

Chapter 199 - It seems to be the Beginning of Seafood Hunting

Renya's first thought after he jumped into the sea was about the clarity of the water. Just as Kilie had said, the sea became deep very shortly after he distanced himself from the wharf. Going by Renya's estimation, the ocean was around a dozen meters deep here, but the degree of water clearness was so high that he could actually see the stones scattered at the bottom of the sea.

Unintentionally being mesmerized by that sight, he almost breathed out, but no matter how much Renya might be outside the norm in this world, even he couldn't hold his breath underwater for an extended period of time. Upon realizing that, he picked <Water Pressure Reduction> and <Securing Breath> from among the spells he received from Emedra, and cast them on himself.

Once he shifted his attention to his vicinity again after having alleviated his concerns about a possible suffocation, the cleanness of the ocean water still stood out the most.

Renya didn't know about it, but on top of there being few elements that would pollute the water in this world, coastland cities paid very close attention about polluted water not being drained into the ocean as it would very likely incur the anger of the katurul, resulting in the pollution origin's as well as the city's destruction. Those were the reasons for the ocean water being clean in this world.

It was obvious from the fact that the water quality preservation costs were included in the budgets of any coastal country. Every country had been wracking its brain every year how to secure the budget which had climbed to a considerable amount of money, but following the common perception that it was far better to pay than losing several cities to the wrathful rampage of the katurul, this budget was never cut down in any way. And even the occasionally appearing corrupt bureaucrats, who embezzled public funds, never touched this budget.

Probably as an effect of that, the ocean, which was maintaining that high level of transparency, allowed Renya to watch the fish swim leisurely within, but at the same time, he could observe things he didn't really want to see.

Those were the remains of sunken boats.

Seafood, which could only be caught in restricted regions of the ocean, was a high-class ingredient that could be traded for a fairly decent price. The stream of people setting out on boats in hope of getting rich quickly apparently never died out.

It's not like they were always attacked by the katurul just because they set out with a ship, if it was at the level of a small boat. That fact spurred on the people even further, but either way, the wrecks of sunken ships ranged across a great variety, from old, worn-down remains to fairly new ones.

Renya was cautious, wondering whether crew members of those wrecks might be around by some chance, but fortunately, as far as Renya could see, there were none to be found.

'Had they been washed away by the ocean current? Or had they been taken away by something other than the ocean current?'

As Renya was diving, he didn't feel a strong tidal current that would carry his body away at present.

'In that case, the latter must have been the case here,' Renya judged. And as if confirming his judgment, those suddenly appeared from within the gaps between the stones on the ocean's bottom. Those were greenish, transparent tentacles with the length and thickness of around an adult's arm.

As if being seaweed or something else, those tentacles started to slowly sway within the ocean. And, as if being in concert with each other, one tentacle after the other appeared from the ocean's bottom and the remains of the boats, starting to shake their bodies.

Renya stopped moving due to the extremely abnormal spectacle.

"(Those...really give me the creeps.)"

Watching the flock of tentacles fully covering the ocean's bottom and filling his visual field in a flash, Renya couldn't help but instinctively feel disgust. And yet, even as he watched those tentacles for a while, they only swayed grossly, and made no effort to approach, or to go even further, attack Renya as he swam.

While watching them, Renya even grew accustomed to his bad feelings, and decided to expel the flock of tentacles from his mind for the time being to focus his attention on searching for the fish he was aiming for. The only thing he knew about his target fish were their name, goldthun, but if Kilie's explanation was correct, he just had to look for fish that were smaller than the fish Kilie had reeled in, had a similar appearance, and a golden patch on their belly.

"(...Found them.)"

They were at a place quite far away from Renya, but Renya's eyes spotted a swarm of fish that looked just like he had imagined them.

At once he tried to swim close to them, but naturally there was a remarkable difference in swimming speed between a man and fish. Moreover, probably because they were fish with a considerable size, the swarm of goldthun easily took distance from Renya as he was chasing after them by swinging their fins powerfully.

Even if Renya swam at full power, it would be impossible for him to catch up with the speed of fish, but what made matters worse was him holding a stone spear in his hand. That circumstance lowered Renya's swimming speed even further, but it wasn't as though he could simply toss it away because it was a hindrance. After all he would have to catch the fish with his bare hands if he were to do so.

Renya continued to pointless struggle for a short while, but after comprehending that he would very likely never catch up like this, he pondered it over for a short moment, and then started to activate his third spell.

It was a high-handed method of accelerating himself by using <Manipulation> on the water around him.

He had tried to consider cladding his body in wind just like the time when he flew in the sky with

wind sorcery, but as it was obvious that he would block his on sight with all the bubbles rising up if he clad his body in wind underwater, he swiftly gave up on that notion.

While manipulating the water flow around him so as to head towards the fish swarm, Renya, who sped up all of a sudden, caught up with the fish' speed and plunged into the swarm. The goldthun swarm started to escape by scattering in all directions in order to avoid Renya's body, but Renya's eyes and arm immediately captured one fish, which was the closest to himself, as it was late in escaping.

The stone spearhead, which Renya thrust out while using the speed of his charge, penetrated the head of the straggler without erring in its aim. Fish blood rapidly spread underwater. Renya tried to pull the fish he had just stabbed with his spear to himself while watching the other fish scrambling to get away.

The fish, which had just been stabbed, smoothly slid off the spear and sank down towards the bottom.

While immediately understanding the reason for the fish having slid off being the lack of barbs on the spear, Renya was about to chase after its sinking body to recover it, but then noticed that something slender and semi-transparent coiled itself around the tail fin of the fish.

"(Those are...)"

Given that the tentacles that appeared in swarms from the ocean's bottom had the size of around an adult arm, Renya believed all of them to be like this, but this was apparently a false impression. There existed a lot thinner - around the thickness of his pinky finger - and far longer tentacles, too.

Those had snatched the prey killed by Renya as bystanders. Of course, Renya was no one who would let such a steal pass while remaining silent.

Right away he pursued the fish that had been stolen, put his arm around its body as if to carry it beneath his armpit, and severed the tentacles coiling around the fish' tail fin by swinging his spear.

No matter how much of an outrageous being the katurul might be, the tentacles with the thinness of a little finger apparently didn't possess an outlandish strength. Severed by one swing of the spear, the tentacles lost their strength, got disconnected from the tail fin, and dropped towards the sea ground.

Renya tried to immediately surface while carrying the fish under his arms without even watching the fate of those cut tentacles any further, but his body got stopped as if being pulled by something which didn't allow him to surface.

"(This is...constricting me, I think?)"

With his upper body naked, Renya felt something touching his right shoulder. Faster than Renya realized that a tentacle had pinned down his shoulder after approaching him from behind while he was preoccupied with the stolen fish, Renya's body was dragged down with a speed that couldn't be compared at all with the speed of the fish being pulled down towards the ocean's bottom.

Once Renya was slapped against the ocean's ground without any decrease in speed, Renya reflexively let bubbles escape from his mouth. The impact was so strong that he would have likely suffered heavy injuries if he had hit the ground defenselessly, but Renya managed to protect himself with sorcery at the nick of time.

While watching the ground collapse and pebbles scatter due to the impact, he swiftly stored the fish under his armpit away into his inventory. It was an act of him believing that he must escape while taking that fish along at the very least, but other people would have likely wondered just what this person was doing in such an emergency situation.

Furthermore, he carelessly threw away the stone spear in his hand.

No matter how he considered it, it was far too meager a weapon to take on the katurul, and he couldn't believe at all that it would be of any use to get the job done.

'Before I'm going to rely on something like that, I should use another method while keeping my hands free,' Renya judged. He tore off the tentacle tightly clinging to his shoulder with all his might.

Once he looked closely at it, the tentacle's surface was densely packed with small suction pads. Those had been apparently sticking to Renya's shoulder while he was struck against the ground.

'It looks like there will be traces left on my skin as those clung to my shoulder quite tightly,' Renya carefreely pondered, but while he was tearing off the tentacle that had been clinging to his shoulder, another tentacle twined itself around Renya's right ankle next.

As he was about to tear off the one at his ankle while clicking his tongue, another tentacle stuck to his back, and while he was trying to get that one off, yet another tentacle coiled around his legs.

"(These guys...)"

Even more so than the powerful strength of the tentacles themselves and their suction power, their large numbers posed the biggest problem. While Renya was removing one, several other tentacles stuck to his body or coiled around it. Because of that, he wouldn't be able to escape from here no matter how much time passed.

Thanks to his sorcery, he didn't need to fear suffocation, but normally he could expect to run out of breath after being out of mana, or otherwise, before that, being strangled to death after having so many tentacles twine around his body that he wouldn't be able to do anything, while he was struggling like this.

Moreover, if Renya was only a little bit late on dealing with the katurul's tentacles, they would immediately aim for its neck, trying to coil a tentacle around it.

Even if Renya's mana and stamina was endless because of <Super Recovery>, only death would await him if his neck were to be broken. Renya possessed enough strength so that it wouldn't be broken so easily, but if countless tentacles were to coil around him and overpower him with their sheer numbers, it was hard to say that he couldn't lose the competition.

"(I will do it...in one go!)"

Renya's irritation steadily grew at the tenacity of the tentacles which he couldn't keep away at all, even though he would leave right away if they would just let him go, and finally shifted towards counterattacking.

He shook off one tentacle, which had reached out for his neck, with his hand, seized that tentacle with both hands, and bit into it just like that.

For a moment, the many tentacles trying to coil around Renya's body froze. While watching that, Renya completely ripped out a bite-sized chunk of the tentacle's flesh while maintaining his hold on it so that it wouldn't get away, and started to chew the meat in his mouth.

"(Hmm? This is quite good.)"

Renya had considered the possibility that he couldn't bite it off, but unexpectedly he could do so quite easily. As he was chewing the meat while rolling it around inside his mouth, the consistency he sensed was completely different from what he had anticipated.

At first Renya had considered the katurul to be some kind of huge octopus or squid. He had wondered whether the taste and consistency of its meat wouldn't be something closely resembling those two, but now that he had actually tried it, the katurul's meat had a crunchy food texture, a fairly normal taste, and almost no smell either.

Naturally, he also considered the possibility of there being poison in it. But, Renya possessed the skill <Healthy Body>. He believed that it was simply impossible for him to die, even if it was fairly strong poison, but there were no signs of the meat containing any in the first place.

He took yet another bite of the tentacle in his hands.

The taste spreading in his mouth alongside a faint saltiness felt - as far as Renya knew - kind of like having thrown together jellyfish and chicken gristle and taken the average of both. It wasn't a bad taste. Rather, it might be called a good ingredient to eat while enjoying its consistency.

"(There's so much of it around me. It probably won't pose any problem even if I collect some of it.)"

Renya, who had happened across this unexpected food after having dived in the ocean to catch delicious fish, looked towards the tentacles surrounding him. There wasn't a shred of his previous irritation left on his expression any longer. Rather, he even emanated an aura of happily welcoming the tentacles which had come gathering around him.

At that moment, it wasn't clear just what the katurul's main body thought as it remained right below the continents' central part, in the far distance. However, it was a doubtless fact that the existence of the katurul, which had until then one-sidedly preyed upon others, completely changed, shifting towards the side of being preyed upon.

For the katurul, the part bitten off by Renya was no more than a tiny fragment of its whole body, but it was questionable just how much of a shock it must have been for a being that always preyed upon others to suddenly become the target of a predator.

That was something no one could answer, but the level of shock the katurul received might have been somewhat guessable from the tentacles, which had been altogether devoted to gathering around Renya, suddenly being pulled back.

However, you could say that the katurul, which had solely focused on hunting others so far, was far too slow in making the decision to run away. The tentacles, which it tried to pull back, were successively cut apart while showing clean cross-sections, and drifted in the sea.

Renya quickly gathered those cut-off pieces. Without anyone noticing, his right hand was grasping a sharp, silver-shining katana even while being in the ocean.

"(Even raw they are great, so I'm quite interested in their taste after grilling them. Besides, they should definitely be suitable for pickling. I feel like this is an ingredient that seems to be even usable for desserts as it will be sweet depending on the location.)"

Renya wasn't absolutely sure, but he had a hunch that it would also work as analeptic. He couldn't say anything definite unless he had Emil analyze it, but if his thoughts, which were based on his sensation when he ate it, weren't wrong, it might become useful as edible medicine.

"(I have to catch as big an amount as possible.)"

After beating the tentacles which were late in escaping, he struck his mana at the tentacles trying to escape by diving into the ground or behind rocks, blew them up alongside the bedrock, and captured them. At the time when they appeared, there were so many tentacles that they covered the ocean's ground. It wasn't an amount he could fully exhaust, no matter how many he took.

And yet, he tossed every single tentacle he captured into his inventory, and as the tentacles in there continuously and steadily gained in quantity, Renya's face unintentionally broke into a wide smile. Then he started to gouge out the ocean's ground in order to secure an even bigger amount and blew away the wrecks of the sunken ships.