

Chapter 209 - It seems to be a Job for Releasing Some Steam

"Kilie! Have the katurul withdraw!"

The magic wall put up by Renya was about to be broken any moment by the pressure from inside the wall. If that happened, not only the smashed pieces of the katurul's tentacles, but even the fragments of the destroyed stone paving would scatter over a wide range. It was easy to imagine that the resulting damage wouldn't be anything to scoff at.

Believing that Shion probably wouldn't stop attacking as long as an opponent to receive the attacks existed, Renya had the katurul withdraw through Kilie.

"I asked the katurul, but wouldn't it have been better to have the katurul incapacitate her while keeping the injuries at a non-lethal level?"

Renya considered Kilie's suggestion for a short moment. It wasn't a bad suggestion per se, but Renya shook his head before long. His decision came from not knowing whether the katurul would correctly comply with such a request.

It was completely unpredictable what a blow that wouldn't kill in the eyes of the katurul would do to a human body. Seeing as Renya couldn't discard the possibility that Shion would suffer lasting injuries, or in the worst case, die, Renya couldn't pick the option of requesting the katurul to knock Shion out.

"Withdraw the katurul for starters. She might regain her sanity if her target is gone, right?"

"Wishful thinking most of the time doesn't come true, you know?"

Renya immediately hit the top of the foolishly cackling Kilie's head with his right fist. Kilie, who was assailed by an intense pain after the dull impact, squatted down on the spot, holding the place hit by Renya with both hands.

On the other hand, Renya was astonished by the firmness of Kilie's skull. While secretly hiding his right hand, which had become red and throbbed painfully, so that Kilie wouldn't see it, Renya made an effort to feign calmness, and looked into Kilie's eyes as she was looking up to him from her crouching position.

"If you have the spare time to raise stupid flags, then withdraw the katurul at once. While at it, look for Emil and Rona, and have them quickly evacuate the surrounding workers into sturdy buildings so that they won't get mixed up in this."

"Renya-san...aren't you handling your personnel way too roughly?"

Kilie unsteadily stood up with teary eyes while repeatedly stroking the place where she was hit. Once Renya visibly formed a fist with his left hand as if asking Kilie whether she was asking for another fist bump, Kilie quickly ran away from him, seemingly believing that she wouldn't endure any further damage to her head.

Following her back with his eyes for a moment, Renya soon shifted his attention to Shion who was in the center of the area surrounded by his mana wall. Probably because Kilie had fully relayed Renya's words to the katurul, no tentacles could be seen. Even the parts that fell to the ground after getting smashed up had very likely escaped underground. Seeing how the katurul had neatly pulled back all its tentacles, only the broken stones of the paving were now scattered on the ground.

The breathing of Shion was going wild as she was standing stock still. It was clearly visible with her abdomen undulating and her chest as well shoulders strongly heaving up and down. And, her eyes didn't recover their focus.

"A light rampage, eh?"

Her cheeks were flushed, and her lips had hardened into the shape of a smile. As if too excited, her unsettled eyes were restlessly wandering around. She totally looked as if she was searching for new prey. However, apparently starting to get irritated about not finding a target no matter how long she searched, Shion's breathing became completely disarrayed.

'What's going to happen if we continued to leave Shion alone like this?

Renya had no answer to that. There might be some kind of solution within the experiences he had accumulated in his previous world, but unable to rely on those, he had no other choice but to just rummage through the knowledge inside his head which didn't yield him anything though.

Shion's eyes wandered around. However, no matter how much she shifted her eyes around, no prey came into sight. The katurul had retreated, and the surrounding soldiers and workers had taken refuge in accordance to Emil's and Rona's instructions. The only one standing there except for Shion was Renya.

"Say, Renya."

The focus of Shion's eyes gathered on Renya's face.

Renya replied to Shion, whose voice sounded faintly high-pitched and unstrung, as calmly as ever, "What is it?"

"Don't you think...that I have become capable of fighting a bit?"

The metallic clanging of the longsword in Shion's hand as it lightly grazed the ground with the blade's point rang through the space that had started to be ruled by stillness due to the missing human presences. It was a sound originating from Shion fixing her hold on the sword.

"I wonder. The katurul has likely gone quite easy on you."

"It's not enough, you think?"

"I think that it's lacking in various ways, but what's your take on it?"

Once Renya answered the question with a question, Shion silently lifted her sword. Even though that was all she did, Renya's mana wall started to creak due to the pressure from within.

It wasn't as though he couldn't raise the wall's density. In Renya's eyes, the amount of invested mana was no more than a drop in the sea. If he poured mana into it like water, it wouldn't be difficult to completely shut in Shion.

"Why don't I do it then?"

Renya asked himself while watching the mana wall being continuously, little-by-little destroyed from within. As he couldn't come up with an answer for this either, he pressed his hands against his waist, and breathed a sigh.

"That's your answer?"

"I myself, don't understand."

Shion took one step forward. By just closing the distance with one step, the mana wall separating Renya and Shion screeched.

Renya couldn't judge whether she did it consciously or unconsciously, but right now she was releasing an amount of mana that couldn't be suppressed even by his mana wall. Going by Shion's presence which he could sense through the wall, Renya discovered one piece of information that seemed to be an answer for Shion's current state within the knowledge he received from Emedra.

"Even the training against the katurul was at first just me being toyed with. However, as the battle continued, I gradually reached a level allowing me to fight back. Before I realized, I could manipulate something like mana. I could even strengthen myself."

Shion took another step forward. Renya assessed that the creaking wall wouldn't hold out any longer, and cut off the mana supply, effectively erasing it.

"But, I don't know. Renya, you're too amazing. It's unclear to me whether I can fight by your side."

"I don't particularly believe that I'm all that amazing, though."

"That's why...I'm..."

The mana that blew up from her shook the ground. The stone paving broke apart, exposing the bare ground after being pried open. Several of the material piles, which had been stacked up for the construction work, crumbled down due to the transmitted vibrations.

"Just what happened to Shion!?"

Even though she was told to evacuate, Rona, who couldn't afford to simply evacuate by herself while leaving Shion behind, had watched Renya and Shion from a fairly sturdy building in a location slightly away from the two, but due to the earthquake-like tremors occurring all of a sudden, she yelled out that question while screaming lightly.

Next to her Emil was intently looking outside without showing any signs that she was perturbed by the tremors at all, but even Emil slightly tilted her head to the side upon Rona's words.

"Who knows? Still, going by the impression from her expression and such, it's kind of like mana intoxication, I'd say."

"What's that?"

"I will omit the detailed theory and reasons, okay? It's a phenomenon where the brain completely overheats due to a continuous release of a somewhat large amount of mana. It's kind of like a common cold that will occasionally be caught by sorcerer apprentices and such, who have talent but lack the skill to control it. Ah, it's not like it really overheats though, got it?" And then Emil cackled, adding, "Though she will truly bite the dust if her brain gets literally boiled."

Rona grabbed Emil's shoulder, and shook it fervently while grilling her, "How do you heal that!?"

Since Emil had called it a common cold, Rona believed that it might be some illness. Thus, she thought that a way to heal it should exist.

Seemingly having expected for that answer to come up, Emil readily and smoothly replied, "If she learns how to control it, it will stop breaking out."

"It has already broken out, don't you see!?"

"In that case it's simple. She'll get clear-headed if you let her release it a bit."

While putting a strange emphasis on the releasing part, Emil moved her hand up and down as if stroking something rod-shaped with a smile that was full of maliciousness.

Once Rona saw that, she screamed without showing any change on face, "Shion hasn't that dangling down there!"

Having those words shouted back at her with an exceedingly serious look, Emil dropped her hand alongside her shoulders while donning an expression that looked somewhat miserable. "Oh...ah, yes. That's true as well. I surely didn't anticipate that retort..."

"How do does she release it?"

Even while shrinking back from Rona's intensity, who drew as close as if to snap at her, Emil returned an honest answer, "For me to get into such a pinch over having my words taken at face value... Well, how about watching the situation rather than getting me to explain? Renya should be able to properly allow her to release it, I think."

"To the outside!? In this place!? They are in public here!"

"I wonder just what the hell and how far are you imagining things!?"

Emil readily decided to give up on explaining this any further. Of course, the one in the wrong was Emil herself who had guided the conversation into this direction. Moreover, the word "release" wasn't the kind of dirty joke word as hinted at by Emil. Rona would normally realize that Emil was hinting at something completely different here, but as her head was full of Shion's issue at the

moment, there was no sign of Rona noticing it at all, probably because she had reached her mental capacity at this point.

Believing that it wouldn't do any particular harm even if she left Rona to her own devices while kicking up a fuss, Emil stopped interacting with Rona, and decided to turn her attention towards Renya and Shion.

"That's why I'm telling you, Renya...Renya can't you judge it for me!?"

At the same time as Shion finished her words, a wind filled with mana blew against Renya's entire body. As it swirled up sand and pebbles, it possessed a physical pressure.

Not having expected that, Renya held up his right arm, shielding his face. At that moment Shion was hidden behind his arm that blocked his visual field.

"Kahaa!?"

Shion had powerfully stepped in while thrusting out the longsword in her two hands. However, the blade of that sword was lightly pushed aside by Renya's right palm, resulting in its trajectory being twisted into piercing through empty air.

While standing upright with both legs spread, Renya thrust out his extended left hand as a counter, and flicked Shion's forehead. Shion had her head thrown backwards by the impact, but she immediately pulled back her arms which she had fully pushed out, and then swept the sword sideways at the space next to her where she believed Renya to be.

Based on the person Renya had known as Shion so far, it was a slash with an unbelievable speed, but that attack couldn't seize Renya's body either. It's because he had jumped over Shion's head with the leeway to pull off a one-handed handstand on top of Shion's shoulder after tightly grabbing her shoulder with the left hand that had earlier flicked her forehead.

"You've been using that timing of a surprise attack repeatedly."

While landing behind Shion, Renya lightly kicked the back of Shion's knee with his heel without even turning around. It was slightly violent, but with the opportunity of Shion's stance falling apart after receiving the impact and having her knee fold in, Renya distanced himself from Shion and gave his evaluation of Shion's first attack.

Without replying to that assessment, Shion released a fully charged <Roar> as she turned around. Shion's <Roar>, which got stronger each time she used it, possessed even more firepower and was a means to stop Renya's movements, even if for just an instant, but being blocked by Renya's held-out right palm, it turned into a gentle breeze consisting of several streamlines without the firepower reaching Renya, and scattered.

"That's all?"

Seemingly having taken into account that her spell would be blocked, Shion rallied her stance while Renya's scattered the <Roar>, and squared off against Renya once more with her sword at the ready.



Shion had been wary of Renya's follow-up attack, but Renya had his own reason why he couldn't do so.

"That <Roar>, it's a plain and unpleasant technique, isn't it?"

Kilie, who had unnoticed entered the building where Emil and Rona were hiding while watching Renya and Shion through a window, muttered while holding a paper bag with cookies she had procured from who knew where, and crunching away at its contents.

"An unpleasant technique in what area? Ah, is it fine for me to take some of those as well?"

"Sure, here you go. If you like, I also got drinks with me."

Standing behind the two who were peeking outside the window, Kilie shared the cookies with Emil as requested, took out a bottle and cups from the pouch hanging at her waist, and offered it to Emil. Going by the color of what was poured into the cup in Emil's hand, it was apparently some kind of milk.

"It looks like Renya-san defended against the <Roar> so that it wouldn't cause any damage to the surroundings. But, since that technique is shot out after turning the surrounding air into a vortex, it means it'll result in a terrible aftermath if he just blocks it."

"He hit it with a reversed vortex, and wore it down by weakening the technique, returning it to a normal breeze, so that his aim wouldn't be discovered? Our master sure loves doing things the hard way."

"...You guys sure take it easy." Rona said with a sigh mixed in while glaring at the two with a sidelong glance.

From Rona's point of view, one was her own mistress, and the other was the man she fancied. She didn't feel like seeing either of them in pain, nor did she feel like thinking about what she should do if one of them got injured heavily or was in danger of dying.

"You worried?"

"I am. You not, Emil?"

Being asked so by Rona with a sullen expression, Emil pondered how she should answer for a little while, and then crammed the cookie she had received into her mouth while saying, "Once it turns into a situation where Renya draws his katana, I will get slightly worried, I guess."

"...That means, Renya still has more than enough leeway, doesn't it?"

As if saying that worrisome situations would still lead to worry, Rona shifted her eyes towards the scene outside the window. Emil stared at her back while wondering whether that's how things worked. Meanwhile, Kilie started to take out something like a sponge cake wrapped up in a paper from her pouch as the cookies apparently weren't enough for her, and stared at them with a very happy face.