't know how to handle something like this! I don't know how to handle something so amazing!> (Rubydra)

"How noisy. Focus on controlling it if you don't want to be blown apart." (Renya)

<Impossible! A big one like this is impossible! It doesn't fit~! It's scary! I'm scared!> (Rubydra)

"Since it's pointless to close it at this point in time, give up and open it up. Around half has already entered. There's only the other half left, so be obedient and accept it." (Renya)

<I don't want to~! Impossible, impossible! It's going to break, it will break~!> (Rubydra)

"Somehow...if you just listen to your conversation, it sounds as if you're doing something terribly obscene. How mysterious." (Shion)

Shion listens to Renya's and Rubydra's exchange while laughing feebly.

'It's probably at the level where I would call the guards if I came across such exchange being held inside a city.

What's actually meant with being oversized or not fitting is Renya's mana. The matter of closing and opening up is a talk about the mana supply path.

If they used proper subjects, it would be a totally harmless conversation, but by just omitting those, it turns into a crime-like conversation. That's the mystery of words.

<It's already impossible! I'm telling you, no more! Anymore won't fit! Please let me off~!> (Rubydra)

"Hey, don't push since it will spill out. Just relax your body and accept it." (Renya)

<I'm dying! I will definitely die~!> (Rubydra)

The cluster of mana inside Rubydra's mouth, who's kicking up a fuss, is beginning to emit such a brightness that it will burn one's eyes, if you look straight at it, and reflect its image on the retina even if one keeps them shut.

At the point in time when the white radiance began to gradually be tinged with a crimson, burning glittering, even Shion, who doesn't have a deep knowledge about sorcery, somehow started to have a bad premonition.

"Umm, Renya? How much power is this going to have?" (Shion)

"Let me see. I don't know unless we try firing it?" (Renya)

Renya recognizes himself as swordsman.

A swordsman who can use sorcery, albeit it would be probably wrong to call it 'only a bit.' However, because he basically perceives himself as swordsman, he hasn't obtained any knowledge about sorcery, not to mention practical skill.

He can merely say with confidence that he has the skill allowing him to use sorcery without chanting.

However, as to what might happen if he uses x mana with y spell formula is something Renya can't predict at all since he's controlling it with nothing else but his own intuition one way or another.

Shion is no different as she's just a swordswoman too, but although she's a complete novice in regards to sorcery as a technique, she was at least taught the basics of knowledge about it in her position as princess.

Once she tried to compare the current situation with that knowledge, she could immediately tell that Renya's action was extremely dangerous.

After all he's trying to use sorcery while unable to predict its outcome.

"Renya! Can't you stop this!? I feel like there will be unthinkable damage, if you release a dragon's power boosted by your own mana." (Shion)

"Stop...like how?" (Renya)

It was apparently too late by now.

Shion wracks her brain, brooding over a method to somehow keep the damage low.

"How much mana do you have left?" (Shion)

"I think it's approximately the same as I have already poured into it." (Renya)

"So it was filled with 50% of your mana, Renya...? Use the remaining mana for protecting the city. You can at least use some kind of defense wall spell, can't you?" (Shion)

"Like this?" (Renya)

Renya turns his look towards the dragonoids' city.

A wind wall is slowly but steadily formed as if surrounding the broken city wall. Before long it changed into a huge tornado wrapping up the city whole.

There's no damage at all to the city that's right in the center of the wind which is blowing with a thunderous roaring, but the monsters, which were crowing outside the city, were enveloped by it in the blink of an eye, and hurled into the air.

"What about us?" (Shion)

"Once fired, we just have to escape at full power until the impact, don't we?" (Renya)

<Whatever. Just let me shoot this as soon as possible~!> (Rubydra)

Shion quickly tells the whining Rubydra,

"Ruby-chan, once you fire it, you have to run away at full power. To be precise, if you fly as if grazing a part of the tornado in the back of the city, you should gain velocity due to the wind power. I'd like you to pay attention to only fly in the direction of the wind flow. A flash breath like before is no good. We won't have any time to get away. Umm...gently ptooiie it out while keeping its cluster shape." (Shion)

<Ptooiie!> (Rubydra)

Without any forewarning, Rubydra spit out the lump of mana in her mouth.

It's a breath that was compressed and controlled by force, on top of Renya's mana, which was poured into it to a crazy degree while blending with Rubydra's mana, having received a dragonic attribute.

The instant she saw the crimson cluster, Shion became pale.

Without doubt Shion felt a fear of death towards that cluster, which flies while distorting the surrounding air just like a heat haze.

"Ruby-chan, fly!" (Shion)

<Full speed ahead~!!> (Rubydra)

Without making sure of the impact, Rubydra turned around and flew while grazing the wind barrier protecting the city as she had been told by Shion. With the power of the wind filling her wings, she accelerates sharply.

"This was called swing-by, wasn't it? (Renya) [efn_note]wiki: In orbital mechanics and aerospace engineering, a gravitational slingshot, gravity assist maneuver, or swing-by is the use of the relative movement (e.g. orbit around the Sun) and gravity of a planet or other astronomical object to alter the path and speed of a spacecraft, typically to save propellant and reduce expense.[/efn_note]

"As if I'd know, but Renya, restrain yourself a bit~!" (Shion)

The instant Shion raised a desperate scream on the back of Rubydra, who's steadily getting farther away from the city, the world turned pure white and was dominated by a sound that couldn't be perceived as anything but a long silence.