

Chapter 136 - Curry and Rice

I was familiar with them...but it's been a long time since I last saw and directly touched consumer electronics. In front of me, in a space surrounded by many of those devices, sat several of my bloodkin in seiza.

"I-I'm terribly sorry...now that it has come to this, we shall offer our li——"

"Rejected."

"I-In that case...how should we ever apologize to you, Shion-sama, for our foolishness..."

The ones sitting in seiza while cladding themselves in tragic auras — are the bloodkin belonging to Chloe's and Layla's teams.

As to why Chloe and the others have such a tragic feel to them — that's because they failed the ordeal I gave them.

The newly acquired 『Residents』 in the recent 《Reign》 number 89.

113 humans had been staying in the area that entered the effective range of 《Reign》. 10 of them fled outside the range as soon as they heard my recommendation, 8 humans were killed by Chloe's team...and 6 by Layla's.

"B-But y'know...boss, for them to die from an attack of such a level was——"

"Red! Can't you shut up!? We didn't follow Shion-sama's decree...hence it's only reasonable for us to take responsibility!"

"Wai-!? I haven't killed anyone ~ssu!" (Blue)

"Blue! Stop it with the unsightly excuses!"

Layla roars at Red who's frantically trying to make excuses. Chloe roars at Blue for claiming his own legitimacy.

"Shion-sama...considering their achievements so far, won't thee show mercy?"

"What kind of mercy?"

Izayoi calls out to me who's troubled because of this bothersome situation.

"Of course, it's the mercy they desire — death." (Izayoi)

"Rejected."

I was an idiot for having expected Izayoi to voice a slightly decent opinion. Chloe, Layla, and Izayoi...these three — the fanatic trio are not even worth listening to.

Why should I decrease the number of my bloodkin, even though I must actually increase them as much as possible from now on?

What a pain... I guess I'll forcibly resolve the issue with an order. The instant I decided so——

"Shion! Don't worry 'bout da tiny stuff! Ain't it fine since we succeeded anyway? Hurry up with da food!"

"You bastard!"

"How disrespectful!"

"Depending on thine next words, I, Izayoi, shall use all my power to——"

——Silence!

I forcibly shut the mouths of the fanatic trio who lunge at Takaharu's remark with menacing attitudes.

——!

Food, huh...? Not a bad idea.

"I made up my mind. I will punish you guys."

""""Yes, master!""""

"The punishment given to you is — skipping out on the meal."

""""...Huh?""""

"Wh-!? T-That's evil ~ssu!?"

Chloe and the others are dumbfounded by their punishment, whereas Blue succumbs into despair.

"Kakaka! How pitiful...ya have my condolences." (Takaharu)

"I mean, unlike you we like totally cleared Shion-chi's trial. Yay for us~" (Sarah)

Takaharu laughs broadly and Sarah reveals an evil smile.

"Takaharu, Sarah, don't provoke them. Or is it okay for me to give you the same punishment?"

""——Wha-!?"

Once I point a malicious smile at those two, Takaharu and Sarah scurry off.



"Did you decide on the dish?"

Since we've got plenty of ingredients from 《Reign》, that side's covered.

"Curry, right!?" (Takaharu)

"Seafood bowl, like obviously!" (Sarah)

"Omelet rice would be nice, I think." (Kanon)

"On this fine night my throat is thirsting for blood...steak, rare!" (Saburou)

"White rice and miso soup...if there's grilled fish to go with it, it would be pure bliss." (Yataro)

The wishes of the former Demon Kings, who are looking forward to normal cooking, are all over the place. Thus an unproductive quarrel among them continues for a while.

"We're in Kanazawa, so it gotta be curry n' rice, y'know?" (Takaharu)

"Takaharu-san, this place isn't Kanazawa." (Kanon)

"Just skip on da small stuff!" (Takaharu)

"Seafood bowls are like totally dependent on freshness, ok?" (Sarah)

"Then, rice, miso soup...and sashimi! How about this?" (Yataro)

"Yataro-dono, doesn't the rice alchemized by Shion-sama suffice?"

"I want to eat white rice and miso soup that's been prepared by a person." (Yataro)

"Saburou and Yata-jii, you didn't take part in the 《Reign》, now did you? There's like no way for your opinion to count here!" (Sarah)

Or rather, why are these guys kicking up a fuss in my room? In the first place, I'm completely unrelated to food...

"So, Shion, which do ya think would be best?" (Takaharu)

"...Huh?"

The unproductive quarrel spreads to me.

"I asked ya, curry, seafood bowl, omelette, steak, or grilled fish...which would be best?" (Takaharu)

"You have forgotten the rare!" (Saburou)

"You didn't mention white rice and miso soup, did you?" (Yataro)

As I'm short taken, Takaharu throws even further words at me, and Saburou as well as Yataro join in by filing cryptic protests.

"I don't need any food, so my opinion doesn't matter here, does it?" (Shion)

"...Hah? Ya might not need it, but ya gonna eat, no? Besides, yer sense of taste works, right?"
(Takaharu)

Takaharu rolls his eyes and tosses even more words at me, who's befuddled.

...Meal? Sense of taste?

Not to mention food...since I've become a Demon King I have no need for water...let alone sleep. I've gotten completely used to a life of not needing any food or sleep. If I've got the spare time to eat, I might as well train. And if I have the time to take a nap, I rather sort my thoughts.

—All of my daily time is allotted to survival.

I don't think that this way of life is wrong. That has been proven by me currently being alive and having become the strongest Demon King in the Ishikawa prefecture.

That's precisely why I can't simply swallow Takaharu's claim about eating.

"...-on! Shion! Ya listenin'?"

Takaharu's voice pulls me out of my deep sea of thoughts.

"Y-Yeah...I'm listening." (Shion)

"So, what would ya like, Shion?" (Takaharu)

"Let's see..." (Shion)

Curry, seafood bowl, omerice, steak, or grilled fish...as food, any of them would be nice.

"...Curry and rice, I'd say." (Shion)

For some reason the name of the somewhat nostalgic dish crosses my lips.



Two hours later.

"Shion-san, everything is ready." (Kanon)

Being called over by Kanon, I headed over to the place where the former Demon Kings had actively prepared the food.

"Oi..."

Arriving at the venue, I'm spontaneously lost for words.

It's at a location around 15 minutes away by foot from the cave I call my home. A big, long table, and a suitable number of chairs has been prepared at a riverside where the sunlight leaks through the leaves of the trees bordering the river.

The sunlight blazing down, and the murmuring of the flowing river...it's a vampire-killing location with all of it feeling unpleasant.

"...I'm going back."

Although I've grown accustomed to staying beneath the sun, it doesn't change the lethargic feeling I get from it. I immediately try to turn back to my cave, but...

"W-W-Wha! Wai-...Shion-san!" (Kanon)

"Shion... Forming friendly ties with those below...this is also a duty of the one standing on top, isn't it?"

Kanon holds me back in panic, and Yataro asks me with a calm voice.

Those below — in other words, my subordinates. The relation between me and my subordinates is one of them being tied to me by my absolute authority over them. There's no need for me to unreasonably take their feelings into consideration, but...

Friendship, loyalty — those are values I can't check on my smartphone, but these uncertain components play a role.

Eating a meal together with them; if it improves my relationship with my subordinates by just doing that...it doesn't use any CP, so the cost performance ratio is great as well?

"Do it indoors next time..." (Shion)

I mutter sullenly, and sit down on the chair assigned to me.

Chapter 137 - Curry and Rice ②

Eight people take part in this time's food party. Kanon, Yataro, Saburou, Takaharu, Sarah, Akira as the six former Demon Kings, Rina as the sole human, and me as the Demon King.

The veteran bloodkin such as Chloe and Layla are absent since they've been punished by me to skip the meal for form's sake. I don't think that it's possible for the loyalty of Chloe's group to sway, but when they succeed in the next 《Reign》, I'd like to show them my appreciation in some way.

"U-Umm...is it fine for us to begin?"

Is she a waitress? A single woman addresses Yataro with a trembling voice.

"Yeah, we're in your care. I think it'd be good to toast with beer?" (Yataro)

"Ya bet!" (Takaharu)

"Hmm...I desire red wine." (Saburou)

"Cassis Orange for me!" (Sarah)

"I'd like to have oolong tea, please."

"Orang...err no, oolong tea for me."

"Oolong tea for me as well, please."

After my subordinates order the drinks they like, I also ask for oolong tea as a beverage. The waitress prepares the requested drinks with trembling hands.

"We've all come together. So, Shion, please give us a toast." (Yataro)

"Huh?"

"A toast. All the former Demon Kings have met together at long last." (Yataro)

Yataro forces something unreasonable on me with a gentle smile.

A toast, he says...? What should I say here...?

I rack my brain, but an impromptu 『toast』 isn't part of my repertoire.

Simple is best... It's run-of-the-mill to pretend respect while staying distant with a tedious speech.

In that case——

"Cheer——"

"Ain't it kinda boorish to keep da toast to one word?"

The toast, representing the ideal solution I arrived at, is shot down by Takaharu's comment.

It'd be simple to rebuke Takaharu, who said something unnecessary, harshly here — I just have to order him. Takaharu, the subordinate, can't go against my orders.

However, I ponder while looking around me.

The humans around us — the 『Residents』 are sending looks full of fear and curiosity my way.

I have two choices: Build the foundation for a ruling based on fear by scolding Takaharu, or show my generosity by pardoning Takaharu's comment.

Spreading fear is something I can do at any time. Restricted conditions are necessary to show one's generosity. Hence——

I make up my mind, choosing to forgive Takaharu.

"From now on, our forces are going to unify the Hakui District, Nanao, the Hosu District, the Kashima District, Wajima, and Suzu — basically the prefecture's north, to solidify our power base. It's planned to establish a firm organization while welcoming many, excellent people as subordinates in the process."

"So serious——"

"Politician——"

"——Shut up."

I look at Takaharu and Sarah, who are both too unrestrained, and forcibly shut their mouths. It's important to show generosity. But, for a Demon King it'd be a foolish move to let slide everything.

"For that sake, the power of the bloodkin who are present here, the power of the bloodkin not present here, the power of the created subordinates, and the humans who became 『Residents』 —

all of these powers are necessary. For the sake of my...no, our glorious future —— cheers!" (Shion)

"Cheers!"

""""Cheers!""""

With a smile Yataro toasts as the very first one into the silence after my toast while holding up his glass. Following him with a slight delay, the other bloodkin toast while raising their glasses as well.

"It was a nice toasting speech, I think. Well then, please serve the dishes." (Yataro)

Once Yataro exchanges a look with the waitress, the 『Residents』, who have been standing back as waiting staff, begin to set the table in a hurry.

"E-Excuse me..."

A waitress places a corn soup, a salad, and the curry rice in front of me with a nervous expression. Although I should feel no hunger, my appetite is stimulated by the aroma of the curry rice I smell for the first time in a long time.

I unconsciously clap my hands together in front of the served dishes.

"Have a nice meal."

And words that had been a custom during my time as a human unconsciously leave my mouth.

""""Have a nice meal!""""

Thereupon, all the gathered former Demon Kings put their hands together as if lured by my words, and repeat the same.

I pick up the provided chopsticks and carry the food to my mouth, starting with the salad. Without having a rejection towards the food I taste for the first time in a while, the fresh veggies crunch crisply as I chew on them.

"...Fresh."

"This lettuce is a vegetable grown by them." (Kanon)

"Aah...those guys, eh?" (Shion)

I had turned them into bloodkin, but since they were of not much use on the battlefield, I neglected them. Those humans then started to farm as a hobby.

"Kuu~! Awesome! More!" (Takaharu)

Takaharu, who wolfed down his first serving of curry rice at an abnormal pace, demands a second serving.

"Y-You're kidding..." (Sarah)

"Hah? If ya don' eat, I'll take everythin'." (Takaharu)

Takaharu says to Sarah, who stares at the curry rice in a daze, with a rough tone.

"This rocks. Or rather, Taka-chi, you're eating way fast. Like no way!" (Sarah)

"Hah? Why aren'cha eatin'? Don' tell me, it's that? Ya can't eat carrots?" (Takaharu)

"I can! I totally can eat them!" (Sarah)

"Oh, I see...! Sarah-jou, you dislike hot food, right? Then I don't mind blowing on it for——"
(Saburou)

"Get lost, creep!" (Sarah)

"Just die..." (Kanon)

Kanon gives her emotions free reign and mutters those words to Saburou, who made a comment towards Sarah anyone would judge as out.

"Jeez, can't you at least enjoy your food silently... So, Sarah, why aren't you eating?" (Shion)

I sigh and ask Sarah, the origin of the uproar.

"Kanezawa's curry is like thicker, with cutlets and cabbage...it's totally common sense to eat it with a fork, y'know!?" (Sarah)

"H-Hii...s-sorry..."

Seeing Sarah getting upset, the waitress screams.

"Huh? Curry is always like this, right?" (Takaharu)

"In the first place, we aren't in Kanezawa." (Kanon)

"The curry you're talking about is normally referred to as Kanezawa curry, isn't it Sarah-jou? Even if they were residents of Kanezawa, the curry made at home would normally be like this one here."
(Yataro)

"No way!? All of the curry over here is Kanezawa curry, no!?" (Sarah)

"What kind of prejudice is that supposed to be..."

"As I said, we aren't in Kanezawa." (Kanon)

The curry rice in my memory had sunny-side-up fried eggs added on top." (Saburou)

"...A bit spicy." (Akira)

The former Demon Kings object to Sarah's claim.

——!

I didn't know...hailing from Sendai...I had actually the same idea as Sarah, but I remain an unrelated bystander, watching while not saying anything.

The curry rice that had been prepared this time is the common one. You melt store-bought roux, cook it together with somewhat largish cut chunks of veggies and pork, and keep the spiciness at a low level.

Not having any motivation to join the unproductive argument, I pick up the spoon and bring the curry rice to my mouth.

——!

...Delicious. Even though I lost all my memories...even the faces and names of my parents after becoming a Demon King, the taste of the curry rice in my mouth makes me feel nostalgic.

Food and sleep is unnecessary to me.

However, it might be nice to have a meal from time to time...is what I start to believe.

