

## **Chapter 188 - It seems to be the Post-War Period after the Recapture**

"Achooo!"

Hearing a very little, lovely sneeze, Renya opened his eyes. Once he looked up to the sky, the sun had gone down quite a bit, and its color had changed. He felt like the temperature had fallen a bit as well.

The place was the dragonoid's capital which they had taken back from the demon army, on top of the wall surrounding that city.

Since he had nothing to do in particular, Renya had placed down a rocking chair, which he had stolen from some vacant house, and had been nodding off on top of it, but as he apparently had too much free time, he ended up falling asleep. He noticed that the height of the sun had changed quite a bit in comparison to before his consciousness blacked out.

Many hastily made tents were spreading out below the wall. While the dragonoids were restlessly going back and forth as they carried and housed wounded soldiers, Rona's loud voice could be heard as she was at her wits' end, "The severely wounded over there! Prioritize the wounded whose lives are in danger regardless of the size of their injuries! Those with small and inconsequential injuries have to wait! Please bear with the pain! First those whose lives depend on it! Be accurate with the triage! Otherwise those that have been rescued will be lost as well! Cast away social status and similar!"

A strangely arrogant soldier called out to Rona or something from among the dragonoids that were moving left and right. Renya couldn't hear what he was saying from where he was, but he immediately grasped from Rona's face, which had become ill-humored in the twinkling of an eye, that he must have said something quite disagreeable to Rona.

"Staff of the Witenagemot!? I don't give a damn, just lay down over there, will you!?" Rona yelled.

Rona's frontal kick, which she unleashed without minding that the thighs of her nicely-shaped leg were in plain sight after the hem of her priestess' garb rolled up, directly hit the abdomen of the slightly cocky soldier. The soldier's body, which was blown away without him being permitted to even scream, passed through the entrance of a tent where the wounded had been gathered, and vanished from sight.

With a stunned feeling, Renya, who thought that the soldier had now likely joined the group of severely wounded even if he had minor injuries before going by his appearance, turned his eyes from below the wall to the source of the sneezing, which had likely caused him to wake up. Right next to his rocking chair, Emil was hugging herself with slightly trembling shoulders.

Seemingly having noticed the look of Renya who thought that she was certainly wearing a cold-looking attire, Emil looked into Renya's direction with a somewhat not fully satisfied expression.

"Yo, Renya. Had a nice rest?" Emil asked.

"Looks like it. You're not cold, Emil?" Renya replied with a question of his own.

Being asked that, Emil blushed faintly. Apparently she had thought that Renya was fully asleep, and certainly didn't expect him to wake up from her sneeze.

"I might feel slightly cold." She answered honestly.

"Well, no wonder in such a get-up." Renya retorted.

Compared to the other members, Emil's clothes certainly showed a lot of skin. Renya had been wondering whether she was wearing such an outfit because she was actually resistant to cold and heat since she was a demon, but that somehow didn't seem to be the case.

"You're not really tactful, are you Renya? Wouldn't you usually lend a woman your coat if she told you that she's cold?" Emil complained while pouting a bit, apparently dissatisfied with Renya's reply.

Renya replied after pinching his coat a bit, "If I lent you this, I would feel cold since I only wear a shirt below, wouldn't I?"

"...You're really a totally lost case..." Emil said with a sigh.

Renya, who was dissed by Emil with the look of a teacher watching a bad student, thought that it would be fine to ignore her just like that, but somehow felt that Emil would regard him as an even worse disappointment in that case, and thus opened his inventory reluctantly. He had put the change of clothes, which Frau had prepared for him, in there. Renya took out a coat similar to the one he was wearing right now, and tried to lend it to Emil. But she sighed deeply.

"What is it?" Renya asked, puzzled.

"Not that one...the one you're wearing right now, Renya." Emil pointed out.

Not understanding the meaning even after being told so, Renya stopped moving while holding the coat he took out in his hands.

Emil repeated her demand, "I said, I'd like you lend me the one you're wearing right now, got it Renya?"

"Why? This one is clean. The one I'm wearing at the moment is dusty and sweaty, you know..." Renya tried to argue.

"Hand me that one." Emil insisted.

Still not understanding the reason, Renya took off his own coat for the time being, and handed it over to Emil. Then he put on the one he had taken out of the inventory while puzzled. Emil took Renya's coat, and put it on while spilling a small chuckle.

"Yeah, as I thought, this one's better." She said happily.

"I don't get the meaning behind it. Does it have anything to do with some kind of hobby characteristic to demons?" Renya inquired.

"...Yeah, you're a slightly disappointing guy after all." Emil evaluated Renya who had entrusted his back to the rocking chair again.

Receiving such assessment lacked an understandable reason and cause to Renya. Arbitrarily deciding that it must be some profound knowledge or something along those lines, which was out of his range, Renya decided to cease any further pondering about this matter.



"If you're told the same thing by Shion, lend her the one you're wearing. Got it?" Emil added.

"Why does the name of Shion come up here?" Renya asked in wonder.

"Listen, just do as I told you, okay?" Emil reminded him once more.

Renya was wondering why she was telling him to lend out a dirty coat, but Emil stood next to Renya's chair, and repeatedly tapped Renya's head. Renya felt as though being somewhat treated like a child because of that gesture, and snorted.

"For now I'm going to say that I understood. So, what's the result of your investigation?" Renya inquired.

The heroes, who weren't present here, as well as Kaede, Croire, and Shion headed out to explore the recaptured capital of the dragonoids. It was a mission to search for survivors, and kill demons and monsters that might have still remained behind. After adding dragonoid soldiers to their ranks and splitting up into teams, they have been thoroughly investigating the buildings of the fairly big city and examining the current state of this city.

Renya himself believed that it was mostly hopeless, but the dragonoids stubbornly believed in the chance of finding survivors. Also, given that the enemy army, besides the black armor which Renya took on, was nowhere to be found, Renya expected that enemy soldiers were certainly hiding themselves inside the city.

Renya carefreely considered it to be something like a little city adventure, but even so, it was a fact that he wanted to get some definite information as fast as possible, and thus asked Emil to separately investigate the city. It was a request based on the thinking that she would doubtlessly be able to provide conclusive, precise information a lot faster than the investigation by the dragonoid soldiers. As Emil looked at him with a broad grin, Renya thought that he apparently hadn't made a mistake in his choice.

"The investigation is done and over with. Ah, the dragonoids are still at it, though. Them fearfully advancing all over the place is quite the pleasant sight." Emil said, ridiculing the investigation by the dragonoids.

"You'd be called a bad person for saying it like that." Renya rebuked her lightly.

"I'm no person anyway." Emil retorted.

Although Renya believed that to be a terrible way to retort, it would bear no meaning even if he tried to get to the bottom of this matter. As it actually wasn't a lie that she was no person, Renya lightly lifted both hands as if to indicate that he gave up.

"So? What's your impression?" Reny probed further.

"There are no survivors. Regardless of friend and foe, though." Emil reported.

"Everyone ended up in the black armor's belly, eh? What a glutton." Renya commented nonchalantly.

"Well, I wonder about that? You remember those objects with the bad taste outside the city? The

city is plastered with similar objects in great numbers all over. Though it's no biggie to omit those as bad taste." Emil spoke in a manner that allowed for various things to be implicitly included.

Renya avoided to comment for the time being, and urged her to continue.

"You're not going to argue it, eh...? Anyway, I think that those scattered objects might be some kind of camouflage." Emil supplemented.

"What's your basis?" Renya checked.

"Most of the corpses were destroyed for fun. I don't know who did it, but I think it's better to clean those away as it's a horrible taste. But, that doesn't apply for several of the corpses." Emil explained.

"I see?" Renya said with uncertainty.

"They were properly dissected to such an extent that anyone, who saw them, would understand. Though I don't get the goal behind doing something like that or why it was necessary to hide it. They were reasonably skilled. Wanna have a look?" Emil extended that strange invite to Renya while smiling in an ill-natured manner. However, Renya refused by shaking his head.

Renya didn't happen to have a hobby of examining dissected corpses. In the first place, he wouldn't be able to tell apart whether the corpses had been irresponsibly cut apart or sliced precisely following some principle backed by a precise technique. That's why he merely thought, 'Oh, is that so?' when he was told about it by Emil.

"So, what's your opinion as an expert?" Renya asked.

"I can't really say much since I'm lacking information. Any possibility ranging from some advanced, religious ceremony to simple preference could be right or wrong. To me it looks like it suggests the line of thinking that it's some crazy art by a psycho demon king, but what do you think?" Emil answered.

Renya envisioned the sight of the demon king, whom he somehow managed to imagine, diligently creating objects of art with the corpses of his enemies all by himself. The impression given by that image was extremely distorted to Renya, probably because he had no artistic inclinations. Rather than a gruesome scenery, it somehow had the atmosphere of black comedy found in American comics. In a hurry Renya erased that image from his mind.

"Don't ask for my opinion. Since everyone goes to heaven once they die, violating corpses is the act of trash. The hobby of cutting corpses without even eating them is something I can't comprehend." Renya replied.

"I see, so that's your opinion on this. It's a very interesting piece of information." Emil said.

"What kind of information gathering are you doing here, just what kind...anyway, do you have any other information?" Renya called out to Emil, bringing her back to reality as she was writing something down on a memo she had taken out of her hotpants' pocket while grinning.

Emil answered Renya's question without stopping the hand writing down notes, "Even if you ask

that, there's no one left to ask. Saying that it's impossible to procure information is me speaking the truth, you know? Ah, I tried to investigate the roads here and there in the city, but there's no doubt that some formations that can probably be used as sorcery arrays have been set up, after all."

"As expected, eh?" Renya sighed.

"The spell, which hit the dragonoid army outside the wall, might have been an effect of the arrays drawn in this city. You're goin' to make sure that they can't be used any longer?" Emil asked.

"Yeah...or rather, just as I thought, it would be easier to simply blow away the city and all once." Renya complained.

"I agree with that opinion, but the dragonoids likely won't approve of that." Emil argued back.

Even Renya knew that the dragonoids wouldn't simply tell him to go ahead if he told them, "Please allow me to completely destroy your capital once since some weird formations have been set up." Having said that, it's not like he couldn't leave those alone just because of that. The power of a spell that was invoked through a sorcery array using the entire city was easily understandable from the devastation of the dragonoid army outside the city. Leaving the formation in a state that made it possible to use it was far too dangerous.

"I guess there's no other option but to sever the circuits of the array at several places..." Renya mused.

"That's dangerous, but it looks like it will be difficult to make the dragonoids understand. And I found the facility with the transfer gate of this city. That one hadn't been destroyed, and there are no traces of weird traps either. It's clean." Emil informed Renya.

"I see, that's a good piece of information." For Renya the news that the transfer gate was in good shape was an extremely important piece of information. After all Renya was planning to plot his escape from the dragonoid continent.

'If Linus was alive, it might have been fine to return to take a peek at the creepy faces of the Witenagemot', he thought, but Linus had been easily killed in action. In Renya's eyes it was owed to Linus's own naive foresight, but very likely the Witenagemot, and especially its chairman, wouldn't consider it like that. In that case it was easy to imagine that they would lay the blame for Linus's death on Renya and the heroes.

'As long as it isn't all that hard to imagine this, I should consider some kind of measure to deal with that.' That's why Renya readily chose to run away.

"Well, the distribution channel for materials has been established. If they come after us to complain, I just have to threaten them to cut off the food supply, I guess." Renya made up his mind.

"That's true. I think we should indirectly tell the others to start assembling after choosing a good time to finish their investigation." Emil suggested.

"If Albert makes trouble, we will kidnap him." Renya added.

"Sure thing. It's fine to leave things to me if it comes to surprise attacks." Emil declared confidently

while throwing out her chest, proud of words that don't actually warrant any boasting.

"I guess we're going into action then. Before anyone notices anything or kicks up a fuss, that is." Renya stated.

"Yeah. Well, I will go secure the transfer gate while at the same time spreading the word. By the way Renya, there's something I'd like to ask. Can I?" Emil suddenly lowered the volume of her voice and asked with a serious look.

In response Renya nodded while wondering just what she wanted to know.

Emil looked around her, and after confirming that no one was nearby, she brought her face close to Renya's face, asking him with a very quiet whisper while covering her mouth with her right hand, "Is it better for me to return the coat after washing it? Or do you want me to return it just like that after wearing it on top for one night? Which do you prefer, Renya?"

After fixedly staring at Emil's face that was right in front of his own, Renya silently grabbed her head with an eagle grip.