

## Chapter 195 - It seems I Fought against the Baron

'One should probably be frankly surprised about astonishing things,' Renya thought. Going by that line of thinking, he had definitely no objection towards calling the sword skills of Baron Reicus Gordonal as surprisingly powerful.

After his initial slashing attack, they crossed swords five times until they distanced from each other again.

Renya had mostly parried and repelled the Baron's attacks, but he still attempted to send the Baron's weapon flying in two of the five sword rallies. And yet, the Baron's weapon was still in his hands, contrary to Renya's aim, despite having a few chips in the blade.

Of course Renya had gone easy on him. Renya would have been able to cut the sword alongside the Baron if he went at it for real, but Renya believed that he could still destroy the Baron's weapon despite that.

'I don't get why I couldn't break it,' Renya angrily glared at the Baron.

The instant blade clashed against blade, the Baron didn't allow Renya to cut into it. Or to be precise, he escaped his weapon's destruction by pulling back before Renya's katana could cut into it.

An attack didn't accomplish its goal by just hitting. It had to pierce or cut through on top of hitting. Anyway, if it didn't lead to causing damage, there would be no point in just hitting.

"You're experienced, to an irritating degree." Renya muttered.

However, adopting that defense method required to actually see through the attack in an instant. Because Renya thought that this should already be impossible for the Baron purely based on his reaction speed, seeing how old he was, it had to be a defense based on taking precautionary steps in advance relying on intuition and anticipation. It seemed to enter the region of a master or expert answering that they could do it for some reason when asked why they would be able to pull off something like that.

"Having grasped the reason right away, you are much more experienced than your age would suggest." Reicus answered.

Even though they had only crossed blades five times, the Baron was out of breath, and the hand holding the longsword was trembling faintly.

Renya had highly evaluated the Baron's abilities in his own way, but the Baron began to fear Renya's ability.

Certainly, the Baron succeeded in invalidating most of the damage of Renya's slashes. However, that wasn't because of him having completely seen through Renya's attacks. Although he hated it, Reicus was forced to understand that it was simply because Renya continued to use adjusted attacks against him.

After all, two deep cut lines were drilled into the sword in his hand and although he evaded its complete destruction, it still meant that he couldn't completely invalidate even those lax attacks. If he had been just an instant later in pulling back his weapon, the blade would have definitely been severed at that point.

For the sake of seeing those instants, the Baron had to concentrate on all nerves in his body. Even though he had a fairly trained body, he had already used up most of his stamina and was short of breath after merely five exchanges of blows.

In contrast to this, Renya didn't look exhausted at all. Because Renya possessed the ability <Super Recovery>, one could actually say that Renya possessed a boundless surplus, but the Baron didn't know about those circumstances. The only fact he knew was that his body likely wouldn't be able to deal with the next attack.

"I really don't want to get any older." Reicus said.

"If you have this ability at your age, you can still be on active duty at the front line for a much longer time to come yet, no?" Renya believed so from the bottom of his heart.

However, Reicus denied that while smiling sadly, "No, not at all. Even if I possess the technique, my body doesn't follow up. I'm already barely standing with my hands trembling and breath out of order."

"How honest." Renya replied.

"I'm old, after all. If I were twenty years younger, I wouldn't have allowed the worthless bunch of the central government to do with Shion-sama as they pleased, and I wouldn't have allowed the likes of a hero to do whatever he pleased." Reicus declared.

A Baron was placed at the lower end of those called nobles. While at it, a hero was commonly representing a single race, despite the tendency of it being forgotten because they weren't treated overly well around Renya. At the very least Reicus wasn't in a position to call nobles worthless, and there was no excuse for him attaching "the likes of" to the hero either.

"Though it looks like both were done away with by you, Kunugi-dono."

"I certainly did away with the hero, but I don't know anything about Trident Principality's nobles."

Once Renya continued that one of them was beaten up in an unforeseen accident during the mock battle carried out at Kukrika, both Reicus and Shion looked as if being surprised for some reason. Given that he hadn't told any lies, he didn't understand the meaning behind their reaction. Once Renya looked at Rona and Emil, those two deliberately averted their eyes. It seemed that something had happened and that it was apparently labeled as Renya's deed. Renya could guess as much from the reactions of everyone present here.

Certainly, Renya had told Rona to make a list of all the nobles, but except for that one noble, who recklessly challenged him to a mock battle, Renya hadn't done anything to them as he was too busy. Especially not coming up with methods to take revenge on them.

Although he had indulged in the imagination of giving them hell, he realized that the ones being troubled the most would likely be the residents of the respective territories if he were to actually carry out his ideas. The fact that he would likely give the civil officials a lot of paperwork was yet another cause which made Renya hesitate to go on with taking his revenge.

"Well, not like it really matters. Even if my bad reputation got worse by one or two evil deeds, it probably doesn't make a great difference anyway." Renya gave up on pursuing that matter.

"So you're aware of your own bad reputation," Shion retorted with a murmur, but Renya pretended to not have heard that, and clearly ignored her.

Most recently Renya was in the process of learning that pretending to not hear something could be a much stronger attack than a katana slash in some cases.

"So, are you going to continue?"

Although Renya couldn't have his way with the Baron, it didn't mean that the Baron was able to tide through it completely unhurt.

"Let's see." Reicus released his combat stance, brought his face close to the blade of the longsword, and checked its state.

The sword, which was fairly sharp and had been carefully and frequently maintained, obviously had received damage beyond a repairable level as far as Reicus could see. Although he didn't know how many slashes it would last, it would definitely break or snap if they continued at this rate. Realizing that, Reicus shifted from a one-handed hold to a two-handed hold.

"I'd like you to keep me company for one more rally." Reicus said and got ready by shouldering the longsword which he was now grasping with two hands.

Seeing him, Renya's expression became grim. After all he somewhat knew what Reicus was aiming for with that stance.

"No matter how you look at it, you intend to launch the next blow with all your power, don't you?" Renya tried to make certain.

"Yes, of course." Reicus quickly answered.

"I think I said in the beginning that I won't do anything terrible as long as there's no reason to do so, but I'm going to judge that this would be a reason, okay?" Renya warned him in a low, cold voice.

"Do as you please," answered Reicus without any hesitation or faltering while smiling calmly.

Hearing those words, Shion was about to raise her voice in protest, but Reicus sharply stepped in quicker than she could speak up. The ground should be hardened and firm because of the soldiers' training which was repeatedly carried out here, but it couldn't withstand the power of Reicus' kick and a cloud of soil flew into the air.

Shion and Rona lost sight of Reicus due to his high speed movement triggered by the acceleration

which was generated through the force of the explosive kick. Because Emil was watching from the side on top of her own high innate abilities, it didn't go as far as her losing sight of him, but the composure vanished from her face for an instant. That's how strong his step-in was.

In addition to the acceleration from the charge, he put his entire body's strength into the slash that followed next. You could say it was the strongest attack Reicus could unleash at that point in time.

Although its power had likely fallen due to his age compared to the full-power slash in his youth when he struck down a cavalryman alongside the horse he was riding, Reicus had the confidence that even Renya wouldn't be able to deal with his attack nonchalantly.

However, that confidence was easily smashed apart.

Reicus was targeting Renya's left shoulder. The frontal slash was loaded with such a power that it would completely excel in penetrative force and power if Renya tried to block it with his katana.

But, Renya's response was a lot faster than Reicus had anticipated. What caused Reicus to be surprised in the first place was Renya's eyes looking directly into his. In spite of him being so fast that Shion and Rona lost sight of him, Renya's eyes were fully fixated on Reicus' movements.

Moreover, the slash unleashed by Renya produced a white flash in front of Reicus' eyes.

Until now Reicus had pulled his sword back each time Renya's katana and Reicus' sword clashed while adopting to Renya's swordsmanship so as to avoid his sword being cut, but for Reicus, who had mustered all his strength, there was no method to parry the blade of Renya's katana which reached his sword's blade before he could even swing his sword downwards.

The blade of his sword, which was cut off and sent flying all too quickly, flew off somewhere while whirling around. While registering that at the edge of his visual field, Reicus' charge still didn't stop. The blade of his sword being cut off was no more than one of the patterns Reicus had actually predicted. And he had already finished imagining how he should deal with it.

Because its blade was gone, Reicus let go of the sword which had become light, and attempted to grab Renya with his accumulated force. As he had cut off the attack aimed for his left shoulder while holding the katana in his right hand, the right half of Renya's body was wide open, and he showed his right flank to Reicus.

Reicus intended to grapple that flank and pull Renya down.

If he suddenly forced an opponent, who had been preoccupied with a sword against katana fight, into an unarmed grappling, that switchover would produce an opportunity and a small moment of hesitation. That's what he was aiming for.

Of course it was a gamble. Reicus knew very well that it was possible for his head to be sent flying next if Renya were to pull back the katana which he had swung through. He gambled on Renya hesitating to go this far.

"It's not that I don't understand how you feel, but it's pointless." The slightly fed-up voice came from above Reicus' head.

'Just how did he get up there?

Renya's body, which he wanted to grapple, was gone in front of him, and once he lifted his face, he looked into Renya's face which had become upside-down.



From the current situation, Reicus could understand that Renya had leaped over his head with a front lay-out<sup>[efn\_note]</sup>A Gymnastics term. Here's a video for it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqqRkjROIGw> <sup>[/efn\_note]</sup>. However, Reicus didn't have any memory of Renya having done any preparatory motions so that he could perform such a jump.

"You think that's a poor move, don't you?"

What he swung next was the pommel of his katana. Once it cleanly hit the temple of Reicus who had stopped moving, Reicus' body was blown away up to the wooden fence. Being out of bounds over there, his body hit the fence without having its momentum dampened much, and rolled outside the fence after destroying that place which should have been built quite sturdily.

"Renya!?! Master isn't dead, is he!?! Hey, he's not dead, yes!?" Shion, who had climbed over the fence, clung to Renya's shoulder after he had pulled off a clean landing, but after turning his eyes at the katana's pommel, which had struck Reicus' temple moments ago, he shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"He hasn't died, I think. It looks like he leaped by himself at the time when the hit connected." Renya soothed her.

Him rolling around flashily was also owed to the strong blow of Renya, but on top of it, it was also owed to Reicus jumping himself to negate some of the power in Renya's hit. The reason why he broke through the fence and rolled outside the training area was because he couldn't fully kill the power behind Renya's hit.

From the feedback remaining in his hand, Renya could sense that he didn't manage to deliver such a strong hit that it would have broken his neck bones or smashed his skull. It was a blow based on the assumption that Reicus would at least be able to adopt such defensive maneuvers, but with him having tumbled a long distance in such a flashy manner even after having adopted those defense measures, Renya even wondered whether the damage from that tumbling flight hadn't been bigger than the damage caused by his own blow.

"Well, look, there's no way that I would kill him." Renya ascertained Shion.

"That's...certainly true, but...master is an old man. You should have gone a bit easier on him..." Shion objected.

"If I had held back, I might have been the one to be cut down." Renya answered.

"That would have been troublesome, but..." Shion mumbled under her breath.

Looking in the direction where Reicus had flown off to, her eyes widened slightly when she noticed a figure having stood up and heading this way.

"Well, well, this was really...a surprise, Margrave-dono." While getting rid of the dirt clinging to his clothes by tapping them, Reicus returned through a gap in the broken fence with a smile after having flown through that gap moments ago.

As if telling a tale of the force of his flight, his clothes were torn all over, and the area of his temple,

which was struck by Renya, had swollen slightly with the skin being red, but he didn't seem to have suffered any injuries beyond that, and his walking stride was firm, too.

"It's my complete defeat, isn't it? Good gracious, you're strong." Reicus laughed.

"Look Shion, isn't he all lively?" Renya said while pointing at him.

Shion couldn't do more than smile feebly. Because Shion was in such a state, she didn't notice, but Rona and Emil, who were looking inside the fence while still being outside, had seen something different from Shion.

"It had quite the effect on Baron-sama, hadn't it?" Rona asked.

"Indeed, his knees are ridiculously shaky." Emil replied.

"Renya has realized as well, hasn't he?" Rona inquired further.

"Well of course. But, if he were to point that out, the master, who wants to look cool in front of his pupil would lose face." Emil chuckled.

Rona leaked a small sigh at Emil's behavior, and headed to Renya's group by nimbly climbing over the fence.

"Baron Gordonal-sama, please allow me to check your injuries and your body. It looks like you're alright, but there are cases where head injuries are serious despite looking shallow." Rona offered her medical treatment.

"T-That's right, master. Testing out Renya is over with this, right? Since you aren't young anymore, I'd like you to get checked by Rona." Shion pleaded.

Renya noticed how Reicus looked shocked when he was told that he wasn't young anymore, but without any intention to particularly point that out, he yielded his spot to Rona, who had approached, and stored the katana back into his inventory.

"I really don't want to get any older. It makes others worry excessively over trifle matters." Reicus grumbled while entrusting the check-up of his wounds to Rona, and added, "Even so, it brought about some results."

"I can't quite believe that you understood anything from the battle just now." Renya doubted his words.

"Your sword skills. The level of trust by your friends. And I somehow grasped just how much Shion-sama has grown emotionally attached to you, I'd say?" Reicus explained.

'Couldn't you have found out all of these except for my sword skill with a method that didn't involve combat?' Renya wondered, but as this was the style of the other party, Renya decided to leave it alone since Reicus had apparently grasped what he wanted to grasp.

Rather than that, Renya was bothered about Rona actively sending him eye signals outside of

Reicus' view while pretending to look at the state of his wounds. Even Renya had guessed that Reicus had suffered some damage and wasn't as healthy as he seemed, but going by Rona's expression, he had apparently received so much damage that it was necessary to quickly wrap this up and make him devote himself to his healing.

"I don't have any interest in your conclusions, Baron-dono. If we're done here, I'd like you to give your body a rest and give your undivided attention to an urgent medical treatment." Renya stated.

"What are you talking about? I'm not so poorly built that I couldn't fight with injuries of this level..." Reicus said while trying to firmly flex his biceps and arms, probably in an attempt to appeal that he was doing fine.

Rona immediately twined her slender arm around the Baron's neck, and made him faint by constricting his carotid artery in an instant.

Easily lifting the Baron's body, which almost sat down on the spot after losing all strength and showing the whites of his eyes, Rona bowed towards Renya in that state, saying, "I will work on his treatment right away."

"Sure, please do." Renya pulled slightly back from her all too experienced movements in making the Baron faint, but still managed to somehow respond to Rona.

Rona left while carrying the Baron's body.

"That was an amazing skill just now."

Once Renya muttered those few words, Shion, who was still clinging to him, muttered back in the same way, "It's a necessary technique so as to make sure that wounded people don't kick up a fuss. Rona previously said that everyone, who uses healing arts, would be capable of it..."

"I don't really wanna be treated by a priest of this world, is what I'm thinking right now." "Yep, I share your opinion on this." After following Rona's back as she became distant while carrying the Baron's body, Renya and Shion exchanged glances, and seriously said so from the bottoms of their hearts.