

Chapter 184 - It seems to be the Recapture Battle 4

Kurz ran while scattering the fragments of the needles he crushed underfoot. It was quite the careful sprint so as to not step on the dragonoids, who were laying all over the place while groaning and screaming, and to avoid the violet lines that were still shining suspiciously on the ground, but considering the armor's weight, Kurz movement speed was still abnormally high.

Renya, who was riding on Kurz' back, clung his body to Kurz using just his legs and drew the katana at his waist. There was the possibility that he could be thrown off if he did something like that on Kurz' back which was shaking up and down irregularly, but it was a stunt he was able to pull off exactly because his fairly secure attachment owed to Renya's own leg strength and his sense of balance as well as Kurz supporting him with the black mist.

And yet Renya frowned slightly.

All of that didn't change the fact that he couldn't secure enough footing. Even if it was Renya, there would be no way for him to make full use of his katana in such a situation.

The question whether he should have worn slightly stronger armored equipment popped up in his mind for an instant, but Renya immediately rejected that idea. Speed and the quickness of defensive movements were the characteristic traits of Renya's fighting style. No matter how much equipment, which would hinder those attributes, might seem necessary, it would only result in a drop of Renya's combat abilities.

"Margrave-sama! Incoming attacks!" Once Renya turned his eyes towards the black armor upon Kurz' warning, the black armor was readying its halberd in order to intercept the enemy that trespassed into its barrier. Countless black chains were about to be released towards Kurz from behind the black armor.

In response Kurz also unleashed countless black snakes to face the armor's attacks. The chains and snakes clashed between the two. The chains pierced the snakes, and the snakes bit into the chains. It was a struggle for supremacy.

But, Renya, who watched that battle unfold, immediately realized that Kurz was being pushed back, albeit faintly. In contrast to the black armor which continued sucking strength from the dragonoid soldiers within the barrier, Kurz was completely cut off from any outside supply. If both were to continue expanding their strength in a similar manner as now, it was naturally obvious that Kurz would use up all his strength first as the one without any means to recover.

However, while that might be true, Renya couldn't simply tell him to eat the dragonoids laying around around them. That didn't mean that he hadn't a part of him thinking on an emotional level that it might be fine since there were some dragonoids who likely couldn't be saved anymore, but even Renya knew that it would result in a quite bad situation in regards to foreign affairs.

"I suppose it's my job to compensate for the parts he's missing," complaining about that in a murmur, Renya climbed Kurz' back, placed his feet on Kurz' shoulders, and started running while using the backs of the snakes as scaffolding.

Renya ran up to the place where the snakes and chains were clashing in no time despite using an unstable footing which was shaking intensely. After a light jump, he next used the chains as footing and closed in on the black armor in one breath.

The black armor, which stopped manipulating the chains while revealing a faint hint of unrest, swung its halberd at Renya who was soaring high above its head after jumping before the chains lost their stress. To counter that, Renya performed a forward somersault in midair while falling, and countered the halberd's upward slashing blade with a slash that contained his full centrifugal force.

The full power slash, unleashed while using his falling speed, the centrifugal force, and even the spring force of his entire body, cut into the ax blade's part of the halberd up until a depth of twice the katana's blade width, but Renya's expectation of him being able to sever the ax blade in one go was quickly betrayed.

"It stopped!?" Renya was shocked.

Renya's katana had cut very deeply into the halberd's blade, but it ended up being fully stopped just as the katana's blade reached that depth.

Renya, who had no scaffold, had no option to put any strength into his katana as soon as it got blocked once.

In contrast to Renya who had lost his momentum, the black armor pulled back the the blade and performed a sweep with the opposing handle part of the halberd, aiming for Renya's flank. Being in midair without a foothold, Renya had no means to avoid that, but while blocking the bladeless handle attack with the sole of his feet, he used that handle as foothold without going against its force and jumped widely.

That allowed him to widen the distance, but there was no place for Renya where he could land. Renya resolved himself to suffer some injuries by landing on the ground which had countless needles turning their pointed ends upwards, but not allowing that to happen, Kurz had a black snake coil itself around a somewhat largish needle and performed a high-speed move by drawing himself towards that needle.

"Margrave-sama! Over here!" Kurz yelled. Responding to the call, Renya stretched his body as far as he could and did a somersault.

At the time when he landed on Kurz, who had made his way to the landing point while smashing the needles growing out of the ground, most of Renya's momentum was gone and he successfully carried out a soft landing soundlessly.

"Kurz, good move," said Renya.

"Landing with the momentum of being sent flying would have been really terrible, after all," said Kurz.

Judging from the difference in weight between Renya and the armor cladding Kurz, it was very likely that it wouldn't have bulged even a millimeter even if Renya had landed on him with quite a force, but for Renya that part was a question of how he felt about it.

"But, I certainly didn't expect the black armor to be able to block the attack just now," said Renya.

"Margrave-sama, you haven't properly strengthened yourself with mana...it looks like that big weapon and the chains are one and the same." Being told so by Kurz, Renya suddenly remembered.

Even though he had definitely been taught by Emedra how to properly reinforce his body with mana, he ended up slashing at the armor in the same manner as usual, thinking that it would work out one way or the other.

However, this could also be attested to the fact that the notion of strengthening his body with mana was prevalent in Renya's mind, and it was also impossible for him to develop such habit in the short time since learning it.

But, leaving that aside, Renya tried asking Kurz about a part of his statement that bothered him, "That halberd and the chains are the same, you say?"

"Yeah, that's what it looks like. Being able to stop Margrave-sama's attack was owed to it sending a part of what's forming the chains to the weapon for the sake of repeatedly repairing the blade, I think?" Kurz guessed.

Once Renya looked at the black armor after being told so, he realized that the great number of chains, which grew out of its waist, had mostly vanished without him noticing.

Apparently being able to stop Renya's slash wasn't a result of the black armor's skill or the weapon's strength, but simply because it was continuously repaired from the outset while being cut up. What actually happened was it being able to stop the blow because the repair speed seemingly surpassed the cutting speed.

"So basically that means it's nothing that can't be cut," Renya summarized.

"For me it became easier~," Kurz rejoiced.

Because the black armor had rerouted the power forming the chains to the weapon, the number of chains had dropped sharply, and the fight between the snakes and chains had heavily shifted in favor of the snakes.

Kurz attacks, which now excelled in numbers, reached a point where they frequently got through to the black armor, but they didn't reach its main body as they were blocked by the halberd's blade.

"Can you overcome its resistance at this rate?" Renya asked while riding Kurz shoulder.

"I wonder?" Kurz inclined his head to the side and after pondering about it for a little while, he shook his head and said, "No good. It's recovering, after all."

For the moment Kurz' snakes were overpowering the black armor's chains, but Kurz had noticed that the black armor was starting to recover its numbers of chains, albeit only slowly, while repelling the black snakes with its halberd. Kurz immediately knew that it originated from the black armor sucking the power from the dragonoid soldiers without a change.

Among those soldiers, some were on the brink of turning into mummies and others went beyond being mummies, turned into dust, and were about to crumble, but it seemed like there were still

many more soldiers who had strength left.

"How troublesome. With the numbers being what they are, I think it still has a lot of leeway left to recover." Renya assessed.

"Isn't it just fine to hinder it from recovering then?" Kurz asked and fleetingly glanced at the soldiers laying at his feet.

Although he had a somewhat bad premonition, Renya decided to be polite for the time being and tried asking, "And the method to achieve that would be?"

"Cleaning up the recovery medicine scattered around here." Kurz answered indifferently.

"...You should stop that. It's also bad for your reputation," warned Renya while knocking Kurz' helmet with his fist.

Seemingly somewhat unhappy, Kurz groaned quietly and lowly, but nodded at Renya's words nonetheless as it was apparently nothing he would obsess over to the extent of enforcing it.

"But Margrave-sama, as long as that armor continues to recover, everyone will turn into dust sooner or later, you know?" Kurz rebutted.

"Well, I guess that's true as well...but if we dirty our hands, it will likely cause various problems," Renya conceded.

'There's already one seed of trouble. The fact that one of that obstinate Witenagemot and moreover the son of its chairman had been easily killed in action will likely turn into quite the cause of trouble afterwards,' was Renya's concern, although only in secret.

Renya had been taking the situation lightly, thinking that he wouldn't die that quickly since he was the commandant of 10,000 soldiers. He thought he just should have wrapped him up in a bamboo mat, if he had known that it would turn out like that, but now it was too late for that. It was Renya's honest wish that he didn't want to add any more seeds of troubles, seeing as he couldn't change what had already happened anyway.

He fully understood that it was a situation that might have the unfortunate consequence of annihilation, but whether that result was achieved through their hands or those of the demons made a difference like heaven and earth.

"Getting through this situation in one go...I wonder whether that's not somehow possible." Renya pondered.

"I don't really care, but if you're going to make up your mind, you have to do it quickly as it's going to completely recover otherwise, Margrave-sama," Kurz said while sensing that the attacks by the chains were gradually gaining in intensity.

"I'm lacking a trump card here, but I'm going to attack it once more. Can you pick me up once more, Kurz?" Renya asked.

"Leave that part to me. Also, go after reinforcing yourself properly, okay Margrave-sama?" Kurz voice held back Renya who was about to kick off Kurz' shoulder after forgetting about this once again.

After Renya looked at Kurz, who seemed to have somehow chuckled under his breath, for an instant with an unhappy expression, he reconsidered since it was his own carelessness that caused this reminder, and began to strengthen himself with mana as he had been told by Kurz.

Although you might call it 'began,' there wasn't any kind of chanting or ceremony involved. Basically reinforcement through mana meant being precisely aware of the mana flowing in one's body, strengthening and broadening that flow, and making sure that it could flow smoothly.

In case it was about using that towards an item and not one's body, it added the conditions of the amount of mana to be used and the creation of a circuit that would allow the mana to flow into the target item as well as the maintenance of all that, but if it only concerned the strengthening of one's body, such troublesome procedures weren't necessary.

Renya shut his eyes and imagined the flow of mana. It was an image of the mana branching off a thick, large flow into many smaller ones, like the blood flow, and spreading into each cell including even the furthest corners of his body. That was possible due to Renya's knowledge of a human's body being a gathering of cells, but Renya misunderstood one thing here.

The method of strengthening through mana in this world was normally based on the imagining of something like bones if for the whole body or one stream of mana heading into an arm, if to strengthen one arm.

However, Renya, who happened to know about cells, was under the impression that reinforcement meant spreading mana into each and every cell. As result of that he let his mana flow while imagining blood veins and not bones.

If a common sorcerer had done something of a similar scale, they would have easily run out of mana and fainted. But, for Renya using such a huge amount of mana didn't matter. Renya strengthened his whole body through mana with an accuracy that any run-of-the-mil sorcerer would have likely failed to control if they had let the mana flow with the same attention to detail.

Speaking of what would happen as result; it was a technique that exhibited its power in proportion to the used amount of mana, and the time and effort it took to cast the spell, and it was obvious that it would display its effectiveness in accordance with that.

"Huh? Somehow...I have a bad feeling, Margrave-sama," Kurz spoke up in bewilderment due to the signs he sensed from Renya's body, but Renya didn't notice it as he was concentrating.

Kurz, who was assailed by a extremely bad premonition, temporarily increased the power he was releasing, manipulated the snakes, and once he pushed back all chains of the black armor, he stabbed his snakes into the ground within the momentary break he gained, using them to anchor his body.

"Go for it, Margrave-sama," he called out to Renya.

"Okay...I'm off," Renya said and kicked off Kurz' shoulder.

In that instant Kurz felt as if he had heard violent screams from the shoulder Renya had used. The armoring, which wouldn't get dented even if hit by something like a wyvern, received so much damage that it caved in due to the impact left behind by Renya's soles.

Even though Kurz had braced his feet, he slithered several meters backwards while scraping off the ground. Of course the torsos of the snakes, which he had stabbed into the ground to serve as anchors, groaned loudly under the stress and were ripped apart, causing Kurz to feel a chill run down his spine.

And it wasn't just Kurz who wondered just what the heck had happened.

Even Renya was flustered when the black armor approached right in front of his eyes the instant he thought that he had kicked off Kurz's shoulder.

Even though he didn't recall having used this much power because he was borrowing Kurz's shoulder, the enemy had appeared right in front of him before he even noticed.

That enemy apparently couldn't understand why Renya was there either. The armor kept standing stock still without intercepting with the chains or attacking with the halberd at all.

Renya decided to postpone pondering about what happened in favor of bringing down the black armor. Because the casualties would only continue to grow as the barrier and the traps had been disabled, he subdued the questions welling up within him, and brandished his katana at the black armor, which hadn't reacted yet, in a flash.

