

Chapter 197 - It seems to be the Morning Beach

The world not being round but something like a pizza placed on a tray seemed to be accounted as comparatively common knowledge in this world. Given that Renya had also received an explanation about this fact from the little goddess, he had known it as a piece of information albeit not being able to understand it, but in reality there existed a supplement to that information.

"This world has the shape of a tray like this, but it appears there's a space between the continents and the tray at the bottom." Rona explained as her fluffy blond hair fluttered in the salty sea breeze while walking in front of Renya.

Rona's hair, visible through the gradually increasing sunlight beneath the cloudless sky, sparkled as if capturing the sun's light. It had a yet different charm from Shion's black hair that seemed to be wet, and Croire's platinum-blond hair that had a metallic touch.

The next day after the warm welcome in Baron Gordonal's mansion, Renya had slipped out of the mansion by himself to try having a look at the sea first thing in the morning, but for some reason he was spotted by Rona and forced to allow her to come with him. Because it felt as though he got caught by something the instant he sneaked out of his room, Renya guessed that Rona might have set up a probe through some kind of divine arts, but even after asking her about it, he didn't get her to tell him the details.

She apparently considered the concern that he would adopt a countermeasure in case a similar situation cropped up next time, if she were to tell him the answer.

Renya wasn't someone specialized at moving overly stealthily to begin with. Emedra, who had become the source of Renya's current sorcery knowledge, wasn't a being that would need to move around in secret. Probably because of that, Renya didn't have the slightest idea just what she had done, even after trying to search Emedra's knowledge.

"Even if I'm saying that it's a space, that doesn't mean that the continents are floating. You can think of it as countless pillars growing out from the tray at the bottom, and supporting the continents." Rona added.

"There are various, doubtful parts there, but...well, for the time being, okay." Renya answered.

'Questions such as who built those pillars, and who confirmed the existence of those pillars keep popping up within me, but our conversation won't get anywhere if I question all of it. I'm also pretty sure that it's not Rona's knowledge, but merely knowledge she had been told,' Renya assessed.

"The one said to live right below the continents as being that coils itself around those countless pillars is the Katurul, the dreamer."

"Huh?"

Renya felt like he heard a word that slightly weighed on his mind within Rona's explanation, but Rona continued without paying any attention to Renya, "Its appearance is said to be similar to a huge octopus, but it's unclear whether that's the actual truth. After all, no one has ever encountered

it, or survived to tell the tale. In legends it's passed on that it possesses eight main arms, but it looks like things similar to auxiliary arms are growing out in great numbers across its body."

"Ah...wait a second." Stopping Rona's explanation for a moment by placing his hand on her shoulder, Renya sorted his questions within his mind.

He picked what seemed to be the most important among them, and decided to throw that question at Rona who turned around while bending her head slightly to one side.

"You said dreamer, didn't you?"

"Indeed, that's what I said."

"It's not plural, right?"

Rona's explanation sounded to Renya as if talking about a single entity.

However, if it was a single being, the huge size of the continents would become an issue. After all, even if you just limited the considerations to the demon continent in the center, it boasted of a huge land with a length and width of many thousands kilometers.

If one was to consider all continents, the distances from one end to the other would turn into enormous values of several ten thousand kilometers.

If the being living beneath the continents was a single entity, it would boast an outrageous size skyrocketing far outside Renya's sphere of imagination. No matter how much it might be based on Renya's view of this world, he had posed that question with the faint hope that this world wouldn't be that much of a random bullshit, although you could say that its structure was completely nonsensical to begin with, but as expected, reality wasn't that kind to Renya.

"Because no one has ever seen the real thing, it's very difficult to say. However, if several beings similar to Katurul existed, this world would perish before we'd need to even mention something like a demon king."

"Somehow I feel like it will perish with just one of them existing, though..."

Probably because it was early in the morning, there were no people out on the streets. If this were a place similar to a fish market, it wouldn't be strange for fishermen and wholesalers doing business since quite early in the morning, but just as the baron had said that marine products weren't treated as local specialty, such a market and its users weren't present in this city.

"The reason why there are cities with no markets dealing with seafood and harbor facilities despite facing the ocean is the katurul. Didn't it strike you as odd, Renya? Like, why one mustn't cross the ocean to go to the neighboring continents, even if the land route is impossible because of the Miasma Forest and the demon's domain."

"I just thought that there existed no ships capable of crossing it." Even while having said so, Renya certainly had considered it weird as well; the abnormal fact of transfer gates being almost the only method to travel between the continents; and that one would normally consider ships to transport

many people at once, even though transfer gates might actually be the cheapest when it came to travel expenses for an individual.

"That's also one of the reasons, but the foremost reason is that one will always be attacked by katurul's arms and dragged into the sea if one tries to cross the sea to get to the neighboring continent. According to the legends, the katurul's main body is right below the continents, and it was handed down that two of its main arms are each extending to the ends of the world in the oceans between the continents," said Rona. "Moreover, countless auxiliary arms originating from those main arms are crawling across the sea bottom. In short, those katurul tentacles seem to wriggle around at the bottom of all oceans across the world. In several areas of the ocean, limited to those close to land, the existence of those tentacles hasn't been confirmed, despite them being part of the ocean. Those are areas where boats won't get attacked even if they sail forth. Only the towns facing the sea in those areas can deal with seafood as a special product." Rona brought her explanation to a close.

"Say...if you also include the arms, just how many ten thousands of kilometers in overall length is that creature supposed to have?"

"Who knows? The length from one end of the world to the other has never been measured to begin with." Once Rona tossed that reply at him quite indifferently, Renya was at a loss for words. "That's why it might be better to not expect getting your hands on a large amount of seafood in this place."

"Large amount? So a little amount would work?"

"It's a small amount at the level of casting a fishing line at the wharf. However...the probability is low, but if your fish hook gets caught in one of katurul's arms, it's the end. The katurul will never extend its arms towards the shore by itself, but if it gets stuck on a fish hook, it will judge that as an attack and extend its arms towards the shore."

"What's that? Sounds scary."

"It's no problem if the angler gets quickly dragged down, but there are stories that anglers were annihilated alongside their towns every now and then when they tried to run away in the past. Right now it's generally forbidden to fish at the wharf."

'Doesn't this mean that even small quantities of fish are impossible?' Renya wondered, but it looked as if that thought hadn't gotten through to Rona yet.

A message board had been set up in front of the two, who had walked up to the wharf facing the sea at the edge of the city before they knew it, as if to prove Rona's words as truth. It stated that the act of fishing was completely prohibited, and that one would be thrown into the ocean without questions asked if discovered to be fishing despite the ban.

"How aggressive..."

"Well, it will turn into a huge tragedy with just one mistake. It's not unreasonable to be very careful."

Because there was no pedestrian traffic yet owed to it being early in the morning, there seemed to

be no patrols going around, and the wharf looked deserted.

So far as it goes, the wharf itself had been paved with stones in an orderly shape, but not a single boat was floating on the water, and the wharf didn't possess any facilities for ships to moor either.

"Hence, I'd like you to give up on this matter, but apart from that...how about...umm, going to grab a breakfast at a restaurant around here, seeing how the two of us especially came here anyway." Rona said with a bit of hesitation mixed in, but although Renya's ears had registered her words more or less, his head didn't comprehend their meaning.

It's because he had spotted an unbelievable sight slightly away from them atop the wharf.

"Hey, Rona?"

"Umm, I have found out in my previous investigations that there are restaurants that serve breakfast with delicious salad around here. I'd like to go there together with you by all means, Re-....Pardon?" Rona, who had interrupted her speech in the middle, immediately reacted to Renya's call albeit with a slightly sullen voice.

'This kind of reaction might be one of the parts separating her from Shion', Renya thought. 'If I were to talk with Shion, she probably wouldn't get back to the matter at hand, continuing to endlessly ramble on by herself, unless I gave her a strong retort.'

"Fishing is strictly forbidden on this wharf, right?"

"Yes, just as it's written on the message board over there. What about it?"

"If my eyes aren't playing a trick on me, there's someone fishing over there, though?"

"Huh?"

Renya pointed behind Rona. Rona, who turned her eyes in the direction Renya pointed at while wondering what silly stuff he was going on about, reflexively froze with her mouth half open upon seeing what was going on.

"Uryaaaaaaa!"

Alongside an extremely manly yell, a thick fishing rod, which might be several meters long, had been cast so powerfully that it made one worried that it might break.

Long, black hair with pigtails tied on both sides of the head, and partly-opened red eyes that gave one the impression of being somewhat sleepy. A dull gray mantle atop plain, light brown shirt and trousers. And a largish pouch dangling on the right side of the waist. A girl, who caused Renya to feel as though he had seen her somewhere before, was desperately pulling on a fishing rod which was several times as long as she was tall while having the rod affixed to a leather belt that was coiled around her waist. That was the scenery Renya and Rona witnessed over there.



"Eh?"

When encountering something going beyond one's imagination, everyone reacted differently, but in Rona's case, her thought process apparently came to a halt. While only muttering a single exclamation, Rona had completely stopped moving, only staring fixedly at that angler. It seemed to be such an unbelievable sight for her, but Renya, who didn't possess all that prior knowledge, merely thought that the fishing rod would be taken away at any moment now, even if the girl had affixed it to her belt, seeing how there was no stopper at her feet.

"Nuoooooooooh! How stubborn! But! You're my breakfast! I won't let you get away!"

"W-Wait a moment!? What are you doing over there!?"

While watching Rona, whose thought process had finally rebooted, starting to run in panic, Renya began to slowly walk. What made Rona anxious seemed to be the possible troubles if the katurul came out, but since Renya judged that the girl pulling the fishing rod right now very likely wasn't about to cause that, he didn't look panicked at all.

After all, the girl's body would disappear into the sea in no time if she tried to go for a contest of strength with such a monster hanging at her rod.

"Oh? Some lewd onee-san showed up. Good mooorning!" The girl uprightly hurled a morning greeting at Rona who had come close, but she didn't let go of the bending rod.

Looking at the other end of the fishing line, it was dashing left and right while causing violent splashes on the sea's surface, making it obvious that she had caught some kind of big catch.

"Who's a lewd onee-san here!?" Rona yelled.

"Huh? I was wrong? I was certain you were on your way back home from work."

"What kind of work!?"

Since Rona had seen through Renya's objective, she was wearing clothes that accurately fit her body. She was wearing them, but since she had fairly amazing proportions to begin with, she was somehow far off from giving off a prim and proper impression even when wearing her normal priestess' garb.

"Renya, what are you looking as if you're agreeing with her?"

Renya shrugged his shoulders at Rona's question that seemed to stifle both emotions and intonation without replying.

"Huh? The onii-san over there...I feel like we've met somewhere before...whaat!?" The words of the girl, who saw Renya's face, changed into a scream midway.

The catch, which had been swinging the fishing line left and right, started to escape towards the open sea at full power, as if having decided for this to be the crunch time. As its charge appeared to be quite powerful, the girl pitched forward after losing her balance, and was about to be dragged away alongside the rod. Renya swiftly approached and tightly grasped the rod with his right hand.

Renya easily stopped the girl's body from being dragged into the sea by supporting it with his other hand.

In the next moment Renya silently lifted up the girl alongside the rod she was grabbing, and very casually tossed her body landward. The girl flew while screaming. And, as if chasing after her, a huge, golden fish sailed through the air while being pulled in.

"Umm...Renya, the other party pretty much looks like a woman...so treat her a bit better..." Even Rona, who had been holding a grudge over being treated as a woman working in the nightlife business, apparently thought that his way to handle this was kind of ruthless.

She was about to give Renya, who wiped his forehead in a manner of having finished a difficult job despite not even sweating, a sermon but after seeing the fish body dropped on top of the girl's body, she burst into laughter.

"Look here, the fish would get damage if it were to drop on the stone paving." Renya declared.

Due to the explanation that he had apparently aimed for this, Rona looked for a short moment at the girl who had fainted while being sandwiched between stone paving and fish, and then showed a thumbs-up - albeit secretly - towards Renya.