

## **Chapter 196 - It seems to be the Objective of the Visit**

A while after the battle between Renya and Reicus.

For some reason Renya's group was welcomed very warmly by the people of the Gordonal Barony. While not even understanding the reason for this treatment, they were led to the dining hall of Baron Gordonal's mansion and lavishly entertained with a feast consisting of the mansion's prized food and alcohol.

Because Renya and his friends were welcomed with bright smiles by everyone, even though their lord had collapsed as result of the duel, Renya suspected that the fief's population and the baron's retainers might hate Baron Gordonal, but once he tried to ask them about the reasons, their treatment had apparently a slightly different tenor.

Renya had previously heard that the baron was secluding himself inside his territory in a state of having partially retired ever since he lost his wife in the battle against the demon. That information wasn't wrong, but the baron repeatedly acted quite mischievously within his own territory.

To be precise, he continued going to hunt dangerous monsters in the forest under the pretext that his sword skills would decline otherwise, no matter how much his surroundings tried to put a stop to it. It seems he kept bringing back the materials of the monsters he hunted determinedly, which caused the people around him to be extremely worried.

Once Renya asked how that was connected to the current situation, he was told that it was Baron Gordonal's cherished sword which Renya had broken, and procuring a replacement would take quite a while. In addition, the damage he suffered through Renya in the duel, caused him to bear deep injuries according to Rona's examination, and he was ordered to consequently rest for a while.

The viewpoint that even the baron would likely stay put in his mansion for some time because of these two points spread among the people, resulting in Renya, who was the cause, to be warmly welcomed. The one who explained all that while crying was an elderly butler personally serving the baron.

Emil sampled the served dishes, ignoring the conversation as usual since it apparently didn't pique her interest. Apart from her, Rona and Shion, who had question marks floating above their heads while modestly partaking on the food, looked as if that explanation had convinced them.

Only Renya harbored remorseful feelings as he might have done something bad to the baron and showed an apologetic expression. That was just because he could somehow understand the feelings of the baron who had been setting out to hunt in the forest even while being told off by his surroundings because of the dangers.

'The baron lost his spouse and many of his men in the battle against the demon. It's easy to imagine that all of them were important to him. What kind of feelings did the baron have when they were abruptly and completely stolen from him? Very likely he wished for his own death as well, didn't he?' Renya assessed.

'In that case, the easiest way without causing any trouble to his surroundings might be to thrust a

drawn blade into his own neck,' Renya thought, but he could also comprehend that this was an unacceptable way for a military man. 'In other words, isn't the reason for the baron having earnestly kept fighting to such an extent that he worried his surroundings because he wanted to find his death at the end of the battles lying ahead?'

Renya had stopped while saying things without knowing the baron's wish. Renya deeply breathed out due to the somewhat gloomy feeling welling up within his heart.

'I think it's different from a guilty conscience, but I cannot help feeling that it's something similar to that. It's as if I, an outsider, have gotten in the way of what a military man had decided for himself.'

Of course it had been the baron who challenged him to the duel. It was probably nothing that Renya would need to worry about, but even so Renya couldn't stop himself from thinking so.

'For a person trying to live from battle, the blank time when they are told to rest merely results in their body becoming weak. If one is still young, they can recover their previous condition through training, but even if the baron could achieve that with his old body, it will likely require a fairly long period of time, and it might actually prove difficult for him to get back to his previous condition. In addition to having lost his favorite weapon, he shouldn't be able to fight very well with his body in such a state. And yet, I'm sure the baron will recklessly go hunting again once his wounds have healed.

"Renya, you okay?" Shion called out to him, looking worried.

In response, Renya returned from his deep brooding. Shion, who was sitting next to him, had gently placed her hand on his shoulder. Going by her expression, he realized that his feelings had shown on his face. Thus Renya quickly switched to a smile while slightly flustered.

However, because of this expression change, Shion apparently guessed what Renya was thinking about, "Is it about master?"

"Yeah...I wondered whether I have gone a bit too far, or something like that." Renya replied.

"How unusual. For you to reflect on something, that's quite a surprise, you know?" Emil, who sat opposite of Renya, said with a slightly mean smile.

It's not that Renya didn't feel a bit offended by it, but he kept his mouth shut because she had spoken the truth.

Seeing his state, Shion put a little bit more strength into the hand she had placed on his shoulder, and said, "Renya, master is someone who tried to make a living through battles as a swordsman. Since he had drawn his sword, he should have naturally made up his resolve in regards to the outcome. Besides, he's not the kind of person who complains about this and that. As someone who has been taught by him, albeit for just a short time, I will guarantee for at least that much."

"That's totally correct. Well, allow me to say that it's certainly nothing that you would need to worry about, Margrave-dono."

Renya was surprised to hear a decent and good opinion from Shion as it was extremely unusual for

that to happen, but he got even more surprised by the voice addressing him from behind. Once he turned around, he found Reicus standing there with a smile plastered on his face, his hands joined behind his back, and in a stylish uniform that used a black color scheme.

Close to Renya, who couldn't form any words because of his surprise, the butler, who had just now explained the reason for the warm welcome to Renya's party, said with a trembling voice, "I suppose even that damage wasn't enough to stop milord."

"There's still quite a way to go until I can be called old, is what I want to say, but this time it was slightly hard. Ah, is it fine for me to sit down next to you, Margrave-dono?"

Once Renya nodded, still unable to speak up, Reicus sat down in the seat next to Renya with an "Alley oop."

"This predicament after he has gone so easy on me, old age is really something terrifying." Reicus said.

"Baron Gordonal..."

"Please stop, Kunugi-dono. I was the one who started it, and I was the one who lost. If you now were even considerate of me, it would wake the urge in me to run away out of excessive embarrassment." Reicus added while laughing.

Renya stayed silent as he didn't know what he should answer.

"If I look at your face, I can roughly guess what you're thinking, but it's very likely just as you're generally suspecting."

"And yet you're telling me to not mind it?" Renya asked.

Reicus immediately dipped his head at that, "This might also be a guidance after all."

"Whose? What kind of guidance?"

"The guidance of that person and my subordinates who went ahead." Reicus muttered while seemingly looking in a far distance, adding, "I suppose they are saying something along the lines 'it's too early for you to come over here' or 'don't screw around by trying to come this way with such a method.'"

"That's...your interpretation, isn't it?"

"Indeed, but, for me that's reality, all of it."

Once he was told this much, Renya lacked a way to deny Reicus' words. After all the rest was Reicus' own problem, and nothing where others should butt in.

"Now, now, let's keep the depressing stories at that, okay? At any rate, it sure is nice to be young, isn't it Margrave-dono?" Renya raised an eyebrow at Reicus trying to change the topic in a fairly high-handed manner.

He didn't quite understand the meaning behind the words he was just told, but the eyes of Reicus, who was smiling complacently, fell on Renya's shoulder. The shoulder where Shion's hand still rested.

"It looks like you're being loved quite a bit."

"So that's the direction you're going for!?"

"Shion-sama doesn't look as though she's fully disinclined either."

"I won't deny that, but..."

"Isn't that fine? I was very popular in my young days as well, though." Reicus puffed up in pride as if wanting to say, "How about that?"

Renya felt doubts about the accuracy of that statement, but with her hand still on his shoulder, Shion brought her mouth close to Renya's ear, and whispered, "It's the truth. He was a person who had countless rumors about love affairs circulating until he finally settled down with his deceased wife."

"What are you saying, Shion-sama? If you're talking about that topic, I'm still going at full strength." Once Reicus said so while putting on airs as a hotshot with his eyes turned towards the entrance of the dining hall, shrill voices could be heard from over there.

When they looked in that direction wondering what was going on, women such as cooks and maids, who seemed to work at Baron Gordonal's mansion, had apparently squealed with only that behavior of the baron as cause. On a closer look, several among them were blushing, and their eyes were somewhat moist, or rather, passionate. At any rate, they donned expressions that couldn't be really described as normal.

It was a spectacle that couldn't be called anything but very ill-mannered for people working in the mansion of a noble, but Renya felt like it was somewhat difficult to make a retort here, and ended up thinking that it was better to not touch on that topic.

"Did you two see? This is what means to have the charm of a truly handsome man." Reicus smoothly brushed his hair up with a triumphant look.

While ignoring almost all of it, Shion calmly whispered additional information into Renya's ear, "I heard that he experienced being beaten half to death several times by his wife because he's like that. According to the rumors, having the baron as practice partner was the very reason why his wife's skills at sorcery improved so abnormally..."

"Putting that aside..."

Because Shion's secret talk apparently came dangerously close to a topic he didn't really want others to know of, the Baron increased the volume of his voice a bit alongside an unnatural clearing of his throat. In response to that, Shion shrugged her shoulders, stopped the whispering, and gently removed her hand from Renya's shoulder.

While feeling a tiny regret over losing the warmth on his shoulder just as her hand separated, Renya turned his attention towards the baron.

"For what kind of reason did you visit my modest territory with your friends on this occasion, Margrave-dono?"

"Now that you mention it, I was dragged to the training ground before I could mention why we are here, wasn't I?"

"Ha ha ha, I completely forgot what happened before."

Once Renya glared at him with narrowed eyes, the baron quickly averted his eyes as if to escape Renya's scowl.

Due to the Baron not changing his expression at all beside not making any eye contact even after Renya continued to glare at him for a while, Renya comprehended that it would be pointless to pursue the matter any further, and spoke of the objective of his visit which he had intended to speak about when they met at the beginning, "I heard that your territory is facing the ocean. There's no ocean adjoining my territory. I'd like to get my hands on marine products by all means."

"I see. However, I wonder whether you're aware of it, but this place hasn't any marine products as specialties." Reicus said something that conformed to Renya's prior information.

Renya had known about this, but when it was confirmed once more by a local, it really hammered it in as a fact.

"That's something I can't understand. Why is that the case even though you have the sea right in front of you?" Renya asked.

Reicus' expression as he looked at Renya's face was full of marvel wondering just what this person might be talking about. Next to Renya, who was puzzled as he hadn't intended to ask anything weird, Shion raised her voice with a little "Ah!"

"Baron Gordonal, Renya is a Lost. Thus there exists a lot of common sense he's lacking." Shion explained.

When she said that he lacked common sense, Renya ended up wondering whether that wasn't a faulty expression, but since he had no other way to explain it either, he had no choice but to contend himself with that explanation.

"Oh, Margrave-dono was a Lost? In that case it might be something he doesn't know, indeed."

Baron Gordonal could apparently agree, but to Renya it wasn't clear at all what was going on.

However, all that he could guess was that the reason why marine products didn't become a specialty product of the territory, although he possessed a territory adjacent to the ocean, seemed to be close to common sense in the eyes of the residents of this world.

"Margrave-dono. Since I don't possess any knowledge about the continents of the other races, I can't say this with absolute confidence, but on the human continent being adjacent to the sea and being able to use the sea don't always conform with each other." Reicus stated.

Renya couldn't understand the meaning behind having access to the sea but not being able to use it.

Shion explained the reason to Renya, who wondered whether the area around the ocean was contaminated with something like poison or something like that, "The Katurul will come out."

"What's that?"

It was a word he hadn't heard as of yet, but going by the faces of those around him becoming gloomy and them frowning as soon as they heard that term, he could guess that it wasn't anything good at the very least.

Renya, who believed that it might be necessary for him to hear the details about this, began to sort the facts he should confirm inside his head.