

## **Intermission - It seems to be a Nightly Matter**

The Gordonal Barony within the Trident Principality, an area that would generally be referred to as countryside. The Trident Principality, which was adjoining to the Miasma Forest which was infested by many monsters and similar to begin with, was a country that seemed to be considered rural amongst the human territories, but the Gordonal Barony, which was especially close to the forest within the principality, was a territory deemed as especially rural even among the rural areas.

One of the territories famous for being in the same situation was the Kunugi Margraviate, but that one had an abnormal lord, abnormal people who were close to him like retainers, and a genuinely abnormal maid. Thanks to all those abnormalities, that territory, and especially its provincial capital, had achieved a reputation that it might be on the forefront of cutting-edge technology, and thus be much easier to live in than any other city in any other country, not to even mention the principality's capital. As such that margraviate didn't fulfill the conditions to be called rural.

Leaving that aside, it was pretty much obvious to anyone that the Gordonal Barony was the countryside, but it had just one component that was considered valuable in this world - the ocean.

Although it might simply be referred to as the ocean, it was an ominous place that would trigger a disaster if handled wrongly due to the existence of the katurul, a being ruling over almost all of the ocean's area. The ocean's blessings were thus scarce.

However, precisely because of that scarcity, it caused the effect that its rarity value was boosted instead. In the eyes of those possessing territories facing the sea, that fact was ironic. But then again, there were rumors going around that the margrave, who had the established reputation of being abnormal as mentioned above, had apparently initiated communication with the katurul, although it wasn't clear how he managed to do so. In reality, the Gordonal Barony was estimated to develop from now on because the seafood procured in the barony had started to circulate on the market, albeit only slowly, but at present the barony couldn't see any change in its evaluation as countryside.



Shion Femme Fatale, who held the title of first princess of the Trident Principality and was currently staying in that very barony, didn't know what to do with all her free time. Because of certain circumstances, was working on repairing the things she had broken, but that work could only be carried out while the sun was out.

In addition to the work not being something requiring urgent attention, it also wasn't anything that could be done in a place that had become dark because of the missing sunlight. It wasn't a job that she had to continue no matter what, going even as far as preparing illumination for the night, but that was also the reason why she had nothing to do during the evenings.

The Gordonal Barony was the sticks.

Even the town, where the baron had his seat, was no exception to that. Most of the stores closed as

soon as the sun went down, and even the stores that wouldn't be included in that majority shut their doors as the evening got late. If this had been Klinge, Renya's address, you'd be able to find several stores running all night long, regardless of whether they were the healthy or unhealthy types of stores. Something at the level of slipping out of the room for a bit to alleviate the boredom in the evening would be possible without any difficulty, but the Gordonal Barony was completely wrapped up by the night's darkness with not a single soul out on the streets once a certain hour had passed.

With a situation like this, the only option was to spend the evening and night inside, but Baron Gordonal himself was the very definition of a martial artist, and probably because he had a somewhat advanced age, the people around him also went to bed rather quickly at night.

If this were Renya's castle, the Head Maid and local silky, Frau, would prepare a light meal, offer various entertainments, which she stole out of Renya's knowledge according to her own words, or stand available as conversation partner, and thus there would be plenty ways to waste some time. With Frau being far away now, Shion couldn't fall back on this method either.

Shion had been staring at the ceiling without getting a wink of sleep while laying on the bed in the room assigned to her. She would probably be able to fall asleep if only she were to be assailed by sleepiness, but sleepiness was something that would be elusive only at times like now.

Suddenly she remembered that Renya had mentioned that he would just count numbers at times when he couldn't sleep, and thus she started to count, but for some reason Shion became even more wakeful instead. Giving up on that method, she sat up her upper body.

"Seeing how it's impossible to force sleep, there's no point to stay in bed either, right?" Shion muttered to herself.

Shion believed that she would sooner or later get sleepy if she gave up on sleeping at such times and did something else instead, but the reason why she tried to fall asleep was exactly because she had too much time on her hand out of lack to do anything else. Noticing that her thinking started to go around in circles, Shion smiled wryly, and pondered that she might as well intrude upon Renya in his room.

'It's not like I'm going to sneak into his bedroom to make love.

Shion had once failed at doing that in the past, and at present she had absolutely no confidence that she would be able to succeed with it when trying it once more. She wasn't that much of an idiot that she wouldn't realize that there was the high danger of Renya losing all sympathy for her if she failed at it a second time. Although she believed that she would go for it once more at some point, Shion decided to limit that second attempt to a time when she was convinced of her success or when it was likely for Renya to forgive her even if she failed.

'Well then, if he asks me why I'm visiting, I will tell him that I'd like to chat with him until I become sleepy,' she planned.

It's not that Shion hadn't considered the option of asking Rona, but it was lacking the touch of novelty since she was always chatting with Rona. On that point, Shion felt that she would be able to hear many, very interesting stories if she earnestly asked Renya to tell her, seeing how he was a

Lost who possessed knowledge of a different world.

'While at it, it might as well increase our intimacy through the fact of me visiting the room of a young man without any vigilance at night', she thought, but she fully understood that it was a two-edged sword as it bore the high risk of her simply being regarded as slutty woman, if she carried out her plan unskillfully.

In regards to the topics to talk about, Shion merely believed that anything would do as long as it was interesting.

"Now then, what should I wear, assuming I go ahead with this."

Right now Shion's body was covered by her night wear which had a thin fabric, but she believed that it would likely be a very bad idea to show up at Renya's room in such an outfit.

'I think it's necessary to show here that I'm properly covering what should be covered by wearing a somewhat thicker gown or something like that,' Shion, who was about to open the drawer with her clothes, suddenly felt the presence of someone else stopping outside in front of her room's door.



'Previously I wasn't so sensitive to presences', Shion thought. However, since she had started to act together with Renya, she felt like her perception to sense such things had become sharper, albeit only little-by-little.

If she focused her senses now, she could perceive that it was two people outside her door, and even that both of them were women. Given that it was two women, Shion believed that it might be Emil and Kilie who had come for a visit, but these two visiting her room, and moreover late at night, didn't really click with her. Considering that it were women, the possibility of Rona being present existed as well, but Shion had excluded her from the possibilities from the very start because she believed that she would be definitely able to sense Rona, an old friend of hers, even through a door.

While pondering about such things, Shion pondered how she should act in this situation, but before she could take any action from her side, there were several light, quiet knocks against her room's door.

"Who is it?"

"We're terribly sorry for visiting you this late at night. We're maids serving our lord, the baron."

Hearing the reply after asking for their identity, Shion slightly raised an eyebrow at the true identity of the voice's owner. Just as there were those among the maids serving nobles who would commute, there were also some who would live at the noble's mansion, so it wasn't overly strange for maids to be present in the dead of the night.

However, those maids weren't any acquaintances of Shion. Moreover, so far as it goes, Shion was in name the first princess of the Trident Principality, even if she had readily rescinded that position,

and thus knocking at Shion's door wasn't anything maids would do without any particular reason.

Shion thought that there possibly was some kind of emergency, but as she couldn't hear any sounds around her, she couldn't quite believe that something like that was going on right now.

'In that case I have no other option but to ask the person who has introduced herself as a maid, I suppose', Shion retrieved a dagger for self-defense out of the luggage that had been leaning against her bed, and opened the door a crack with her right hand while holding the scabbard in her left hand behind her back.

"What kind of business do you have with me?"

Without hiding in her voice that she was wary of them, she peeked outside the room through the little gap of the opened door, seeing two girls in maid clothes, who were both a lot smaller than herself, holding small lamps while cowering with apologetic expressions.

Shion almost ended up lowering her guard down against her better judgment, but once she widened the crack a bit while making sure to not let go of the knob, she quickly checked the back and sides of the two girls.

"We're very sorry for disturbing your rest, Shion-sama. But, while being fully aware that it's rude, there's no one besides you whom we could consult." The girl with long, silver hair, who was the slightly taller of the two, said while turning an imploring look at Shion who remained wary.

The other girl, who had short, red hair, stood stock still while casting her eyes down, apparently unable to look at Shion who emitted a somewhat threatening aura.

"Only me? What about Baron Gordonal-dono?"

If it came to a person to consult with, it would be logical to bring it up with the head maid who took care of them as maids, the retainers of the baron family who were above the head maid, or the baron himself as the one standing above all of them. You could say that consulting with Shion, who was an outsider and furthermore the first princess, was barking up the wrong tree.

"Lady Head Maid and all of the honorable retainers are not present as they have gone back home. Given that Baron-sama is at an advanced age as you know, we hesitated to bring up this topic with him so late at night..."

"I see, I think that makes sense, but still, isn't it slightly odd to come to me with this? Even if you leave the matter of social standing aside, I'm no one belonging to this territory."

The instant Shion took the term 'social standing' into her mouth, the faces of both maids visibly cramped up.

'It looks like both have completely forgotten that I'm the principality's first princess', Shion sighed slightly.

Although she was somewhat astounded by the fact that the maids were kind of slow on the uptake despite serving at a noble's mansion, Shion decided to let this matter go as she believed that they

might be so much at their wits' end that this thought hadn't even registered with them, if she interpreted their carelessness in their favor.

"You went out of your way to pick me as consultation partner, so try telling me what it's about. I don't know whether I'll be able to help you, but I can at least listen to you for starters."

Unable to turn them away just like that, Shion urged them to explain the situation while believing that there was probably no meaning in her wielding her social position at this point in time. In response, the one with the red hair frankly explained what she wanted to consult Shion about.

"As a matter of fact, we'd like to consult you about Margrave Kunugi-sama..."

The look in Shion's eyes changed when Renya's name came up. That sudden change reflexively woke the urge in the two maids to turn around and run away, but without giving them a chance to do so, Shion threw open the door widely, and dragged the two petrified girls into her room right away.

"Tell me the details."

The two maids were baffled by her reaction that betrayed her wariness until now as if it had been a lie. While dragging the two into the room, the dagger Shion had held in her left hand dropped to the ground, but that caused the maids' faces to cramp up even further.

However, Shion didn't have the composure to pay any attention to that. It's because her heart couldn't remain calm after she had been told that the consultation topic revolved around Renya, but in the eyes of the maids, Shion's behavior only frightened them as they wondered whether they might have done anything that could have upset Shion in some way.

While looking at the two of them, Shion pondered, 'Even if I won't get an idea what's it about unless I listen to the details, it might be about something others shouldn't hear about, considering the time they've come to me for consultation. It might be the kind of story that'll lead to a disastrous situation if it's not dealt with at once. Considering it like that, I must draw the information out of the girls in front of me as quickly as possible.'

"For the time being, spit it out."

"S-Shion-sama!? Umm, what?"

"Quickly spit out what you wanted to consult me about."

Due to Shion bringing her face very close and threatening them, the maids became teary while telling Shion about the details in panic.

