

Chapter 179 - It seems to be a Consultation in the Presence of the Enemy

"Certainly I don't sense any presences of living beings coming from that city. If there's something in the 10,000s present, it's definitely weird for it to have no presence, though." (Emil)

Once Emil speaks up after hearing Renya's worries, Leopard agrees with her while nodding his head in confirmation.

"Yeah, I surely had such a hunch, too. I thought that it was odd. But, I believed it was fine to not give a damn since no one said anythin'." (Leopard)

"Worry about it, at least a bit. That's the reason why it's said that even your soul is stuffed with muscles."

Leopard turns a terribly hurt expression at Kaede, who nonchalantly spit out words that everyone considered to be too harsh, but there was no follow-up from Kaede's side.

Renya ends up wondering whether those two really have a good relationship, but since it somehow works out smoothly between them, the subtleties between men and women are difficult to understand.

"It's hard to imagine that they retreated. At least I don't see any disadvantage for the demon king's army leading to such a decision."

When Rona stated her opinion calmly, Kurz raised his hand cheerfully and declared,

"Margrave-sama, the presence of food is definitely missing~" (Kurz)

"Umm, Kurz-san? Just what do you mean with food? No, forget it. I can somewhat guess what you mean, but..."

Croire tries to timidly retort, probably thinking that it might be a good place to do so. While smiling bitterly at his sister's state, Grün composedly states his own opinion.

"I intend to follow your decision, Margrave-dono." (Grün)

"Anyway, we don't have any option but to march on and hit them once, do we?" (Albert)

Wondering whether he should say here anything as he finds it difficult to judge whether it's fine for him to state his opinion, Albert decided to do so, apparently believing that it also affects the safety of his comrades.

That opinion was very likely one that could be accepted in any army as typical model answer to some extent, but Renya shakes his head.

"Considering that a safer and more reliable plan exists for the time being, I can't agree with your proposal." (Renya)

"Just for reference, is it alright for me to also hear about that reliable plan of yours?"

Renya confidently answered back to Albert, who asked with his face cramping and being pale, seemingly having a very bad premonition,

"We will blow them away alongside the city from here." (Renya)

"What about the residents' livelihood and peace...?" (Albert)

"Well, I suppose it's a method we can't take if there are survivors in there." (Renya)

After glancing in the direction of the city, Renya says,

"If there are no survivors in the city, or if there's no one besides the demon king's army, it's the most uncomplicated method with the least sacrifices. Then you will just have to rebuild the city." (Renya)

"Something like that...there's not few people who escaped from over there. For the residents it's their beloved hometown. If you destroy it..." (Albert)

The attitude of Albert, who says this as if imploring Renya, doesn't suit a hero overly much.

There were some among the dragonoid soldiers watching from the sides that openly frowned, but Albert himself hadn't the leeway to concern himself with something like that.

After all the words of Renya that it would be fine to just blow away everything alongside the city aren't a figurative expression, a joke or anything like that, but words he would easily and moreover immediately put into action if they were to be approved.

"My way of phrasing might be bad, but I think that you will have to rebuild it anyway even if we recapture it, don't you think? There will likely be few residents who will feel like using a city that had been occupied by monsters just like that. After all it won't be clear what the monsters might have set up in there. In the worst case it wouldn't be strange for them to have installed some kind of device that sucks out the mana or vitality of the city's residents and supplies them to the demon king. If it were me, I would do just that." (Renya)

"Anyone would come up with the idea to plant some kind of trap if it's a facility they are going to give up anyway," Renya says.

As long as it's not exposed, it will be a big gain. And even if it's exposed, the only losses will be the material costs and labor used to set up the trap.

'In order to hide a trap that would use the entirety of a city, it's probably perfect to plant many small traps that are easy to find,' Renya believed, but when he gave a single example, he noticed that Emil's expression slightly froze, interrupted his words, and looked at Emil.

"What's wrong, Emil?" (Renya)

"No, I just thought that you're reliably considering really nasty stuff. Aren't you more like a demon king than the demon king himself?" (Emil)

Renya sent a somewhat grim stare at Emil, who revealed a malicious smile, while snorting sullenly, and then immediately locked back at Albert, admonishing him.

"Narrowing down your options due to emotions can't be called wise. If it can be left behind, there would be nothing better than doing so, but I can't believe that there are surviving residents inside

that city at present." (Renya)

"No way!"

A shout reached them before Albert could even open his mouth in response.

Once everyone turns in the direction of the voice's origin, a cavalryman glaring at Renya with an enraged look was about to get close.

Renya, who appraised the equipment he was wearing, judges that it's a fairly pricey set of gear. 'Since he's wearing something like that, the owner of the voice must hold a reasonably high position,' Renya guesses.

"Who is he?" (Renya)

"He's Linus Greybunarl-dono, the one appointed to be the general of this subjugation force."

Albert tells Renya, who asks for his identity, in a whisper.

Renya can't grasp the details of his figure and countenance overly well since Linus is covered from head to toe in such an inflexible plate armor that Renya feels like pitying the horse, but the eyes glaring at Renya from within the helmet are grim and stabbing.

"There was a great number of inhabitants in that city. There's no way that they have been all killed in such a short time!" (Linus)

"Don't shout. It will affect the morale, you know?" (Renya)

After indifferently answering to the cavalryman, who approaches with a force as if he's going to bite, as if having heard something bothersome, Renya asks Albert as if he had realized it just now,

"Did you say Greybunarl just now?" (Renya)

"Just as you've guessed, he's the son of the Dragonoid's Witenagemot's chairman." (Albert)

"The son of that person, huh...?" (Renya)

'That will be a bother,' Renya sighs once while recalling the face of the elderly chairman of the Dragonoid's Witenagemot that's not overly wise.

Renya didn't know how he took that sigh, but Linus, who had gotten very close, became even louder while glaring at Renya alone.

"Can I have you stop speaking about irresponsible conjectures?" (Linus)

"Minus ten points." (Renya)

"What!?" (Linus)

"No, don't worry about it." (Renya)

Renya has absolutely no intention to provide an explanation.

Shion, who's in a position of naturally being exposed to Linus' shouting since Renya is sitting

behind her, grasped the reins with her right hand and tried throwing a question at Renya while testing whether it's possible to slightly reduce Linus' loud voice by blocking her ear with a finger on her left hand.

"Why a minus rating all of a sudden?" (Shion)

"The one who said that there are no presences of people in that city is the beastman Lepard, no? The sharpness of his senses is far beyond that of humans." (Renya)

"It's different when inside a forest, but in a place like this, even elves have to yield a bit to beastmen."

"If pushed to say, I think that dragonoids are peerless in regards to strength and mana, but if it comes to such senses, I believe the hero of the beastmen to be superior."

Once Croire and Albert guarantee for the sharpness of the beastmen's sense one after the other, Lepard threw out his chest in triumph for some reason.

He couldn't mention it in this place, but besides Lepard's opinion, Renya was also largely affected by the opinion of Emil as backing for his decision.

It's doubtless that the beastmen's senses are excelling those of other races, but Emil is actually a demon. The sharpness of her senses should surpass that of all the other four races.

Renya thinks that he somehow might have to wallop Lepard a good one due to the triumphant look of Lepard, whose nose's height had somewhat become even higher.

Renya believes that Lepard will definitely end up shrivelling away in low spirits with just that if he heard it, but it's not that Renya particularly wants to tease him or get angry at his self-satisfied look. Renya saying that acting conceited doesn't result in anything decent was an expression of his very own kindness.

"It's just as you heard. Isn't it a problem if someone like you indulges in wishful thinking while ignoring information that has this much credibility?" (Renya)

Renya hasn't the slightest intention to meddle in the movements of the dragonoid's military forces. If it was an unbelievable story, it would be fine if they ignored Renya and the others, and moved suitably, but Linus apparently has no intention to release Renya right away, and snaps at him even further.

"It's no definite information!" (Linus)

"I guess you're the type that doesn't believe unless they see with their own eyes. Depending on the situation, that's a troublesome type." (Renya)

"Ah, so that's the reason for the minus evaluation, I suppose."

"I can't say whether he's good or bad, or acceptable or unacceptable as commanding officer."

"You're saying that he's just a troublesome person?"

"That's nothing I can answer, seeing as we are in front of the person himself."

It's the same as if having said so, but due to Renya playing dumb, Linus' shoulders start to tremble. 'How pitiful,' Shion thinks.

It's because she believes that he has no chance at winning a quarrel against Renya when it comes to making fun of someone.

Usually people at positions like the Witenagemot or Linus have likely almost never been made fun of. Even if it happens, they should be capable to crush the other party with their authority or such without having to directly go along with it.

However, if the other party is Renya, they have to purely gain victory with their words. If they were to choose another method, they would be immediately crushed physically.

"I guess for the time being we will let their side decide their things? Our side has its own plan. Since I'm not saying that you've got to obey our words, you're free to do as you like, okay?"
(Renya)

"You think such reasoning will pass while campaigning with our army?" (Linus)

Being told so by Linus with a low, subdued voice, Renya dons a puzzled expression, and faces Albert next.

If he could, Albert would like to avert his eyes and feign ignorance, but seemingly understanding very well that he can't do so either, he directly takes on Renya's look, and murmurs a reply.

"For the time being...seeing as your position is a formal one, Margrave-dono, it has taken the form of a campaign of the dragonoid army that protects the four heroes." (Albert)

"What's with that? I haven't heard anything about something like that? So it's fine even if I go home?" (Renya)

"Margrave-dono, can't you somehow..." (Albert)

Albert tries to somehow calm Renya whose mood immediately becomes bad due to a fact he hasn't been informed of.

Linus snorts in displeasure and turns his horse.

"The commandant of this army is me. Can I get you to refrain from arbitrary words and deeds!?"
(Linus)

"Alright, you are my enemy then, right? Stay on standby near that city since I will blow you away together with the demon king's army." (Renya)

"So you're going to depend on your strength after all, huh? You damned, savage human!" (Linus)

A creaking sound could be heard from Renya's right hand.

Shion, who quietly looked in the direction of that sound, sees some kind of swaying heat haze rise from Renya's right hand, and senses that it's something very dangerous.

"Renya, let's draw back for the moment here. Certainly, if it's you, you can completely erase the army over here alongside that city, but if you did that, you would definitely be called demon king."
(Shion)

"That's right, Renya. Isn't it better to have him show what he got, if he says that he's the commandant of this army?" (Croire)

As if covering for Shion who restrains Renya in slight panic, Croire brings her horse close to Renya while smiling full of composure.

"I'm sure there's no doubt that he will recapture the city that had been stolen by the demon king's army with some exceptional strategy." (Croire)

"...You're quite a poisonous woman for an elf." (Linus)

"It's my principle to counter hate with poison, and deep affection with honey." (Croire)

Croire wards off Linus' words, which are said as if spitting them out while glaring at her, as something that doesn't concern her at all, and laughs.

"I'm certain that the dragonoid's army protecting the four heroes will put forth amazing efforts."

"Kuuuh..."

"But, well..."

While hiding her mouth with her hand and with a dangerous light dwelling in her eyes, Croire says,

"I wonder just how many heroes will follow your orders?" (Croire)

"Say what you want!" (Linus)

"If it's not just lip-service, then please show us your ability through your actions, Sir dragonoid." (Croire)

Seemingly perceiving that he can't match her with words, Linus leaves Renya's group without saying anything after hatefully glaring at Croire.

"He's someone who will simply make you feel like an idiot for dealing with him, Renya."

"Nuu..."

"For starters, let's go with a compromise between Leopard-san's and Emil-san's arguments, and Albert-san's opinion?"

Croire whispers while seeing off the leaving back of Linus as if watching something worthless.

"That man will likely deliver the first blow by himself without relying on us." (Croire)

Croire estimates that Linus, who was stirred up, certainly won't draw back from here and ask for the help of Renya and the others.

In that case, they will carry out the first attack with only their own strength, even if it's somewhat reckless, Croire predicted.

"Did you aim for that?"

"Now, I wonder about that?"

Croire returns with a smile at Renya's question.

"Didn't the dragonoids and elves entertain a fairly good relationship?"

"That's an old story. It's unrelated to me, Renya." (Croire)

Due to Croire saying so with an unconcerned look, Renya felt his innards cool down just a little bit, and harbored a small amount of pity for Linus, who had been manipulated, despite him being an annoying character.