

Chapter 198 - It seems to be a Chat with Kilie-san

T/N: Kirie -> Kilie to get closer to another name.

"Haah, dear customer, we sure have met at a strange place."

Fish slices were roasting with a nice sizzling sound on top of a net setup above a bright red open fire. Drops of oil dripped down into the fire below. Having their surface lightly smeared with soy sauce, the aroma of said sauce hung in the air at the same time as those slices were grilled. Blending with the fragrance of the roasted oil, it all combined into an aroma that stimulated one's appetite to an abnormal degree.

It was a situation where it was truly regrettable for no white rice to be at hand, but even Renya didn't feel like cooking rice at the wharf, where they currently were, no matter how wide of a space it might be.

However, as he thought that, the action of the girl in front of him, who had quickly cut and trimmed the caught fish in front of her, had started a fire, had built a cooking stove out of stones she had procured somewhere, and had started to grill the fish slices by laying them across a wire netting, was something far removed from common sense, even when using Renya as criterion.

"Is she an acquaintance of yours?" Standing stock still in a place slightly away from Renya, who was right next to the girl who was fully concentrated on the fish while humming through her nose, Rona asked him shyly.

Renya clearly comprehended that she kept up that questionable feeling of distance with the intention of promptly claiming that she was an unrelated stranger to them if something were to happen, but since there would be no point in pointing it out, Renya kept acting as he had before.

"From a little while ago. She's the merchant who sold me my katana." Renya answered.

"Peddler." Kilie urged him to correct himself as if that one word was the game changer here. "There was that shinai I received from you afterwards, you remember dear customer? I sold that for quite a bit of money. I must say, there are certainly people with fantastic taste. Ah, I can't tell you to whom I sold it, okay? It's a matter of confidentiality."

"Since the katana I received in exchange has served me well, that's alright with me, but...is this really just a normal katana?" Renya asked

'After all it's not at the level of it having a very good performance anymore. I mean, there's not a single chip in the blade even after it having clashed with longswords many times heavier and thicker. There's no way that it'd be sorted by merely evaluating it as a sharp sword.

Renya wondered whether she, who had given him that katana, might know something about it, but the reply he got was something truly simple.

"It's a katana, no? I don't know the details, but since it's something I obtained at another place as well, going as far as its origin...ah, I can't tell you how I got my hands on it either, though. This is

also something falling into the range of a merchant's duty of confidentiality. No matter how much you ask me about it, dear customer." Kilie said.

"You repeatedly calling me customer, customer is somehow..."

"No, I mean, when we did business the other day, I introduced myself, but dear customer, you haven't told me your name, have you?"

Being told so, Renya searched his memory. Even after probing the part of his memories he could remember as it had been quite a while ago, he could recall the other party having introduced herself, but not that he had done the same.

"I'm sorry about that. I'm called Renya Kunugi. I'm a margrave and so forth in the Trident Principality."

As soon as Renya said that he was a margrave and so forth, Rona revealed a slightly miserable expression.

In the eyes of Rona, who pretty much entered the category of being regarded as nobility in the Trident Principality, margrave was a fairly high position. It wasn't a rank she would ever introduce with "and so forth," but going by Renya's values, it was no more than a simple name.

"Oh? I feel like you had been an adventurer back when we met a while ago? So you got ahead in life, eh?"

"Before I realized, I guess. It's nothing I wished for, though."

"The majority of people can't actually obtain what they wish for," Rona reflexively muttered, but neither Renya nor Kilie had apparently heard her.

"By the way, about that fish..."

"Ah, you going to eat it? I will share what has been given to me, okay? It's a fairly greasy gilbartouin."

That seemed to be the name of the fish. On top of being rotund and fat, it was almost half as tall as Renya. Moreover, its grilling scent splendidly whetted Renya's appetite.

If he was told by her that she would share some of it with him, Renya had no reason to reject her offer.

"Then I shall take you up on that for a bit." Renya confirmed.

"W-Wait a moment, you two!?" Rona stopped Renya and Kilie, who were about to sit down together on the stone paving next to the fire, in a panic.

Once both of them looked at her curiously while simultaneously asking, "Is something wrong", Rona faltered for an instant as if being mentally overpowered by them, but apparently recalling what she had to tell them right away, she lifted her voice, and pressed the two for an answer with,

"You're going to eat in such a place!?"

"Eh? That's bad?"

"If we don't eat it while it's still fresh, it will be rude to the grilled fish, right?"

Rona was on the verge of spontaneously squatting down on the spot as she was at her wits' end because of their replies, but she immediately pulled herself together, and pressed the two for an answer once more, "In the first place, hasn't it been written that fishing is prohibited here!?"

"Isn't it alright as long as we all stay quiet about it, seeing as we weren't caught by that katurul or whatever?"

"That's something you couldn't have known in advance!"

Once he was clearly shot down, even Renya couldn't rebut her since it was certainly as she had said.

"Ah, Renya-san, it's done you know? It looks good for eating, here, have a plate."

"Sorry. I will gratefully accept it."

"Listen to what I'm telling you!" Rona was about to impulsively launch her divine arts at the fire grilling the fish, but she desisted at the last moment.

It's because she knew that she would definitely piss off Renya if she did something like that. Renya was a person where it wasn't clear what kind of revenge she would have to suffer, if she were to spoil the grilled fish prepared while using fresh ingredients.

"If you're this angry, Rona, would you be satisfied with tossing her into the ocean as it's written on the message board?"

"Eh? That's..."

Whatever the circumstances might be, Rona couldn't demand such an action. She might survive this if she were to immediately get back to shore, but the instant of Kilie being sensed by the katurul would spell her death penalty.

Certainly she should be condemned for having angled in an area where it was prohibited to do so, but it was difficult to tell her to die in a situation where nothing had happened, just because it was a rule.

"Now, now, lewd onee-san. Eat some fish with us..."

"Who's a lewd onee-san here!? I have a proper name! It's Rona!"

"Rona-san, eh? Nice to meet you."

Once she saw Kilie's broadly grinning expression, Rona couldn't say anything further anymore. She sat down next to Renya, and silently accepted the plate with the grilled fish held out to her by Kilie.

When she stabbed the fish slice with the fork that had been provided alongside the plate, the considerable elasticity of the fish meat forced back the fork's tip. Hence she pierced through the skin by putting a bit of strength into it, and lifted up the freshly grilled slice. The steam rising from it carried a light aroma of grilled soy sauce. Rona slowly bit into that slice.

"...It's delicious." Next to Rona, who voiced out such an impression, Renya was silently transporting slices of the fish to his mouth.

Those oily fish slices seemed to agree with Renya's taste. Kilie placed one slice after the other on the net, and as soon as they got roasted, every single of them was wolfed down by Renya and Kilie.

Even Rona ate two, three slices because of their deliciousness, but since they were quite oily, she started to feel somewhat full after eating around this many.

"You two are amazing." Rona, who put down her plate, muttered as she watched the two still continuing to eat.

Hearing that, Kilie answered while looking slightly disappointed, "Since it's a tasty fish, I can eat as much as I like. But, the taste falls behind a bit, I'd say."

"Compared to what?" Renya asked while stopping his hands.

Renya almost never compromised and always had interest when it came to matters of food.

"The one I had aimed for is a fish called goltotun. It's somewhat smaller compared to a silber, but it has a faintly golden-shining patch on its back, and its oil will turn into a syrupy, first-rate quality if you heat it up a bit. If you just sprinkle some salt on the fish and grill it, you can sell it for several gold coins in any bigger city. It's a fish you will hardly ever find on fish markets as it's believed that you can only find it in areas of the oceans where you can't sail out with a ship, like this place here."

"It's that delicious?" Renya asked and turned his eyes towards the sea.

Rona suddenly had a very bad premonition, but she had no means to stop Kilie's explanation.

"Well, that's of course. Only once, when I made a killing with a deal, I happened to eat it as a celebration. Its aroma and texture were great. It had a flavor completely justifying to be called a high-class item. Since I ate it in an inland city, it was already slightly old, and I had no choice but to grill it while strengthening the fire, but it looks like it's possible to even eat it raw." Kilie continued further with an enthralled expression, "It's oil melted at body warmth, and its texture was similar to that of a belbad. Its umami overflowed when you bit into it. Even when it slid down the throat, it felt pleasant."

"Such fish can be found in this area of the sea?"

"Seems so. It's only sometimes, but there are cases where it will be washed up at wharfs in a state of having been nibbled by other fish. Since no boats sail out and as there are no anglers either, it's probably a place similar to heaven for fish."

"Hmm, how far away from the wharf is it?" Renya started to unbutton his tunic.

Once he quickly tossed away the tunic in front of Rona, who stared at him with wide-open eyes for some reason while being driven by the thought 'Don't tell me!', he readily took off the shirt below as well, exposing his naked upper body.

Contrary to the expectation that his body might be quite trained, it outwardly didn't look as though it was trained to such an extent that it was plastered with muscles.

"I cast my fishing hook thinking it's not that far away from here since it appears that the sea will become deep right away once you get away from the wharf a bit. I've been taken lightly by the fish because there's no danger for them to be caught."

"I see." Renya folded his clothes neatly, entrusted them to Rona, who was staring at him without even blinking, and then took off his boots next, becoming barefooted.

He drew something by sliding his finger across the stone paving, where he had sat, pinched the paving's surface, and pulled it up as if manipulating clay. By just doing that, he was able to pull out a stone rod with a sharp end from within the stone paving.

Combining the alchemy previously shown to him by Emil and Emedra's sorcery knowledge, Renya created a stone rod through adjusted alchemy, but as neither Kilie nor Rona seemed to possess any knowledge in that field, they were surprised by the sudden appearance of the stone spear.

"Renya, just what..." Rona felt compelled to ask even though she could somewhat predict the answer she would receive.

And Renya confirmed Rona's expectation by giving her the answer she had anticipated, "I will go diving for a bit to catch fish."

"Eh? No, wait!? Y-You mustn't! I mean, this place is..."

"If you're going to say that I will be thrown into the ocean if I fish here, it will be impossible to blame me if I jump into the ocean to begin with, right?"

'What's with that absurd logic?' Rona's brain started to freeze, but forcibly pulling herself back to reality, she yelled towards the back of Renya as he continued walking across the stone paving with bare feet, "Don't do it, Renya! Even if it's you, the katurul will..."

"I think it'll be alright as long as I don't provoke it. If it proves impossible, I will escape." Lightly waving his hand, Renya said without any concern, and kicked off the wharf's edge.

Rona, who saw him vanish in the sea after causing a water spray, pondered whether she should wait here or request help by calling other people.

"Let's wait while making sure for the fire to not go out?"

"You sure say that without any sense of danger..." Upon Kilie's proposal, Rona glared at her while even putting bloodthirst into her look, but Kilie folded her arms and tilted her head to the side

without a shred of indication that she minded it or was concerned.

"Even if you tell me that, it's definitely not like I can jump into the sea to chase after him. Even if we were to call for someone, it's already beyond help."

"...That's certainly true."

"Thus, don't you think it's more constructive to be ready so that Renya-san can warm himself at the fire once he gets back? Or, are you going to jump in after him, Rona-san? Personally I think a picture of you being attacked by tentacles would be very popular."

"What are you expecting there?"

Kilie started to rummage through the pouch hanging at her waist, muttering, "In that case I have a magic filming tool."

Because Rona had gone out with the intention to only stroll around the town with Renya, she had no weapon at hand. While firmly enduring the urge to pummel Kiliel's crown of the head with her beloved mace assuming she had it with her, she continued fixedly gazing at the waves where Renya's figure had completely disappeared.