

## **Chapter 193 - It seems to be in the Middle of Travel**

The location was a certain road stretching from the Kunugi Margraviate to the north. As forests were growing on both sides, it was a route with bad visibility.

There was no other option but to ask the creator what kind of intention they followed when they built the road as they did, but the road itself was actually quite old, and it was obvious that its creator wouldn't be alive anymore.

The fact that the sight on both sides of the road was obstructed by forests made it the perfect spot for ambushes. There might have been some kind of reason to build it like that based on a territory's defense, but leaving times of war out of this, it bore absolutely no meaning in times of peace.

A group was motionlessly lying in wait inside that forest. It was obvious at a glance that their arms and clothes were worn-out, and their equipment lacked any kind of unity. They were dirty and it was obvious with one look that they weren't any decent people to begin with.

They fixedly stared down the road with the glaring eyes of starved beasts while keeping their bodies low. What they were waiting for was a big trade caravan that got caught in their intelligence network. In short, they were bandits.

Having obtained the information that a trade caravan, which would be fully loaded with cargo, would travel along this road, they were on alert, eagerly awaiting for the merchants to arrive.

Of course, if it was such a big trade caravan, they would naturally have quite a few guards with them. However, it often happened that low-ranking adventurers looking to earn some extra change were hired for such things, and if their ability was low, their experience in group and interpersonal battles would be lacking as well.

On the other hand, the bandits might be several levels worse off in regards to equipment if compared to adventurers, but they were used to group and interpersonal battles, and on top of that, they had the numerical advantage on their side.

It's a digression, but genuine bandits don't exist in this world. Most of them are dropouts like farmers, who went broke, or adventurers who were excommunicated by the guild after showing too much bad behavior. Them going down the path of criminality might have some parts that could be somewhat pitied, but if you see it from the eyes of the ones being attacked, there's no big difference whether they do it for the sake of survival, to get food, or for pleasure.

However, seemingly because those were the reasons for them to crop up, the number of bandits in the Kunugi Margraviate was negligible. After all, there was plenty of work in a new territory like the Kunugi Margraviate as long as one wasn't particular about the type of work.

Even if the citizens didn't go out of their way to meddle with occupations like banditry that had few people doing it because of the dangers, they would receive jobs by normally asking at the employment agency, and those working diligently could always live affluently.

For that reason, the bandits, who existed in the Kunugi Margraviate, were only people who had wandered in from other territories after hearing about the good situation in the Kunugi Margraviate.

"Oi, I see 'em." One of the bandits said with a quiet, stifled voice.

At the end of his line of sight they discovered a cloud of dust raising far down the highway.

"Isn' it somewhat weird?" Someone voiced out, showing signs of suspicion.

It's because the amount of dust being blown into the air seemed to be abnormally big, but another bandit ridiculed those words, "Ya gettin' cold feet? If yer pressin' on with yer wagons that are fully loaded, such an amount of smoke is blown up, ye?"

"Ya might b' rite."

"Hey, ye shitheads! Shut yer traps and get rdy." A man who seemed to be the leader ordered.

Accordingly, the bandits began to prepare. Although it was called preparation, it was only about several bandits grasping the rope, which they had spanned across the road and then hidden beneath a layer of sand, for blocking the road. The remaining bandits drew their respective weapons and simply got ready to attack all at once as soon as ordered.

All that was left was to pull the rope to block the road once the trade caravan was passing their location, and attack with everyone once the merchants' wagons came to a halt.

There were also times when the bandits would choose the method of blocking the road with their own bodies, but once they had done that several times, even their targets came up with countermeasures, and the number of trade caravans, which tried to break through by running the ones blocking the street over after adding leather and metal guards to their horses and wagons, had been increasing. Once that took place, those breaking through got injured as well, but because the bandits were naturally injured as well, it led to a loss of combat power on the bandits' side.

However, while that may be true, it didn't mean that the likes of bandits could blockade the road with some kind of big trap. And assuming they were able to do so for argument's sake: If the road would lose its usability because the cleaning up of the trap would become difficult, it would result in the trade caravans passing through there decreasing, effectively lowering the bandits' spoils.

Hence they came up with the method of stopping the horses, which would likely pull the wagons, with a rope as a compromise. Even if the merchants were to force through their way in this case, the horses would fall over, or it would suffice to simply let the rope go assuming it looked like the horses would break through.

As long as they could completely stop the horses, the bandits would be able to proceed to their heart's contents afterwards, be it burning it all down or killing everything.

That was the case until that day.

Having finished their preparations as usual, and waiting at their stations as usual, the bandits started to hear explosions that weren't as usual in any way. Not that much time had passed since they had confirmed the cloud of dust in the distance.

"The hell's this?" The bandits started to become noisy because of the sounds they weren't used to hearing.

Going by the eye measurement at the time when they saw the clod out dust, there should still be plenty of time left until that, which appeared to be the targeted trade caravan, would reach the place where they were lurking, but the cloud of dust suggested that it had closed the distance considerably, and the explosions, which were of completely unknown origin, continued to rise in volume as if to indicate that the caravan was approaching at a great speed.

"A-Ain't somethin' wrong here?"

"Idiot. If it's different, so be it. Ain't it fine to simply slaughter the guys comin' first and then aim for the ones coming next?"

Bandits starting to get flustered appeared among them, but as they were shouted down by the others, they had no choice but to stay where they were. If they had let those wanting escape to their own devices at this time, things might have turned out differently further down the road, but although

they believed that things would proceed as usual, following their expectations, that turned out to be their doom.

"Hey, they comin'! Pull the rope!"

"Huh? Somehow I don' see any horses..."

Having reached this point, some others finally noticed the abnormality of the situation as well, but the other bandits, who had their eyes only set on their prey, had already become unable to make a calm judgment, and shouted at them.

"Shut the fuck up! Just stop it, the rest's gonna work out somehow."

As ordered, the rope was pulled, and some of the quick-tempered bandits showed up on the other side. While readying their swords and axes which they were holding and flaunting, they turned their eyes towards what might be a wagon, which was closing in while kicking up a cloud of dust, and had their expressions freeze once they noticed that they had been wrong.

"Wahahahahahaha! No matter how often I ride it, it's really, damn fun!"

They could hear a woman saying something while laughing wildly, but they had absolutely no spare time to pay attention to something like that. For the bandits it was something they saw for the very first time. It had a frame that appeared to be made out of some kind of metal, a square something that had been equipped with some unknown armor and leather while following some kind of intention.

For an instant it looked as though it might be a wagon, but if that were to be a wagon, it would be odd for it to lack the horses pulling it, and yet no horses could be seen. Even though it wasn't pulled, something like wheels raised a big cloud of dust, and were turning while causing thundering explosions. It was something completely outside the bandits' scope of knowledge and imagination. With only that much, they reflexively ended up being completely captivated by it, resulting in them being late in coping with the situation.

Once it thrust into the rope spanning across the road without dropping its speed at all, it went right ahead while pulling the rope along without decelerating its speed.

There was no way for the bandits, who had been on the other sides of the rope, to be able to evade that which had approached up to right in front of them just when they realized what was going on. Sounds of something wet and soft being knocked against something hard reverberated many times. Without being able to tell whether it was the bodies or faces of the bandits, who had hidden near the grove of trees or within, they were struck and sprayed by something with a slimy sensation, and an intense stench of iron rust was scattered into the vicinity.

The bandits, who had grasped the rope, missed the timing to let go of the rope due to the excessive speed of 'that' as it had passed through. Some were dragged along the road's surface for a while together with the pulled rope. Others were suddenly slapped against trees. And other, unluckier fellows were thrown against their comrades at that speed.

All of that happened in just an instant. None of the bandits could react. They, who were dumbfounded for a while as they followed the cloud of dust becoming more distant with their eyes, wiped the something clinging to their faces and bodies with their hands before long, and froze once they realized its true identity.

Those were smashed body parts of what used to be their comrades several minutes ago. Some raised hollow laughter due to the overly gruesome sight. Others immediately went down on all fours and

threw up everything in their stomachs, unable to hold back their urge to vomit. Even the bandits, who didn't go as far as that, were unable to take a single step away from where they were standing, and merely racked their brains with the questions, "Just what did we try to mess with?" and "What did we do for it to leave?", questions lacking any answers.

"Huh? Why are this many people around here...oh, those guys were bandits!?"

"Uoh!? What's this pool of blood...? Hey, you guys, just what..., bah, there's no one to answer this, is there?"

"Saaay, is it fine to catch them? I think we will be able to get a bounty since they are banditish, but it's fine to catch them, right?"

A little time passed after the something, which caused the bandits to be dumbfounded, had passed through. The trade caravan, which should have been the bandits' original target, arrived on-site. The escorting adventurers discovered a group of bandits, which didn't even try to move, in the middle of the forests on the sides and on the highway, resulting in them becoming extremely bewildered.

Going by their personal appearances, their equipment, and the situation on-site, it appeared for there to be no doubts about them being bandits, but even when the adventurers cautiously approached them, they didn't move at all, and didn't show any signs of resisting an arrest.

Blood, parts of bodies that obviously belonged to people, and countless clumps of meat, which couldn't be identified any longer, were scattered on the ground and in the surrounding forest. Given that there was a considerably high number of people, who died after being thrown against fellow bandits and trees with an excessively powerful force, the adventurers guessed that they might have been attacked by some kind of monster, but there was almost no one among the captured bandits who regained their sanity, and since even those, who barely did, started to confess incoherent things as they were in a state of not knowing what had attacked them at all, the investigation about them came quickly to an end, and all of them were taken along for their punishment.

"Hey, Emil. We definitely ran over something just now, didn't we?" Renya, who had been nodding off in the passenger seat of Emil's carefully produced car, woke up from a faint impact traveling across the car's frame, and asked Emil who was loudly laughing next to him.

Shion and Rona, both sleeping soundly as well, sat in the car's back seats. Renya's group, which had decided to choose whether to dig a tunnel until the sea or think up some kind of other method after actually having seen the sea for starters, took out the car, which Emil had built before and had then been stored in Renya's inventory, and were now in the middle of traveling straight north.

From Renya's point of view, it was something that made him feel slightly anxious, but the one most skilled at driving this car was Emil. As it couldn't be helped, he first asked Emil to accompany them, and then entrusted the driving to her.



Moreover, Shion and Rona requested to accompany him as well, claiming that it would be absolutely necessary to greet the noble governing the territory at their destination.

On the other hand, the ones not wanting to accompany him were Mayria, who had completely turned into a workaholic, and Croire who seemed to not have any interest in going to other human territories.

Since Renya had asked Frau to take care of his home from the start, she joined the group of those staying behind.

As for the four heroes: Kurz had been playing with the two priestesses who followed him around as usual, but the other three made themselves rare, seemingly having felt some kind of bad premonition. Renya admired how their intuition worked at the strangest parts.

For that reason, Renya departed this time to the Baron Gordonal territory for the sake of taking a look at the sea with only those four members, which was unusual considering it was him.

"Eh? Did we run something over, you ask? I don't think we did, though?" Emil replied.

"Please, I'm begging you, it's wrong to run over travelers or caravans, so don't do it. If you hit someone at this speed, they won't be able to remain people anymore, and we will be charged with big reparation payments." Renya pleaded.

This car was quite something even in regard to the sturdiness of its main body, but because it used a barrier at the same time, its sturdiness was boosted even further. On top of that, Emil went at the potentially highest acceleration this car possessed from the very start, driving it continuously at its highest speed.

However, even if she drove like this, the destination was at a distance that would still take more than half a day. Shion and Rona, who were sitting in the back seats, quickly lost consciousness, and were now in the middle of peacefully sleeping next to each other. Renya had remained awake for a while to monitor Emil, but he apparently fell asleep in due time.

"You're really a worrywart, Renya. It's fine. I won't run over 『things that mustn't be run over』, got it?" Emil exclaimed in annoyance.

"As if I could trust you." Renya retorted.

"How cruel. It will be alright, so just go sleep already. I will wake you up once we enter a city. If you like, I will arrange for an inn, and even take you to bed." Emil said jokingly.

For now it was scheduled that they would arrive in the evening in a city located in the Baron Gordonal territory, their destination. They had planned to spend a night in an inn over there, and then head to the city on the next day after greeting Baron Gordonal first.

"It's said that sleep brings up a child well, right? Since the two in the back are also sleeping while looking so happy, it's okay for you to be sound asleep as well, you know?" Emil commented.

"There's no way that I would make you drive all the way, is there?" Renya intended to take her fatigue into consideration as well, but for Emil that appeared to be unnecessary.

She laughed lightly through her nose, "I'm no one who would feel exhausted from something like this. Since my true abilities are different to begin with, you don't need to be strangely considerate of me, and should take a rest when you can. Don't you think so?"

"Really? Then...I will rely on you for a little while longer." Renya consented.

It's probably true that there's nothing better than sleeping,' Renya thought. Once he decided to sleep for a while, he didn't need much time to doze off.

Emil fixedly stared at Renya's profile for a while after he had started to snore once again while entrusting his back to the passenger's seat, but once she confirmed that he wouldn't wake up anytime soon, she headed towards their destination while churning up the acceleration close to the limit again, bringing up the speed which she had relaxed a bit.